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**National Park Service  
Pacific West Region  
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700  
Oakland, California 94607**

N2219 (PWRO-P)

February 2, 2009

Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Pacific West Region  
Attn: Resource Chiefs, I&M Coordinators, Science Advisors, CRAC,  
NRAC, MAC, Research Learning Center Directors, Contract &  
Agreement Specialists

From: Regional Director, Pacific West Region

Subject: Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs) in the Pacific West Region  
Optional Reply Due March 15 and July 15, 2009

Executive Summary:

*CESUs are an administrative tool for parks and networks to obtain research, technical assistance or educational activities to further the stewardship of parks. CESU projects are neither contracts nor grants, but rather, collaborative in design and execution, thereby requiring active participation between the park unit and the university or institutional partner. Projects may be selected non-competitively and can be designed to address any physical, biological, social or cultural resource issue. Projects may also be developed in phases as funding becomes available.*

The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) network is a partnership between 13 federal agencies and over 200 universities located throughout the country. This network is designed specifically to provide federal agencies with collaborative research, technical assistance, and education from universities and other institutional partners. CESUs provide a broad range of biological, physical, social, and cultural science expertise needed to address resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context. Further background information on the national CESU system can be obtained at <http://www.cesu.psu.edu/>

The CESU network is comprised of 17 biogeographically-defined units, four of which fall within the Pacific West Region (PWR). Each unit consists of a host university, additional institutional partners, and federal partners, all formally linked by a master cooperative agreement. The University of Washington (UW) hosts the Pacific Northwest CESU (PNW-CESU); The University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) hosts the Great Basin CESU (GB-CESU); The University of California (UC) hosts the Californian CESU (CA-CESU), with the UC Berkeley campus serving as the unit's administrative host; and the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) hosts the Hawaii-Pacific Islands CESU (HPI-CESU). Parks are able to use any of the 17 established CESUs, not just the CESU closest to their boundary.

The NPS has assigned a Research Coordinator to each CESU in the nation to facilitate and approve the unit's NPS agreements, strengthen ties between the NPS and unit partners, and achieve the broad goals of the CESU network outlined at the beginning of this memo. This past year has brought changes in PWR CESU Research Coordinator staffing with the retirements of Darryll Johnson, PNW-CESU in June 2008 and Jim Shevock, CA-CESU in January 2009. Dr. Chris Lauver is the new NPS PNW-CESU Research Coordinator, GB-CESU Research Coordinator, Dr. Angie Evenden is also serving as the Acting Research Coordinator for the Californian CESU during FY09. Dr. Darcy Hu continues as Acting Research Coordinator for the HPI-CESU. PWR CESU Program Assistant Linda Whitson provides administrative support to all four CESUs in the region. See Attachment 1 for specific CESU Research Coordinator and Program Assistant contact information. A list of PWR CESU universities and federal partners is available on the Pacific West Region Website/Natural Resource Programs/CESUs/CESU Procedures at <http://inside.nps.gov/regions/region.cfm?rgn=141&lv=3>

As a federal agency participant in the CESU network, the NPS can establish cooperative projects with host universities or other institutional partners under very favorable negotiated terms, including a reduced indirect cost rate. Projects are implemented as Task Agreements issued against the master Cooperative Agreement that established each individual CESU. Task agreements also can be modified if additional funds become available or project plans change.

CESUs offer opportunities to expedite and expand research, technical assistance, and educational activities in parks. One of the great features about CESUs is the ability to link graduate students and university researchers directly with park professionals. CESU Research Coordinators can help your park or network identify these opportunities and suitable projects.

If you would like to use any of the CESUs, keep in mind the following:

NPS and other participating federal agencies can initiate Task Agreements directly with the host universities, any of their other university partners, or other partner institutions.

Projects are selected noncompetitively and approved directly by the Research Coordinator and the park, regional office or other NPS office.

All CESU member universities and institutional partners have agreed to an indirect cost rate not to exceed 17.5% as established in the national CESU Agreement. Therefore, these charges must be incorporated in the total cost of the project and are non-negotiable.

Under the CESU Cooperative Agreements, project funds may be transferred from agencies to their university partners and partner institutions, but not directly between federal agencies.

CESU projects require substantial federal involvement. Projects are collaborative, not contractual. Cooperative Agreements must not be used to circumvent federal acquisition laws and regulations or to supplement park staffing.

The primary purpose of the cooperative project must be to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation. If the principal purpose of a project is to acquire services for the direct benefit or use of the Federal Government, then a contract mechanism should be used.

CESU Projects involve multiple steps and engagement of a wide range of individuals. Steps for conducting a CESU project and associated roles and responsibilities are described in a document entitled 'PWR CESU Project Steps, Roles and Responsibilities'. This document as well as task agreement templates for the PNW-CESU, GB-CESU, CA-CESU and HPI-CESU are posted on the Pacific West Region Website/Natural Resource Programs/CESUs/CESU Procedures at <http://inside.nps.gov/regions/custommenu.cfm?lv=3&rgn=141&id=439>

This CESU task agreement process is not overly complicated, given ample time (minimum of 45-60 days from Research Coordinator approval to obligation). Problems arise when inadequate time is allowed or appropriate procedures are not followed. New projects and modifications of existing projects need to be reviewed and approved by the Research Coordinator. Once approved, projects are then routed to the PWR CESU Program Assistant and then on to the Division of Contracting and Procurement in Oakland for final approval and obligation. The submittal deadline for projects that need to be started by the first of June is **March 15, 2009**. To ensure obligation before the end of the fiscal year, all other projects should be submitted no later than **July 15, 2009**. Please allow ample time to secure CESU Research Coordinator approval prior to these submittal deadlines.

With FY09 well underway, please let your Research Coordinator know of your interest in using the CESU this year. The Research Coordinators can work with you to fine-tune your project, ensure that it is appropriate for a cooperative agreement, and if necessary, seek university researchers with interest and expertise to match your project's needs. Once such a contact is made, and if the park has financial resources to support the project, then the CESU Cooperative Agreement can be utilized to meet your park priorities. I also encourage you to use CESUs at scales beyond park boundaries, linking with other federal agency members with similar interests to create landscape scale projects that offer additional resource benefits and cost efficiencies.

I want to restate that CESU projects need pre-planning. Talk with the Research Coordinators early and often. It is unlikely that the Research Coordinators can find appropriate researchers or adequately review your highest priority projects without some lead-time. Therefore, **submit your priority projects early to the Research Coordinators, even if a funding source has not yet been secured.** Your pre-approved priority projects then can move quickly through the system once a funding source has been identified. Waiting until June or July to consider using the CESUs places undue stress on the system to complete and process large numbers of Task Agreements or modifications in the closing weeks of the fiscal year.

/s/ Jonathan B. Jarvis  
(signed original on file)

Jonathan B. Jarvis

Attachment (1)

cc: Baltodano, Lilette, Oakland-AP  
Evenden, Angie, GB-CESU and CA-CESU  
Fish, Tom, WASO  
Frost, Bert, WASO  
Goldsmith, Jay, Oakland-NR  
Hu, Darcy, HPI-CESU  
Johnson, Beth, WASO  
Jope, Kathy, Seattle-NR  
Lauver, Chris, PNW-CESU  
Louter, David, Seattle-CR  
Sherrill, Jamie, Oakland-AP  
Toothman, Stephanie, Seattle-CR  
Whitson, Linda, Seattle-NR  
Williams, Jack, Oakland, FM

**ATTACHMENT 1: CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PACIFIC WEST REGION NPS  
COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT (CESU) RESEARCH COORDINATORS  
AND PWR CESU PROGRAM ASSISTANT**

***Pacific Northwest CESU***

Dr. Chris Lauver, Research Coordinator  
College of Forest Resources, Anderson Hall, Room 15  
University of Washington  
Voice: 206-685-7404  
Fax: 206-685-0790  
E-mail: [chris\\_lauver@nps.gov](mailto:chris_lauver@nps.gov)  
PNW-CESU Website: [www.cfr.washington.edu/research.cesu/](http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.cesu/)

***Great Basin CESU***

Dr. Angie Evenden, Research Coordinator  
Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (GB-CESU)  
Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Science  
University of Nevada, Reno  
1000 Valley Road  
Reno, Nevada 89512  
Voice: 775-784-4616  
Fax: 775-784-4583  
E-mail: [angela\\_evenden@nps.gov](mailto:angela_evenden@nps.gov)  
GB-CESU Website: <http://www.ag.unr.edu/gbcesu/>

***Californian CESU***

Dr. Angie Evenden, Acting Research Coordinator  
(See Contact Information for Great Basin CESU)  
CA-CESU Website: <http://nature.berkeley.edu/cesu/>

***Hawaii-Pacific Islands CESU***

Dr. Darcy Hu, Research Coordinator  
PWRO Honolulu, c/o Hawaii Volcanoes National Park  
P.O. Box 52  
Hawaii National Park, HI 96718-0052  
Voice: 808-985-6092  
Fax: 808-985-6029  
Email: [darcy\\_hu@nps.gov](mailto:darcy_hu@nps.gov)  
H-PI CESU Website: <http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/faculty/duffy/HICESU.htm>

***Pacific West Region - CESU Program Assistant***

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