

Cooperative
Ecosystem
Studies Units
Network



**Strategic Plan
2003**

The CESU Network Strategic Plan FY2004 - 2008

Executive Summary

Introduction

Management and stewardship of the nation's federal lands and waters requires skillful public service supported by sound science. New, collaborative efforts among federal agencies, universities, and local stakeholders are necessary. The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Network was created in response to these needs. CESUs are authorized in Public Law 105-391, and implemented through a formal Memorandum of Understanding among participating federal agencies.

The purpose of this document is to provide a strategic plan for the CESU Network for 2004-2008.

The CESU Concept

CESUs are "cooperative study units" established on university campuses. They provide research, technical assistance and education to federal resource management, environmental and research agencies, and similar benefits to their partners. Each CESU is established through a formal competition and a unified cooperative/joint venture agreement between multiple federal agencies and non-federal partners. Under CESU agreements, collaborative research, technical assistance and education projects are conducted with substantial involvement of, and benefits to, both federal and nonfederal partners.

CESUs are organized around general biogeographic regions, with each CESU having regional responsibilities and opportunities to participate in projects at a national level. Taken together, the individual CESUs repre-

sent the CESU Network. The Network is guided by the CESU Council, which includes representatives of each participating federal agency. The Network is led by a national coordinator, appointed by the Council.

Current Status of the CESU Network

As of 2003, 13 federal agencies and over 90 universities and other partners participate in the CESU Network. Twelve CESUs have been established. A competition was recently conducted for additional CESUs in five biogeographic areas. When these CESUs are established, the CESU Network will be complete.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) Network is *to promote, conduct, and provide research, technical assistance and education services nationwide in support of the missions of participating federal agencies and their partners concerning natural and cultural resource management on federal lands and waters*. To achieve this mission, each CESU project is conducted cooperatively and with substantial involvement by and benefits to federal and non-federal partners.

Strategic Goals of the CESU Network

Several key strategic goals are derived from the CESU mission. These strategic goals guide development of the CESU Network.

Strategic Goal 1. Link universities (including minority institutions) and other partners with federal resource management, environmental and research agencies in new and innovative ways that deliver high quality research, provide usable knowledge, and support science-based decision-making.

Strategic Goal 2. Create new and innovative opportunities for federal resource management, environmental and research agencies to collaborate and coordinate their research, technical assistance and education activities.

Strategic Goal 3. Provide an efficient and effective mechanism to promote, conduct and provide research, technical assistance and educa-

tion through collaborative projects of concern to federal resource managers, their partners, and decision-makers.

Strategic Goal 4. Accomplish the above strategic goals through an efficient, effective and evolving organization that includes federal agencies, universities, and other partners.

An Engaged and Active CESU Council

The CESU Council establishes policy and direction for the CESU Network. To achieve CESU Network strategic goals, the objectives are:

- to have an active, engaged Council, serving as a governing board for the CESU Network, and representing the Network to their respective agencies (*achieving Goals 1, 2 and 4*).
- to create a minimum of CESU national policy, a maximum of flexibility and accountability at the local level, and an efficient system for updating CESU policies and procedures as the Network develops (*achieving Goals 2 and 4*).
- to establish CESUs through formal competition, systematically review and evaluate CESU performance in support of the Network mission, and renew satisfactory agreements efficiently and in a timely way (*achieving Goals 1, 3 and 4*).
- to promote and support Network Initiatives that can further the mission of CESUs (*achieving Goals 2 and 3*).
- to provide oversight and support to a national coordinator, and enable the national coordinator to work toward achieving the CESU mission (*achieving Goals 1 and 4*).

A Dynamic and Evolving CESU Network

During 2004-2008, full national coverage will be maintained by the CESU Network, and the CESU Network will continue to be dynamic and evolving. To achieve CESU Network strategic goals, the objectives are:

- to include in the CESU Network interested and engaged federal partners that contribute substantively to achieving the mission of

the CESU Network, as well as use the CESU Network to achieve their individual agency's strategic goals (*achieving Goals 2 and 4*).

- to encourage the appropriate complement of federal agencies to be partners in a CESU, with each contributing to the CESU's collaborative activities and benefiting from participation (*achieving Goals 1 and 2*).
- to encourage the appropriate complement of universities and other institutions (including minority institutions) to be partners in a CESU, with each contributing to the CESU's collaborative activities and benefiting from participation (*achieving Goals 1, 2 and 3*).
- to continually update and improve CESU cooperative/joint venture agreements, and increase the effectiveness of CESUs (*achieving Goals 3 and 4*).
- to carefully review and evaluate CESU performance, and create a renewal process that is timely, efficient, and useful to both federal agencies and host universities (*achieving Goals 1, 3 and 4*).

Adding Value Through Network Activities

The CESU Network achieves its mission primarily through the activities of the individual CESUs. Some *network*-level activities are appropriate and essential, and add value to the overall capacity of the CESU Network to serve the needs of its participants. To achieve CESU Network strategic goals, the objectives are:

- to provide clear and concise explanation of CESU Network policies and procedures, and assist CESU partners in the efficient and effective management of CESU activities (*achieving Goals 3 and 4*).
- to utilize the CESU National Network website as a “clearinghouse” for important CESU Network information, and assist CESU partners in the efficient and effective management of CESU activities (*achieving Goals 3 and 4*).
- to increase the ability of federal agencies and non-federal CESU partners to use CESUs in ways that are efficient and effective (*achieving Goals 3 and 4*).

- to continually review, renew and refresh the collaborative relationships that are the foundation of CESU activities (*achieving Goals 1 and 4*).
- to annually document the activities and progress of the CESU Network, and to assist CESU partners in meeting their individual agency or institutional reporting requirements (*achieving Goal 4*).

Creating a National Staff

The CESU national coordinator provides leadership for the CESU Network, assembles and manages a small national staff, and serves as liaison with the federal agencies, host universities, and other CESU partners. To achieve CESU Network strategic goals, the objective is:

- to create and support a small and efficient national office staff, capable of providing effective leadership and responsive assistance to CESU partners throughout the Network (*achieving Goals 1 and 4*).

Innovation Through Network Initiatives

To complement and strengthen local and regional CESU activities, the CESU Network will undertake several network-wide initiatives. The Network Initiatives will focus on three key themes.

- making existing information available and useful,
- encouraging agency collaboration and coordination, and
- creating professional development opportunities for federal resource managers and university faculty.

For each initiative, pilot/demonstration projects will be developed. The CESU Council will seek federal and external funding.

Implementing the Strategic Plan

Responsibility for implementing the CESU Network Strategic Plan rests with the CESU Council, with the CESU national staff organizing and conducting the actions and activities as appropriate. The CESU Council will actively support the achievement of the CESU strategic goals, and

the actions and activities described in this plan. Table I in the Strategic Plan summarizes the strategic goals, actions and activities to be undertaken by the CESU Network during 2004-2008.

Conclusion

CESUs bring together federal resource management, environmental, and research agencies and the nation's universities and other partners. The CESU Network is an innovative and responsive tool to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This CESU Network Strategic Plan will help guide the development and evolution of the CESU Network. In doing so, CESUs will assist the nation in responding to the new century's demands.



**Cooperative
Ecosystem
Studies Units
Network**

**Strategic Plan
FY 2004-2008**

The CESU Network Strategic Plan

FY2004 - 2008

Introduction

Management and stewardship of the nation's federal lands and waters requires skillful public service supported by sound science. Complex issues that transcend administrative boundaries make it essential for federal agencies to work together in innovative and effective ways. The nation's universities have an important role as collaborative partners with federal agencies—providing research, technical assistance and education for science-based decision-making.

The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Network was created in response to these critical needs. CESUs are authorized in Public Law 105-391, and implemented through a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among participating federal agencies. Each federal agency participates in the Network under its own appropriate legal authorities.

The first CESUs were established in 1999. Since that time, the CESU Network has grown considerably, with CESUs established throughout the nation. Numerous research, technical assistance, and education projects have been completed or are underway. New, collaborative efforts among federal resource managers and researchers, university faculty in many disciplines, students, and local stakeholders have been initiated.

The purpose of this document is to provide a strategic plan for the CESU Network. The plan will guide the development and management of the CESU Network over the five-year period of 2004-2008.

The CESU Network Strategic Plan focuses on *network*-level and *multi*-agency goals. Strategic plans for individual federal agencies are the

responsibility of each agency, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Most university and other CESU partners have strategic plans, goals and performance measures for their own institutions. Strategic plans for individual CESUs are the responsibility of the local federal, university and additional partners in that CESU.

The CESU Network is a useful tool to help federal agencies achieve their own strategic goals within GPRA, and help universities and other institutions achieve their respective missions in education, research and service.

In this CESU Network Strategic Plan, a *mission statement* is presented, followed by a set of four key *strategic goals*. These are followed by a description of *actions and activities* that support achieving the strategic goals, and thereby the CESU mission. Each action or activity is associated with one or more of the CESU strategic goals.

The CESU Concept

CESUs are “cooperative study units” (the language in P.L. 105-391) established on university campuses. They provide research, technical assistance and education to federal resource management, environmental and research agencies, and their partners.

Cooperative emphasizes that multiple federal agencies, universities and other institutions are collaborative partners with substantial involvement in CESUs and their activities. *Ecosystem studies* involve the biological, physical, social and cultural sciences/studies and fields of applied scholarship needed to address important resource issues and support science-based decision-making. *Resources* include both natural and cultural resources on federal lands and waters.

Each CESU is established through a formal competition, and implemented through a unified cooperative/joint venture agreement between the federal agencies and the non-federal partners. A host university is the primary contact for each CESU. The host and partner universities provide space, access to facilities, basic administrative support, and the skills and expertise of their faculty, staff and students. Additional partners provide complementary skills and expertise. Federal agencies contribute

scientific staff as appropriate, additional administrative support, and funds for specific research, technical assistance and education projects. Projects are undertaken with substantial involvement of, and benefits to, both federal and non-federal partners. Each federal agency follows its own appropriate laws and regulations regarding participation in CESU projects and activities.

CESUs are organized around a series of general biogeographic regions, with each CESU having regional responsibilities and opportunities to participate in projects at a national level. Taken together, the individual CESUs represent the CESU Network. The CESU Network is guided by a CESU Council, authorized through the MOU among the federal agencies, and includes representatives of each of the participating federal agencies. The Network is led by a national coordinator appointed by the Council. A detailed description of the CESU concept is available at the CESU website, www.cesu.org/cesu.

Current Status of the CESU Network

As of June 2003, 13 federal agencies participate in the CESU Network, including:

- Bureau of Land Management,
- Bureau of Reclamation,
- US Fish and Wildlife Service,
- US Geological Survey,
- National Park Service,
- USDA Agricultural Research Service,
- USDA Forest Service,
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service,
- National Marine Fisheries Service,
- Department of Defense,
- Department of Energy,
- Environmental Protection Agency, and
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

As of June 2003, 12 CESUs have been competitively established in the following biogeographic areas:

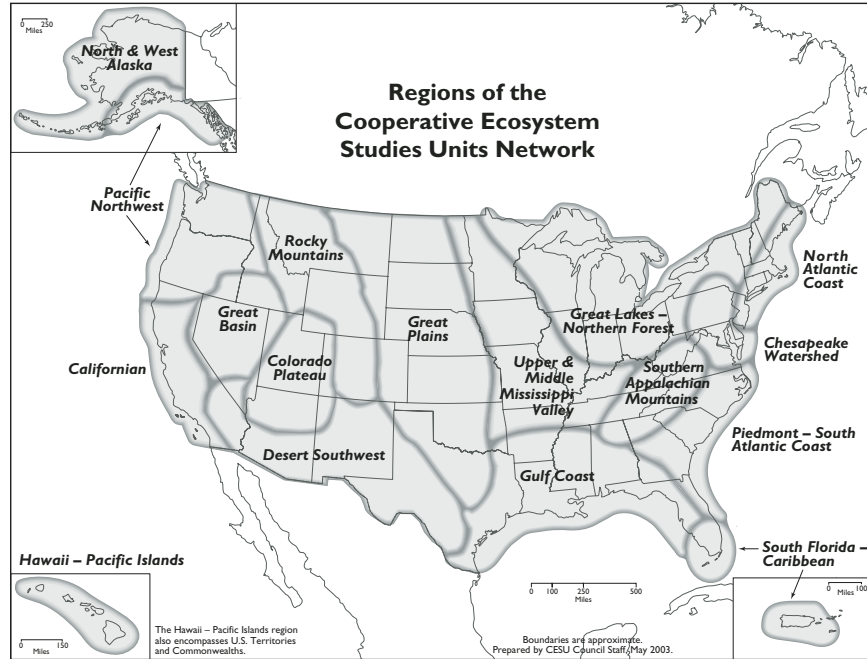
- Chesapeake Watershed,
- Colorado Plateau,
- Desert Southwest,
- Great Basin,
- Great Lakes-Northern Forest,
- Great Plains,
- Gulf Coast,
- North Atlantic Coast,
- Pacific Northwest (including Southeast Alaska),
- Rocky Mountains,
- South Florida-Caribbean, and
- Southern Appalachian Mountains (see Map I).

A fifth round of competition was recently conducted for additional CESUs in five biogeographic areas:

- Californian,
- Hawaii-Pacific Islands,
- North and West Alaska,
- Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast, and
- Upper and Middle Mississippi Valley.

When these CESUs are established in 2003, the Network will be complete. For a current list of CESUs, participating agencies, universities and other institutions, see Appendix I.

A total of 90 universities (including 18 minority institutions) and 24 state, tribal and non-governmental partners participate in the current 12 CESUs; 44 states and territories are represented. When completed, the



Map I. Regions of CESU Network

CESU Network will include over 100 universities in 50 states and the territories, as well as international partners.

Over 650 research, technical assistance and education projects have been completed or are underway across the Network. The 2002 *CESU Annual Report* inventories the activities of each CESU, and describes examples of accomplishments, current activities, and specific projects. The *CESU Annual Report* is available at the CESU website, www.cesu.org/cesu.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Network is to promote, conduct, and provide research, technical assistance and education services nationwide in support of the missions of participating

federal agencies and their partners concerning natural and cultural resource management on federal lands and waters.

Importantly, this mission is achieved, and each CESU project is conducted *cooperatively*, with substantial involvement by and benefits to federal and non-federal partners.

In this mission, *research* is defined as the creation of new knowledge, *technical assistance* is the application of existing knowledge, and *education* is the transfer of knowledge. In many cases, these outcomes may be combined in a single program or project.

Research activities of the CESU Network are both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, combining the skills and expertise of university faculty and federal managers and scientists in ways that deliver *sound science* and scholarship and share *usable knowledge*. *Sound science* is carefully designed, rigorously conducted, and systematically peer-reviewed. *Usable knowledge* is derived from sound science, and is provided to federal managers and their partners on time and in ways that enable its application to problem-solving, science-based decisionmaking, and effective management. Both long and short-term research, appropriate to each agency's mission, are conducted through the CESU Network.

Technical assistance by the CESU Network is essential to meeting the missions of the participating federal agencies and their partners. Technical assistance applies existing theories, techniques, and research results to solving (or mitigating) specific resource management problems. Technical assistance is responsive, timely, and like research, results in the delivery of usable knowledge.

Education through the CESU Network includes the professional development of federal resource managers and other employees through workshops, conferences, training sessions and degree programs as appropriate. It also includes the training of graduate and undergraduate students through participation in CESU projects, and educational programs designed for citizens (including, but not limited to, environmental education, sustainable development, resource interpretation, and public science education).

Importantly, the scope of CESUs includes both natural and cultural resources, all of the relevant disciplines, and the delivery of high-quality research and usable knowledge to both natural resource and cultural resource managers and others.

Hence, the mission of the CESU Network is both ambitious and practical, expansive in scope while specific in purpose, and reflective of the skill and expertise residing in federal agencies, the nation's universities, and other partners. An important outcome of the CESU Network is the bringing together of federal resource managers, university faculty and students, and others—in new and effective ways that help guide the conservation and public use of federal natural and cultural resources. Accomplishing the CESU Network mission is a significant, collaborative challenge, and an extraordinary opportunity.

Strategic Goals of the CESU Network

Several key strategic goals are derived from the CESU mission. These strategic goals guide the development of the CESU Network, and the actions and activities of the CESU Council, national staff and participating CESU partners.

Strategic Goal 1. Link universities (including minority institutions) and other partners with federal resource management, environmental and research agencies in new and innovative ways that deliver high-quality research, provide usable knowledge, and support science-based decision-making.

Strategic Goal 2. Create new and innovative opportunities for federal resource management, environmental and research agencies to collaborate and coordinate their research, technical assistance and education activities.

Strategic Goal 3. Provide an efficient and effective mechanism to promote, conduct and provide research, technical assistance and education through collaborative projects of concern to federal resource managers, their partners, and decision-makers.

Strategic Goal 4. Accomplish the above strategic goals through an efficient, effective and evolving organization that includes federal agencies, universities, and other partners.

During 2004-2008, the CESU Council, Network, national staff and individual CESUs will engage in activities and actions in support of achieving these important strategic goals.

An Engaged and Active CESU Council

The CESU Council (“Council”) was established under a MOU among the federal agencies. Each participating federal agency appoints a representative to the Council. The Council meets as needed, and at least quarterly. Minutes of each meeting are taken and posted on the CESU Network website. The Council may establish subcommittees (“working groups”) as needed.

Uniquely, there is no lead federal agency in the CESU Network. The Council serves as a governing board among the federal agencies participating in the CESU Network. The Council has several important responsibilities, derived from the MOU among the agencies. These include:

- serving as the official liaison between the CESU Network and the Council members’ individual agencies,
- establishing, maintaining, and revising CESU Network policies and procedures,
- approving the addition of new federal agencies into the CESU Network,
- selecting host universities for new CESUs, evaluating existing CESUs, and renewing CESU agreements,
- developing and supporting CESU Network initiatives, including federal and non-federal funding sources,
- appointing and evaluating the CESU national coordinator, and
- additional activities appropriate to the Council.

Council members serve as the official liaison between the CESU Network and their respective agencies. They communicate about CESUs

directly to their agency's leadership, field managers, and other employees. They bring to the Council the views of their respective agencies, and represent their agencies in Council decision-making. Council members will be actively engaged in Council decision-making, regularly attend scheduled Council meetings, and participate in CESU activities as available. Each CESU Council member will appoint an alternate, who can substitute for the Council member in their absence. *The objective is to have an active, engaged Council, serving as a governing board for the CESU Network, and representing the Network to their respective agencies (achieving Goals 1, 2 and 4).*

To establish, maintain and revise CESU Network policies and procedures, the Council will approve and maintain an Administrative Guide prepared by CESU national staff and reviewed by federal agencies, host and partner universities, and other CESU partners. The purpose of this administrative guide is to describe the organization, policies and procedures of the CESU Network, and assist federal and non-federal partners in the efficient operation of individual CESUs. The guide focuses on those policies and procedures established by the CESU Council through its authority as assigned in the MOU. It does not substitute for or replace relevant government-wide laws, regulations and policies, OMB guidance, and specific departmental or agency law, regulation and policy. The Administrative Guide will cover those policies and procedures appropriate to the CESU Network, following federal laws, policies and regulations established government-wide and for the individual participating federal agencies. The Administrative Guide will be revised as needed by the Council. *The objective is a minimum of CESU national policy, a maximum of flexibility and accountability at the local level, and an efficient system for updating CESU policies and procedures as the Network develops (achieving Goals 2 and 4).*

To accept additional federal agencies into the CESU Network, select host universities, evaluate existing CESUs and renew CESU agreements, the Council will establish specific evaluation criteria and procedures through the Administrative Guide. The section of this plan titled "Achieving Strategic Goals: Adding Value Through Network Activities" discusses these in more detail. *The objective is to establish CESUs through formal competition, systematically review and evaluate CESU performance in support*

of the Network mission, and renew satisfactory agreements efficiently and in a timely way (achieving Goals 1, 3 and 4).

The development and support of CESU Network Initiatives is an important element of Council activity. These initiatives are described in the section of this plan titled “Achieving Strategic Goals: Innovation Through Network Initiatives.” The Council will support the use of federal funds for these Network Initiatives (within available resources and individual agency priorities), as well as create opportunities for non-federal support from foundations, the private sector, and other sources. *The objective is to promote and support Network Initiatives that can further the mission of CESUs (achieving Goals 2 and 3).*

The Council appoints a CESU national coordinator. The national coordinator provides leadership for the CESU Network, assembles and manages a national office staff, and conducts other duties as assigned by the Council (see the section of this plan titled “Achieving Strategic Goals: Creating a National Staff”). The CESU national coordinator serves a flexible term established by the Council, and will be evaluated annually by the Council. *The objective is to provide oversight and support to a national coordinator, and enable the national coordinator to work toward achieving the CESU mission (achieving Goals 1 and 4).*

In addition, the CESU Council will engage in other activities appropriate to the Council and within the scope of the Memorandum of Understanding among the federal agencies.

A Dynamic and Evolving CESU Network

The CESU Network was established under the MOU among the federal agencies, through several rounds of formal competitions, and by the resulting cooperative/joint venture agreements that created individual CESUs. In FY 2003, the CESU Network will be completed, with a diverse range of participating federal agencies, over 100 of the nation’s universities and additional partners. Full national coverage by CESUs—i.e., all states and US territories included in an active CESU’s bioregion—will be achieved. During 2004-2008, full national coverage will be maintained by the CESU Network, and the Network will continue to be dynamic and evolving.

The CESU Network will evolve in several ways. These include:

- adding federal agency partners to the Network,
- adding federal agency partners to individual CESUs,
- adding non-federal partners to individual CESUs,
- revising CESU cooperative/joint venture agreements, and
- evaluating and renewing existing CESU cooperative/joint venture agreements.

Since the MOU was originally signed in 1999, 13 federal resource management, environmental and research agencies have joined the CESU Network. The CESU Council approves the addition of each new federal partner, following procedures outlined in the Administrative Guide.

With these 13 federal agencies in the CESU Network, federal participation is nearly complete. The Council will continue to consider additional, interested federal partners, where adding the agency or bureau serves the CESU Network mission, and participating in the CESU Network serves the mission and needs of the proposed federal partner. In addition, some participating federal partners may elect to withdraw, following procedures described in the MOU. *The objective is to include in the CESU Network interested and engaged federal partners that contribute substantively to achieving the mission of the CESU Network, as well as use the CESU Network to achieve their individual agency's strategic goals (achieving Goal 2 and 4).*

Federal agencies join the CESU Network (by signing the MOU), and then join individual CESUs. Agencies join those CESUs that can provide needed expertise in research, technical assistance, and education. Several agencies have elected to join each of the existing CESUs. During 2004-2008, all federal agencies that belong to the CESU Network will participate in at least one individual CESU.

As the CESU Network evolves, opportunities are available for additional federal partners to be added to established CESUs. The procedure to join an individual CESU is described in the Administrative Guide. The

decision to join an individual CESU is the responsibility of the agency, and subject to the approval of the participating universities and other partners. The decision is based on local and regional needs, priorities, presence in the region, available resources, as well as the expertise available from participating universities and other partners.

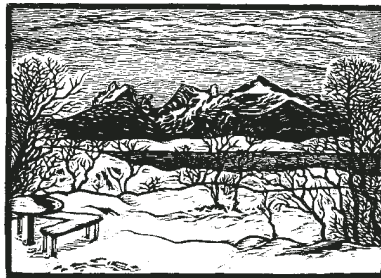
The CESU Council will encourage agencies to join individual CESUs as appropriate, and the national staff will assist as requested. In addition, some participating federal partners may elect to terminate their participation in an individual CESU, following procedures described in the cooperative agreement/joint venture agreement. *The objective is to encourage the appropriate complement of federal agencies to be partners in a CESU, with each contributing to the CESU's collaborative activities and benefiting from participation (achieving Goals 1 and 2).*

As the CESU Network evolves, opportunities are also available for additional universities and other non-federal partners to be added to established CESUs. The procedure to join an individual CESU is described in the Administrative Guide. The decision to add an additional university or other non-federal partner to an individual CESU is the responsibility of the host university, federal and other partners. Such decisions are based on local and regional needs, as well as the expertise available from the additional and existing universities and other partners. The CESU Council will encourage and promote the addition and integration of minority institutions into the CESU Network.

The CESU national staff will assist with the addition of universities and other non-federal partners as requested. In addition, some participating universities and other non-federal partners may elect to terminate their participation in an individual CESU, following procedures described in the cooperative agreement/joint venture agreement. *The objective is to encourage the appropriate complement of universities and other institutions (including minority institutions) to be partners in a CESU, with each contributing to the CESU's collaborative activities and benefiting from participation (achieving Goals 1, 2 and 3).*

As the CESU Network evolves, additional amendments to the existing CESU cooperative/joint venture agreements may be useful—to improve the operation of CESUs, increase effectiveness of CESU activities, and respond to new federal requirements and local and regional needs. Federal agencies and non-federal partners may propose amendments to the cooperative/joint venture agreements; amendments require approval by the CESU Council. The CESU national staff will assist and manage the amending of CESU agreements, ensuring that the agreements are consistent for all CESUs in the Network. Originals of the signed agreements and amendments will be archived by the CESU national staff. *The objective is to continually update and improve CESU cooperative/joint venture agreements, and increase the effectiveness of CESUs (achieving Goals 3 and 4).*

CESUs are established through 5-year cooperative/joint venture agreements, and are subject to renewal based on mutual agreement of all parties. The 5-year renewal requirement provides an opportunity to evaluate the performance of an individual CESU, both in meeting its own strategic goals and in its contribution to the CESU Network.



The first round of CESUs (established in 1999) will be up for renewal in 2004, and the CESU Council has established specific evaluation criteria and renewal procedures, and will distribute these through the Administrative Guide and CESU website. The process will include a self-assessment by the host university, an independent peer review, and a review and recommendation by the CESU Managers Committee (made up of regional managers from the participating federal agencies). The decision to renew the CESU agreement will be made by consensus of the host university and the CESU Council. Expiration of an agreement will result in a new competition to select a host university for that bioregion's CESU. *The objective is to carefully review and evaluate CESU performance, and create a renewal process that is timely, efficient, and useful to both federal agencies and host universities (achieving Goals 1, 3 and 4).*

Adding Value Through Network Activities

The CESU Network achieves its mission primarily through the activities of the individual CESUs, as they conduct collaborative projects of research, technical assistance and education. Some *network*-level activities are appropriate and essential, and add value to the overall capacity of the CESU Network to serve the needs of its participants. These on-going activities include (but are not limited to):

- maintaining a CESU Network Administrative Guide,
- maintaining a CESU Network website,
- conducting training for federal and non-federal partners,
- convening a Biennial CESU National Network Meeting, and
- preparing a CESU Network Annual Report.

The CESU Network Administrative Guide is under preparation and will be completed and approved by the Council in 2003. The CESU Network Administrative Guide will be revised as needed, and the current version made available to all CESU Network partners in appropriate formats (website, CD-ROM, booklet, and so forth). *The objective is to provide clear and concise explanation of CESU Network policies and procedures, and assist CESU partners in the efficient and effective management of CESU activities (achieving Goals 3 and 4).*

As the CESU Network is in many ways a “virtual organization”, the ability to share information continually, efficiently, accurately and effectively is of critical importance. The CESU National Network website www.cesu.org/cesu serves this important function. The CESU national staff will maintain and operate the website, update information available on the site, evaluate the effectiveness of the website through a survey of its users, and make additions and improvements as appropriate. In addition, the CESU National Network website will establish and maintain internet links to appropriate websites of each individual CESU, federal partners, universities, and other non-federal partners. *The objective is to utilize the CESU National Network website as a “clearinghouse” for important CESU Network information, and assist CESU partners in the efficient and effective management of CESU activities (achieving Goals 3 and 4).*

CESUs are an innovation in the way federal agencies and the nation’s universities work together. As they develop, there is a growing need for training focused on using CESUs effectively, i.e. getting “added value” from their use. The CESU Network national staff, working with representatives of the federal agencies and host universities and other partners, will develop a series of training workshops and materials that can be used by federal resource managers, university staff and faculty, and others. *The objective is to increase the ability of federal agencies and non-federal CESU partners to use CESUs in ways that are efficient and effective (achieving Goals 3 and 4).*

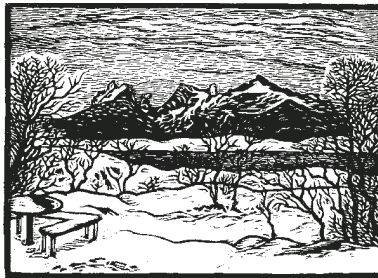
While much of the communication, collaboration and coordination of CESU activities takes place at the local level, there is an important need to periodically assemble CESU partners from throughout the nation, to share information, evaluate “what’s working and what isn’t”, and work to achieve the CESU mission. Since 1999, two National Network Meetings have been held (1999 and 2001) in Washington, D.C. The next meeting is scheduled for June 2003.

During 2004-2008, the CESU Network will hold two biennial National Meetings. These meetings will be organized by the CESU national staff, with guidance from the CESU Council and consultation with host universities and other partners of individual CESUs. Participation by all

CESU partners—federal agency representatives at the local and national level, university faculty and administrators, other CESU partner representatives—will be encouraged. *The objective is to continually review, renew and refresh the collaborative relationships that are the foundation of CESU activities (achieving Goals 1 and 4).*

Each year, individual CESUs accomplish a wide range of research, technical assistance and education activities, and the CESU Network makes progress in meeting its strategic goals. In addition, each of the federal agency partners, and most of the university and other non-federal partners, prepare and distribute annual progress or performance reports.

To document the activities and progress of the CESU Network, and to assist CESU partners in reporting their activities within CESUs, a CESU Network *Annual Report* will be prepared by the national staff. This report will inventory the activities of each CESU, and report on the progress of the CESU Network in meeting its strategic goals. The report will be widely distributed to participating federal departments, agencies, host universities and other CESU partners, and to Congress as appropriate. *The objective is to annually document the activities and progress of the CESU Network, and to assist CESU partners in meeting their individual agency or institutional reporting requirements (achieving Goal 4).*



Creating A National Staff

The CESU Network is led and administered by a small national staff, including a national coordinator, a deputy national coordinator, and part-time office assistant (2.15 FTE). Since 1999, several Department of the Interior agencies have provided personnel, support funds and office space for this staff.

The CESU national coordinator provides leadership for the CESU Network, assembles and manages the small national staff, and serves as liaison with the federal agencies, host universities, and other CESU partners. The national coordinator is appointed by the CESU Council, for a flexible term, and will be evaluated annually by the Council. The duties and responsibilities of the national coordinator will be described in the Administrative Guide.

The CESU deputy national coordinator supports the national coordinator in carrying out CESU responsibilities, and represents the CESU Network as appropriate. The duties and responsibilities of the deputy national coordinator will be described in the Administrative Guide.

As the CESU Network has grown, the need for national support staff has increased. A total of 3.5 FTE is required to adequately staff the CESU national office. In addition to the leadership positions described above, CESU national staff will include a program management assistant, graduate student intern, and individual temporary assignments (“details”) from participating federal agencies.

The graduate student internship will be offered to students from CESU-affiliated universities, and include both work experience and professional development activities. Opportunities for federal employees to be temporarily “detailed” to the CESU national office are available, and such employees will work on key CESU national projects, assist in development of the CESU Network, and perform other duties as assigned. Opportunities for faculty from CESU-affiliated universities to work with the CESU national staff through administrative leave, sabbaticals, and Interagency Personnel Act (IPA) assignments will be available. The Department of the Interior and its participating agencies will continue to

host the CESU national staff and office. *The objective is a small and efficient national office staff, capable of providing effective leadership and responsive assistance to CESU partners throughout the Network (achieving Goals 1 and 4).*

To support this small but necessary national staff, the CESU national staff will prepare an Operating Plan that includes staffing needs, budget, and other details for FY04-08. The Operating Plan will be approved by the Council. The CESU Council will, through its respective agencies and departments, request the necessary support funds to maintain the CESU national staff.

Innovation Through Network Initiatives

Most CESU activity—in the form of research, technical assistance and education—is initiated at the local level, and conducted by the participants of individual CESUs, sometimes working together across bioregional boundaries. To complement and strengthen these local and regional activities, the CESU Network will undertake several network-wide initiatives.

These Network Initiatives are designed to increase the capacity of CESUs to meet the needs of federal agencies, increase the effectiveness of CESU activities, and encourage federal agency collaboration and coordination. Initially, the Network Initiatives will focus on several key themes:

- making existing information available and useful,
- encouraging agency collaboration and coordination, and
- creating professional development opportunities for federal resource managers and university faculty.

Each Network Initiative is briefly described below.

Network Initiative One: Information Infrastructure, Synthesis, and Application

The purpose of this initiative is to encourage and support individual CESUs to develop demonstration projects that make existing informa-

tion (datasets, reports, proceedings, scientific and scholarly articles, and so forth) more accessible and useful to federal resource managers and their CESU partners. Such projects can increase the accessibility of available information, create opportunities to synthesize results across individual CESU projects and bioregions, improve research, technical assistance and education, and reduce costs (*achieving Goals 1, 2 and 3*).

Network Initiative Two: Interagency Collaboration and Coordination

The purpose of this initiative is to support CESU demonstration projects that encourage federal agencies, working with universities and other CESU partners, to collaborate and coordinate their research, technical assistance and education activities. Such projects might deal with common resource management issues, such as wildland fire, drought, public access and use, historical preservation, and others. They might deal with landscape or bioregion level issues that cross boundaries between federal agencies, and create opportunities to improve research, technical assistance, and education, as well as reduce costs and improve service to the public (*achieving Goals 1 and 2*).

Network Initiative Three: Professional Development for Resource Managers

The purpose of this initiative is to support CESU demonstration projects that result in a better trained, prepared and experienced workforce of resource professionals. This initiative leverages the nation's universities and their capacity for continuing education, distance learning, and advanced degree training to improve the federal workforce, build its expertise and capabilities, and attract skilled professionals to federal service. Projects might develop innovative and cost-effective education programs for federal employees, internship and entry-level opportunities for students working with federal resource managers, efforts to increase minority student involvement in CESU activities, leadership training to meet the predicted needs within the federal workforce, and more (*achieving Goals 1 and 4*).

CESU Network Initiatives will be accomplished through demonstration projects conducted by individual CESUs, with the most successful projects expanded to additional CESUs within the Network. Demon-

stration projects will be selected by the Council through competition, carefully evaluated upon completion, and the lessons learned applied to other CESUs. A mix of federal and non-federal funding sources may be used to support Network Initiatives. The Council will establish additional Network Initiatives as need and opportunity arise.

Implementing the Strategic Plan

Responsibility for implementing the CESU Network Strategic Plan rests with the CESU Council, with the CESU national staff organizing and conducting the actions and activities as appropriate. The CESU Council will actively support the achievement of the CESU strategic goals, and the actions and activities described in this plan. Table 1 summarizes the strategic goals, actions and activities to be undertaken by the CESU Network during 2004-2008.

Each year, the CESU Annual Report will include a description of progress in achieving Strategic Goals 1-4 and outcomes related to the specific activities of the CESU Network presented in this plan. In addition, federal agencies may include CESU activities and progress in their annual GPRA reporting. Like the CESU Network, this Strategic Plan must be dynamic and evolving. The CESU Council will revise the Strategic Plan as necessary, in consultation with host and partner universities, and other CESU partners.

Conclusion

Management of the nation's land and waters requires skillful public service supported by sound science. The challenges of the 21st century, and the environmental choices presented to the American people, demand that federal agencies anticipate and respond through science-based decision-making. The CESU Network is an innovative tool to meet these challenges. CESUs bring together federal resource management, environmental, and research agencies and the nation's universities and other partners. CESUs, and the network of science partnerships they create, are critically important. This CESU Network Strategic Plan will help guide the development of the CESU Network. In doing so, CESUs will assist the nation in responding to the new century's demands.

Table I. Summary of CESU Network Strategic Goals, Actions, and Activities (2004-2008)^a

CESU Network Actions and Activities	CESU Network Strategic Goals			
	Goal 1. Link universities and other institutions with federal agencies in new and innovative ways that deliver sound science, provide usable knowledge, and support science-based decision-making.	Goal 2. Create new and innovative opportunities for federal agencies to collaborate and coordinate research, technical assistance, and education activities.	Goal 3. Provide an efficient and effective mechanism to promote, conduct, and provide research, technical assistance, and education through collaborative projects of concern to federal resource managers, their partners, and decision-makers.	Goal 4. Accomplish Goals 1-3 through an efficient, effective, and evolving organization that includes both federal and non-federal partners.
<p><i>An Engaged and Active CESU Council</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies appoint Council representatives and alternates • Council representatives share information between agencies and CESU Network • Council representatives attend regular Council meetings • Council approves and follows CESU Administrative Guide 	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>

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<i>An Engaged and Active CESU Council continued</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council supports CESU Network Initiatives, including funding options • Council appoints and annually evaluates CESU national coordinator 	√	√	√	√
<i>A Dynamic and Evolving CESU Network</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal agencies added to CESU Network • Federal agencies added to individual CESUs 	√	√		√

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New non-federal partners added to individual CESUs • CESU agreements consistently updated and improved across the Network • Individual CESUs evaluated and CESU agreements renewed 	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>
<p><i>Adding Value Through Network Activities</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CESU Administrative Guide completed and distributed; revised as needed • CESU National website operated, updated, evaluated, and improved • Training workshops and materials developed and conducted • Biennial CESU National Network Meetings held in 2005 and 2007 • Annual Report on CESU activities prepared 	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>
<p><i>Creating a National Staff</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CESU national coordinator appointed for flexible term, annually evaluated 	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>

Table I. Summary of CESU Network Strategic Goals, Actions, and Activities (2004-2008)^a

CESU Network Actions and Activities	CESU Network Strategic Goals			
	Goal 1. Link universities and other institutions with federal agencies in new and innovative ways that deliver sound science, provide usable knowledge, and support science-based decision-making.	Goal 2. Create new and innovative opportunities for federal agencies to collaborate and coordinate research, technical assistance, and education activities.	Goal 3. Provide an efficient and effective mechanism to promote, conduct, and provide research, technical assistance, and education through collaborative projects of concern to federal resource managers, their partners, and decision-makers.	Goal 4. Accomplish Goals 1-3 through an efficient, effective, and evolving organization that includes both federal and non-federal partners.
<p><i>Creating a National Staff</i> <i>continued</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National staff increased to 3.5 FTE • Graduate student intern program with CESU-affiliated universities established • “Detail” opportunities for federal agency employees with CESU National staff created • Professional development opportunities for faculty and other partners created 	√	√	√	√

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating plan and budget for CESU national office developed, approved, and funded 		✓
<i>Innovation Through Network Initiatives</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CESU demonstration projects developed for information infrastructure, synthesis, and application 	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CESU demonstration projects developed for interagency collaboration and coordination 	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CESU demonstration projects developed for professional development for resource managers 	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CESU demonstration projects competitively awarded to individual CESUs 		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of federal and non-federal funding sources identified for CESU demonstration projects 		✓

^aThe CESU Network is a useful tool to help federal agencies achieve their own strategic goals and performance measures within GPRA. Federal agencies may include CESU activities and strategic goals within their own GPRA reporting.

About this Plan

The CESU Network Strategic Plan (2004-2008) was developed by the CESU Council and CESU national staff. Two intensive Council Retreats were held (March 2001 and September 2002) to outline the plan and establish key strategic goals and network initiatives. CESU Network staff prepared the draft plan, which was reviewed and revised by the Council. The draft plan was then distributed for comment to federal agency representatives, as well representatives of host universities and other CESU partners. The draft plan was also made widely available through the CESU website to CESU Network participants and others for review and comment.

Network staff revised the draft plan based on review comments, and submitted it to the CESU Council for final review and approval. The plan was approved by the Council in May 2003.

For more information about the Strategic Plan or the CESU Network, please contact:

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Appendix I. Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (Host, Federal Agencies and Partner Institutions)

Chesapeake Watershed CESU (Host: University System of Maryland)

3 States (and DC) represented by host and partners: Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
Department of Defense

Partner Institutions (4):

George Mason University
Pennsylvania State University
University of the District of Columbia*
University of Virginia

Colorado Plateau CESU (Host: Northern Arizona University)

7 States represented by host and partners: Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
USDA Forest Service

Partner Institutions (12):

Arizona State University
Colorado State University
Diné College*
Haskell Indian Nations University*
New Mexico State University
Oregon State University
University of Arizona
University of Nevada, Reno
Utah State University
The Arboretum at Flagstaff
Museum of Northern Arizona
Navajo Nation Archeology Department

Desert Southwest CESU (Host: University of Arizona)

4 States (and DC) represented by host and partners: Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
USDA Forest Service
Department of Defense

Partner Institutions (6):

Howard University*
New Mexico State University
Southwest Texas State University
University of California, Riverside
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
Sonoran Institute

Great Basin CESU (Host: University of Nevada, Reno)

6 States represented by host and partners: California, Idaho, Kansas, Nevada, Oregon, Utah

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
USDA Forest Service
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Partner Institutions (11):

Utah State University
California State University, Fresno*
Desert Research Institute
D-Q University*
Great Basin College
Haskell Indian Nations University*
Idaho State University
Oregon State University
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Utah
White Mountain Research Station

Great Lakes-Northern Forest CESU (Host: University of Minnesota)

12 States represented by hosts and partners: Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
USDA Forest Service
Natural Resources Conservation Service
National Aeronautics & Space Administration

Partner Institutions (22):

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College*
Indiana University
Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Southern University and A&M College*
SUNY-College of Environmental Science and Forestry
University of Iowa
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
University of Toledo
University of Vermont
University of Wisconsin, Madison
West Virginia University
American Indian Science and Engineering Society
Great Lakes Commission
The Great Lakes Forest Alliance
International Association for Great Lakes Research
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Minnesota Forest Resources Council
National Council for Air and Stream Improvement
The Nature Conservancy
The Science Museum of Minnesota

Great Plains CESU (Host: University of Nebraska)

8 States represented by host and partners: Colorado, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wyoming

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management

Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Network

Bureau of Reclamation
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
USDA Forest Service

Partner Institutions (10):

Colorado State University
Langston University*
Little Priest Tribal College*
South Dakota State University
Texas A&M University
University of North Dakota
University of Minnesota
University of Oklahoma
University of South Dakota
University of Wyoming

Gulf Coast CESU (Host: Texas A&M University)

6 States represented by hosts and partners: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
Department of Defense
Natural Resources Conservation Service
National Aeronautics & Space Administration

Partner Institutions (15):

Auburn University
Louisiana State University
Mississippi State University
Southern University and A&M College*
Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi
Texas A&M University, Galveston
Texas A&M University, Kingsville*
Troy State University
University of Central Florida
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
University of Texas, Austin

Coastal Conservation Association
The Nature Conservancy

North Atlantic Coast CESU (Host: University of Rhode Island)

4 States represented by host and partners: Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island

Federal Partners:

US Geological Survey
National Park Service

Partner Institutions (3):

University of Maryland, Eastern Shore*
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Rutgers University

Pacific Northwest CESU (Host: University of Washington)

6 States represented by host and partners: Alabama, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Vermont, Washington (and British Columbia)

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
US Fish & Wildlife Service
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
USDA Forest Service
Environmental Protection Agency

Partner Institutions (12):

Heritage College*
Oregon State University
Tuskegee University*
University of Alaska, Anchorage
University of Alaska, Southeast
University of British Columbia
University of Idaho
University of Oregon
University of Vermont
Washington State University
Western Washington University
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Rocky Mountains CESU (Host: University of Montana)

6 States represented by host and partners: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
USDA Forest Service

Partner Institutions (7):

Montana State University
University of Colorado (Boulder and Denver)
Salish Kootenai College*
University of Idaho
University of Wyoming
Utah State University
Washington State University

South Florida - Caribbean CESU (Host: University of Miami)

4 States (and Territories) represented by host and partners: Florida, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands

Federal Partners:

Bureau of Land Management
US Geological Survey
National Park Service
US Fish and Wildlife Service

Partner Institutions (9):

Barry University*
Florida A&M University*
Florida Atlantic University
Nova Southeastern University
University of Florida
University of North Carolina, Wilmington
University of Puerto Rico
University of the Virgin Islands*
Audubon of Florida

Southern Appalachian Mountains CESU (Host: University of Tennessee)

5 States represented by hosts and partners: Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Federal Partners:

US Geological Survey
National Park Service
USDA Forest Service
Department of Energy

Partner Institutions (14):

Appalachian State University
Florida A&M University*
Lincoln Memorial University
Middle Tennessee State University
Tennessee Technological University
Western Carolina University
Western Kentucky University
University of Kentucky
Foothills Land Conservancy
Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association
Joint Institute for Energy and the Environment
National Council for Air and Stream Improvement
Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Southern Appalachian Man and Biosphere

*Minority Institutions

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For updates to this list, visit <www.cesu.org/cesu>.

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