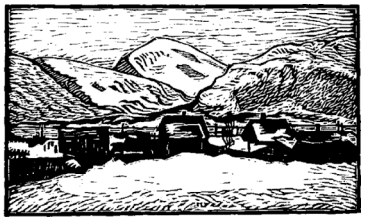
Briefing Statement
COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNITS

16 November 2005

Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Network



Overview

Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs) provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental and research agencies and their partners. Their broad scope includes the biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context.

Each CESU is composed of federal agencies, a host university, and partner institutions. CESU agreements allow each of the participating federal agencies to efficiently transfer funds and duty-station employees at university partners while maintaining responsibility for agency-sponsored activities within CESUs. CESUs are organized around biogeographic areas (a map is available on the CESU website), and linked together in the CESU Network.

The CESU Network has the following objectives:

- provide resource managers with high-quality scientific research, technical assistance, and education,
- deliver research and technical assistance that is timely, relevant to resource managers, and needed to develop and implement sound adaptive management approaches,
- ensure the independence and objectivity of research,
- create and maintain effective partnerships among the federal agencies and universities to share resources and expertise,
- take full advantage of university resources while benefiting faculty and students,
- encourage professional development of federal scientists, and
- manage federal resources effectively.

Federal agencies participate in the CESU Network through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and by joining individual CESUs. Some federal agencies have duty-stationed employees at CESUs. The CESU Network is coordinated by a CESU Council that includes representatives of the federal agency partners. The CESU Council meets regularly. The Network is led by a National Coordinator, appointed by the Council.

Current Status

Twelve federal agencies participate in the CESU Network, including the:

- Bureau of Land Management,
- Bureau of Reclamation,
- US Fish and Wildlife Service,
- US Geological Survey,
- Minerals Management Service,
- National Park Service,
- USDA Forest Service,
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service,
- National Marine Fisheries Service,
- Department of Defense,
- US Army Corps of Engineers, Civil Works, and
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Since 1999, 17 CESUs have been competitively established across the nation. A total of 199 universities and other partners participate in the CESU Network. This total includes 160 universities and colleges (45 are minority institutions) and 39 NGOs or state organizations. These partners collaborate with the federal agencies to provide local expertise for key local needs and priorities. For all agencies in the Network, CESUs have been engaged in over 3200 cooperative research, technical assistance, and education projects.

Documents and background materials about CESUs (such as CESU cooperative agreements, the *Strategic Plan for the CESU Network for 2004-2008*, the Network map and list of partners, and briefing statements) are available on the CESU website: http://www.cesu.org/cesu.

Individual CESUs also have websites available that provide information about their activities and projects. Links to these individual websites are available through the CESU website.

For more information, contact Dr. Gary Machlis, CESU National Coordinator at 202.208.5391 or gmachlis@uidaho.edu.