



Fact Sheet: Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units

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, cultural, and engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context. The multi-disciplinary structure of CESUs makes them well-suited to address federal agency needs for sustainability science.

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 station employees at university partners while maintaining responsibility for agency-sponsored activities within CESUs.

Federal agencies participate in the CESU Network through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and by joining individual CESUs. CESUs are organized around biogeographic regions and linked together in the CESU Network.

The CESU Network is coordinated by the CESU Network Council that includes representatives of the federal agency partners. The Network is led by a National Coordinator, appointed by the Council. The CESU Network has the following objectives:

- provide usable knowledge to support informed decision making;
- 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 current and future federal scientists, resource managers, and environmental leaders; and
- manage federal resources effectively.

Current Status

Fifteen federal agencies currently participate in the CESU Network. Since 1999, seventeen CESUs have been established across the nation. Currently 367 universities and other non-federal partners participate in the CESU Network. These partners collaborate with the federal agencies to provide local expertise for key needs and priorities. CESUs have been engaged in over 10,000 cooperative research, technical assistance, and education projects. Topics are wide-ranging – from the discovery of a lost 19th-century city to bird habitat management plans to Geographic Information Systems-based automated coastal change analysis tools.

■ The fifteen federal agencies

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- National Park Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
- USDA Agricultural Research Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- U.S. Forest Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Civil Works
- Department of Defense, Installations and Environment
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration

■ The seventeen units and host university

- Californian – University of California System
- Chesapeake Watershed – University System of Maryland
- Colorado Plateau – Northern Arizona University
- Desert Southwest – University of Arizona
- Great Basin – University of Nevada
- Great Lakes-Northern Forest – University of Minnesota
- Great Plains – University of Nebraska
- Great Rivers – University of Missouri
- Gulf Coast – Texas A&M University
- Hawaii-Pacific Islands – University of Hawaii System
- North & West Alaska – University of Alaska System
- North Atlantic Coast – University of Rhode Island
- Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast – University of Georgia
- Pacific Northwest – University of Washington
- Rocky Mountains – University of Montana
- South Florida-Caribbean – University of Miami
- Southern Appalachian Mountains – University of Tennessee

