

**GREAT PLAINS COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT
MANAGER'S COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL
FEBRUARY 10, 2004
10 AM TO 12 PM**

Participants:

Kyle Hoagland	Water Center, UNL
Christine Lockert	Coordinator, GP-CESU
Gary Willson	NPS Research Coordinator, Lincoln, NE
Steve Cinnamon	Midwest Region, NPS, Omaha, NE
Steve Miller	Superintendent, Tallgrass Prairie, KS
Esther Stroh	USGS – Missouri Field Station, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Columbia, MO
Michele Schoeneberger	USFS, Rocky Mountain Research Field Station, National Agroforestry Center, Lincoln, NE
Jack Butler	USFS, Rocky Mountain Research Field Station, Center for Great Plains Ecosystems Studies, Rapid City, SD
Bill Hill	Wyoming BLM, Newcastle Field Station

SUMMARY

While we were waiting to make sure that everyone had joined us on the phone, Kyle explained that a revised GP-CESU brochure will be available prior to the spring meeting in April. Although the current brochure is not that old, we are almost out of them and they are out of date already. We have added two new university partners, and the CESU Network map is now complete. The Project Examples will also change in order to reflect participation by each university partner and all federal agency. Copies of the new brochures will be provided to you when they are available.

We reviewed the status of the FY03 Work Plan and the Draft FY04 Work Plan. The discussion focused on the points below.

Strategic plan – while it indicates that this objective is complete, we have not yet sent out a final copy. Last summer we solicited comments on a version that will be pretty much the final version. We do need to incorporate a few additional comments, post it on the web and provide to each of our partners as the completed Strategic Plan.

Research Needs Catalog –

NPS: The NPS research needs catalog is moving forward. There is a list of research needs from all parks in the region on the website. These lists are taken from the Park Service PMIS database, and will need to be updated yearly as the PMIS database changes. An expanded list of needs is available for five parks so far. These lists are a result of research, and communication between Christine Lockert and the resource managers of the parks, as well as simply put together by the park based on a template example. We have found that we cannot do this without the parks assistance, we simply do not have access to enough resources.

BOR: The Bureau of Reclamation has provided us with a short list of needs that is available on the website. We probably need to update this.

BLM: The Bureau of Land Management was going to put together a similar list based on the needs of each field station, Bill Hill was not clear as to whether that had progressed or not. I will contact Marty Griffith to determine the status.

USGS: Esther Stroh stated that she does not see a need for such a list for USGS in that they are suppose to be working on the needs of other DOI agencies (they don't have their own needs). She does feel that the lists are very useful to USGS themselves. Each USGS center does have initiatives that could be listed.

USFS RMRS: Michele Schoeneberger reiterated that USFS RMRS is a research provider and not a research requester, therefore they do not have "needs" either. Can again provide program initiatives, but they do change often. Jack Butler – The Center recently renewed their research charter, it is based on

stakeholders research needs. His center has agreements with Inventory & Monitoring network and routinely works with NPS. Need to see if some of this work can come through the GP-CESU.

Minority Partners: BLM did fund one project with Langston University last fiscal year, but we would like to increase overall involvement of our minority partner institutions. We asked Langston University to host our spring meeting, and we hope that Little Priest Tribal College will be able to make that trip as well. The meeting will give us the opportunity to learn more about Langston, and what expertise and facilities they have to offer. Kyle, Gary, and Christine are also hoping to make a site visit to LPTC to help us determine how they can be involved in the unit. There is an interim President at the college right now and we are having difficulty reaching him.

Multi-agency projects: Steve Cinnamon pointed out that all DOI agencies receive a pot of Cooperative Conservation Initiative (CCI) money (have since determined that it is only NPS, BLM, and USFWS). BLM: given by state, each office in the state competes for that money. Their current focus is riparian improvement type projects
NPS: wildlife habitat improvements, “on the ground” improvements

Each agency (NPS, BOR, BLM) can provide Christine Lockert with their agency guidance as a starting point and we can determine if there are similarities that we can use as a pilot project for multi-agency research. CCI is one way that a multi-agency project may be addressed, but there are other means to get this done as well. It was also suggested that we work on identifying all of the joint funding programs that the agencies have together and place this information on the web as another source of potential agency collaboration.

Complete geographical representation by adding a Kansas partner: The gap is obvious and we would like to fill it. We have talked to Kansas State and at one point it appeared that the application process was going to move forward, however we have yet to see an application. Our main point of contact is going to look into it again, and start the ball rolling if it in fact has been dropped. We should know in a few weeks if they are still planning to submit an application or if they have reconsidered. Contacts were provided for individuals at Emporia State University and Fort Hays State University as well (both in Kansas).

Market the GP-CESU: There needs to be an effort to market the CESU at all levels.

- Do agencies put the GP-CESU on meeting agendas?
- How to demonstrate to superiors the effectiveness of the GP-CESU, provide the knowledge for them to make informed decisions and support the GP-CESU
- Provide GP-CESU PowerPoint presentation to all manager's, and technical representatives

Survey agency managers about technical assistance expertise needs and provide them with information on partners with extensive expertise in that field --- NPS already has a list of their parks T.A. needs and tries to match the needs with expertise within the park service. However there is too many needs for them to be able to help everyone, this is another opportunity where the CESU can help. What about other agencies? Is there a need for information about what facilities, expertise some of our partners have?

Project Reporting Guidelines: We need to develop some guidelines on how to report projects to the GP-CESU office and technical representatives as well. The GP-CESU should be aware of all projects, activities that are funded under the GP-CESU for accurate reporting on the website and to the National CESU office. We would like this to be done on a project-by-project (or at least quarterly) basis rather than once after the end of the FY. Need to discuss if this should be at the agency level or university level. This has developed as an issue because some of the technical representatives are unaware of projects that are being performed at their own institution (this information is on the website), and because we have been unaware of projects that are funded by agencies other than NPS.

Draft Agenda for April Meeting: It was asked if there was anything that should be on the agenda that is not currently and if there were any other comments on the agenda,

- should include a bullet for recruitment as part of discussion for Increasing Minority Partner Institution Involvement
- include discussion on Cooperative Conservation Initiative (CCI) as possible way to develop a pilot multi-agency project

The main meeting date is the 14th from 8:30 – 4 or so. It was suggested that we consider changing it from midday to midday in order to better accommodate traveling times. Kyle, Christine and Gary Willson were already planning on being at Langston University for a half-day on Tuesday the 13th. This will be opened up to everyone. So on Tuesday afternoon there may be a tour of Langston University and research centers, plus a meeting with faculty to learn about their expertise, etc. An evening social/dinner can then also be arranged. We will attempt to move up the adjourning time on Wednesday to 3 or 3:30pm. We need to make sure this will work for the Langston folks.

Actions:

- The Work Plan will be sent out to the University technical representatives for their input and a final version will be provided to everyone.
- Christine Lockert will contact representatives for the agency guidance of CCI projects
- Send GP-CESU PowerPoint presentation to all manager's and technical representatives (add the contact names to the presentation)
- Send 5-year Review Guidelines to managers for their information

The focus of the meeting in April is to develop a stronger relationship with our minority partner institutions and to insure that the needs of the manager's are being met. A goal will be to initiate a new level of collaboration by proposing multi-agency project work. Everyone present plans to attend the April 14th meeting (except Michele Schoeneberger) – see you there!

Adjourn