

GP-CESU Meeting
Conference Call
November 16, 2007

Participants: Frank D'Erchia (USGS), Leatha Frost (USBR), Vi Hillman (BLM), Kyle Hoagland (UNL), Bill Jensen (ESU), Christine Lockert (UNL), Rod Lym (NDSU), Kent Reid (NMHU), Linda Wallace (OU), Gary Willson (NPS)

- 1) GP-CESU and National Network Updates are provided in the attached PowerPoint file
 - a. 22 new, or continuing research, technical assistance and education projects were supported by the GP-CESU in FY2007 for more than \$1M in funding.
 - b. Ten of 13 partner institutions received funds
 - c. Three of seven federal agencies obligated funds

- 2) Expertise Showcase
 - a. Emporia State University (Bill Jensen): introduced to the CESU by Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, which is about 20 miles down the road from ESU. As a partner, they hope to do more research at TAPR; and are interested in research opportunities at any federal lands.
 - i. Have close relationships with TAPR, The Nature Conservancy, and BLM in Texas
 - ii. Masters degree program in departments of Biology and Physical Sciences
 - iii. Expertise includes: ecology, biology, identification/natural history of organisms in the Great Plains, terrestrial ecology, mammalogy, ecosystem ecology, aquatic ecology, herpetology
 - iv. Websites for more info: www.emporia.edu/biosci/biology & www.emporia.edu/physci
 - b. New Mexico Highlands University (Kent Reid): represent southwestern outpost for GP-CESU, sits on the edge of the short-grass prairie. www.nmhu.edu
 - i. Have good relationships with federal agencies, several have lands in the area: Forest service grasslands, National Park Service, Southern Plains Inventory & Monitoring Network is housed at NMHU (Rob Bennets is the coordinator).

Comment: Linda Wallace mentioned NEON (National Ecological Observatory Network, <www.neoninc.org>) and the idea that it seems that NEON and CESUs should be able to work together in order to address questions of interest: NEON has questions of interest that relate directly to what CESUs are also involved with (climate change, invasive species). NEON is also looking for ecological gradient sites, CESU partners may be of

assistance here. Something to think about is how the two organizations may be able to interact.

NPS (Gary Willson):

- Centennial Challenge, a multi-year program. There is no project money this year, that will come in subsequent years. However, they do plan to hire an additional 3,000 seasonal employees this year. Gary will share these position announcements with partner universities.
- Gary has served as the NPS Lead coordinator the last two years. This involved conducting conference calls with all NPS coordinators, holding the coordinators' annual meeting, and preparing the NPS CESU Report to Congress. Is currently working on the 07 Report to Congress, after that his term as Lead coordinator is up.
- In FY2007, NPS alone obligated nearly \$42 million in projects through CESU agreements. Obviously, this figure increases when you take all agencies into account.

USGS (Frank D'Erchia):

There has been a re-organization within USGS regions. The old format, there was a position for each main discipline of BIO/GEOL/GEOG/WATER. The Central region is now the North Central (MN, ND, SD, CO, WY, NE, ...) with Headquarters in Minneapolis. Max Etheridge will be the leader. In time, someone from this regional office may join as a representative to the GP-CESU. For now, Frank will continue as representative. South Central is KS, MO, AR, OK, TX, LA.

USBR (Leatha Frost):

- Is unsure if grants.gov will continued to be enforced or not, but she does not think that it will "go away". Will be attending a meeting in a couple of weeks where she intends to inquire about current status. The law requiring grants.gov for cooperative agreements does have a sunset this month. Indicated that following the requirements for grants.gov is not really affecting the total project numbers for USBR. Simply a slower year for them.
 - Question: why the concern over grants.gov? The main issue is that when a agency wants to use the CESU agreement, they work with university faculty to develop a proposal that includes what they want/need; so if they then need to advertise it on grants.gov; how can they not give it to that university that they originally collaborated with? It does not make sense. NPS feels that CESUs were already competitively organized when Host Institutions were selected. NPS is not compiling with the grants.gov law, however most other agencies in DOI are.
- Items that were discussed at recent RM/GB/DS CESU meeting: better collaboration among federal agencies to coordinate research; agencies use same policies to do agreements (hard, all agencies do things differently); issues universities were having in getting/receiving the agreements, funding, and payments.

BLM (Vi Hillman):

- Fairly new to the CESU. She manages BLM lands in eastern Wyoming, and Nebraska.
- Interested in looking at some cooperative partnerships in NE, opportunities to do research in NE.

3). Spring Meeting (please see modified notes at the end)

Great Plains CESU/Colorado Plateau CESU – Joint Meeting
“Engaging Minority and Small Institution Partners”

Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO

March 20-21, 2008

Who Should Attend?

Small and minority institutions (10), including:

GP-CESU: Black Hills State University (1), Emporia State University (1), Langston University (1), New Mexico Highlands University (1)

CP-CESU: Diné College (1), Fort Lewis College (1), Haskell Indian Nations University (1), Mesa State College (1), Navajo Nation (1), Navajo Nation Community College (1)

All federal partners (9) in the two CESU's: BLM (2), DOD (1), NPS (2), NRCS (1), BOR (2), USACoE (1), USDA-FS (2), USFWS (1), USGS (2)

28 total attending, including the two host universities (Northern Arizona University & University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

What are the Goals of the Meeting?

- Enhance the capacity of the small and minority institutional partners to provide research, education and technical assistance to their federal partner agencies.
- Fund at least two new projects/interns activities in each CESU.
- Federal agencies will learn about small and minority institutions' expertise *and* the institutions will learn about federal agency partner research, education and technical assistance needs and funding opportunities.
- Smaller and minority institutions would have the opportunity to learn from successful projects and internship programs.

How Will I Get to the Meeting?

Most flights to Durango offer convenient connections through Denver, generally at a cost of ~\$500-600 (for the GP-CESU minority and small institution partners). The NPS coordinator's office will cover airfare for a representative from each of those institutions that do not have travel funding available.

Why is the Meeting Being Held in Durango?

Fort Lewis College, which represents a successful internship program, has kindly offered to host this joint meeting, providing us with a beautiful venue, and the opportunity for a mid-meeting field trip to Mesa Verde.

Modified since meeting: There does not appear to be a date in March/April that will work for both host institutions as we had hoped. Therefore, the GP-CESU will hold the meeting for our minority/small institution partners at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, NM. This was our original plan before we discussed a joint meeting with CP-CESU. Invitees for the GP-CESU are Black Hills State University, Emporia State University, Langston University, New Mexico Highlands University, and all federal agencies.

We will be looking at the same week (March 17-21, 2008).