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**National Park Service
Pacific West Region
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N2219 (PWRO-P)

December 09, 2010

Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Pacific West Region
Attn: Resource Chiefs, I&M Coordinators, Science Advisors, CRAC, NRAC, IMAC, Research Learning Center Directors, Contract & Agreement Specialists

From: Regional Director, Pacific West Region

Subject: Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs) in the Pacific West Region
CESU Project Submittal Deadline - July 15, 2011

Executive Summary:

CESUs are an administrative tool for parks and networks to obtain research, technical assistance or educational activities to further the stewardship of parks. CESU projects are neither contracts nor grants, but rather, cooperative agreements that are collaborative in design and execution, thereby requiring active participation by both the park unit and the university or institutional partner. Projects can be designed to address any physical, biological, social or cultural resource issue. Additionally, projects may be developed in phases as funding becomes available. Projects may involve multiple CESU partners.

The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) network is a partnership among 13 federal agencies, over 200 universities and 50 other nonfederal partners located throughout the country. This network is designed specifically to provide federal agencies with collaborative research, technical assistance, and education from universities and other institutional partners. CESUs provide a broad range of biological, physical, social, and cultural science expertise needed to address resource management and other park needs at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context. Further background information on the national CESU system can be obtained at <http://www.cesu.psu.edu/>

The CESU network encompasses 17 biogeographic units, four of which fall within the Pacific West Region (PWR). Each unit consists of a host university, additional institutional partners, and federal partners, all formally linked by a master cooperative agreement. The University of Washington (UW) hosts the Pacific Northwest CESU (PNW-CESU); The University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) hosts the Great Basin CESU (GB-CESU); The University of California (UC) hosts the Californian CESU (CA-CESU), with the UC Berkeley campus serving as the unit's administrative host; and the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) hosts the Hawaii-Pacific Islands CESU (HPI-CESU). Parks are able to use any of the 17 established CESUs, not just the CESU closest to their boundary.

The NPS has assigned a Research Coordinator to each CESU in the nation to facilitate and approve the unit's NPS agreements, strengthen ties between NPS and unit partners, and achieve the broad goals of the CESU network

outlined at the beginning of this memo. Dr. Angie Evenden is the CA-CESU Research Coordinator based at the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Chris Lauver based at the University of Washington is the PNW-CESU Research Coordinator and the Acting GB-CESU Research Coordinator. Dr. Darcy Hu is Acting Research Coordinator for the HPI-CESU. PWR CESU Program Assistant Linda Whitson provides administrative support to all four CESUs in the region. See Attachment 1 for specific CESU Research Coordinator and Program Assistant contact information and Attachment 2 for a list of PWR CESU universities and federal partners.

The CESU Task Agreement process is not overly complicated, given ample time (minimum of 45-60 days from Research Coordinator approval to obligation). Problems arise when inadequate time is allowed or appropriate procedures are not followed. New projects and modifications of existing projects need to be first reviewed and approved by the Research Coordinator. Once approved, projects are then routed to the PWR CESU Program Assistant and then on to the Division of Contracting and Procurement in Oakland for final approval and obligation.

Although you are strongly encouraged to submit projects earlier in the FY, to ensure obligation before the end of the fiscal year, all projects and associated purchase requests must be submitted to the PWR contracting office no later than **July 15, 2010** (this includes no-cost extensions needed by the end of the fiscal year). **In order to meet this deadline, please contact the CESU Research Coordinator well in advance of this date to develop the Task Agreement or modification, secure approval, and process the purchase request.**

CESU Projects involve multiple steps and engagement of a number of individuals. Steps for conducting a CESU project and associated roles and responsibilities are described in Attachment 3. Task Agreement and modification templates for the PNW-CESU, GB-CESU, CA-CESU and HPI-CESU may be obtained from the respective Research Coordinator. It is anticipated that these templates will be posted to a new PNW CESU webpage on Inside NPS sometime in January.

As a federal agency participant in the CESU network, NPS can establish cooperative projects with host universities or other institutional partners under very favorable negotiated terms, including a low indirect cost rate. Projects are implemented as Task Agreements using the master Cooperative Agreement that established each individual CESU. Task Agreements can be modified if additional funds become available or project plans change.

CESUs offer opportunities to expedite and expand research, technical assistance, and educational activities in parks. One of the CESUs great features is the ability to link students and university researchers directly with park professionals. CESU Research Coordinators can help your park or network identify these opportunities and suitable projects.

If you would like to use any of the CESUs, keep in mind the following:

- NPS and other participating federal agencies can initiate Task Agreements directly with the host universities, any of their other university partners, or other partner institutions.

- All CESU member universities and institutional partners have agreed to an indirect cost rate not to exceed 17.5% as established in the national CESU Agreement. Therefore, these charges must be incorporated in the total cost of the project and are non-negotiable.

- Under the CESU Cooperative Agreements, member federal agencies can obligate project funds to their university partners and partner institutions, but not directly to other federal agencies.

- CESU projects, as financial assistance legal instruments, require two elements: 1) where the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer a thing of value to the State, local government, or other recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation and 2) substantial involvement is expected between the executive agency and the recipient. If the principal purpose of a project is to acquire services for the direct benefit or use of the Federal Government, then a contract mechanism should be used. Cooperative Agreements must not be used to circumvent federal acquisition laws and regulations or to supplement park staffing.

With FY2011 underway, please let your Research Coordinator know of your interest in using the CESU this year. The Research Coordinators can work with you to fine-tune your project, ensure that it is appropriate for a

cooperative agreement, and if needed, seek university faculty with interest and expertise to match your project's needs. Once such a contact is made, and if the park has financial resources to support the project, then the CESU Cooperative Agreement can be utilized to meet your park priorities. I encourage you to consider CESU projects at scales beyond park boundaries, linking other parks and federal agency members with similar interests to create landscape scale projects that offer additional resource benefits and cost efficiencies.

I want to restate that CESU projects require advance planning. Talk with the Research Coordinators early and often. It is unlikely that the Research Coordinators will find appropriate academic partners or adequately review your highest priority projects without sufficient lead-time. Therefore, **submit your priority projects early to the Research Coordinators, even if a funding source has not yet been secured.** Your pre-approved priority projects then can move quickly through the system once a funding source has been identified. Waiting until June or July to consider using the CESUs places undue stress on research coordinators and contracting staff to complete and process large numbers of Task Agreements or modifications in the closing weeks of the fiscal year.

In closing, the CESU partnership provides PWR parks a special opportunity to access and apply the rich diversity of expertise and innovation of academic partners to collaborative projects that address important park needs. I encourage park staff to get to know the PWR CESU Research Coordinators and to explore with them opportunities to actively communicate NPS needs to academic partners and to expand park staff understanding of the available academic partner resources.

/s/ George J. Turnbull
(signed original on file)

(for)

Christine S. Lehnertz
Regional Director, Pacific West Region

Attachment (3)

cc: Baltodano, Lilette, Oakland-AP
Brinkley, Suzanne
Evenden, Angie, CA-CESU
Fish, Tom, WASO
Frost, Bert, WASO
Goldsmith, Jay, Oakland-NR
Graber, David, Oakland
Hu, Darcy, HPI-CESU
Johnson, Beth, WASO
Lauver, Chris, PNW-CESU and GB-CESU
Louter, David, Seattle-CR
Murray, Ray, Oakland
Sauvajot, Ray, Oakland - NR
Sherrill, Jamie, Oakland-AP
Tonnessen, Kathy, RM-CESU
Whitson, Linda, Seattle-NR

ATTACHMENT 1: CONTACT INFORMATION FOR NPS PACIFIC WEST REGION COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT RESEARCH COORDINATORS AND PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Pacific Northwest CESU

Dr. Chris Lauver, Research Coordinator
School of Forest Resources (Anderson Hall, Room 15)
Box 352100
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195
Voice: 206-685-7404
Fax: 206-685-0790
E-mail: chris_lauver@nps.gov
PNW-CESU Website: <http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.cesu/>

Great Basin CESU

Dr. Chris Lauver, Acting Research Coordinator
(See Contact Information for Pacific Northwest CESU)
GB-CESU Website: <http://www.ag.unr.edu/gbcesu/>

Californian CESU

Dr. Angie Evenden, Research Coordinator
Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management
137 Mulford Hall, MC#3114
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, CA 94720
Voice: 510-643-0665
E-mail: angela_evenden@nps.gov
CA-CESU Website: <http://nature.berkeley.edu/cesu/>

Hawaii-Pacific Islands CESU

Dr. Darcy Hu, Acting Research Coordinator
Pacific West Regional Office Honolulu
P.O. Box 52
Hawaii National Park, HI 96718-0052
Voice: 808-985-6092
Fax: 808-985-6029
Email: darcy_hu@nps.gov
H-PI CESU Website: <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/hpicesu/hicesu.htm>

Pacific West Region - CESU Program Assistant

Linda Whitson
National Park Service
Pacific West Region, Seattle
909 First Ave., Seattle, WA 98104
Voice: 206-220-4259
Fax: 206-220-4160
E-mail: linda_whitson@nps.gov

**ATTACHMENT 2: 2011 DIRECTORY OF UNIVERSITY, NGO AND FEDERAL PARTNERS
PACIFIC WEST REGION CESUs**

PWR CESU PARTNERS	Pacific NW CESU	Great Basin CESU	Californian CESU	Hawaii-Pacific Islands CESU
ALASKA				
University of Alaska-Anchorage	√			
University of Alaska-Southeast	√			
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game	√			
BRITISH COLUMBIA				
University of British Columbia	√			
CALIFORNIA				
University of California, Berkeley (host)			√	√
University of California, Davis			√	
University of California, Irvine			√	
University of California, Los Angeles			√	
University of California, Merced			√	
University of California, Riverside			√	
University of California, San Diego			√	
University of California, Santa Barbara			√	
University of California, Santa Cruz			√	
California State University, Channel Islands			√	
California State University, Chico			√	
California State University, Fresno		√	√	
California State University, Los Angeles			√	
California State University, Northridge			√	
California State University, San Luis Obispo			√	
Humboldt State University			√	
San Francisco State University			√	
White Mountain Research Station (UC San Diego)		√	√	
University of Redlands				√
Institute for Bird Populations			√	
HAWAII & PACIFIC ISLANDS				
University of Hawaii, Manoa (host)				√
University of Hawaii, Hilo				√
University of Hawaii, West Oahu				√
Hawaii Community College				√
Honolulu Community College				√
Kapiolani Community College				√
Kauai Community College				√
Leeward Community College				√
Maui Community College				√
Windward Community College				√
University of Guam				√
American Samoa Community College				√

PWR CESU PARTNERS	Pacific NW CESU	Great Basin CESU	Californian CESU	Hawaii-Pacific Islands CESU
HAWAII & PACIFIC ISLANDS (Continued)				
Bishop Museum				√
National Tropical Botanical Garden				√
Pacific International Center for High Technology Research				√
The Nature Conservancy, Hawaii				√
IDAHO				
University of Idaho	√	√		
Idaho State University		√		
Boise State University		√		
MINNESOTA				
St. Mary's University of Minnesota	√			
NEVADA				
University of Nevada, Reno (host)		√		
University of Nevada, Las Vegas		√		
Desert Research Institute		√		
Great Basin College		√		
OREGON				
Oregon State University	√	√		
University of Oregon	√			
Southern Oregon University	√			
Oregon Institute of Technology	√			
Portland State University	√			
TEXAS				
Texas A&M, Kingsville		√		
UTAH				
Utah State University		√		
University of Utah		√		
Brigham Young University		√		
VERMONT				
University of Vermont	√			
WASHINGTON				
University of Washington (host)	√			
Eastern Washington University	√			
Washington State University	√			
Western Washington University	√			
Central Washington University	√			
Heritage University	√			

PWR CESU PARTNERS	Pacific NW CESU	Great Basin CESU	Californian CESU	Hawaii-Pacific Islands CESU
FEDERAL PARTNERS				
NPS	√	√	√	√
BLM	√	√	√	√
USGS	√	√	√	√
USFS	√	√	√	√
USFWS	√	√	√	√
USBR	√	√	√	
NOAA	√		√	√
NRCS	√	√	√	√
MMS	√			
USDA-ARS		√		
NASA			√	
DoD, Installations and Environment			√	√
US Army Corps of Army Engineers	√			√

ATTACHMENT 3: Brief of Administrative Steps for Processing PWR CESU Task Agreements and Modifications

1. ***Start Early!*** The steps for establishing a CESU project agreement, outlined below, involve multiple parties and may be very time consuming. Please allow sufficient time for working with your CESU Research Coordinator (RC) and note that the Oakland Contracting office requires 45-60 days minimum to process agreement actions.
2. ***Contact CESU NPS Research Coordinator.*** NPS staff or the Agreement Technical Representative (ATR) notifies the CESU RC of intent to develop a new task agreement (TA), or a modification (MOD) to an existing TA at the earliest possible date. For a new TA, the ATR discusses the project with the CESU coordinator to make sure it's appropriate for the CESU program, including how NPS will be substantially involved (or collaborate) in the project.
3. ***Prepare and Submit IAGP.*** For all anticipated CESU actions, the ATR submits an Individual Agreement Plan (IAGP; available at the PWR Contracting site or from CESU RCs) to the network Major Buying Office (MABO) for review and assignment of an IAGP number. The MABO then sends the IAGP to PWR Contracting to allow that office to plan its workload. For all new TAs, include a draft of page two of the IAGP, Documentation for Use of a Cooperative Agreement (also called the substantial involvement documentation form, or SID form). The SID form is not required for modifications.
4. ***Prepare Draft Task Agreement.*** To draft a new TA, the ATR gets the CESU TA template from either the RC or the PWR web site. The ATR drafts the TA (with help from the university principal investigator or PI), and returns it and the draft SID form (page 2 of the IAGP) to the RC. In drafting the TA, please establish a realistic schedule for the project that avoids unnecessary modifications for date extensions later on and include a detailed itemized budget with a (maximum) 17.5% CESU indirect cost rate. The maximum life span of any TA is 5 years from its effective start date (that is, a minimum of 45-60 days after step 7, date of CESU approval).
5. ***Prepare Draft Modification to Existing TA.*** To draft a TA modification, the ATR gets the MOD template from the RC (or the PWR web site) and submits it back to the RC when completed. For MODs that add new funds to the TA, the MOD must contain an itemized budget (with a 17.5% indirect cost rate) for those new funds only (if not included in the original TA). MODs are also used to extend the project end date, change the ATR, or any other change in the terms and conditions.
6. ***Obtain CESU Review.*** The CESU RC reviews the TA/MOD, adds in the TA# (except for HPI CESU) and makes other edits or suggestions to improve the TA or SID form. The RC then sends these edits and other comments back to the ATR for needed corrections and approval of RC edits.
7. ***CESU Approval.*** Once a final version of the TA/MOD is agreed to, the CESU RC will send an approval email to the ATR and Linda Whitson (PWR CESU Program Assistant), with the approved TA and SID form or MOD attached and instructions for processing the purchase request (PR).
8. ***Create Purchase Request.*** Upon receiving CESU RC approval the park or unit needs to create a PR for the amount of the funds in the TA/MOD, and route the PR via IDEAS to Linda Whitson in Seattle with supervisory and budget approvals. Attach a copy of the approved TA/MOD to the PR (except for HPI CESU). No-cost modifications also require PRs. The ATR is responsible for ensuring that the PR gets to Linda in a timely manner. The ATR should contact the PI at this time to suggest the PI initiate internal university agreement review procedures.
9. ***Action Forwarded to Oakland Contracting Office.*** Linda reviews the TA/MOD and makes additional changes if needed. She then attaches her final version to the PR, and routes it to PWR Oakland for final approval and obligation. Linda will send an email notification to the RC and ATR when the action is forwarded to Oakland for final processing.
10. ***Action Finalized by Oakland Contracting Office and University.*** Lilette Baltodano, Contracting Officer, reviews and (hopefully) approves the TA/MOD, and then sends TA/MOD by email to the university sponsored projects office for its signature. The ATR and CESU RC are copied on this email. The signature page of the TA/MOD is signed by the university and returned to Lilette. She then signs for NPS and obligates the funding. Lilette sends a pdf copy of the fully executed TA/MOD to the ATR and the CESU RC when signatures are complete. Note: The PWR Oakland Contracting office requests 45-60 days to complete these steps.

Key to Acronyms:

ATR	Agreement Technical Representative
CESU	Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
IAGP	Individual Agreement Plan
IDEAS	Interior Department Electronic Acquisition System
MABO	Major Acquisition Buying Office
MOD	Modification (to a Task Agreement)
NPS	National Park Service
PR	Purchase Request
PWR	Pacific West Region
RC	Research Coordinator
SID	Substantial Involvement Documentation
TA	Task Agreement