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**National Park Service  
Pacific West Region  
333 Bush Street, Suite500  
San Francisco, CA 94709**

N2219 (PWRO-P)

January 24, 2012

Memorandum

To: PWR Superintendents and PWR Management Team  
Attn: Resource Chiefs, I&M Coordinators, CRAC, NRAC, IRAC, 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 Deadlines: June 29, 2012 to CESU Research Coordinators and July 16, 2012 to Regional Contracting

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 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, non-governmental organization (NGO) 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 San Francisco 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 16, 2012** (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. Draft Task Agreements and modifications must be received by the CESU Research Coordinators no later than **June 29, 2012** in order to meet the mid-July regional deadline. If you are a new ATR or your project is complex please contact the CESU Research Coordinator well ahead of this deadline.

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. Please review the steps document carefully as procedures have changed this year. Task Agreement and modification templates for the PNW-CESU, GB-CESU, CA-CESU and HPI-CESU may be obtained from the respective Research Coordinator or on the [PWR CESU Sharepoint Site](#).

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 may 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 FY2012 underway, please let your Research Coordinator know as soon as possible 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 be able to 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.

Parks and programs wanting to use the CESU must complete an Individual Agreement Plan (IAGP) Form on the new [PWR IAGP Webpage](#). This form is to be completed for all Task Agreement and modification actions regardless of dollar value.

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/ Christine S. Lehnertz  
(signed original on file)

Christine S. Lehnertz

Attachment (3)

cc: Baltodano, Lilette, SF-AP  
Evenden, Angie, CA-CESU  
Fish, Tom, WASO  
Forbes, Sheri, SF  
Frost, Bert, WASO  
Giammo, Maxine, SF-AP  
Goldsmith, Jay, SF-NR  
Graber, David, SF  
Guillory, Leo, SF  
Hu, Darcy, HPI-CESU  
Johnson, Beth, WASO  
Lauver, Chris, PNW-CESU and GB-CESU  
Louter, David, Seattle-CR  
Murray, Ray, SF  
Reed, Cameron, SF-AP  
Sauvajot, Ray, SF - NR  
Sherrill, Jamie, SF-AP

Watkins, Tim, WASO 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 Environmental and Forest Sciences (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](mailto: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](mailto:angela_evenden@nps.gov)  
CA-CESU Website: <http://nature.berkeley.edu/cesu/>

***Hawaii-Pacific Islands CESU***

Dr. Darcy Hu, Research Coordinator  
Pacific West Regional Office  
P.O. Box 52  
Hawaii National Park, HI 96718-0052  
Voice: 808-985-6092  
Fax: 808-985-6029  
Email: [darcy\\_hu@nps.gov](mailto: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](mailto:linda_whitson@nps.gov)

**ATTACHMENT 2: 2012 DIRECTORY OF UNIVERSITY, STATE, NGO AND FEDERAL PARTNERS --PACIFIC WEST REGION CESUs**

<b>PWR CESU PARTNERS</b>	<b>Pacific NW CESU</b>	<b>Great Basin CESU</b>	<b>Californian CESU</b>	<b>Hawaii-Pacific Islands CESU</b>
<b>ALASKA</b>				
University of Alaska-Anchorage	√			
University of Alaska-Southeast	√			
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game	√			
<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA</b>				
University of British Columbia	√			
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>				
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 Diego State University			√	
San Francisco State University			√	
White Mountain Research Station (UC San Diego)		√	√	
University of Redlands				√
California Department of Fish & Game			√	
Institute for Bird Populations			√	
Institute for Wildlife Studies			√	
<b>HAWAII &amp; PACIFIC ISLANDS</b>				
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				√
University of Hawai'i Maui College				√
Windward Community College				√
University of Guam				√
American Samoa Community College				√

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

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

### **ATTACHMENT 3: Administrative Steps for Processing PWR CESU Task Agreements and Modifications**

1. ***Start Early!*** The steps for establishing a CESU 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 San Francisco 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 is appropriate for the CESU program, including how NPS will be substantially involved in the project.
3. ***Confirm ATR Certification.*** Check the [NPS National ATR Certification Database](#) maintained by WASO to ensure that certification is current. ATRs must have completed required 24-hour ATR training or 8-hour re-certification training within the last 3 years AND be registered in national database.
4. ***Prepare and Submit IAGP.*** For all anticipated CESU TA and MOD actions, the ATR or other project manager completes an Individual Agreement Plan (IAGP) on the [PWR Contracting Sharepoint Site](#), identifying PWRO-San Francisco as the Major Buying Office (MABO). The MABO Lead then reviews and assigns the action to an Agreement Specialist. Please review the IAGP instructions on the SharePoint site before completing the form (and do not submit paper versions of the IAGP, Documentation for Use of a Cooperative Agreement, or Substantial Involvement Documentation). In filling out the IAGP, please provide a thorough response for the single source justification question which will be used in the “Notice of Intent (NOI) - Single Source Justification” document (see below).
5. ***Obtain TA, MOD and NOI templates.*** Templates can be obtained from the CESU Research Coordinator or the [PWR CESU Sharepoint site](#).
6. ***Prepare Draft Task Agreement.*** For new TAs, the ATR uses the CESU TA template and drafts the TA with help from the cooperating principal investigator (PI). In drafting the TA, please: a) establish a realistic schedule for the project that avoids unnecessary modifications for date extensions later on, and b) 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.
7. ***Prepare Draft Notice of Intent (only for new TAs exceeding \$25K).*** The ATR and RC will prepare the initial draft using the NOI template. Note: The draft NOI will be submitted to region as part of the final task agreement package. The PWR contracting office will then post to the Grants.gov website for transparency purposes.
8. ***Prepare Draft Modification to Existing TA.*** The ATR uses the MOD template to prepare a draft modification with input from the PI. 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. MODs may also be used to extend the project end date, change the ATR, or any other change in the terms and conditions.
9. ***Obtain CESU RC Review.*** The RC reviews the draft TA or MOD and the NOI (new TAs >\$25K only), and may make edits or suggested changes to improve the documents. The RC and ATR communicate back and forth until both parties approve the documents.
10. ***Initiate University Internal Review Process.*** ATR works with university PI to ensure that the initial departmental proposal and budget review is completed at the time the final TA or MOD package is submitted to the CESU RC for approval. **Please note: the university does not sign the TA/MOD at this time**—the final TA or MOD will be prepared for signature and transmitted directly to the university by the NPS PWR Contracting Office as part of Step 14 (below).
11. ***CESU Approval.*** Once a final version of the TA or MOD is agreed to by all parties, the CESU RC sends an approval email to the ATR and Linda Whitson (PWR CESU Program Assistant), with the approved TA and NOI, or MOD, attached and instructions for processing the purchase request (PR).
12. ***Create Purchase Request (PR).*** Upon receiving CESU RC approval, the park or unit creates a PR for the amount of the funds in the TA or MOD and routes the PR via IDEAS to Linda Whitson in Seattle with supervisory and budget approvals. Attach a copy of the approved TA and NOI, or MOD, to the PR. Include the IAGP number on the comments section of the PR so the contracting office can match the two documents. No-cost modifications also

require PRs. The ATR is responsible for ensuring that the PR gets to Linda in a timely manner. Linda cannot complete step 13 below until she has a PR for the TA or MOD.

13. **Action Forwarded to San Francisco Contracting Office.** Linda reviews the TA or MOD and makes additional changes if needed. She then attaches her final version to the PR and routes it to PWRO-San Francisco for final approval and obligation. Linda will notify the RC and ATR when the action is forwarded to San Francisco for final processing. Her email will include both the PR and IAGP numbers for reference and an updated copy of the TA or MOD when additional edits have been made.
14. **Action Finalized by San Francisco Contracting Office and University.** The PR package is reviewed by the assigned Agreement Specialist, who edits and finalizes the TA or MOD and posts the NOI to Grants.gov for the TA. The Agreement Specialist assigns the TA number. The ATR and CESU RC are copied when the TA or MOD is emailed to the university sponsored projects office for signature. The signature page of the TA or MOD is signed first by the university, then by the NPS. Contracting personnel obligate the funding and send a pdf copy of the fully executed TA or MOD to the ATR and the CESU RC when signatures are complete. **Note: The PWRO-San Francisco Contracting office requests 45-60 days to complete steps 13 and 14.**

**Pacific West Region Contracting and CESU Web Resources:**

PWR Contracting Webpage (sharepoint): <http://inpniscsfern1:8000/sites/PWR/pwrcontracting/SitePages/Home.aspx>  
 PWR CESU Sharepoint Site: <http://inpniscsfern1:8000/sites/PWR/PWRCoopecostudyunit/default.aspx>  
 WASO ATR Database: <http://wcp.den.nps.gov/Policy-Program/FedFinAssist/atrc.htm>

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)
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPS	National Park Service
PR	Purchase Request
PWR	Pacific West Region
RC	Research Coordinator
TA	Task Agreement