

2009 Pacific Northwest CESU Annual Meeting  
Executive & Managers Committee meeting  
University of Washington  
October 28, 2009

SUMMARY

**Introductions and welcome**

Gordon Bradley, PNW CESU Co-leader and Professor, School of Forest Resources (SFR), University of Washington (UW), opened the meeting by asking participants to introduce themselves, and then he reviewed the meeting agenda.

Steve West, Interim Associate Director for SFR, also welcomed the participants and reviewed recent changes affecting SFR, which hosts the PNW CESU on behalf of UW. In June 2009, University of Washington established the College of the Environment (CoEnv). The former College of Forest Resources became the School of Forest Resources as a new unit in the College of the Environment. West stressed that collaboration is vital to SFR, and the PNW CESU provides important funding to our University and state partners, including important SFR projects (see <http://www.cfr.washington.edu/> for more information on the School of Forest Resources).

Dennis Hartmann, Interim Dean (CoEnv, UW) reviewed the development of the College of the Environment and its units, noting it is the fourth largest college at UW. (For more information on the college, see <http://coenv.washington.edu/>.) CoEnv seeks to engage with UW colleges, and the wider external community, through its Environmental Institute (see [http://coenv.washington.edu/centers/environmental\\_institute.shtml](http://coenv.washington.edu/centers/environmental_institute.shtml)).

**Review of FY09 activity**

Chris Lauver, PNW CESU Co-leader and Research Coordinator, National Park Service (NPS), presented a review of PNW CESU activity for the past fiscal year. Information included recent staff changes, numbers of new projects and total funding by agency, projects and funding by university/state partner, NPS projects by discipline (biological, cultural, physical, social, interdisciplinary), examples of NPS projects, and a partial list of projects for other agencies. Lauver also reviewed some FY09 issues and, in particular, mentioned that the NPS Contracting Office (CO) for the Pacific West Region is currently denying task agreements with non-US partners (i.e., the University of British Columbia in this unit). The NPS regional CO is requesting further information on the Dept. of Interior authority to process financial assistance agreements with non-US partners. Several parties are working on the resolution of this issue at both the regional and national levels (including Tom Fish, National Coordinator, CESU Network). See the presentation on PNW CESU FY09 activity at <http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.cesu/admin.htm>

Several activities are already planned for FY10. The PNW CESU master cooperative and joint venture agreement expires in October 2010. The program is preparing to participate in the five-year renewal process, which entails a self-assessment by the host university, and a manager's

review. The unit is currently revising the strategic plan as part of the self-assessment. Another activity planned for FY10 is a new edition of *Cooperative Ventures*, the PNW CSU newsletter. Bill McLaughlin, University of Idaho, suggested that the newsletter be distributed in an electronic version. Also, unit staff would like to make improvements to the program web site by adding how-to documents from other agencies for developing and processing cooperative and joint venture agreements.

### **National CESU update**

Tom Fish, National Coordinator, CESU Network, reviewed national CESU activity with his presentation: *The way forward with the CESU Network—New collaborations and new directions*. The presentation opened with a history of the CESU program, a review of current and new partners, and a note that the program map is currently being revised. At present there are 13 federal agency partners, and NOAA is the newest. Potential new partners are USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA Risk Management, and Environmental Protection Agency.

As part of the ten-year program evaluation and project inventory, the National CESU office is developing a geo-referenced project database that captures and disseminates vital statistics, periodic needs, and an assessment and evaluation. Other endeavors currently underway are:

- Revising the ten-year strategic plan
- Writing an administrative history
- Developing an administrative handbook that will be dynamic and web-based to point users to appropriate, agency-based information and virtual resources.
- Building support for a CESU national office fellowship
- Building awareness and information products for outreach and inreach by the CESU communications committee
- Enhancing the national CESU network web site to better reflect the breadth of the program. Enhancements will include posting templates to facilitate branding and a new logo (the logo competition is in progress)

The 2010 CESU network national meeting will likely be held in the Washington DC area. Fish is interested in themes that reflect initiatives of the new administration, such as sustainability.

Preliminary data for the ten-year assessment includes information on 3,698 projects reported by ten CESUs. The distribution by discipline is natural science 64%, social 6%, cultural 17%, and interdisciplinary 13%.

In revising the ten-year strategic plan, Fish would like to incorporate language of the day into the mission statement. Using a logic-model approach, the plan could include situation, inputs, outputs and outcomes. It could then be used for program development and evaluation.

There are expanding opportunities from new executive orders, the Government Accountability Office report on climate change, and the Department of Interior Secretarial Order on climate change.

Fish presented examples of multi-partner projects, and then conducted a discussion of the

funding issue with international partners introduced previously. Fish is working with a Law Center to research this issue to locate departmental authorities to conduct CESU business.

#### General Q&A

- With respect to contracting issues, there was a question about refusal of key personnel at a university partner to allow researchers to participate in CESU projects due to the reduced overhead rate of 17.5%. Bill McLaughlin commented on a developing approach at UI regarding a determination of the extent of collaboration (e.g., fully collaborative efforts qualify for the 17.5% rate; efforts deemed not to be collaborative may be subject to higher or standard university overhead rates). USACE, for example, has several types of funding mechanisms in place at a single university to accommodate different types of projects. Substantial involvement is the federal definition for financial assistance (or cooperative) agreements. This involvement is not explicitly required, but is commonly viewed as such by agencies' contracting offices.
- Regarding the application and approval process for new CESU partners, is it appropriate for one partner to have what amounts to veto power of a new applicant? Tom Fish acknowledged that the application process is not always transparent, and said that an agenda item for the national federal managers committee meeting will be a discussion of uniformity on this issue across the CESUs.
- Is there a standard method of performance assessment at the end of a project? No, each agency can develop their assessment; the CESU does not provide one.
- How do federal partners exercise the education and training aspect? It varies by project and agency.

#### Review of strategic plan

Gordon Bradley reviewed the draft of the revised strategic plan (see the document at <http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.cesu/admin.htm>). Bradley posed the following questions about the plan:

- In light of the previous discussion regarding lack of transparency in the process, do we need to add language in the Admission Decisions section?
- Might this also be true regarding the application process and evaluation of application materials?
- Do we need new language in the section on Expected level of agency/partner participation to address nonparticipating members?

Brief discussion occurred on these issues, with the general consensus that our unit would follow the national CESU's recommendations.

Bradley discussed the PNW CESU's past efforts to recruit tribal colleges and institutions as minority partners. He also noted that non-university research organizations could be considered for partnership. The USFS office of tribal relations would like to use the CESU mechanism but needs to better understand how USFS uses the CESUs—for research only or also for management, which would include tribal relations.

Lauver discussed possible procedural and formatting changes to the strategic plan. He suggested inserting strategic directions and themes, and revising the outline. Lauver suggested forming a

strategic planning committee to draft revisions for the plan, and said the timeline could either be short-term (completing revisions by January 2010 in time for the five-year renewal process) or longer term (ca. 6-12 months). During the meeting wrap-up discussion, Bill McLaughlin, University of Idaho, volunteered to be on the strategic planning committee.

### **Review of FY05-FY09 activity and discussion of five-year renewal process**

Gordon Bradley reviewed the past ten years' activity with emphasis on the five-year renewal period, FY05 through FY09. The self-assessment is based on questions issued by the national office. Questions fall under four general criteria for evaluation:

- (1) Were the formal commitments identified in the CESU agreement (and amendments) fulfilled?
- (2) Were the projects successfully completed, and was there effective delivery of relevant and high quality project results to managers, consistent with the mission of the CESU?
- (3) Was there involvement of the partner institutions as appropriate in the activities and projects of the CESU?
- (4) Did the CESU facilitate collaboration and substantial involvement among its federal agency partners?

To see a copy of the draft self-assessment report, go to <http://www.cfr.washington.edu/research.cesu/admin.htm>

During the meeting wrap-up discussion, Lauver outlined steps in the renewal process. The managers committee circulates the self-assessment report for review and comment among the agency partners, and then prepares their review. The manager's review is usually led by two agency representatives. Lauver for NPS and Linda Nelson or Al Cofrancesco for USACE volunteered to take the lead. Also, the managers committee must identify one to three external reviewers, and Lauver mentioned that he has a couple of ideas for reviewers, and will follow-up with both of these activities with the agencies.

Discussion followed of how agency partners can disseminate information on project needs to university and state partners, and how to achieve more equal distribution of projects and funds among university and state partners. Fish recommended posting on the CESU national web site. Also, agencies can post project needs on grants.gov and specify in the eligibility line that applicants must be a PNW CESU partner. Agencies can distribute project announcements to the PNW CESU partners only by using a single-source justification. National Park Service has a best-practices document on how to solicit participation. Distribution procedures also depend on agency competition requirements. Bureau of Land Management is moving toward competitive grants and away from single sourcing. The Pacific Northwest region of Bureau of Reclamation was recently given wider latitude on using single-source justification. Natural Resources Conservation Service has no competition requirement.

### **Discussion of federal agency research, technical assistance, and educational needs**

Federal agency representatives in attendance presented their respective agencies' needs for research, technical assistance and education. Agencies without representatives at the meeting sent in written needs statements previously (see also agency needs statements starting on page 8).

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would like assistance in organizing and structuring research needs (BLM does not have a research branch, but does have a science services unit). They would like to use the CESU in the capacity of a research branch. Any university partner can submit a three-page proposal to any state office describing a research gap and how the proposal can fill that gap. Other needs include BLM staff education & training, implementing the Northwest Forest Plan, inventory and monitoring, and social issues.

Minerals Management Service (MMS) expedites safe energy resource exploration and development on the outer continental shelf, as stated in the agency's mission. The Environmental Studies Program funds research to provide information about potential impacts of oil and gas activities on the marine, coastal, and nearshore environment. Renewable energy sources are also included in the agency's offshore jurisdiction. This is a new focus and is being developed more actively on the east coast. In Alaska, needs related to renewable energy are still undergoing definition. Physical oceanography is one of the priorities in Alaska. The Alaska region has \$12,000,000 funding distributed to 50-60 projects that typically last five years. The region does collaborative programming with the National Oceanographic Partnership Program, US Geological Survey, and Alaska state universities. MMS produces an annual studies plan with descriptions of current and planned projects. The website is < <http://www.mms.gov/alaska/ess/index.htm>>. The annual deadline for public input on potential new studies is mid November. MMS also accepts unsolicited proposals, but the review process is more stringent.

National Park Service (NPS) stresses a variety of needs given the complex and varied resources and management needs. In addition to the needs listed in the written statement, NPS is interested in climate change impacts and developing adaptation strategies for both natural and cultural resources, staff training in restoration ecology, and increasing workforce strength and diversity at the university level to train future resource managers and scientists. Also of particular interest are inventory and monitoring protocol methods, trend analysis of monitoring data for individual and integrated vital signs, articulation and identification of research and data needs, and peer review.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries has six science centers that conduct basic research to support the management arm. Fisheries research needs are marine fisheries ecosystems, coastal ecosystems, species and habitats at risk, recovery research, monitoring of stock status, biodiversity, climate change, wave energy, dam passage (Open Rivers program), quantitative aspects, salmon, and marine mammals.

### **Highlighted PNW CESU projects**

Presentations on NPS projects provided a sample of the work conducted under the PNW CESU cooperative and joint venture agreement:

1. Learning while doing: problem-based learning and Natural Resource Condition Assessments, Jon Bakker, School of Forest Resources, University of Washington

2. Human and environmental dynamics at Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Shelby Anderson and Adam Freeburg, Anthropology Department, University of Washington
3. Connecting theory and applied science in natural resource CESU projects, Regina Rochefort, North Cascades National Park Complex, National Park Service
4. Unexpected (good) outcomes of CESU projects, Dave Louter, Pacific West Region, National Park Service

### **Discussion of agency needs and university partner strengths**

Discussion of the issue of multi-agency projects and mechanisms needed to distribute funds from more than one agency partner so that one agency does not have to pay overhead to another.

With upcoming PNW CESU renewal, is it time to raise the overhead rate a bit?

US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has district offices within the PNW CESU region located in Seattle, Portland, Walla Walla, Alaska, and Sacramento. To date, the USACE has funded 26 CESU project actions equaling more than \$2,000,000 through 7 different CESU networks. \$1.8 million of this total are from projects funded through various USACE District offices while the remainder represents projects funded through research programs managed by the Engineer Research and Development Center, Environmental Laboratory. To date, there has been interest, but no funded actions through the PNW CESU. USACE has disseminated information about CESUs through webinars for district and division staff, meetings for districts and divisions, and through the USACE Gateway website, which is an internal website for districts and divisions. Sample projects funded through the CESU network include invasive species, threatened and endangered species, and cultural affiliation studies for NAGPPA. Research projects are administered through the Engineer Research & Development Center (ERDC), Environmental Laboratory office. There is no authority to initiate them at the Corps District level. A district pays ERDC a small fee (5%) to process a CESU project.

Heritage University is a minority institution with a student enrollment that is 60% Hispanic and 10% Native American. In general, funding isn't the issue. Heritage doesn't do much research and doesn't have a lot of science majors due to educational deficits from high school. Many of the students are place-bound; that is, they are culturally bound to stay in the Yakima area in their communities and traveling away for educational programs is difficult. There are serious environmental problems and environmental health issues in Yakima County due to environmental injustice. This is a complex social/economic/environmental situation. Heritage would like to see the US Environmental Protection Agency join the CESU network; this could facilitate joint EPA-Heritage projects to address some of these issues.

University of Idaho's College of Natural Resources is moving toward three general foci: terrestrial ecology, aquatic ecology, and human systems dynamics (process orientation). Twenty two percent of the faculty are new within the last three years. At the university level, there are four major thrusts of research: water energy, evolving (urban) landscapes, SciTechEngineerMath (STEM) education, and evolutionary biology. Another focus is the new NSF EPSCoR climate change project involving all higher educational schools in Idaho. An additional strength is

building sustainable communities (an interdisciplinary initiative). The university has a strong commitment to service learning.

NOAA Fisheries would like to be the agency *du jour* for climate change. NOAA has eight line offices and is considering a ninth that would deal with climate change. Fisheries is interested in long-term monitoring, and would like to see a program on the west side ocean river, like Umpqua river, Rogue river, high interior Idaho, John Day river, or Puget Sound (intensively monitored watersheds). What about the Yakima area and a Heritage partnership? Wenatchee?

University of British Columbia includes three relevant groups: Environment Canada that does scenario testing for climate change; forest resources; and economic policy.

Southern Oregon University has a strong environmental studies program. Due to budget cuts, a re-organization coalesced various environmental programs into an environmental center, creating the new department of environmental sciences. The graduate program emphasizes interdisciplinary research and a new field station. The NPS Klamath I&M Network is housed on the SOU campus.

University of Washington is very strong in numerous research areas (e.g., forests, marine/coastal, climate change impacts, etc.) including salmon or fisheries research. Also see the welcoming remarks by Steve West and Dennis Hartmann (page 1).

USFWS is initiating the Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) program, a conservation science partnership that is a new organizational model that will involve other Department of Interior agencies. It is similar to the CESU model. CESUs can offer to facilitate LCC work through the CESU mechanism.

#### Meeting wrap-up

After some discussion there was consensus that the next meeting will be held in the spring of 2010.

#### Action Item

Lauver agreed to email Department of Interior Secretarial Order No. 3289, dated Sept. 14, 2009, subject: addressing the impacts of climate change on America's water, land, and other natural and cultural resources.

## Ongoing Research, Technical Assistance and Education Needs of Agency Partners

### Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

#### Research

- Species and habitats at risk
- Aquatic/riparian systems
- Reclamation of damaged lands
- Young forest stand biodiversity for Northwest Forest Plan
- Human dimensions (e.g., fire and the rural interface)
- Research and data management system to address litigation and public values

#### Technical assistance and education

- Continuing education opportunities (e.g., short courses to advanced degree work)
- Technical transfer and exchange of new science information
- Applications of new science and technology in resource management activities (e.g., application of landscape modeling systems for BLM forest lands in Northwest Forest Plan)

### Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

#### Research

- influence of Northwest water and hydropower projects on ESA listed aquatic and terrestrial species
- effects of removing migration barriers, screening water diversions, and increasing or improving flow regimes
- access to disciplines that are unique or in short supply

#### Technical assistance and education

- technical transfer and exchange of new science information
- developing collaborative relationships with other public agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations
- continuing education opportunities

### Minerals Management Service (MMS)

#### Research

- Physical Oceanography
- Endangered and Protected Species
- Socio-economics
- Oil Spill Fate and Effects
- Monitoring

#### Technical outreach and education

- Technical transfer and exchange of new science information
- MMS Ocean Science: The Science and Technology Journal of the Minerals Management Service (bi-monthly)



## National Park Service (NPS)

### Research

- Strengthen partnerships with the academic and scientific communities to promote research that enhances the management of protected natural areas and heritage sites
- Developing more collaborations with agency and university partners (projects, expert workshops, etc.) to define science and planning needs in response to climate change
- Developing adaptation strategies for coping with climate change
- Research and training in conservation of global species and environmental pollution
- Developing interagency interdisciplinary research, technical assistance, and education programs that integrate cultural and natural resource concerns and that provide avenues of communication between disciplines.

### Technical assistance

- Developing efficient ways to monitor the vital signs of natural systems
- Developing effective ways of sharing natural system monitoring information so that these data are useful to the surrounding agencies and communities outside the parks
- Training in restoration ecology

## Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

NRCS' interests are focused on natural resources that form the foundation for healthy lands. NRCS seeks technical assistance, research, and education in the following areas:

- **Soil Quality:** The quality of intensively used soils is maintained or enhanced to enable sustained production of a safe, healthy, and abundant food supply.
- **Water Quality:** The quality of surface and groundwater is improved and maintained to protect human health, support a healthy environment and encourage a productive landscape.
- **Water Management:** Water is conserved and protected to ensure an abundant and a reliable supply for the nation.
- **Grassland, Rangeland and Forest Ecosystems:** Grassland, Rangeland, and Forestlands are productive, diverse and resilient.
- **Fish and Wildlife Habitat:** Working lands and waters provide habitat for diverse and healthy wildlife, aquatic species, and plant communities.
- **Wetlands:** Provide quality habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, protect water quality, and reduce flood damages.
- **Clean Air:** Agriculture makes a positive contribution to local air quality and the nation's effort to sequester carbon.
- **Energy:** Agriculture activities conserve energy and agricultural lands are a source of environmentally sustainable bio fuels and renewable energy.
- **Working Farm and Ranch Lands:** Connected landscapes sustain a viable agricultural and natural resource quality.

## US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Technical assistance related to the Corps of Engineers research and development areas of navigation, flood and coastal storm damage reduction, and ecosystem restoration.

Detailed topics of interest to the Corps of Engineers are:

- Ecosystem Restoration
- Ecosystem Evaluation and Modeling
- Environmental Risk Assessment
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Recreations Resources Management
- Invasive Species
- Impacts of Cold
- Water Quality
- Sediment Management
- Wetlands
- Information Systems
- Dredging/Dredged Material Disposal
- Dam Removal

### US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

#### Research

- Analysis of impacts, and associated uncertainties, of climate change on species and habitats managed by USFWS; associated effects of varied management strategies, viable mitigation options, and tools for evaluating effectiveness
- Information to close gaps in understanding of the life histories, habitat needs, and vulnerabilities of imperiled trust species under the jurisdiction of USFWS, as well as information that can evaluate and refine associated management strategies.
- Evaluation data, and new evaluation tools, regarding the effectiveness of fish and wildlife conservation and restoration programs on USFWS lands and/or conducted by partners with USFWS support, including education and visitor services.

#### Education and coordination aspects

- Strong base of students with interest in the Student Career Experience Program (and other federal recruitment mechanisms) who can enhance the diversity of the USFWS professional workforce and also have training in areas of FWS jurisdiction or concern (climate change, freshwater/anadromous fish, GIS applications, migratory bird ecology, habitat and watershed ecology, wetland/riparian management, land management techniques, public/private partnerships, fish health/genetics/ physiology, conservation law)
- Collaboration in the selection and design of research/educational projects
- Access to an array of research capabilities with reasonable overhead rates
- Cooperation in the development and distribution of conservation outreach materials (consistent with first two bulleted points)
- Technical assistance to enable FWS personnel to know what capabilities are available and how to access them within the CESU partnership

### US Forest Service (USFS )

The Northwest Forest Service Center's main scientific goal is to provide robust scientific information supporting the effective management of marine, coastal and diadromous living marine resources. The Center conducts a wide range of research that includes scientific

disciplines from physiology to stock assessment to geomorphology. Likely areas for which NWFSC would seek partnerships include:

#### Research

- Ecological research supporting ecosystem approaches to management of marine and coastal systems, with a particular focus on fisheries and imperiled species
- Socioeconomic research aimed at ecosystem service valuation, community descriptions, etc.
- Development of novel sampling technology and techniques
- Investigations of impacts of marine, estuarine and coastal systems, and condition on human health and well-being

#### Technical assistance and education

- Continuing education opportunities (workshops and short courses to advanced degree work)
- Technical transfer and exchange of novel technologies, information and research approaches.

#### US Geological Survey (USGS)

- Understand ecosystems and predict ecosystem change: ensure the nation's economic and environmental future
- Climate variability and change: clarify the record and assess consequences
- Energy and minerals for America's future: provide a scientific foundation for resource security, environmental health, economic vitality, and land management
- A national hazards, risk and resilience assessment program: ensure the long-term health and wealth of the nation
- The role of environment and wildlife in human health: a system that identifies environmental risk to public health in America
- A water census of the United States: quantifying, forecasting, and securing freshwater for America's future