



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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To: AFOs

From: State Director

Subject: Establishment of the *Californian* Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU)

The Cooperative Agreement for the *Californian* CESU was recently signed by all charter members and this CESU is now up and running. The host university for the *Californian* CESU is the University of California. The administrative host campus is UC Berkeley; however all nine UC campuses are participating institutions. Three California State University campuses are also partner institutions: San Francisco State University, California State University Fresno, and California State University Los Angeles. Other charter members of the *Californian* CESU include BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, US Geological Survey, USDA Forest Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

CESUs were first established at selected educational institutions in the late 1990's to provide research, technical assistance, and education to Federal land management, environmental and research agencies, and their partners. With the establishment of the *Californian* CESU, and those recently proposed for four other biogeographic regions, the CESU network will be complete and will include over 130 university, Federal, State, tribal, and non-governmental partners. Attachment 1 shows the CESU network as of October 2002, and lists partner organizations for the different CESUs.

The Cooperative Agreement for the *Californian* CESU (copy attached) allows participating Federal agencies to transfer funds and duty-station employees at participating university institutions. A significant advantage to Federal agencies of having contract work performed through a CESU is that participating university institutions have agreed to accept an indirect overhead rate of 15% of total direct costs for activities conducted through the CESU program.¹ (See Attachment 2.) Subcontracting and transfer of funds to other CESU partners occurs without any charge above the base overhead rate.

¹The CESU Council recently approved an increase in the indirect cost rate from 15% to 17.5%. This rate will take effect on May 1, 2004.

As shown in Attachment 1, the *Californian* CESU is entirely within the State of California. However, it does not encompass the entire State. Portions of California overlap with the biogeographical boundaries established for three other CESUs: Desert Southwest, Great Basin, and Pacific Northwest. BLM is a charter member of each of these CESUs so if there is a need to have contract work performed through any of these CESUs, the base CESU overhead rate would apply to work performed by any of the participating university institutions. Furthermore, it is possible to have work performed by a university partner in another CESU even though the work would be performed outside the geographical boundaries of that CESU. For example, if a scientist at Utah State University (a partner in the Colorado Plateau CESU) had expertise in a Central Valley management issue, it would be possible to contract with that scientist to perform work in California under the CESU agreement even though Utah State University is not a partner of the *Californian* CESU.

Details about the CESU Network, including a Fact Sheet, Program Brochure, Briefing Statement, draft Strategic Plan, Slide Show, Map, Interagency MOU, list of Council Members, Answers to Frequently Asked Questions, selected Cooperative Agreements, and the 2002 Annual Report are available on the CESU Home Page at www.cesu.org/cesu. An example of the protocol used in the Colorado Plateau CESU for developing and implementing Task Agreements to accomplish research, technical assistance, and educational projects under the Cooperative Agreement may be viewed at http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~envsus_p/new/projects.htm. That website also has a link to projects funded by BLM under the Colorado Plateau Cooperative Agreement. The Colorado Plateau CESU was one of the first CESUs to be established and its partners have considerable experience in developing and implementing Task Agreements to fund and carry out projects through a CESU Cooperative Agreement.

Questions regarding the development of Task Agreements pursuant to the *Californian* CESU Cooperative Agreement should be directed to Julia Lang at 916-978-4527. General questions about the CESU network may be directed to Ed Lorentzen (BLM's technical representative to the *Californian* CESU) at 916-978-4646 or to John Haugh (BLM's alternate on CESU Council) at 202-452-5071.

Signed
Mike Pool
State Director

Authenticated
Louise Tichy
Records Management

Attachments

- 1 - Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit Network Map and List of Partner Institutions (2 pp.)
- 2 - *Californian* Cooperative and Joint Venture Agreement (16 pp.)

Distribution

CA-939 (Attn: Rick Hanks)
ST-100 (Attn: Lee Barkow)
WO-210, MS 204 LS (Attn: John Haugh)