Minutes
Annual Business Meeting
Piedmont South – Atlantic Coast CESU
March 22 - 23, 2005
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

Members attending:
Ray Albright, National Park Service
Upton Hatch, Auburn University
Andrea Miller (for Graham Worthy), University of Central Florida
Nancy Peterson, University of Florida
Bill Starkel, US Fish & Wildlife Service
James Sweeney, University of Georgia
John Sweeney, Clemson University
Parley Winger, US Geological Survey
John Yancy, National Park Service

Guests attending:
Bill Bowerman, Clemson University
Jim Cato, University of Florida
Peter Colverson, The Nature Conservancy and University of Florida
William Conner, Clemson University
Bill Hammitt, Clemson University
Sarah Miller, University of Florida
Tom Reinert, University of Georgia
Scott Robinson, University of Florida
John Scheirt, University of Florida
Wayne Smith, University of Florida
Carrie Straight, University of Georgia
George Tanner, University of Florida

Overview of the PSAC CESU

Jim Sweeney provided an overview of the CESU network as a whole, and the specifics on our PSAC CESU. He concluded with a summary of project funding activity for the past year. The overview presentation (in Microsoft PowerPoint format) including the funding summaries is available on the CESU’s web site for all members to use.

Progress on Strategic Plan Objectives

Jim Sweeney reviewed the 3-year goals and 1-year objectives under each that were set out in the CESU’s Strategic. Overall, we completed 80% of the
Manager's Meeting

The federal agency representatives held their Manager's Committee meeting on the morning of March 22, prior to the Annual Business meeting. The meeting was called by John Yancy acting as Interim Chair. Members not present in Gainesville provided their comments earlier by phone.

The Committee discussed:

- Potential new member agencies for the PSAC CESU
- Joint projects done via the CESU
- Agency protocols for working with the CESU
- Planned National CESU meeting attendance
- The need for a Committee Co-Chair. Bruce Jewell was elected (and accepted) to serve as the Chair of their Committee.
- Follow-up Committee conference call – to be arranged by the new Chair, Bruce Jewell.

Procedure for Electing New Members

Members present discussed the process for admitting new members to the PSAC CESU. The pros and cons of options running from processing each application as it was submitted to admitting new members only once every two years. We also discussed the need for a general set of guidelines or criteria on which to evaluate candidate member applications.

Those present developed the following proposal for all members to consider:

The PSAC CESU will hold all new member applications (regardless of when submitted) for review and discussion at the following annual business meeting. One week following the annual business meeting, a vote by email will be taken on all applicants reviewed. This will provide, as required, an opportunity for all current members (whether or not they were in attendance at the meeting), to vote. All applicants receiving a unanimous vote of approval will be added via one new amendment thereby minimizing paper work and the time involved in getting members signature.

Exception to the 1-year rule: An applicant needing a more immediate review can petition the PSAC CESU Executive Committee. But, as this is an exception and not the rule, there must be clear justification (provided by the applicant) for the need of an immediate review (e.g., a federal agency partner – who must pay a 1-time fee of $10,000 – needing to complete the process within the current fiscal year). Majority vote of the Executive Committee will be final.
ACTION ITEM – CESU Technical Representatives should send Jim Sweeney their vote (yes, accept; or no, do not accept) on the above proposal by May 20. Anyone not providing a vote by May 20 will be considered in favor of the proposal.

Those present also agreed that current members should develop a general list of criteria upon which to evaluate a new application. Such criteria would be used to measure whether or not the applicant brings something unique to the CESU, or under-represented among current members in the CESU (geographic location, expertise, regional, national or international program, different clientele, etc.). It was also suggested we develop a set of themes or project focus areas that we see as the PSAC CESU’s strength or unique niche, and then evaluate applicants’ abilities to address them. It was decided that in the coming months we should conduct an email discussion on this topic and solicit ideas for evaluation measures from all current members with the objective of establishing such criteria within 6 months.

Process for submitting grants to federal agencies

National Park Service
1. A park manager (or other NPS employee) writes up a statement of work which is usually smaller than a scientific proposal or pre-proposal that identifies a research, education or training need. The manager may or may not know how to meet this need, and may or may not have a university or NGO member in mind to do the project.

2. The statement of work is submitted to the NPS CESU Coordinator (Ray Albright), who reviews it to ensure it falls within the mission of the CESU, and that it meets the joint participatory requirements of a cooperative agreement.

3. Once approved the statement of work goes to the identified cooperating faculty or NGO member (Ray will work with University/NGO Technical Representatives to identify the best person to do the work if not previously identified by the park manager) for them to complete any required university/NGO paperwork.

4. While this is being completed, NPS’ fiscal office will initiate necessary financial paperwork

5. The university or NGO then submits the signed statement of work to the NPS contracting officer in Atlanta, and that is where the actual amendment to the CESU agreement is completed and a procurement request is generated transferring the funds to the cooperating university/NGO.

It is also possible that the NPS would send out a Request For Proposals (RFP) and member faculty/staff could respond to that to initiate the above process.
However, as noted above, this does not have to be a competitive process, and usually is not. The competition has already occurred in the establishment of the CESU and its authorizing documents. Each project or plan of work is then a simple amendment to the master cooperative / joint venture agreement.

USGS

USGS is a little bit different in that they have their own research scientists. However, if they have a research, education or training need not met within their current staff, they will seek cooperation through the CESU.

1. A USGS Scientist that has a need would submit a pre-proposal to our CESU contact (Parley Winger).
2. If it fits the CESU mission and that of USGS, the USGS scientist will be given the go-ahead to develop a full proposal in cooperation with an identified CESU faculty or NGO member, adding all university or NGO forms.
3. The proposal will undergo both internal USGS and external peer review
4. If approved, the local contracts administrative officer will complete the USGS forms and send the completed project to the cooperating university or NGO.

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Although not completely worked out yet, the process envisioned is essentially the same as that for the NPS for education and training needs, and possible for some research needs. It should be noted however, that the primary route for research for the F&WS is via the USGS BRD (Coop Fish and Wildlife Units).

No other federal agency representatives were present.
[Note: It would be very helpful if other federal agency technical representatives could provide a similar brief outline of their proposal process under the CESU]

In all cases, it is apparent that it behooves the cooperating non-federal faculty/staff to develop strong working relationships with your local federal agency managers. Most of the projects funded under the CESU have been (and likely will be) submitted by these managers through their respective agency’s internal processes.

Poster Session

A poster session was held the morning of the second day. This provided the opportunity for scientists funded by the CESU to present materials on their projects, and Department Chairs from the host (University of Florida) to display posters on their School and its programs. Posters presented include:
From University of Georgia

- **A Summary of Current Projects Funded by the PSAC CESU** – J.M. Sweeney, Warnell School of Forestry, University of Georgia

From Clemson University

- **Designing a Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program for the National Park Service Great Lakes Network** – W.H. Bowerman, Department of Forestry and Natural Resources and Institute of Environmental Toxicology, Clemson University
- **Mammal Inventory of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Obed Wild and Scenic Riverway, and the Blue Ridge Parkway** – E.R. Britzke, S.C. Loeb, and P. Jodice, East Arkansas Community College, USDA Forest Service Southern Station @ Clemson University, and USGS South Carolina Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit @ Clemson University
- **Degradation Processes and Coastal Freshwater Swamp Forest Responses in South Carolina and Louisianna; Project Description and Preliminary Results** – W.H. Conner, K.W. Krauss, T.W. Doyle, and J.L. Whitebeck, Baruch Institute of Ecology and Forest Science, Clemson University, USGS National Wetlands Research Center, and Department of Biological Science, University of New Orleans
- **Determination of Feral Hog (Sus scrofa) Movement Patterns in Congaree National Park, South Carolina** – B. Friebel and P.G.R. Jodice, Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, Clemson University, and USGS South Carolina Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit @ Clemson University
- **Summary poster of 5 projects in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, Clemson University**
  - Needs Assessment Study of Partnership and Collaborative Competencies – K.F. Backman and B. Wright
  - Philips Level-5 Return on Investment Evaluation of Entry Level Intake Program – R.D. Bixler and B. Wright
  - Kirkpatrick’s Level-4 Evaluation of the Interpretive Development Program – W.E. Hammitt and B. Wright
  - Kings Mountain National Military Park Battlefield Audio Tour for Visually Impaired Visitors – H.J. Grove
  - Kirkpatrick’s Level-4 Evaluation of Preservation and Skills Training Program (PAST) – C. Goetcheus and B. Wright

From University of Florida

- **Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation - Faulty Expertise and Research Strengths** – Sarah Miller, University of Florida
- **Florida Natural Resources and Ecotourism Management Research Capabilities of the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport**
Management – Steve Holland, Tourism, Recreation and Sports Management, University of Florida

- **Ordway - Swisher Preserve** – Steve Coates and Mel Sunquist, Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida

- **School of Natural Resources and Environment - A campus-wide, interdisciplinary program at the University of Florida** – Nancy Peterson, University of Florida

- **Southeastern Applied Fire Ecology Cooperative- SAFEC- A Multi-Agency Initiative** - George Tanner and Steve Coates, Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida

- **The Natural Areas Training Academy** - Pete Colverson, The Nature Conservancy and the University of Florida

From National Park Service

- An additional poster was displayed by the NPS on the CESU network.

**Federal Partners Research, Education, and Training Needs**

USGS – BRD’s research scientists do their work supported by their base funding (dwindling amount) but with an increasing emphasis on and support from outside sources. Their scientists, like others, must compete for funds from other federal agencies. USGS is interested in working with and through the CESU, but this will occur on a cooperative, as needed basis. They list their scientists and each person’s expertise and project areas on their web site.

USFWS – Just now completing their research needs assessment (survey) which will be used to establish research and training needs priorities. Program areas that have expressed research / training needs include:

- Everglades (grasshopper sparrow, lesser vegetation)
- Fisheries
- Imperiled Species
- Joint Venture Programs (e.g., Lower Mississippi Valley needing landscape level analyses and integration of habitat analyses with populations)
- Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Planning (inventory, fire management, etc.)
- Regional Fire Program
- Migratory Birds
- Ecological Services Offices (big user of research)

NPS – The USGS BRD is a primary supplier of research needs for NPS. But NPS also works through the CESU network, particularly at the local park level. Theme areas of interest include:

- Air Quality
- Water Quality / Quantity
- Exotics and Invasives
- Urban / Rural Interface
- Recreation use vs resource protection
- Demographic Changes – what do they mean to use of our parks?
- ORV Use and Impacts (especially on sensitive species and habitats)
- Accountability – Performance Measures
- Employee Training – advanced degrees
- Internships
- Inventory (winding down) and Monitoring (big need)

USDA FS – General theme areas for research include:
- Fire
- Unmanaged Recreation
- Invasives
- Biofuels