

## **HOW THE CONCEPT WORKS**

This is a true cooperative venture between the National Park Service and the PSAC CESU universities. It requires good faith cooperation between the NPS and the university partners.

To initiate the emergency response roster, each PSAC CESU partner university is asked to assign a person to be the point of contact (POC) for the university. The university POC role is to help advertise the roster across the university, to forward the completed roster to the NPS, and to administrate the agreement when a university expert is deployed. This role is performed without any compensation from the NPS.

The emergency response roster is populated with university experts (employees) who volunteer to prepare for possible deployment by taking four on-line training courses about incident conditions as well as submit an application form to their university POC. This is done without any promise of being called to an incident and without any compensation from the NPS.

When an incident occurs, a NPS emergency response team is activated. The need for specialized expertise is determined by either the Resource Advisor (READ) or the Incident Commander (IC) on the team. The NPS emergency response roster is consulted for the necessary skill(s) and availability of possible experts. A request is made from NPS to the university expert with the skill regarding his/her availability to respond to the incident. The university expert is typically contacted by phone and briefed on the location of the incident, the scope of work needed, the date to report to the incident, and the number of days needed at the incident. The university expert is given sufficient time to determine if he/she is available or if he/she has to decline the request. If the response is positive, the NPS responds back with travel arrangements and a contact person at the incident. This is called being mobilized. The NPS pays for salary, travel, lodging, meals and personal protection equipment, as well as equipment and supplies needed to accomplish the requested work.

The NPS POC and the university POC are alerted when a request is made for a university expert. If the university expert is available to be deployed, then the NPS POC immediately initiates the necessary contractual paperwork. The paperwork should be ready within 24 hours of when the NPS POC is first alerted. The university expert can be mobilized immediately after the paperwork is complete.

At the incident, the university expert comes under the care of the Incident Command System (ICS). The value of the ICS training sessions, taken on-line by the university expert, will be well proven while at the incident. Daily work tasks are assigned through ICS 12-hour shift plans. Needs are met by the ICS to the best degree possible in an impacted area. A NPS employee (or other federal employee) oversees and guides the university expert at all times at an incident. Often, the university expert works alongside and in cooperation with several NPS employees. Most everyone at an incident

understands that a university expert is not very familiar with the ICS and incident conditions, so kindly allowances and reminders are frequently made.

The university expert records his/her payroll costs during the incident using an ICS form (OF 288). The form are faxed by the ICS to the home university at the end of the time of service or at least every week. The home university pays the university expert through the university's normal payroll system as if he/she had never left campus. The university will invoice NPS for payroll time, associated benefits, and indirect costs.

Pay rate for a university expert is based on their home university's current daily rate equivalent, plus benefits, for the university expert. This should be the amount specified in the [NCH Resource List Data Form](#). By terms specified in the PSAC CESU Cooperative Agreement, the university may assess up to a 17.5% indirect cost to all payroll costs incurred by the university expert.

At the end of the time of service at an incident, the university expert goes through the proper steps to detach from the ICS (called demobilization). The ICS arranges and pays for travel, as well as for travel time, back to the home university. The NPS POC and the university POC should be alerted by the ICS of the demobilization. The Task Agreement between the NPS and the university for the emergency service of the university expert concludes according to normal requirements of any task agreement.

The university expert remains on the NPS emergency response roster for the remainder of the calendar year. The roster for each PSAC CESU university partner will renewed by the university POC by June 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

As a point of clarification, there are two "organizations" of the NPS involved in this emergency response process. They both have very different roles in the process. The NPS POC serves the Southeast Region of the National Park Service as a representative within the PSAC CESU. The contractual side of the process is handled by the NPS POC. The phone call to the university expert comes from the NPS Emergency Incident Coordination Center (EICC) which maintains a database of people who can be called out in emergency situations to serve on incidents on various land ownerships, not just national parks. The EICC will maintain the emergency response roster as a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) subset, in its database of potential responders. The EICC handles the application side of the process. It is the EICC who keeps the roster of the university experts, contacts the university expert, mobilizes the university expert and arranges travel plans to the incident for the university expert.

These two "organizations" of the NPS should not be confused with the ICS, which may be a mix of federal agencies. The university expert is folded into the ICS while at an incident and until demobilized. The university expert can always communicate with NPS POC and/or the university POC while at an incident.

Questions regarding the concept of the emergency response can be addressed to the NPS POC