The Mission of the Great Plains-Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit is to support partnerships to assess the ecological and cultural status of public lands within the Great Plains Region and examine its future within the context of private lands. We facilitate the improvement of the scientific basis for managing ecosystems in the region through technical assistance, research, and education among the partner institutions and agencies.

INTRODUCTION:
The Great Plains-Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (GP-CESU) is a network of 20 academic institutions and one non-government organization (NGO) located in the Great Plains region as well as 12 federal agencies. The unit encompasses a broad geographical portion of the Great Plains and offers an outstanding group of scientists in grassland and ecosystems studies, natural and cultural resources management, technical assistance and educational opportunities. The ‘heart’ of the GP-CESU is the guiding Cooperative Agreement that establishes simple and relatively quick funding mechanisms between federal partners and non-federal partners. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) serves as host to the GP-CESU, which was established in October 2000.

NATIONAL NETWORK:
The Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU) National Network was established to meet the challenges of managing federal lands and waters by using the skills and talents of scientist and scholars. The CESU is a national consortium of tribes, federal agencies, academic institutions, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations and other partners working together to support informed public trust resource stewardship. The GP-CESU is one of 17 CESUs located throughout the nation.
OBJECTIVES:
• Provide research, technical assistance and education to federal land management, environmental and research agencies and their potential partners
• Develop a program of research, technical assistance and education that involves the biological, physical, social and culture sciences needed to address resource issues and interdisciplinary program-solving at multiple scales and in ecosystems context at the local, regional and national level
• Place special emphasis on the working collaboration among federal agencies and non-federal agencies and their related partner institutions

IMPACT:
Advantages for Federal Partners
• Adds depth and breadth to the expertise of any federal agency
• Offers a simple, expedient cooperative agreement which is already approved
• Is a bridge of communication with other federal agencies and academic/NGO institutions
• Opens opportunities for training in professional development or resource specific issues
• 17.5% overhead rate
Advantages for Academic/NGO Partners
• Positions the partner into a long term collaborative relationship with several federal agencies
• Opportunities for graduate and undergraduate involvement in a federal agency project
• Enhanced ability to conduct research at multiple scales and sites
• Better access to federal resources to conduct projects of mutual interest

PARTNERS:
Federal Partners
• US Army Corps of Engineers
• US Department of Defense
• Farm Service Agency
• US Fish and Wildlife Service
• US Geological Survey
• Bureau of Indian Affairs
• Bureau of Land Management
• National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
• National Park Service
• Natural Resources Conservation Service
• Bureau of Reclamation

Academic Partners
• Black Hills State University
• Colorado State University
• Emporia State University
• Kansas State University
• Langston University
• New Mexico Highlands University
• North Dakota State University
• Oklahoma State University
• South Dakota School of Mines and Technology
• South Dakota State University
• Texas A&M University
• Texas Tech University
• University of Minnesota
• University of Nebraska-Lincoln
• University of Nebraska Medical Center
• University of North Dakota
• University of Oklahoma
• University of South Dakota
• University of Wyoming
• Winona State University

NGO Partner
• World Wildlife Fund-Northern Great Plains

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