Greetings to our partners from the staff at the Great Plains CESU! The team here hopes that you are doing well and that you and yours are safe and healthy. Our office, like many, has moved to functioning remotely, but we continue to communicate with our partners nationwide and are moving forward on the many workings of our collaborations. The Great Plains CESU continues to pursue new partnerships and strengthen current ones throughout this new season. Please do continue to keep us updated with any contact changes and your interests and inquiries moving forward.

We have had a very active 2020 so far. Larkin Powell stepped down as the Great Plains CESU Director January 1, 2020. He had served in that role since 2011 and had been instrumental in transforming the operation of the Great Plains CESU. Under his direction our program not only grew significantly, but we initiated several new endeavors including installing an annual graduate student research award and revising our communication with partners by revamping our social media presence.

Our new Director, Paul Hanson, is a faculty member in UNL’s School of Natural Resources. He teaches and conducts research in the Earth Sciences and has been at UNL since 2005, and had previously served as the Associate Director of UNL’s School of Natural Resources from 2014-2019.
Thank you Professor Larkin Powell for the years of service as Director of the Great Plains CESU from 2011-2019. We welcome Professor Paul Hanson as the Great Plains CESU Director as of January 2020.

Next, we have begun the **renewal process to remain the host institution for the Great Plains region** within the National Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Network. If approved, this five-year agreement would go into effect on August 15, 2020. Stay tuned to our social media outlets and upcoming newsletters for updates on our renewal request.

Given the multiple changes that we are undergoing, coupled with travel issues related to the pandemic, we have decided to postpone our Great Plains CESU Annual meeting. In previous years we had held this meeting in the spring, but we have opted to hold our **annual meeting in the fall** of 2020 in the hopes that we have less on our plate and perhaps fewer travel restrictions to contend with. We will send out dates and information as our plans develop.
Congratulations to the winners of the 2020 GPCESU Student Award!

This year we are excited to present this award to two deserving students. They both put forth great individual efforts with their research projects that partnered with the National Park Service on research projects within Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The winners are Michael Brunson (Kansas State University) and Gaimi Davies (University of North Dakota).

Michael Brunson

Research to Inform Visitor Use Management Planning at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

A typical visitor use management project for a student may involve a survey to understand visitor perceptions and/or attitudes about conditions at the park; or a student may conduct a test of how people move about the park temporally and spatially.

"Between the survey data, GPS data, camera data and the trail counter data, Michael did an otherworldly job of keeping it all in order and ready for analysis upon completion of the data collection period."

Dr. Ryan Sharp - Principle Investigator.

Gaimi Davies

Project Ancient Insight for Current Bison Management

"Gaimi’s work on bison has illuminated the ecological history of ancient bison from the Northern Great Plains and opens the door for new questions to be asked. Through her research, we are able to better inform the current management of bison and help prepare this iconic species for unprecedented changes in climate and habitat."

Dr. Igor Ovchinnikov - Principle Investigator.
The National CESU Network has been hard at work keeping its partners informed and community safe during these times of social isolation and health conscious quarantine. The 2020 CESU Network Biennial National Meeting has been postponed with dates to be announced.

Research Opportunities:
Please check the [website](#) for a current list of Statements of Interest & opportunities.

Project Spotlights:
Have a CESU project we can spotlight? To be featured in future articles, please [send us your details](#).

Federal Partners: Advertise a project to our Academic and NGO partners by sending a Request for Statements of Interest to our Office Coordinator [contact](#).