



## **Director's Report**

FY 2017 (October 1, 2016-September 30, 2017) was the second year in our 2015-2020 Cooperative and Joint Venture Agreement between our partners in the Great Plains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU). We followed our progress in FY2016 with another year of new actions that should help us reach our goals to be proactive and work on behalf of our partners.

### **Two new partners**

We added two new non-federal partners during FY2017: University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA). Our current partners voted to accept these new partners in May 2017, and we look forward to working with them in the future.

The University of Wisconsin Extension membership allows faculty throughout the UW university system who are affiliated with Extension to collaborate with our federal partners in the Great Plains. And, WAFWA serves as an umbrella organization for state agencies, but also has biologists on staff or contract who can serve as collaborators with our federal agency partners to receive federal funds for collaborative projects. We now have 12 federal agencies and 23 university/non-federal partners. When Dr. Powell became Director in 2011, the Great Plains CESU had 9 federal and 16 non-federal partners, and we believe the growth in partnerships during the last 6 years demonstrates the value of the CESU system to its members.

### **Engaging partners**

The Great Plains-CESU hosted its Annual Meeting on February 7, 2017 in Lincoln, NE in conjunction with the 77th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference in Lincoln, Nebraska. We thank our federal and academic partners who participated and provided discussion at the meeting. We also are grateful to the Great Rivers and Great Lakes-Northern Forest CESUs who joined the meeting along with their partners. Annual meetings are required for the CESU system, but travel costs and federal travel authorizations have made it difficult to host in-person meetings. The Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference offered an opportunity to hold a parallel meeting to leverage travel already paid by many members. Our office will be working with our partners to find cost-effective ways to engage and build collaborations in the future.

Our office awarded the first Great Plains CESU Graduate Student Award to Jeremy Brunette, a MS student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Jeremy's adviser, Matthew Douglas, received the award on Jeremy's behalf at our Annual Meeting in February 2017. Jeremy conducted cultural work for his MS degree at UNL at the Chickasaw National Recreation Area, and Jeremy now works in a post-Master's position at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. We will be asking academic partners for nominations for the award for 2018.

Kat Bickert, our office coordinator, spent several days this summer traveling to visit the sites of CESU-facilitate research projects to increase the visibility of the role of the CESU in collaborative research. Kat visited Dr. Keith Gido, Kansas State University, and his team at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. Their work on a National Park Service-funded project is evaluating non-native fish in streams on the Preserve. Kat also visited Dr. Ryan Sharp, Kansas State University, at the Brown V. Board of Education National Historic Site. This National Park Service-funded project was a survey of visitors to the Historic Site. The two projects were chosen to exemplify the range of work being done through CESU-facilitated projects, and Kat has created spotlights for these projects that can be found on-line at: <http://gpcesu.unl.edu/projects/spotlightproject.asp>

### **Staffing and office support**

Staffing remained constant during FY 2017. Kat Bickert continues her very effective role as the office associate. Dr. Tanya Shenk served as the Great Plains CESU's National Park Service (NPS) Research Coordinator (RC). In August

2017, Tanya began a year's leave to contribute to work in Rwanda through the Peace Corps. Nicole Athearn, the RC for the Great Rivers CESU, will fill in for Tanya during her absence, through July 2018.

The Institute of Natural Resources (IANR) of the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) made the decision to continue their support of the Great Plains CESU office for a second 3-year period. IANR provides \$30,000/yr: \$14,000/yr in administrative support, \$15,000/yr in office support for Kat's position, and \$1,000/yr in support of office communication (phones, internet). We are grateful to Dr. Mike Boehm, the new IANR Vice Chancellor, and Dr. Ron Yoder, Associate Vice Chancellor, for their support, which comes at a time of difficult financial decisions on the UNL campus due to the downturn in the state's ag-based economy. Mike and Ron challenged the Great Plains CESU to find ways to integrate with centers on the UNL Campus, and we will be looking for ways to respond to that challenge in FY2018. We continue to appreciate Dr. John Carroll, Director of the School of Natural Resources, for his support and office space allocations in Hardin Hall.

Our office also received annual funding support of \$17,399 from the national CESU network during FY2017 (\$14,808 after removal of 17.5% overhead). We are grateful to the federal partners who contributed to the pool of funds used for this annual support, and we appreciate the efforts of Tom Fish in the national CESU office to wade through the logistics to funnel funds from various federal agencies to the National Park Service as the contracting source for the funds. Funding from the national level continues to be uncertain under the new plans for federal agency support, and we continue to work with the national CESU office to secure these funds when available.

### Financial Report

The following projects were documented during FY2017 using Great Plains CESU's Cooperative Agreement. *It should be noted that USFWS does not keep internal documentation that allows them to distinguish projects that are funded through the CESU agreement. And, we did not receive information from the majority of our federal partners, which continues to be a limiting factor in our effectiveness to document the impact of the National CESU system.*

**Agreements with \$0.00 funding levels indicate no-cost modification agreements.**

2017 NEW AGREEMENTS			
Federal Agency	Task Agreement Number	Academic Institution	Funding
NPS	P17AC00126	Kansas State University	\$224,141.00
NPS	P17AC00612	University of Oklahoma	\$7,786.20
NPS	P17AC00057	South Dakota State University	\$30,000
NPS	P17AC00181	University of Nebraska Lincoln	\$175,224.00
NPS	P17AC00976	Kansas State University	\$94,031.00
NPS	P17AC01222	North Dakota State University	\$90,000.00
NPS	P17AC01030	Texas A&M University	\$47,000.00
NPS	P17AC00128	North Dakota State University	\$24,530.00
NPS	P17AC00817	Colorado State University	\$5,418.28
USBR	R17AP00090	University of Oklahoma	\$79,626.00
USACE	W912HZ-17-2-0019	Texas Tech University	\$30,343.00
USGS	G17AC00057	Texas Tech University	\$69,995.00
USGS	G17AC00164	Oklahoma State University	\$18,500.00
USGS	G17AC00391	North Dakota State University	\$46,800.00
USGS	G17AC00432	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	\$14,800.00
			<b>\$958,194.48</b>

**2017 MODIFICATIONS**

<u>Federal Agency</u>	<u>Agreement Number/Mod Number</u>	<u>Academic Institution</u>	<u>Funding</u>
USACE	W912HZ-16-2-0004 / P00001	South Dakota School of Mines and Tech	\$80,000.00
USACE	W912HZ-16-2-0026 / P00001	Oklahoma State University	\$188,888.00
USBR	R16AC00065 / 002	University of Wyoming	\$0.00
NPS	P15AC00499 / 0003	Oklahoma State University	\$39,169.00
NPS	P15AC00962 / 0003	Texas Tech University	\$0.00
NPS	P12AC10310 / 0006	Colorado State University	\$0.00
NPS	P15AC01085 / 0002	Texas Tech University	\$31,974.00
NPS	P15AC01605 / 0002	Kansas State University	\$0.00
NPS	P16AC00369 / 0002	University of South Dakota	\$0.00
NPS	P14AC00804 / 0004	University of South Dakota	-\$1,034.43
NPS	P15AC00459 / 0001	South Dakota State University	\$0.00
NPS	P16AC01250 / 0001	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	\$98,549.00
NPS	P17AC00126 / 0001	Kansas State University	\$0.00
NPS	P16AC01045 / 0001	Texas Tech University	\$6,000.00
NPS	P16AC01385 / 0001	Colorado State University	\$15,000.00
NPS	P17AC00057 / 0001	South Dakota State University	\$0.00
NPS	P17AC00057 / 0002	South Dakota State University	\$138,000.00
NPS	P15AC01147 / 0001	Kansas State University	\$0.00
NPS	P15AC01387 / 0001	Kansas State University	\$0.00
USFWS	F15AC00499 / 0003	South Dakota State University	\$61,584.00
			<b>\$659,164.00</b>

Respectfully submitted,



Larkin Powell  
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 Director, Great Plains CESU  
 12/01/2017

*With grateful thanks to Kat Bickert for her work to document projects with agencies and to develop information contained in the financial report.*