



Director's Report

This was another year of interrupted activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but we continued working toward our goals to be proactive and improve our operation on behalf of our partners. This included holding a virtual annual Great Plains CESU Partners Meeting, awarding our annual Great Plains CESU Graduate Student Award, and putting effort into revising our website and social media offerings. We also drafted a new strategic plan for 2021-2025 as we are in the first year of our new Joint Venture Agreement between our partners in the Great Plains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU).

Engaging Partners

We continue to grow by adding additional partners and are always seeking to add both federal and non-federal partners to our team. We now have 13 federal agency partners after adding the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) in FY2021. This is in addition to our 23 non-federal academic and NGO partners. At present we are in contact with a number of academic and non-academic organizations regarding their interest in joining our ranks.

The Great Plains CESU hosted our Annual Partners Meeting on November 9, 2021 as a virtual meeting due to COVID-19. The agenda covered a review of our year and recent activities, as well as remarks from Dean Archie Clutter of UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) and David Doty, UNL's Director of Research and Economic Development. Representatives from many of our federal partners and several individuals from our academic partners spoke on their activities and expected needs for the coming years. As always we would like to thank our federal and academic partners who participated and provided discussion at the meeting.

Annual Student Award

Each year we identify a deserving individual for our Great Plains CESU Graduate Student Award. This year's recipient is Amy Cochran, a MS student at Kansas State University. Amy's project was entitled Evaluating Visitor's Temporal and Spatial Distribution and Service Level Satisfaction at Tallgrass Prairie National Reserve. On behalf of the Great Plains CESU and its partners, we extend a huge congratulations to Amy and a thank you to her advisor, Dr. Ryan Sharp, for nominating her. Please watch for an email in early fall when we will be asking our academic and federal partners for nominations for our 2022 award.

Great Plains CESU Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan was presented to our partners during our Great Plains CESU Annual Partners Meeting in November 2021. We have identified the following goals for improving the Great Plains CESU over the next five years:

(1) **Explore ways to improve the effectiveness of our annual GP CESU Partners and Stakeholders Meeting.** In 2020 we held a virtual meeting, a model that seemed to be effective in engaging our partners. Future meetings will likely be held virtually, but when possible we will seek opportunities to couple our meeting with another local meeting that attracts members of our federal partners and our stakeholders.

(2) **We aim to pursue adding additional federal, academic and NGO partners to the GP CESU.** One specific goal is to engage with tribal colleges in the Great Plains region to showcase the advantages of participating in and joining the GP CESU. At present we do not have a tribal college as a member.

(3) **Improve the methods by which we interact with our partners and other stakeholders.** This will include re-designing the GP CESU website as well as re-envisioning the way in which we engage with our stakeholders via our social media offerings, specifically Facebook and Twitter. Specifically, we aim to find better ways to highlight the research efforts that are being conducted with GP CESU funding, and especially those projects involving student activities.

(4) **Better engage with stakeholders in both academic institutions and NGOs.** Improving our communication with our stakeholders is expected to increase the effectiveness of our operation and our ability to identify researchers for advertised projects. This will include improving our engagement with local researchers in the area and those in the Nebraska University system.

Great Plains CESU Website

This year we made an effort to greatly improve our website to better engage with our partners and to improve our ability to educate our clientele on our activity within the Great Plains CESU. In addition to re-building this site on a platform that now complies with UNL standards, we made an effort to streamline some of our content and to better highlight our activities, including better showcasing our annual graduate student awardees, and ongoing projects that are funded through the Great Plains CESU. Our new website is here: <https://gpcesu.unl.edu/>.

Staffing and office support

Our office personnel has remained constant over the past several years. Brittany Grove continues her role as our office associate, and Dr. Tanya Shenk continues to serve as our National Park Service (NPS) Research Coordinator. Dr. Paul Hanson has served as Director of the Great Plains CESU since January 2020. Our team has successfully adapted to the numerous changes to our normal operation due to COVID-19. We are hopeful that the coming year sees us rebound to some of those more traditional office activities.

The operation of our office is made possible through funds granted from several different sources. The primary stream of funding is from annual dues from our federal partners. In 2021 these direct costs totaled \$11,489. We are grateful to the federal partners who contributed funding, and we greatly appreciate the efforts of Tom Fish in the national CESU office to funnel available funding to us from the participating federal partners. These funds were supplemented by funding from our regional National Park Service office, and we are very thankful to Rick Clark for again making these available to us. Additional, but very critical, funds continue to be made available through the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) at the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) IANR provides \$30,000/yr, including both a stipend for the Director and support for the office associate position as well as funds for office telecommunications. We are grateful to Dr. Mike Boehm, the IANR Vice Chancellor, and Dr. Ron Yoder, Associate Vice Chancellor, for their support. In addition, we continue to appreciate Dr. John Carroll, Director of the School of Natural Resources, for his support and office space allocations in Hardin Hall.

New Agreements and Agreement Modifications for FY2021

The following projects were documented during FY2021 through the Great Plains CESU’s Cooperative Agreement. It should be noted that several agencies do not consistently report their funded projects to us, therefore these values do not represent all of the projects that were funded through the Great Plains CESU in FY2021.

Agreements with \$0.00 funding levels indicate either no-cost modification agreements or unreported values.

FY2021 New Agreements

Federal Agency	Agreement Number	Partner Institution	Funding
NPS	P21AC10117	South Dakota State University	8,400
NPS	P21AC10808	University Of Nebraska - Lincoln	131,149
NPS	P21AC11642	Texas Tech University	205,015
NPS	P21AC11884	University Of Nebraska - Lincoln	29,750
USACE	W912HZ2120038	University of Oklahoma	755,895
ERDC - CERL	W9132T2120010	University of Oklahoma	97,000
NRCS	NR213A750023C001	Texas A&M	899,999
NRCS	NR213A750008C003	University of Wyoming	175,000
NRCS	NR213A750025C005	Kansas State University	0
NRCS	NR213A750025C011	North Dakota State University	0
NRCS	NR213A750023C010	University of Wyoming	0
			\$ 2,302,208

FY2021 Modifications to Existing Agreements

Federal Agency	Agreement Number	Partner Institution	Funding
NPS	P16AC01378	University of Wyoming	0
NPS	P17AC00181	University of Nebraska - Lincoln	0
NPS	P17AC00181	University of Nebraska -Lincoln	0
NPS	P18AC00040	Not Listed	0
NPS	P19AC00050	Not Listed	0
NPS	P19AC00052	Kansas State University	0
NPS	P19AC00364	Texas A&M	0
NPS	P19AC00663	Kansas State University	0
NPS	P20AC00283	Emporia State University	0
NPS	P20AC00284	North Dakota State University	2,506
NPS	P17AC00128	North Dakota State University	96,574
NPS	P19AC00003	University of North Dakota	7,500
NPS	P19AC00049	Kansas State University	55,773
NPS	P19AC00151	University of Wyoming	98,901
NPS	P19AC00364	Texas A&M	47,000
NPS	P20AC00365	University of South Dakota	29,995
NPS	P20AC00767	University of Wyoming	132,400
NPS	P20AC00880	University of Wyoming	184,909
NPS	P20AC01055	New Mexico Hghlands University	30,000
USACE	P00002	Oklahoma State University	0
USACE	P00002	Texas Tech University	100,000
ERDC - CERL	P00001	University of Oklahoma	0
NAVFAC Southwest	N62473-18-2-0010	Texas Tech University	166,203
USACE (Fort Worth)	W9126G-18-2-0017	Colorado State University	1,110,948
USACE (Fort Worth)	W9126G-18-2-0061	South Dakota State University	0
USACE (Fort Worth)	W9126G-19-2-0018	University of Oklahoma	73,000
USACE (Fort Worth)	W9126G-19-2-0031	Oklahoma State University	417,270
USACE (Fort Worth)	W9126G-19-2-0039	Colorado State University (CEMML)	0
			\$ 2,552,978

Respectfully submitted,



Paul Hanson
 Professor, School of Natural Resources
 Director, Great Plains CESU
 February 11, 2022

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