



Director's Report

Happy 2025 from us here at the GP CESU! Last year was another very interesting and productive year here and we are looking forward to the opportunities and of course challenges of the coming year. We are celebrating 25 years as host institution for the GP CESU here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. With that said, we have also recently submitted our renewal package to continue as the host university for the program. As you are probably aware we held our annual GP CESU Partner's meeting last month showcasing some of our activities and research from our network. We also awarded our annual Graduate Student Award—more about all of that below! This past year we had ~\$5.5 million in agreements funded through the Great Plains CESU. Details on those projects funded from the past year are below. As always, thanks to our federal partners for reporting their project details to us.

Engaging Partners

The Great Plains CESU hosted our Annual Partners Meeting on January 14, 2025, as a hybrid meeting in which we engaged our partners locally and across the Great Plains. We adopted this timeframe last year to more fully cover the previous year in our Annual Meetings. The agenda included a synopsis by GP CESU Director Dr. Paul Hanson of the past year, our recent activities and the discussion of goals we have set for the future, including the 5-year renewal as Great Plains CESU Host Office. Dr. Thomas Parr spoke on Adaptive Management Through Partnerships. We included a brief roundtable discussion with partners, and featured research talks by our Graduate Student Award recipient, Levin Brandt, and Dr. Shawn DeKeyser who spoke of their GP CESU funded project for reforestation of the Knife River Indian Villages. Those presentations are available on our website: <https://gpcesu.unl.edu/information/meetingsreferences.aspx>

As always, we would like to thank our federal and academic partners who participated and provided discussion at the meeting. If you have any suggestions for individuals or topics you would like covered at our next meeting, please pass them on to us at any time at gpcesu@unl.edu.

We presently have 13 federal agency partners, 23 non-federal academic and three NGO partners. If you are aware of any organizations that are interested in joining our ranks, please feel free to have them contact us at gpcesu@unl.edu.

Annual Graduate Student Award

Since 2016, we have recognized a deserving individual for our Great Plains CESU Graduate Student Award. The 2024 recipient was Levin Brandt, a graduate student in Biology at the University of North Dakota.

Levin's work this past season was as a Midwest Wildlife Intern on a number of Air Force Installations across the Great Plains. Levin was nominated by Zachary Rigg, Natural Resources Manager at the Air Force Civil Engineer Center at Offutt AFB. Levin's Academic Advisor was Dr. Susan Felege at the University of North Dakota. Congratulations Levin on behalf of the Great Plains CESU and our partners. You can read more about his work and view his presentation at our Annual Partners Meeting here: <https://gpcesu.unl.edu/information/studentawardrecipients.aspx>



Remember, the annual GSA Award deadline is September 15 of each year, and we will also send out a reminder to our academic and federal partners for nominations for our 2025 Great Plains CESU Graduate Student Award!

Staffing and Office Support

The GP CESU office staff remains small in number but very productive. September of 2024 saw our Acting NPS Research Coordinator, Dr. Brandon Gerig accept a new position in the academic world, and he is now with the School of Freshwater Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Congratulations, Brandon!



Filling the post of Acting Research Coordinator is Dr. Thomas Parr. He is with the National Park Service and is an ecosystem ecologist by training. Additionally, he currently serves as the Research Coordinator for the Great Lakes/Northern Forest CESU, and is based at the University of Minnesota Campus in St. Paul. Welcome to our team, Thomas!

Barb Biffle remains our Administrative Coordinator, and Dr. Paul Hanson has served as Director of the Great Plains CESU since January 2020.

The operation of our office is made possible through funds granted from multiple sources. The primary stream of funding is from annual dues from our federal partners, and we are grateful to both our dues paying partners and National Coordinator of the CESU Network, Tom Fish who distributes those funds to the regional offices. In addition, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) at the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) provides funding for salaries and operation of the GP CESU. We are grateful to Dr. Mike Boehm, the IANR Vice Chancellor, and IANR Dean of the Agricultural Research Division Derek McLean for their continuing support. In addition, we appreciate Dr. Larkin Powell, Director of the School of Natural Resources, for his support and office space allocations in Hardin Hall.

New Agreements and Agreement Modifications in 2024

The following projects were documented 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 the past year. As always, we extend a huge thanks to our partners that have been submitting their grant information to us in a timely manner.

New Agreements in 2024

Federal Agency	Agreement Number	Partner Institution	Award Amount
NPS	P24AC02431	Emporia State University	\$63,671
NPS	P24AC00468	South Dakota State University	\$270,000
NPS	P24AC01455	University of Wyoming	\$129,493
NPS	P24AC02187	University of Oklahoma	\$12,263
NPS	P24AC01556	University of Wyoming	\$103,811
NPS	P24AC00437	University of Wyoming	\$175,000
BLM	L24AC00141	Kansas State University	\$524,000
BLM	L24AC00283	Texas Tech University	\$24,509
BLM	L24AC00314	University of North Dakota	\$499,598
USGS	G24AC00246	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	\$20,000
NRCS	NR243A750008C012	University of Wisconsin-Madison-Div. of Extension	\$600,000
NRCS	NR243A750023C032	North Dakota State University	\$494,120
			\$2,916,465

Modifications to Existing Agreements in 2024

Federal Agency	Agreement Number	Partner Institution	Award Amount
NPS	P21AC10808	University of Nebraska-Bd of Regents	\$22,700
NPS	P23AC00968	Kansas State University	\$41,630
NPS	P23AC01981	North Dakota State University	\$150,000
NPS	P23AC01461	South Dakota State University	\$450,000
NPS	P23AC02210	University of Wyoming	\$40,851
NPS	P23AC02260	University of Wyoming	\$117,000
NPS	P21AC11884	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	\$16,200
BLM	L22AC00525	South Dakota State University	\$46,917
BLM	L23AC00261	South Dakota State University	\$133,151
BLM	L23AC00334	South Dakota State University	\$220,000
USACE	W912HZ2120038	University of Oklahoma	\$0
USACE	W912HZ2220031	Kansas State University	\$34,762
FWS	F23AC03351	Colorado State University	
NRCS	NR223A750008C004	Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison-Div. of Extension	\$1,249,947

\$2,523,158

Respectfully submitted,



Paul Hanson
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 Professor, School of Natural Resources
<https://gpcesu.unl.edu/>
 February 7, 2025