Southeast CESU Strategic Plan

April 2003

Joint Strategic Plan for the
Gulf Coast CESU
Piedmont – South Atlantic CESU
South Florida – Caribbean CESU
Southern Appalachian CESU

Prepared by

Dr. Ray Albright
Dr. Carol Daniels
Dr. Gillian Bowser

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

Purpose of the Strategic Plan ……..…….. 3
Mission ……..……..... 4
Vision ……..……... 4
Core Values and Guiding Principles …….. 4

II. What the CESU Program Is About

The National CESU Program …….. 5
Who the SE CESUs Are ……..…….. 5

III. Role of the SE CESUs

Organization of a CESU …… 6
Southeast CESU Role ……..……..…….. 6
Distinction of CESU Role from Other NPS Science Programs ……. 7

IV. Critical Issues

Keeping the CESUs Effective.…….. 7
Valuing and Enhancing Partnerships…… 7
Ensuring Integration Occurs…… 7
Identifying Emerging Science Issues and Needs…… 8
Properly Addressing Administrative Program Elements……. 8

V. Strategic Goals and Outcomes

New and innovative opportunities…….……. 9
Source for best science and usable knowledge…….……. 9
Integrated and multidisciplinary initiatives…….……. 10
Committed to CESU partners…….…… 10
Forecasting issues, needs and trends in science……..…. 10

Appendix 1 --- Description of Four Southeast CESUs 12
Appendix 2 --- CESU Project Process …… 17

Southeast CESU Strategic Plan

April 2003

Joint Strategic Plan for the
Gulf Coast CESU
Piedmont – South Atlantic CESU
South Florida – Caribbean CESU
Southern Appalachian CESU

I. Introduction

Science is the foundation of many of our natural resource and cultural resource decisions. Every day, National Park Service (NPS) resource managers make decisions that affect the well being of our Parks, our region and quality of the experience to our visitors. Whether we are dealing with issues concerning resource protection, resource use, recreation or serving the public, the importance of our scientific information to the needs of our Parks is recognized and highly valued by our decision makers, visitors, and science partners.

The Southeast Region of theNPS provides coordination for four Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs). These four CESUs are called the Gulf Coast CESU, the Piedmont – South Atlantic CESU, the South Florida – Caribbean CESU, and the Southern Appalachian CESU. The reader will see these four CESUs referred to as the *SE CESUs* in this Strategic Plan.

The strength the four SE CESUs lies in their ability to interact with and engage a large number of partners with enormous depth and breadth in science capability and skill. CESUs can deliver the best science and usable knowledge at a park, regional or national scale.

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

This is the first Strategic Plan developed for the SE CESUs. The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to provide a both a background summary of the program and a blueprint for future National Park Service (NPS) direction of the program. It will serve as the primary source of guidance over a fiveyear period for NPS program focus, organization, and decision. This is a NPS document and does not apply to other Federal Agencies or partners within the SE CESUs. While the SE CESUs are composed of numerous federal agencies, universities and other partners, the mission statements, vision and core values in this Strategic Plan are solely NPS perspectives.

The NPS CESU Coordinators, drawing on the guidance of the Associated Regional Director of Natural Resource Stewardship and Science, wrote this Strategic Plan.

The Mission of the SE CESUs

- To provide NPS resource managers and program staff access to a broad range of high-quality scientific research, technical assistance and education products that are timely and usable.

- To create and enhance interdisciplinary collaboration, consultation and exchange of information between NPS and universities, research institutes, and other federal and state agencies in order to facilitate sharing of capabilities, expertise, and resources.

- To identify and inform NPS of emerging science issues, ideas and strategies and promote better understanding of these items.

The Vision of the SE CESUs

To be the best providers of high quality science and usable knowledge to the Southeast Region of the National Park Service.

Core Values and Guiding Principles

The NPS personnel assigned to the SE CESUs are guided by a set of core values and principles that reflect the mission and underscore the vision of the CESU program. These bullets are non-parallel—either start all with a verb or adjective but not a mixture. Also the fourth bullet almost suggests that some of the CESUs have NOT dignified their partners otherwise there would not have been a need to mention it!

- Promote Excellence, innovation, teamwork, and productivity in the provision of high quality science and usable knowledge.

- Maintain Commitment to the needs and mission of the National Parks, regional program areas and agency.

- Expect Highest standards of professional responsibility, accountability and credibility.

- Support andencourage partners within the CESUs.

- Create an atmosphere of respect, trust and fairness in all actions.

II. What the CESU Program Is About

A CESU is a multi-agency, university-based, broadly interdisciplinary, and working collaboration that provides scientific research, technical assistance, and education.

The National CESU Program

Sixteen different CESUs form a nationwide network of CESUs. The CESU network complements existing Federal research programs, and is an innovation in the delivery of science, technology and information to federal agencies. The CESUs are focused at different bio-geographical regions of the country (as depicted in the name of each CESU). At present there are 13 Federal Agencies and about 113 private sector partners within the network.

The national CESU network began with the formation of four CESUs in 1999. The Southern Appalachian CESU was one of the original four and the Piedmont – South Atlantic Coast CESU was one of the final CESUs formed in 2003. The network was established to provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal agencies. There are some very specific objectives associated with the National CESU network that can be summarized as follows:

- **Synergism.** Objectives speak towards creating and maintaining partnerships, sharing resources, enhancing collaboration, and encouraging cooperation.
- **Science.** Delivering science that is high quality, timely, usable and appropriate.
- **Simplicity.** A cooperative agreement serves as the contractual bridge between the NPS and all other non-federal CESU partners. The stipulations in the cooperative agreement is uniform for all CESUs which, in turn, promotes the synergism and science addressed above.

Consistently capitalization of either “National CESU” or “national CESU”
The National CESU network is coordinated by a CESU Council that includes representatives of the federal agency partners. A CESU National Coordinator is appointed by the Council. The Council issues oversees formation of new CESUs and strategize plans for CESU development.

Who the SE CESUs Are

The four SE CESUs are composed of 9 different federal agencies, 31 universities and 13 other partners.
A description of each of the four SE CESUs is found in Appendix 1. A reference table that compares specific attributes of each CESU is Appendix II these should be separate appendices.

III. Role of the SE CESUs

This bit makes little sense!*Organization of a CESU*

This is a brief overview of the structural organization of a CESU. The reader is directed to the National CESU website at www.cesu.org/cesu for detailed information.

Every CESU is composed of:

1. federal agencies,
2. a host university and,
3. private sector partners.

Not all 13 federal agencies that have joined the national networkbut most CESUs have 4-6 federal agencies as members. The NPS follows a policy of having membership in every CESU. The host university serves as a base for the CESU by providing administrative support to the CESU. Most federal agencies that are members in a CESU locate a federal representative at the host university. Private sector partners can be a university, research laboratory, conservation association, research association, state agency, Native American tribe, or any private entity that can provide expertise, resources and capabilities to the CESU. The private sector partners collaborate with the federal agencies, under an established cooperative agreement, on projects that pertain to scientific research, technical assistance or education.

SE CESU Role

The four SE CESUs play the important role of being the SE region's best source of sound science and usable knowledge.To support this role, the SE Regional Office has placed an agency representative, or CESU coordinator, within each CESU. The CESU Coordinators serve under the Associated Regional Director of Natural Resource Stewardship and Science. Although funding of the CESU Coordinators comes through the Natural Resources program area (the funding comes from the CESU folks at the national level????), the role of the CESU extends well beyond this discipline area. The scope of the CESUs encompasses four major science areas: the physical sciences, the biological sciences, the cultural sciences and the social sciences. With the predominance of cultural based National Parks within the SE, the four SE CESUs can play an important role in providing the best sound science and usable knowledge in the cultural and social science disciplines.

Distinction of CESU Role from Other NPS Science Programs

The CESU program compliments two other region wide NPS science programs: the Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) program and the Research Learning Center program. The I&M program is the region wide (???need a better word here) of natural resource condition. This differs greatly from the CESU role of being the best source of science for several disciplines, not just natural resources. The role of the Research Learning Center

program is make Parks, within a given I&M network, –is this the wording from the Natural Resource Challenge? to scientists. . This is a narrower focus and smaller scope role than CESUs have. Having the role of being the region wide source of best available science and usable knowledge stems from the CESUs having a nationwide scale, multi-disciplinary scope, multi-agency and multi-partner resource base.

IV. Critical Issues

The critical issues of the SE CESUs are efficiency, effectiveness and engagement. The following five critical issues further define these issues. Embedded within the critical issues are the needs for clear communication, the desire for cooperation, an atmosphere for consultation and the watchfulness for conservation.

1. Keeping the CESUs Effective.

This issue involves building awareness and marketing the CESU value while ensuring the CESUs remain relevant and innovative. There are four parts to this issue:

1. Continually introducing the CESU program and benefits to NPS resource managers across the region
2. Stressing the cultural and social scope of the CESU program
3. Promoting the use of the CESUs for technical assistance and education projects
4. Keeping the CESUs effective, relevant and innovative.

2. Valuing and Enhancing Partnerships

CESUs are by their nature a network of partnerships. This issue pertains to keeping this network strong and useful. There are two parts to this issue:

1. Promoting synergism among partners
2. Fostering new partnerships

3. Ensuring Integration Occurs

The collaboration, consultation and exchange of information between private sector partners and the NPS is a mission of the CESUs. There four parts that address this issue:

1. Facilitating the access of parks to science
2. Transferring useful information to parks such as results from CESU projects
3. Informing private sector partners of parks' science needs
4. Providing a capability / skill database of science resources within the CESUs

*****capitalizing Parks indicates the 57 Parks, lower case "parks" impl

4. Identifying Emerging Science Issues and Needs

CESUs must be able to act a barometers of science for the Parks, predicting tomorrow's science climate. This issue pertains to engaging the CESUs for this purpose. There are four parts to this issue:

1. Providing a forum to identify the emerging science issues and needs

2. Utilizing the most effective mechanism to inform parks of emerging science issues and needs
3. Staying current on park science needs (synoptic and long term needs)
4. Being a resource for current technology and scientific methodolgies

5. Properly Addressing Administrative Program Elements

Accountability, consistency and coordination are critical for CESUs to be credible. This issue has four parts that address the administrative side of the CESUs.

1. Region wide consistency in processing CESU projects
2. Coordination with Research Learning Centers, I&M networks and other regional programs
3. Integration and coordination with the Combined Call processes
4. Ensuring accountability for project results

V. Strategic Goals and Outcomes

The strategic goals emerge from the critical issues, the mission statements and the vision. Each goal is underscored with a set of desired outcomes. The strategic goals of the four SE CESUs echo the DOI Secretary's four C's, as shown in the table below.

Secretary's Four 'C' Elements	**SE CESU Critical Goals**
Conservation	3, 4, 5
Cooperation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Consultation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Communication	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

The Secretary's Four C's Elements:
Conservation . We strive to conserve our Nation's land and its resources.
Cooperation . We interact, collaborate and partner with others on matters of mutual interest to reach understanding and agreement and to work toward common goals.
Consultation . We confer with others to exchange observations and views so that all of us have the best and most complete information to support our decisions, including the best scientific information.
Communication . We take the initiative to reach out to others to give and obtain information for our mutual benefit and understanding.

<u>Goal 1.</u> Create new and innovative opportunities for research, technical assistance and educational opportunities within the four SE CESUs.
(Addresses Critical Issue #1, #2, & #5)

Outcomes:

1. Initiate a systematic process for communicating the mission and vision of SE CESUs to NPS resource managers.

2. Ensure the SE CESUs are recognized as the best expertise base to address science information and research needs of environmental / cultural / social decision makers.
3. Provide region wide recognition for individuals and Parks that make extraordinary use of a SE CESU.
4. Develop a culture for scientific creativity.
5. Coordinate with and remain integrated with regional resource management programs and project proposal processes.
6. Help National Parks to share information, identify science needs and priorities, and develop a understanding of science and how science can improve decision making.

Goal 2. Support the SE Region as source for best science and usable knowledge.
(Addresses Critical Issue #1, #3 & #5)

Outcomes:

1. Provide access to scholarly and scientific information on research, science, and natural resources in a form that aids park managers, DOI managers, Congress, and the public in the management of park resources.
2. Develop new and improved means to deliver science and technology to NPS resource managers and communicate findings in an accessible, useful format.
3. Advance the understanding of biological, physical, social and cultural sciences throughout the region by supporting projects that target these sciences.
4. Maintain a high quality of science and usable knowledge to support the sound management and conservation of our National Parks.
5. Facilitate comparison, exchange, and integration of science information within the region.
6. Promote open communication that promotes mutual understanding, appreciation and cooperation.
7. Offer peer review and merit evaluation as a resource to the parks.
8. Supply consultation for scientific advice and project planning.

Goal 3. Promote integrated, multidisciplinary initiatives, investigations and ventures.
(Addresses Critical Issue #2, #3 & #5)

Outcomes:

1. Support and promote integrated, multidisciplinary research projects within all SE CESUs.
2. Identify collaborative opportunities in which several partners can jointly contribute to scientific activities carried out in support of NPS science needs.

3. Encourage integration of sciences data into interpretive information products that can benefit public understanding and appreciation of National Park resources.
4. Develop administrative and operational procedures that encourage and support integrated and multidisciplinary communication and collaboration as a way of doing business within the SE CESUs.
5. Encourage integrated and multidisciplinary efforts by rewarding successful collaboration, and identifying and eliminating roadblocks as they arise.

Goal 4. Remain committed to CESU partners and enhance collaboration
(Addresses Critical Issue #2, #3 & #5)

Outcomes:

1. Support and bring together CESU partners – whether federal, state, local and tribal governments and academic, scientific, environmental, and business organizations – to develop a shared understanding of science, science needs and priorities, and efforts to advance science information across the SE region.
2. Develop external CESU networks at all levels with Federal, state, university, conservation associations, and other cooperators for potential coordination and collaboration needs.
3. Continue and improve the mechanisms for collaborative identification and definition of science information needs of National Parks.
4. Work to ensure that CESU partners understand the procedures and quality control measures required of the science information that they provide.
5. Develop and maintain strong communication networks between parks, regional and WASO staff, state/ federal agencies and among CESU partners.

Goal 5. Serve in leadership role in forecasting issues, needs and trends in science
(Addresses Critical Issue #1, #3 & #4)

Outcomes:

1. Anticipate future (long-range) science information needs of National Parks and identify potential options and constraints.
2. Facilitate evaluation of new methods and technical capabilities for addressing science information needs.
3. Hold lectures, forums and/or workshops on emerging science issues and concerns to inform NPS resource managers and decision makers.
4. Assist in the interpretation of regulatory information (state, federal and international) to aid in the formulation of policy.

Appendix 1.
Description of Four SE CESUs

The Gulf Coast Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (GC-CESU)

This CESU was established in 2002 and has 6 federal agency partners and 16 private sector partners, the most partners of any of the four SE CESUs. Texas A&M University in College Station, TX serves as the host. Encompasses 7 states from Texas to Florida. Closely associated with National Parks in a band from Palo Alto Battlefield NHS, across Vicksburg NMP, to De Soto NM.

NPS CESU Coordinator: Dr. Gillian Bowser, (979) 845-9787

CESU Federal Partners

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resource Division
- National Park Service
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Department of Defense
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- US Forest Service

CESU Private Sector Partners

- Auburn University
- Grambling State University
- Instituda Ecologicia, Mexico
- Louisiana State University
- Mississippi State University
- Southern University and A&M College
- *Texas A&M University, College Station (Host)*
- Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi
- Texas A&M University, Galveston
- Texas A&M University, Kingsville
- Troy State University
- University of Central Florida
- University of Florida
- University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc.
- University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- University of Texas, Austin
- Coastal Conservation Association
- The Nature Conservancy of Texas

The Piedmont – South Atlantic Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (PSA-CESU)

This CESU was established in 2003 and has 6 federal agency partners and 9 private sector partners. This is the newest CESU addition to the SE. The University of Georgia in Athens, GA serves as the host. Encompasses 4 states from Florida to North Carolina. Closely associated with National Parks in a band from Fort Matanzas NM, across Chattahoochie River NRA, to Wright Brothers NM.

NPS CESU Coordinator: Dr. Ray Albright, (865) 974-8443

CESU Federal Partners

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resource Division
- National Park Service
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service

CESU Private Sector Partners

- *University of Georgia (Host)*
- Auburn University
- Clemson University
- North Carolina State University
- Florida A&M University
- University of Florida
- University of Central Florida
- Audubon of Florida
- Audubon of South Carolina
- Audubon of North Carolina

The South Florida – Caribbean Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (SFC-CESU)

This CESU was established in 2000 and has 4 federal agency partners and 10 private sector partners. The University of Miami in Miami, FL serves as the host. Encompasses the southern end of Florida, Puerto Rico and Caribbean islands. Closely associated with National Parks in a group from Canaveral NS south to Virgin Islands NP.

NPS CESU Coordinator: Dr. Carol Daniels, (305) 361-4904

CESU Federal Partners

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resource Division
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

CESU Private Sector Partners

- *University of Miami (Host)*
- Nova Southeastern University
- Florida A & M University
- Barry University
- University of Florida
- University of North Carolina at Wilmington
- University of Puerto Rico
- University of the Virgin Islands
- Audubon Society of Florida
- Florida Atlantic University

The Southern Appalachian Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (SA-CESU)

This CESU was established in 1999 and has 4 federal agency partners and 15 private sector partners. This is the oldest CESU in the SE. The University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN serves as the host. Encompasses 8 states from northern Alabama to Virginia. Closely associated with National Parks in a band from Little River Canyon NP to Shenandoah NP.

NPS CESU Coordinator: Dr. Ray Albright, (865) 974-8443

CESU Federal Partners

- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resource Division
- National Park Service
- Department of Energy
- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

CESU Private Sector Partners

- *University of Tennessee (Host)*
- Appalachian State University
- Florida A&M University
- Western Carolina University
- Foothills Land Conservancy
- Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association
- Joint Institute for Energy and the Environment
- National Council for Air and Stream Improvement
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory

- Southern Appalachian Man and Biosphere
- University of Kentucky
- Western Kentucky University
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Tennessee Technological University
- Lincoln Memorial University

Commonalities and Distinctions of the SE CESUs

Attribute	**Gulf Coast**	**Piedmont – South Atlantic**	**Florida / Caribbean**	**Southern Appalachian**
Year of Origin	2002	2003	2000	1999
Number of Federal Partners	7	4	4	6
Common Federal Agencies	NPS, BLM, USGS	Same	Same	Same
Distinct Federal Agencies	NRCS, DoD, NASA, USFS	USFS	USFWS	DOE, USFS
NPS Regions Associated	SE, MW, IM	SE	SE	SE, NE
Number of States Associated	7	4	1	8
Host University	Texas A&M – College Station	University of Georgia	University of Miami	University of Tennessee
Number of Non Federal Partners	16	10	10	15
Approx Number Of Associated Parks	23	19	11	20

Appendix 2.

Protocol for Developing, Approving and Tracking Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Proposals

Developed by: Dr. Carol Daniels (CESU Research Coordinator, South Florida and Caribbean CESU)
Dr. Ray Albright (CESU Research Coordinator, Southern Appalachian CESU) and
Kathleen Batke (Contracting Officer, Southeast Regional Office)

It all starts with a need for assistance. The need could be from a Park, a Learning Center, an I&M Network, the Regional Office or any NPS unit or program. The need could involve research, technical assistance or education. The need may deal with something in the area of cultural, social, physical or biological sciences. Whatever the need, the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs) in the Southeast Region can help in the solution.

This paper presents the process, or the protocol, for taking a need and developing it into a project through a CESU[1] in the Southeast Region.

There are two possible scenarios of project development:

1. when the technical expert, or principal investigator, is already known and is agreeable to perform the work for the Park Service; and
2. when the principal investigator is not known and one needs to be found.

Regardless of the scenario, two distinct sets of actions occur: actions by the Park Service and CESU; and actions by the host/partner institution where the principal investigator resides. The term, 'principal investigator' refers to the specialist, researcher, investigator, evaluator, technical expert or instructor required to assist in the need. The term 'Park' refers to the NPS project representative in any NPS unit or program.

SCENARIO 1 – Principal Investigator Already Known.
1) The Park develops a DRAFT statement of work* for the need and forwards it to the CESU Coordinator for a review of appropriateness*. The CESU Coordinator may be informally involved in the development of the draft SOW if so desired. The review of appropriateness is documented and forwarded to the Park. (* See SOW guidelines and Review of Appropriateness criteria below.)
2) Collaboration with a technical expert or principal investigator (PI) is established. The PI may then work with Park to develop a FINAL SOW. The Host University and/or CESU Director are notified of the intent of the project.
3) The PI, using established institutional procedures for proposal preparation, develops a detailed proposal (contains technical plus estimated costs) which addresses all aspects of the final SOW. The PI sends the detailed proposal to the Park (with copy to CESU Coordinator).

[1] The reader needs to be familiar with the function and partnerships of the CESUs within the SE Region. If not, then contact a CESU Coordinator for this information.

4) The CESU Coordinator, with input from the Park, completes a technical evaluation* of the detailed proposal. If concerns are found, the proposal can be revised, delayed or cancelled. The CESU Coordinator documents the technical evaluation results and forwards to the Park. (* See Technical Evaluation criteria below.)
5) The final detailed proposal (contains technical and costs) is routed through PI's institutional approval process which involves the partner institution administrative office (e.g. Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs). This step could progress concurrently with step 4 in some situations.
6) The Park submits the complete package to the SERO Contracting Officer (CO): the final proposal; the final SOW (electronic copy); the review of appropriateness statement; the technical evaluation statement; and a DI-1 funds obligation form (purchase request).
7) The SERO CO processes the project as a task order under the cooperative agreement for the host or partner. The CO will verify the cost reasonableness based on the cost proposal and technical evaluation. Note that the SERO CO can assist, upon request, with cost negotiation/development in earlier steps.
8) The SERO CO informs host/partner institution of award and obligates the funds. The CO completes the task order distribution and COTR delegation. The task order distribution includes the COTR, the host/partner institution, the CESU Coordinator, the Park AO and any additional requested individuals.
9) COTR and SERO CO jointly administer the task order.

SCENARIO 2 – Principal Investigator is not known.
1) This is identical to Step 1 of Scenario 1 in that the Park develops a DRAFT statement of work* for the need and forwards it to the CESU Coordinator for a review of appropriateness*. (* See SOW guidelines and Review of Appropriateness criteria below.)
2) The CESU Coordinator can use two search methods to find a PI from a host/partner institution: • the CESU Coordinator examines the research expertise database and contacts the PI(s); • the CESU Coordinator sends an e-mail announcement to the CESU host/partners. The announcement could go out to the CESU mailing list and/or is posted on the CESU web site.
3) If the CESU Coordinator deems this response to be insufficient, the CESU Coordinator can then look beyond the host/partner institutions in the CESU to other CESUs both in the region and across the nation. This broader search can be conducted initially at the Park's request.
4) Any potentially interested PI at the host/partner institutions submit a letter of interest, a statement of qualifications to the CESU Coordinator. Any technical propositions to the SOW are welcomed but not required.
5) In the case of multiple responses, an unranked list of PIs is prepared by the CESU Coordinator and forwarded to the Park for consideration / acceptance. Recommendations from the CESU Coordinator may be attached for guidance.
6) The Park selects an appropriate PI (or possible multiple PIs for large projects) based on the CESU Coordinator's recommendations and followed up with a direct contact with the PI to ensure the PI is technically capable and agreeable to perform the work for the

Park Service. The CESU Coordinator can be used to facilitate the direct contact.
7) The process then continues as specified in Step 2 of Scenario 1 now that the PI has been identified, with the Park sending the draft statement of work to the PI for review.

Statement of Works Guidelines

A statement of works (SOW) simply defines what tasks are needed for a specific output. The audience is the cooperator. A clear, well developed SOW greatly simplifies the development of the cooperator's proposal. Here are some key elements in a SOW as it would pertain to CESU projects. This is by no means a definitive description of how to write a SOW and appropriate reference material should be consulted prior to a SOW development.

Prior to developing an SOW, the cost estimate of the project must be considered. The costs should be reasonable and support the justification.

- The **project objective** states the end result expected of the project in a single sentence. A second sentence may be necessary in some cases, but with the intent of keeping the objective short and sweet.

- The **scope of work** should describe the need and the justification for addressing the need. Literature references are not really necessary unless they would benefit the cooperator. Give a brief walk through of what you want to out of this project. Talk about where the project will take place, if this project ties into another project, if this project may continue for additional years, if any training is necessary, if any permits are necessary, if any special facilities / labs / equipment may be required, if there are any peculiarities associated with this project that the cooperator may need to be aware of (safety, remoteness, federal laws, park policies, wandering bands of angry Hottentots, etc.).

- Reference any **applicable documents** or websites that the cooperator needs for this project. List them out bullet form.

- **Tasks** should be described in very specific terms that clearly identify the work procedure involved and what the output should be. Use mandatory language such as 'shall', 'must', 'required to' and such for the cooperator tasks. The government only 'will' do things. If the task is to create a report, be specific about how the report should be arranged, what subject matter it should contain, what kind of images to include, what items should be shown on any maps and such forth. The key is to identify all the elements desired in the report as clearly as possible.

- A cooperative agreement requires **substantial involvement** or collaboration between the cooperator and the Park – this is one of the main differences between cooperative

agreements and contracts or awards. There are five common means of substantial involvement (listed on page 5). State the ones that pertain to your project.

- **Products** must be well defined. It may be a report, database, tangible product or event. Guard against unpleasant surprises at the end of the project by requesting progress reports on monthly or quarterly cycles.

- The **performance dates** shall be specified. Remember that in CESU task orders, the government can only obligate current year funding and not future year funds. For this reason, the performance dates may need to reflect an option to continue a project that exceeds any fiscal year funding based on the availability of funds.

- **Resources**, such as government furnished property (equipment), government furnished facilities, government furnished personnel or cooperator furnished properties must be specified. Clearly state what the Park Service will and will not provide.

- Outline a **budget** or state that a budget will be developed with the cooperator.

- List **Key Personnel** to serve as contacts for this project.

Review of Appropriateness Criteria

All CESU projects will undergo a review of appropriateness. This review is conducted by the CESU Coordinator and contains four checkpoint elements that must be met.

1. PMIS Listing. Projects applicable to the PMIS database must be properly entered into PMIS to meet CESU approval. It is the responsibility of the Park's representative to ensure the correct information of the project is contained in the PMIS database.

2. CESU Strategic Objectives. The proposed project must address some management issue or aspect that pertains to the biological, physical, cultural and/or social sciences. In addition, the nature of the project must be towards some aspect of research, provision of technical assistance and/or provision of education (training). The promotion of a working collaboration among federal agencies, universities and research institutes is also appropriate. These are the underlying tenets of the CESU program nationwide.

3. Pass Through Funding. The proposed projects must not be used to circumvent applicable Federal acquisition laws and regulations. Proposed projects that pass an unreasonable amount of the funding through to a subcontractor will not be approved.

4. Legal Provisions. The proposed project must meet the legal aspects of a cooperative agreement. Specifically, three major elements in Director's Orders 20 must be met (refer to DO 20 for definitions and more information and reference P.L. 104-208, P.L. 105-391, P.L. 104-333, and 16 U.S.C. 5933 for legislative authority):
   A. *Value Transfer*. The agreement is used to transfer money, property, services, or anything else of value from the National Park Service to the partner (*this element is intrinsic to all projects*).
   B. *Public purpose*. The project must show support between the National Park Service and a state, local government, tribal government or other non-Federal partner; or carry out any National Park Service program, authorized by law or by appropriation, with a state, local or tribal government, other public entity, educational institution, or private nonprofit organization; or develop adequate, coordinated, cooperative research and training programs concerning the resources of the National Park System with a public or private educational institution, state, or a political subdivision of a State. (*This element has a very broad application that is automatically met if the project supports park programs.)*
   C. *Substantial Involvement.* The review will document the method(s) of substantial involvement. At least one method is always met just by the nature of collaborative projects. These methods are:

      1. Park Service and cooperator collaborating or jointly participating in reviewing and/or modifying proposals, data and/or reports.
      2. Park Service and cooperator jointly participate in accomplishing the project.
      3. Considerable Park Service involvement is anticipated prior to project implementation to insure legal compliance with environmental protection (NEPA) as well as obtaining any necessary permits.
      4. Extensive collaboration anticipated to incorporate findings or product into park operations.
      5. Joint participation is anticipated in the development of interpretive messages presented in various interpretive media (videos, waysides, brochures, etc.).

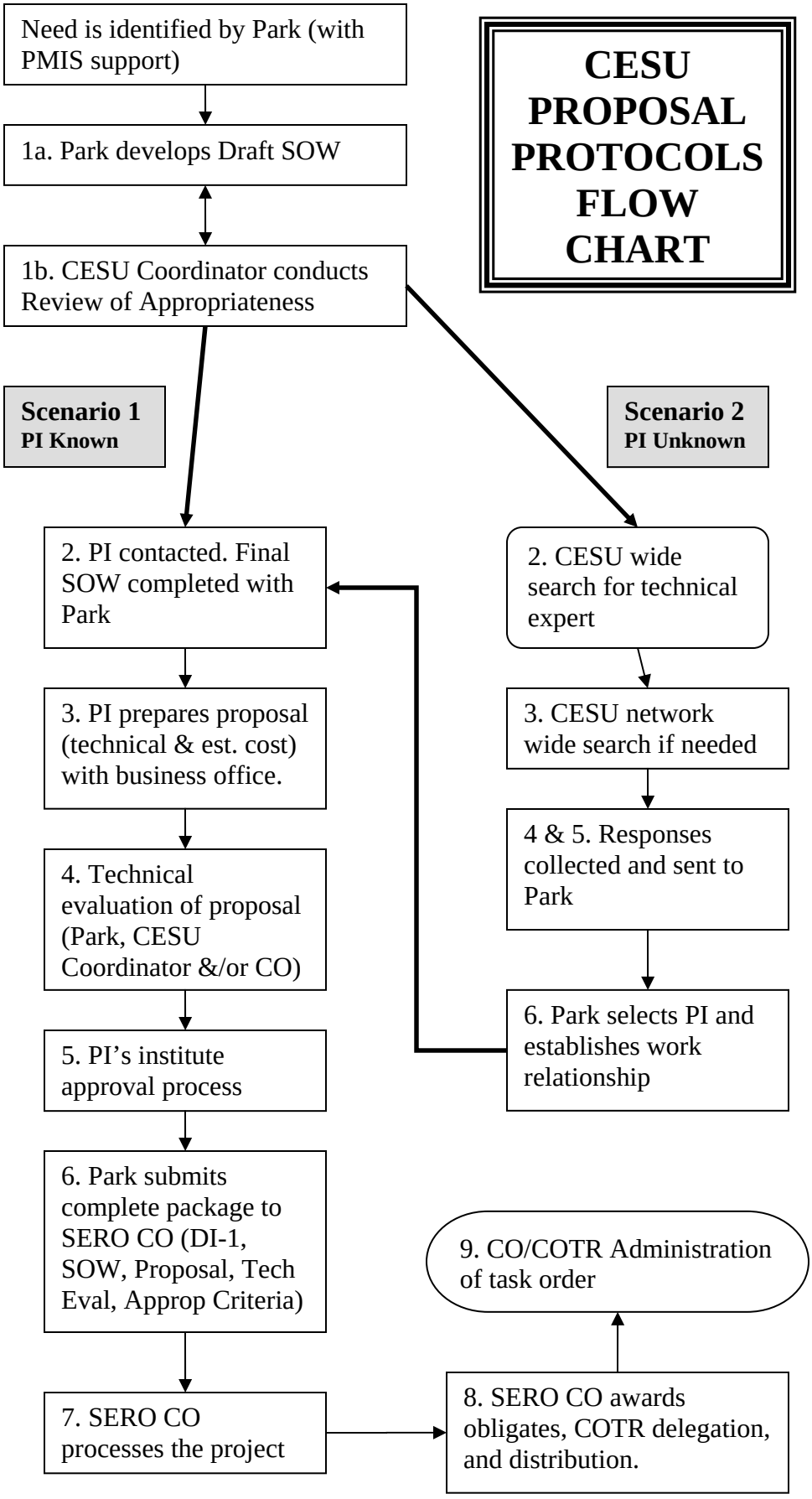
Technical Review/Evaluation Criteria

The cost proposal and technical elements of the project are reviewed to ensure the costs are reasonable and the methodology / approach is sound. The intent of this review is to both document a quality assurance check and to allow negotiation in the task order. Close communications between the Park, the CESU Coordinator and the SERO CO should expedite this review. There are 3 key checkpoint items in this review:

1. *Expertise.* The proposed project is reviewed to ensure the investigator / evaluator / specialist are qualified and capable of performing the task(s). The skill mix of multiple participants is examined as well.

2. *Methodology.* A final check that the methodologies are clearly described and technically sound. The review looks for well defined deliverables, appropriate timelines, facilities involved and rational protocols / equipment.

3. *Costs.* Are the costs reasonable? This is the critical review question. The material and supplies costs plus the travel costs are evaluated. The amount of subcontracting (technical and cost) is also evaluated.


CESU PROPOSAL PROTOCOLS FLOW CHART
Need is identified by Park (with PMIS support)
1a. Park develops Draft SOW
1b. CESU Coordinator conducts Review of Appropriateness
Scenario 1
PI Known
Scenario 2
PI Unknown
2. PI contacted. Final SOW completed with Park
3. PI prepares proposal (technical & est. cost) with business office.
4. Technical evaluation of proposal (Park, CESU Coordinator &/or CO)
5. PI's institute approval process
6. Park submits complete package to SERO CO (DI-1, SOW, Proposal, Tech Eval, Approp Criteria)
7. SERO CO processes the project
2. CESU wide search for technical expert
3. CESU network wide search if needed
4 & 5. Responses collected and sent to Park
6. Park selects PI and establishes work relationship
8. SERO CO awards obligates, COTR delegation, and distribution.
9. CO/COTR Administration of task order