



**South Florida Caribbean
Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
Conference Call Minutes
Thursday, July 25, 2019, 2:00 pm eastern**

Call In Information

Audio Conference Number: 866.708.5073

Participant Code: 600 10 78#

Leader Code: 467 81 77#

Participants

Carol Daniels, SFC-CESU – National Parks Service
Helena Solo-Gabriele, SFC-CESU – University of Miami
Ken Rice, U.S. Geological Survey
John Baldwin, Florida Atlantic University
Jose Lopez, Nova University
Laura Brandt, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mike Durako, University of North Carolina - Wilmington
Robert Gutierrez, Florida International University
Sherry Whitaker, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Tom Fish, National CESU
Veronica Delgado, Nova University

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1. Welcome, Roll Call
 2. Approval of Minutes. Helena reviewed the minutes from the April 24, 2019 meeting. The minutes were approved.
 3. NPS contracts set up. Carol mentioned that applications are missing from ORCA, the Avian Research Institute, and from the University of Puerto Rico. These three agencies have until December 2019 to submit their applications. All other SFC CESU member agreements have been finalized or are in process. Those that are in process should be completed in the August to September time frame.
 4. Indiana University's Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands was not required to become a member of the SFC CESU in order to continue their current project on boater education in collaboration with the Everglades. Indiana University's Eppley Center is a member of the Great Lakes CESU which allows them to petition the SFC CESU to move forward with their agreement.

5. Continuation of the leadership of the SFC CESU past 5 year renewal. Helena mentioned that she does not plan to continue as co-director of the SFC CESU past the 5 year renewal. The main reason is because of her current research load has increased significantly. She is willing to transition at the most appropriate time up through the end of the current 5 year period which ends in about 1 year (summer of 2020). Tom Fish explained that the new host institution can be determined in one of two ways. The first way is as “a decision of internal governance.” This requires a consensus of the SFC CESU partners for the new host. Alternatively, a full regional competition would be required which would involve a request for proposals.

A considerable discussion ensued in terms of the benefits and drawbacks of each approach. A recommendation was made to formally inform all of the partners of the opportunity to host the SFC CESU and to then discuss internally the best route during the next SFC CESU meeting. **Action item:** Helena to draft a one-page bullet outline about the responsibilities of the host institution. Tom and Carol to review and Helena to then distribute to the group.

6. Federal and Non-Federal Partners News and Updates.
 - Sherry mentioned that there have been a few new awards made in response to the proposals received from the new proposal requests.
 - Ken Rice mentioned that the administration of awards is taking longer than normal for approval through the various federal Departments. Awards are still being made but at a slower pace.
 - Tom mentioned the activities associated with the 20-year anniversary of the CESU which include the new CESU logo, a meeting during this coming summer/fall with the council and directors to identify events to commemorate the anniversary. An infographic will be available shortly. There will be a 20-year evaluation of projects. Students from Howard University will be engaged in the process. The 20th anniversary will also be recognized at the Ecological Society meeting. The Rocky Mountain CESU will host a symposium commemorating the CESU. There will be publications highlighting accomplishments during the last 20 years. Tom is soliciting photos with captions and with examples of projects that show people working collaboratively in the field.
 - Tom mentioned that he is currently in communication with FEMA. He is looking at how FEMA can be a part of the project. They have exhibited strong interest. Likewise the CDC is another potential new federal partner. The national CESU has executed an MOU with the Defense POW Accounting Agency, which focuses on the forensics of lost military personnel. This will be the 16th partner at the federal level.
 - Carol mentioned that the storm recovery team funded a couple of projects through the SFC CESU.
 - Tom mentioned that he is working on the host University support funding. He will inform Helena once it is ready.
7. Next meeting/call is scheduled for Thursday, September 19 at 2 pm.