CESU Directors Meeting  
9-28-2021

* Did around room introductions
* Presentation – CESU Program Characterization and Evaluation
  + By Tom Fish and Shawn Dalton
  + Trying to capture the level of activities occurring
    - Capture the main reason for the CESU and how it has grown
    - Using the information that we have
  + Two approaches
    - Use best available data
    - Appreciative inquiry approach
      * Want to know where things have gone really well and dig into it more
      * Examples: research, technical assistance, education/capacity building
  + Projects that have gone well
    - North Atlantic Coast – sat around fire and discussed projects that could be conducted cooperatively
      * Facilitating better interaction with larger groups
    - Sharon Ziegler-Chong – contacted by a non-partner and got a graduate student to help on a native peoples story map project
      * Pulled in that non-partner, graduate students, other organization, and the Host University
      * Bringing ideas and relationships together-CESU allowed all of this to happen, was a mechanism
    - Rocky Mountains CESU – annual student award and highlight a students work on a CESU project
      * Students get an opportunity to get experience through a CESU project and then get jobs with either an agency or academia
    - Chesapeake Watershed – projects start with one PI going on because of the federal partners interest and then expands to other institutions
      * Telling stories of national park research via videos for the national parks
    - Tom Fish is the glue – helping educate and to transition CESU Directors
  + Thoughts on changing climate in which the CESU is operating
    - Originally used for federal partners to gain access to institution resources
    - How has the CESU role changed?
    - Judith - CESU Value – get funding quickly and lots of opportunities for young scientists to get involved in a very directed project – allows them to build a resume of accomplishment
      * Not providing enough PR on the things that CESU does accomplish
      * Option – centralized news and media office
      * Good opportunity to educate on career paths students could be following instead of just professor
    - Training – professional and student
      * Co-development of research
      * Get students direct access to applied research
      * Build on the original intent of the CESU
      * Students better qualified for agency positions
    - Sharon – connection to local communities
      * Definite divide between what the feds are doing and what the local community conservations are
      * CESU is the glue between these two groups – especially student research
      * Great mechanism to engage feds with local roots, resources, and future leaders of the community
    - Connection between one region and their research that occurs elsewhere
    - Many students finding their unknown pathway through the CESU
      * Help students find a career path
    - Diversity, equity, and inclusion – CESU’s role
      * University of Rhode Island- SEER
        + Developing internships in underrepresented and marginalized neighborhoods where hurricanes or natural disasters occur and train them how to respond to these disasters
    - Requirement that the agency works with the partner (visitor services, students, PIs, etc.)
      * Overlooked relationship building that occurs in the NPS
      * Like idea of research coordinator for other federal partners besides the NPS
        + Other partners have disconnects over the different regions due to the lack of research coordinator
        + NPS considered boundary organization
  + Characteristics of a successful CESU site and why
    - National meeting - time to be reenergized by the collegiality
    - Competitiveness of early career faculty – CESU projects help them launch their careers
    - Solving regional problems – helps moves sites forward in different regions
    - Value of bringing organizations together
    - Have searchable database
    - Have stories/project highlights
    - Have co/located active research coordinators
    - Have passionate leaders
  + Feel free to send Tom Fish people to have join the PI meetings – other PI or students that are heavily involved in CESU projects
  + Student network- is there a desirable CESU student network across CESUs
    - Need to figure out how many projects there are and about the students involved in those projects
    - CESU-focus session at all-hands meeting in September 2022 for LTER
      * Students like opportunities for career planning