

## **Using the CPCESU Cooperative Agreement**

### **Responsibilities of NPS Key Officials, Principal Investigators, the Research Coordinator and Ongoing Project Management**

**INTRODUCTION:** It is imperative that usable products (reports, data, collections, and management recommendations) are produced in a timely manner for all projects processed through the Colorado Plateau Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CPCESU). It is also required that the information be made available for public distribution and that information and reports are archived. This document outlines the policy and procedures for management and peer review of draft reports, ongoing project management, final product disposition, and information sharing. Responsible parties are identified. Protocols for project initiation have previously been developed and are posted on the CPCESU web site and thus are not covered here.

**ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:** To meet the above objectives, a close working relationship between the Colorado Plateau Research Coordinator and the park Key Official (formerly technical representative), as well as between the park Key Official and the Principal Investigator is required.

**The project or park Key Official has the primary responsibility for project management. This includes:**

- Preparing the Scope of Work and budget in cooperation with the principal investigator and submitting to the CPCESU
- Completing the Project cover Sheet and the Project Summary Form and submitting to the CPCESU
- Insuring that the Purchase Request is processed through the Denver Budget Office
- Maintaining a close working relationship and ongoing communication with the PI
- Issuing research and collecting permits and collecting Investigator's Annual Reports
- Monitoring project progress
- Reviewing invoices and recommending payment or non-payment
- Managing peer review of draft products
- Applying findings to park management

**The Principal Investigator has the primary responsibility of conducting the technical assistance or research. Responsibilities include:**

- Preparing the Scope of Work and budget in cooperation with the park Key Official, and submitting to the University Office of Grants or Sponsored Projects
- Maintaining a close working relationship and ongoing communication with the Key Official
- Working with the University Office of Grants or Sponsored Project to complete Standard Forms 424 and 424a

- Obtaining all necessary signatures from the University or other partner administration
- Keeping the project on schedule
- Submitting invoices for payment
- Preparing and submitting Investigator's Annual Reports
- Preparing and submitting a report abstract that is suitable for public distribution
- Preparing and submitting draft and final reports to the Key Official and the CPCESU Research Coordinator

**The Research Coordinator plays an assistance and coordination role. Responsibilities include:**

- Assisting parks in finding a highly qualified and productive PI
- Determining if the CPCESU cooperative agreement is the appropriate tool for processing a project
- Coordinating project initiation, insuring all necessary paperwork is received from park Key Official, all necessary signatures are acquired, and funds are obligated
- Assisting Key Official in project trouble shooting and dispute resolution
- Assisting in identification of report peer reviewers
- Acquiring electronic and hard copy of final products prior to payment of final invoice (final 10%) to distribute to the Technical Information Center in Denver and CPCESU files in Flagstaff
- Making products readily available to the public while protecting sensitive locality information by posting hotlinks to PDF files via the CPCESU web site
- Providing NPS product information to the CPCESU host university for inclusion in annual reports

**ONGOING PROJECT MANAGEMENT:** It is essential that the Key Official remain substantially involved and aware of project activities from the time of initiation through completion. This is the only way to insure that the project is on target, satisfactory progress is being made, or a determination made that the Scope of Work needs to be modified based upon new information. It is the best method to identify serious problems, initiate resolution, and to insure the success of a project.

- Timeliness – The Scope of Work should provide a timeline, which includes due dates for interim reports, draft reports, and final products. The Research Coordinator keeps a file of all active projects and maintains an online database with project start and end dates. Interim reports should be provided to the Key Official. Annual reports and final products should be provided to the Key Official and to the Research Coordinator. The Key Official should inform the Research Coordinator if a project is falling behind schedule, and if a no-cost time extension will be required to assist in getting the project back on track.

Upon completion of a project and receipt of a report abstract and the two paper copies and a PDF file of the final product by the CPCESU, the CESU will note that the project is complete on the Project Summary Form. The report abstract and link to the entire report will be posted on the CPCESU web site. In the event that the report contains sensitive, locality information, the report abstract will be written by the Principal Investigator so that it is suitable for public distribution. CPCESU will make only the report abstract available on the website.

- Problem Resolution – Problem prevention is especially important. When work is being conducted through a cooperative agreement, legal recourse is limited. All work conducted through a cooperative agreement should be a collaborative effort between the funding agency and the Principal Investigator. Insuring that the Principal Investigator is highly qualified and motivated to do the work should alleviate most problems. A thorough understanding between the cooperators of what is expected and frequent, effective communication will go a long way in preventing problems. If, despite the best efforts of the Key Official, problems arise that jeopardize the timely delivery of the desired products, the Key Official should contact the Research Coordinator for assistance in resolving the problem. The Research Coordinator, based upon input from Key Officials, will keep an informal file of performance of present and past investigators for the sake of future problem prevention.
- Product Review – The Key Official is responsible for management and scientific review of research and technical assistance products. The Research Coordinator will assist, upon request, in finding scientific peer reviewers among the partner organizations or parks. Management review is conducted to insure that the product targets the management question being asked and that the material is provided in a form that can be applied to decision-making. Scientific peer review is conducted to insure that the product reflects good science and valid interpretation of results.
- Product Disposition – A minimum of a report abstract and two hard copies and a PDF file of each final report should be provided to the CPCESU. A hard copy will be archived at the CPCESU in Flagstaff and the Technical Information Center, in Denver. A PDF file of the product will be posted on the CPCESU web site. Disposition of collections, data and field notes should be detailed in the Scope of Work.