

Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Coast CESU

July 12, 2011

Convened by WebEx

Participants

Non-Federal Partners

URI

Judith Swift

Art Gold

Deb Coty

Robert Sand

Univ of Maryland Eastern Shore

Joe Pitula

University of Massachusetts Boston

Jack Wiggan

Rutgers University

Norbert Psuty

Michael DeLuca

Andrea Spahn

Stony Brook University

Lawrence Swanson

College of the Atlantic

John Anderson

Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies

Richard Delaney

Cornell University

Stephen Smith

Magdeline Laba

Susan Hoskins

Federal Partners

USDA-NRCS

Theodis Bunch

NOAA

Nicole Bartlett

USGS

Howard Ginsberg

US Army Corps

Deannda Sontag

National Park Service

Charles Roman

CESU Network Office

Tom Fish

- **Welcome and Introductions**

- Judith Swift (URI, CESU Host University) called the meeting to order at 12 noon
- The meeting was convened by a WebEx format, with thanks extended to Robert Sand (URI Computer Systems) for his assistance in setting-up and guiding us through this technology
- This North Atlantic Coast CESU annual meeting was originally planned to be hosted by Rutgers University Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, but expected attendance was low so the meeting was re-scheduled and

convened as a WedEx. Thanks were extended to those that were involved in the planning for the Rutgers site meeting.

-- Judith Swift stressed to all partners the importance of timely review and signature of amendments to the CESU Cooperative Agreement that add new non-federal and federal partners

-- ACTION ITEM: Judith mentioned that applications for two new non-federal partners (Northeastern Univ and the Biodiversity Research Institute) have been distributed to North Atlantic Coast CESU partners for consideration. Responses from partners are due to Judith by Aug 22, 2011.

- **Federal Agency Presentations on research initiatives and opportunities**

-- *USGS*: Howard Ginsberg (Research Ecologist and USGS representative for the North Atlantic Coast CESU) provided an overview of research activities of the USGS-Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and described the organization of the agency into themes of geology, hydrology, geography, and biology.

Howard stated that USGS is the research agency for Department of the Interior bureaus, such as the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service, and USGS scientists often collaborate with non-federal CESU scientists to conduct the research. He discussed several ongoing or recently completed USGS projects conducted in collaboration with North Atlantic Coast CESU university faculty and students, including studies on vector-borne diseases, coastal geomorphology, and salt marsh ecology.

-- *USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service*: Theodis Bunch (Acting National CESU Coordinator for USDA-NRCS) spoke on the conservation mission of NRCS through technical assistance and research, with a focus on working with private landowners. He discussed some projects with URI facilitated by the CESU agreement.

Regarding opportunities it was stated that individual state NRCS offices issue annual requests for statements of interest.

-- *NOAA*: Nicole Bartlett (Northeast Region Coordinator and NOAA representative for the North Atlantic Coast CESU) provided an overview of the NOAA “hubs” and programs throughout the northeast, with particular mention of habitat restoration and climate change initiatives.

NOAA is a new partner to the CESU Network and continues to work through administrative challenges, but Nicole was optimistic that the North Atlantic Coast CESU will be a valued mechanism for NOAA to collaborate with partners, especially regarding climate change and marine spatial planning topics.

-- *National Park Service*: Charles Roman serves as the NPS research coordinator of the North Atlantic Coast CESU. He spoke on the natural and cultural resource conservation-oriented mission of the NPS, identified the myriad of natural resource management issues that confront coastal National Parks in the northeast, and pointed to emerging program areas (e.g., marine resources, climate change) that are expected to provide opportunities for collaboration with CESU partners.

- **Non-Federal Partner Presentations on Capabilities and Focus Areas**

-- *Cornell University:* Cornell University was welcomed as a new member of the North Atlantic Coast CESU. Stephen Smith of the Institute for Resource Information Sciences offered an overview of the Institute's research, research management, and outreach capabilities, providing numerous examples including expertise in bathymetric LIDAR, vegetation mapping, shoreline change analysis, wetland and SAV inventories, and education and training programs.
<http://iris.css.cornell.edu/>

-- *University of Rhode Island:* Art Gold (Department of Natural Resources Science) provided a brief overview of some of the projects that are supported by federal agencies through the CESU agreement. He stressed the valued role of student involvement in research projects and highlighted a student internship project where a URI graduate student had an opportunity to work with the Science Advisor for the National Park Service.
 He suggested that future CESU activities and projects would benefit from more formal interactions among partners – benefiting from the enormous multidisciplinary strength of the CESU Network.
<http://www.ci.uri.edu/>

-- *Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies:* The Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies was welcomed as a new member. Richard Delaney (Executive Director) highlighted the Center's renowned whale/marine mammal research program, as well as studies and long-term monitoring involving coastal geology, marine habitat mapping, water quality, aquaculture, and other topics. The Center also has programs in marine education, marine policy, and marine animal disentanglement response.
<http://www.coastalstudies.org/>

-- *Rutgers University:* Michael DeLuca and Norbert Psuty (Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences) spoke of the broad coastal and marine-related disciplines addressed through the Institute, NJ Sea Grant Consortium, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, and other programs at Rutgers. Some recent CESU-sponsored activities include sponsoring of a workshop on a seamless network of marine protected areas for the NY-NJ Bight, shoreline change and sediment budget analyses for barrier island systems, marine habitat mapping, and environmental education programs. In addition to the National Park Service, Rutgers investigators are working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service through the CESU program.
<http://marine.rutgers.edu/main/>
- **Report from the CESU National Office (Tom Fish, CESU National Coordinator)**

-- Sherri Yost is now working with Tom Fish to address the enormous administrative burdens associated with the Network Office. Rotating Ph.D. fellows are also available to address various tasks in the National Network Office.

- The CESU Council is drafting a new member application and approval process, thus providing a consistent process for all of the geographically-located CESUs. This new “draft” process will be sent to all CESUs for review and comment.
- A CESU Administrative Guide is being developed, intended to provide guidance on CESU procedures for obligating funds and others processes.
- The CESU Network Strategic Plan is being updated. The existing Plan was originally prepared in 1999.
- A CESU collaborator is developing a comprehensive project evaluation and inventory database for the entire Network. Nationwide, the CESU program has supported over 7,000 projects since the start of the CESU network in 1999. The intent of this effort is to provide some basic synthesis and a searchable website.

ACTION ITEM – Judith Swift mentioned that the North Atlantic Coast CESU is considering ways to better track projects, providing a data base with links to final products, information on student involvement, and other fields. The key is to find a reasonable way to collect these data without an undue burden on the investigators or program managers. The North Atlantic CESU, through the URI host, will draft a data base and share with Tom Fish and others, perhaps ultimately serving as a model for others.

- **North Atlantic Coast CESU website update**

- Charles Roman reported that the North Atlantic Coast website has been updated, now providing pdf files of all CESU Cooperative Agreements and Modifications (adding new partners)
- For the National Park Service, the website will be used more for posting of specific procedures for preparation of study proposals and processing appropriate funding documents.

- **Student Internships**

- The CESU Network provides an ideal mechanism for matching student internship requirements with agency needs. Judith Swift reported on a North Atlantic Coast internship, supported by the NPS and by the University of Rhode Island, for a Ph.D. student to work in Washington with the Science Advisor to the Director of the National Park Service. A YouTube/podcast of the student, now Dr. Erika Lentz, was viewed by the group, where Erika discussed her experiences and the value of the internship to her young career.
- Charles Roman reported that the NPS plans to continue these kinds of internships, with NPS and university support. Pending the availability of funds, other internship opportunities will be available.
- Perhaps other federal agencies can follow the model that the National Park Service has found successful.

- **Future Meetings and Closing Remarks**

- The WebEx meeting met our needs for the 2011 Annual Meeting, but the group strongly stated a preference for face-to-face meetings in the future, with a field trip and group dinner providing enhanced opportunity for building collaborations.

-- WebEx would be fine for shorter duration meetings that may be needed to report on or discuss a single issue or topic.

-- The 2012 Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Coast CESU will be held in conjunction with the National CESU Network meeting, typically held in Washington DC in June.

-- John Anderson suggested that a future meeting of the North Atlantic CESU be hosted by College of the Atlantic and Acadia National Park's newly renovated Schoodic Education and Research Center.

- **Adjourn**

-- The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Minutes Respectively Submitted,
Charles Roman

August 25, 2011 (revised)