



The U.S. Department of War and the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units National Network

Military Mission Support Through the CESU Network

The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) National Network provides the U.S. Department of War (DoW) with cost-effective access to critical research, technical expertise, and education assistance for managing its nearly 27 million acres of diverse land, water, and airspace. This support is vital for maintaining realistic warfighter training environments, managing cultural resources, and achieving national security goals. Through the CESU Network, DoW partners with 19 Federal agencies and over 500 non-federal entities to develop solutions to challenges such as wildfires, flooding, and invasive species and modernizing mission-essential historic infrastructure to meet evolving operational demands. From fiscal year (FY) 2009-2025, the CESU network facilitated over 3,000 cooperative agreements between DoW and its partners at approximately 225 installations.

Mission Benefits

The CESU Network helps DoW support the warfighter, sustain military readiness, and steward its natural and cultural resources including:

- ▶ Enabling multidisciplinary problem-solving for installations and mission operations.
- ▶ Communicating local DoW priorities to Federal and state agencies, universities, and private organizations to advance mission effectiveness.
- ▶ Supporting priority DoW natural resources initiatives such as the Recovery and Sustainment Partnership (RASP).
- ▶ Creating the next generation of DoW natural and cultural resources professionals through internship and graduate student research opportunities.
- ▶ Establishing cost-setting measures that have yielded an estimated \$245 million in savings over a 16-year period.

DoW CESU Project Highlight



JBLM firefighting intern helps maintain critical training lands with a controlled burn.

At Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), a CESU Network cooperative agreement strengthens mission readiness by sustaining training lands, supporting timber harvest, and finding cooperative solutions to environmental compliance challenges. Additionally, the agreement fosters job training and education to service members, veterans, and military spouses through JBLM's internship program. This program has yielded over 115,000 volunteer hours (equivalent to \$4.6M in labor) since 2014, benefiting the installation and equipping participants with skills and certifications in firefighting, pest management, biological surveys, and forestry. Through this program, servicemembers obtain valuable skills and unique access to universities and colleges so they can further their education and career goals after their service ends. The CESU cooperative agreement at JBLM creates a win-win-win for the mission, our servicemembers, and long-term land stewardship.



JBLM volunteers assist with an experimental wetland revegetation project.

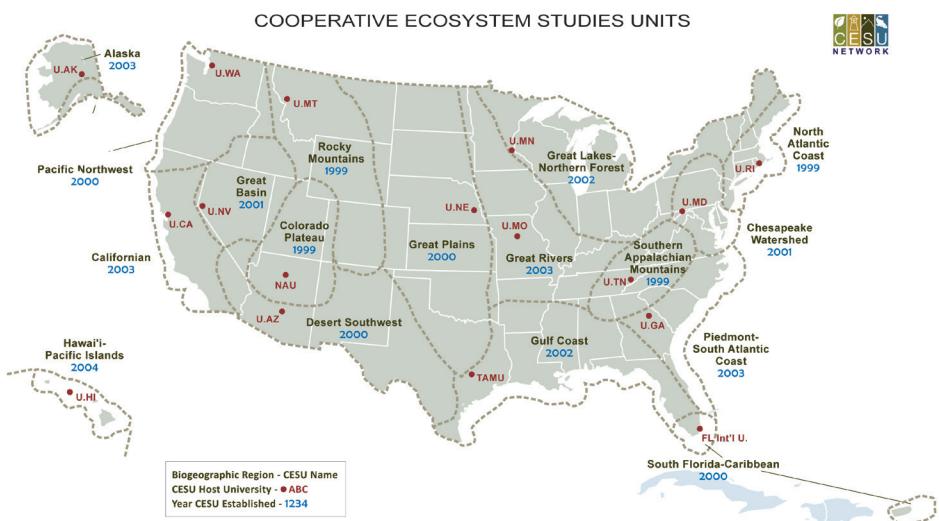


Airmen, their spouses, and civilian partners planted longleaf pine trees at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, Jan. 15, 2020. The 325th Civil Engineer Squadron natural resources section, and contracted partners planted longleaf pine trees along Highway 98 near Fire Station 4 at Silver Flag Road. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Magen M. Reeves)

CESU Network Background

- ▶ Established in 1999 and led by a National Coordinator in the National Park Service.
- ▶ Includes 17 strategically aligned regional units and is coordinated by the National CESU Council comprised of Federal agency representatives from CESU Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signatories.
- ▶ Each regional CESU is comprised of Federal agencies, host universities, and partner institutions.
- ▶ DoW became a CESU Federal agency partner through an amendment to the MOU in 2000 and is currently a member of all 17 CESU regions.
- ▶ The DoW Legacy Resource Management Program provides annual funding for membership, which gives the Military Departments access to all 17 regional CESUs.
- ▶ The CESU Network provides research, technical assistance, and training to the Federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners.
- ▶ Cooperative agreements offer a mechanism by which DoW entities can partner with universities, state resource agencies or other Federal agencies to optimize capacity of installation lands and waters to support the military mission and to comply with federal laws, executive orders, and regulations.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Energy, Installations, and Environment (OASW(EI&E)) maintains a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to ensure the Military Services have access to a contracting office to execute CESU agreements. Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) regional offices also execute agreements for the Navy and Marine Corps via the CESU Network, enabling tailored support for operational readiness and strategic installation priorities across the Military Services.



For more information about
DoW's participation in the
CESU Network:

Forrest Cobb

DoW National CESU Program Manager

forrest.h.cobb2.civ@mail.mil