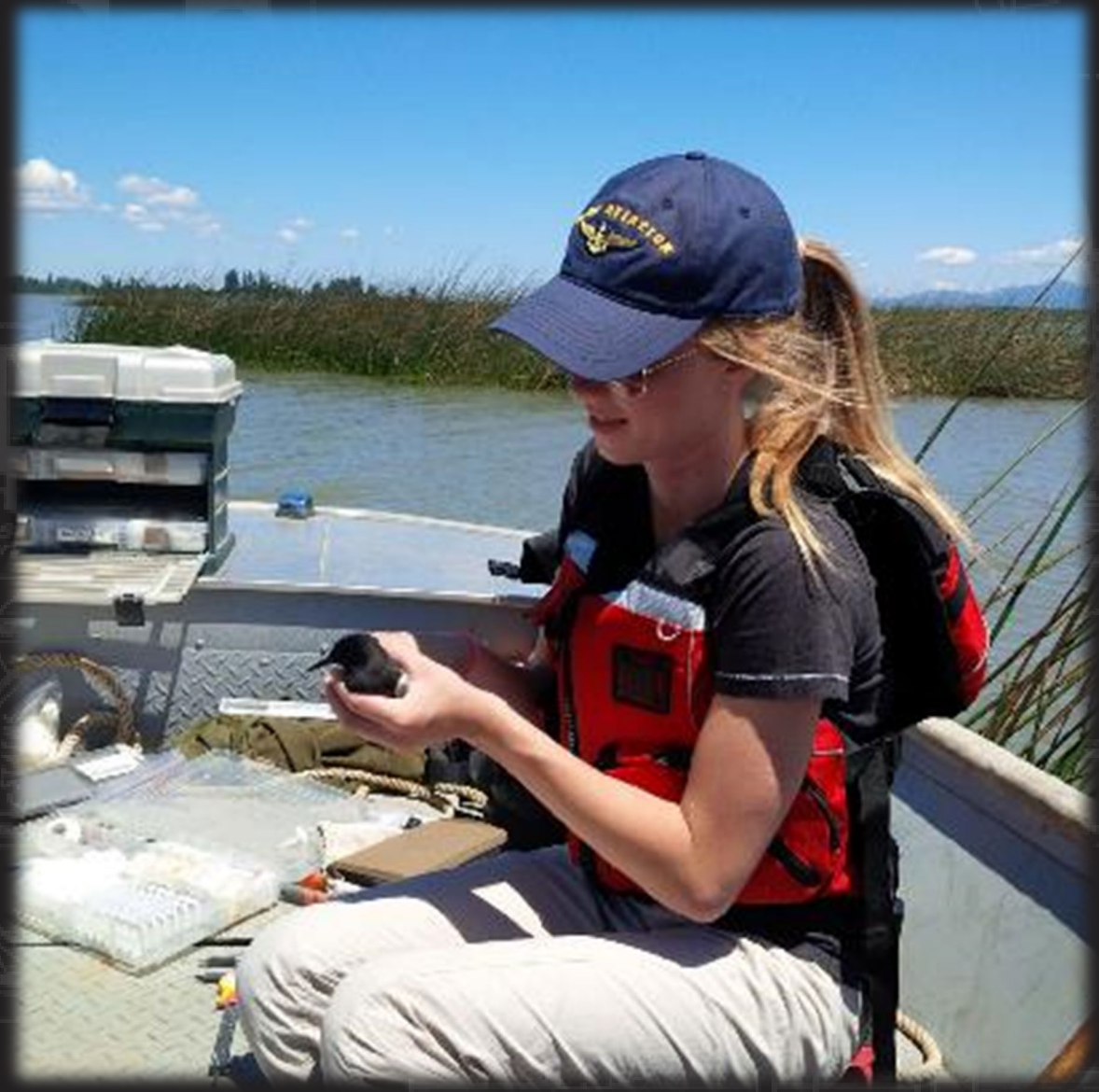
# COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS



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# What is a Cooperative Agreement?

- A legal assistance instrument as described by 31 USC 63, the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act (FGCA)
- Where funds (or a thing of value) are being transferred to a partner
- Where substantial involvement is expected between USACE and the partner when carrying out the activities within the agreement
  - Substantial USACE involvement could mean, for example, having the option to halt an activity if specifications aren't met, requiring approval of one phase before allowing the next to start, or monitoring performance to provide specific direction of the work.
  - It wouldn't be considered substantial involvement if our role was just to approve plans before award, ensure terms and conditions are met, or provide advice.
- Cooperative agreements must be executed by a certified grants officer.
- Cost is not the main determining factor when selecting the awardee. (Does not have to be low bid)

# USACE Cooperative Agreements Related to NRM

**Note**: USACE authority for cooperative agreements related to the recreation and environmental stewardship is limited to specific types/purposes:

- Educational and training activities

- Research and development – Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU)
- Management of undesirable plants on Federal lands

- Fish, wildlife, water quality, cultural resource management with Indian Tribes

.

# Overarching Authority for Cooperative Agreements - FGCA

**41 USC 501, Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977** (Amended by 31 USC 6301-08 Using Procurement Contracts and Grant and Cooperative Agreements)

- Requires federal agencies characterize the relationship between a federal and non-federal party as:
  - Procurement Contract **or**
  - Federal Financial Assistance

This act set forth requirements to use cooperative agreements and grants to transfer funds to non-Federal entities but did not provide authority by itself to enter into an agreement. There must be specific authority for the type of work being done.

# Noxious Weed Cooperative Agreements

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**7 USC 2814: Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 (Management of undesirable plants on Federal lands)**

- Agreements with State agencies (or their political subdivisions) to establish integrated management systems to control or contain undesirable plant species
- The cooperative agreement will:
  - prioritize and target undesirable plant species to be controlled
  - describe the integrated management system
  - define the duties of the Federal agency and the State agency
  - establish a timeframe
- Integrated management system can include:
  - Education
  - Preventative measures
  - Physical, mechanical methods, or biological methods
  - Cultural methods
  - Land management such as livestock/wildlife grazing

# Noxious Weed Cooperative Agreements

- The HQUSACE Project Manager (PM) for Land Use and Natural Resources may delegate signature authority for cooperative agreements to USACE District Commanders after reviewing and approving a draft scope of work and draft cooperative agreement.

- The PM for Land Use and Natural Resources shall review all cooperative agreements every five years from the date of issuance to determine if the cooperative agreements are still appropriate and relevant to the execution of the Federal Noxious Weed Act authorities.

- District Commanders wishing to execute a cooperative agreement under this authority shall submit a request via concurrence memo to the PM for Land Use and Natural Resources which includes:
  - A draft scope of work
  - A draft cooperative agreement

https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/coopagree/coopagree.cfm

# Training and Education Cooperative Agreements

**33 USC 2339, WRDA 2000, Section 213a: Assistance Programs**

- To further training and educational opportunities about water resources development projects
- May enter into cooperative agreements with non-Federal public and nonprofit entities
- For services relating to natural resources conservation or recreation
  - ➢ Delegation of authority provided down to District Commanders in fall 2024
  - ➢ Allows district grants officers to enter into local cooperative agreements under this authority
  - ➢ Similar to a contract, but provides more flexibility in the scope of work that often results in more getting done than through a contract
  - ➢ Career pipeline to participants, more employees from a variety of backgrounds

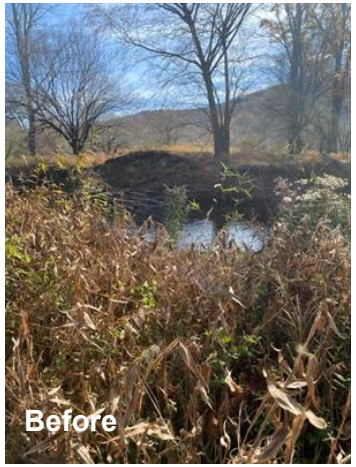
# Workforce Options and the FY26 Rec Strategy

- USACE FY26 NRM Strategic Staffing & Operations Plan sent out by Director of Operations, Mr. Hill on 22 October 2025
- Purpose: Outlines flexible strategies to allocate resources and sustain USACE Recreation operations during FY26.
- Priorities: Safe public access, public health and safety, and supporting the local communities and economies
- Objectives: Increase operational efficiencies, keep recreation areas open with blended workforce, prioritize essential services, expand capacity through partnerships
- **Goals:**
  - **Increase conservation corps student participation by 25% in FY 26**

# Western Pennsylvania Conservancy – Salmon Creek Fish Habitat Restoration

The partnership the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers formed with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy provided an opportunity to meet multiple management goals within 1,200 feet of shoreline along Salmon Creek, a tributary of Tionesta Creek Lake within the Pittsburgh District. These management goals included fish habitat restoration, educational opportunities, improved fisheries for anglers, revegetation, and streambank restoration and stabilization.

- **Partnership Type:** Cooperative Agreement and Friends of Reservoirs Large Grant Opportunity
- **Partners involved:**
  - Western Pennsylvania Conservancy - $47,479
  - Friends of Reservoirs – $32,056
  - Forest County Conservation District - $12,000
  - Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
  - Allegheny National Forest
- More than 500 volunteer hours, as well as rock and rootwad materials, were donated.
- Articles explaining the project have been shared on social media pages across agencies involved.
- This area will be used for education and creel surveys to identify changes in fisheries.
- This restoration effort will continue along the remaining 2,000 feet of affected shoreline to see the project through to completion.



# National Student Conservation Association (SCA) Cooperative Agreement

- National cooperative agreement administered by Fort Worth District, signed February 1, 2025. (Valid through January 31, 2030)
- USACE pays for crews and interns in a fee-for-service cost share, transferring funds via repositioning to SWF
- USACE provides training, equipment, on-the-job transportation
- SCA provides round-trip travel and living allowance, housing, liability/health insurance, *AmeriCorps education awards
  *(when available)

# About Conservation Corps

- More than 130 organizations around the country that are part of the Corps Network http://www.corpsnetwork.org/
- 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations
- Comprehensive youth development programs that engage young people, ages 16 - 25 and returning veterans up to age 35, in service to their communities and the environment
- Corps members receive
  - Job training/hands-on work experience
  - Academic programming
  - Support services
  - Leadership skills
  - Stipend based on living wage

The CorpsNetwork
Strengthening America through service and conservation

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NCYCC NORTH CAROLINA YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

# NC Youth Conservation Corps

- Regional agreement administered by Jacksonville District grants officer. Currently at Falls Lake, Jordan Lake, and Philpott Lake in the Wilmington District in VA and NC (SAW).
- Comprehensive youth development program using nature to teach:
  - Job and leadership skills
  - Community service
  - Environmental stewardship
  - Personal responsibility

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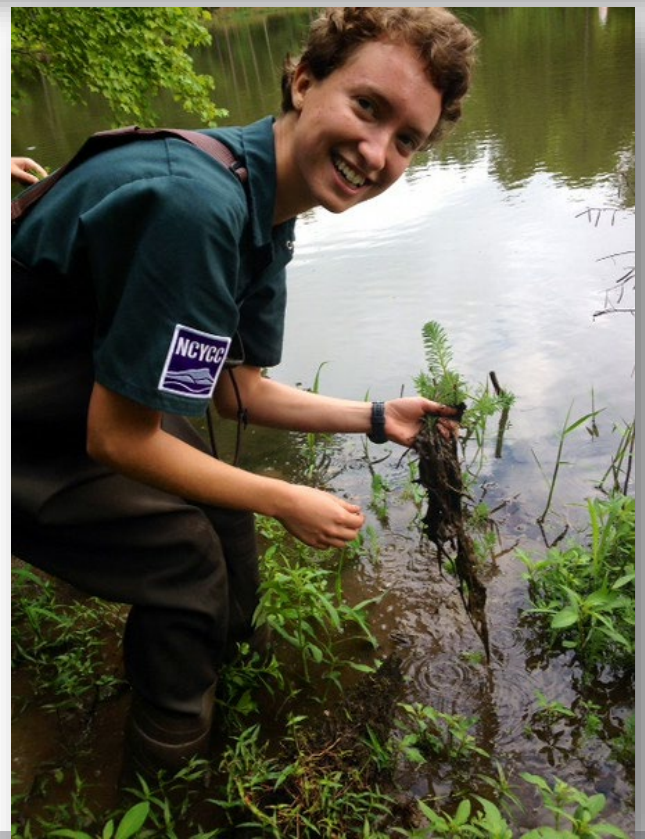

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# Northwest Youth Corps

- Cooperative Agreements in NWP and NWS
- Extensive trail work at Chief Joseph Dam, WA

# Cooperative Agreements with Tribes

**WRRDA 2014, Sec 1031(b), Cooperative Agreements with Indian Tribes**

- Authorizes Indian Tribes or a designated representative of an Indian tribe to carry out authorized activities of the Corps of Engineers to protect fish, wildlife, water quality, and cultural resources.
- Agreements will allow Tribes to build economic capacity while working on infrastructure and natural and cultural resources of mutual interest with USACE, especially in Indian Country.
- Allows resource sharing on a Government-to-Government basis.
- District sets up MOA with each Tribe as the overarching agreement to establish purpose and procedural steps for the two governments
- Cooperative agreement to transfer funds for specific work
- Delegation memo from Assistant Secretary of the Army (ASA) to Commanding General (CG) April 8, 2026
- Next step: Further delegation to District Commanders

# Research and Development Cooperative Agreements – CESU Program

- A national network of federal agencies, universities, tribes, state and local governments working together to provide technical, scientific, and educational support for natural/cultural resource management

- Organized in 17 geographic units with more than 475 partners

- MOU between agencies. Specific projects set up by cooperative agreements.

# Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units

- USACE agreements coordinated primarily by grants officers at ERDC *(**but some district Grants Officers have also processed CESU agreements*)
- Host universities coordinate admin support and access to staff/students
- Projects for education, research, technical assistance
- Facilitates collaboration across agencies/non-fed partners
- Provides a pathway for federal agencies to fund projects at partner institutions with defined overhead (17.5%) and cost-sharing  (average overhead rate outside of CESU network is 51%)
- Cooperative agreement can be issued for 5 years (using options)
- http://www.cesu.psu.edu/
- Procedures to initiate a CESU project on Gateway

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# USACE CESU Project: Libby Dam, MT (NWS)

*** *Study 1 - Didymosphenia geminata* in the Intermountain Northwest and Long-term Management Strategies for Nuisance Mats**

- Growing issue in the Kootenai River since 2001 with major implications for ecosystem
- Native, but invasive
- Little known about Didymo
- Libby Dam becoming a worldwide research hub

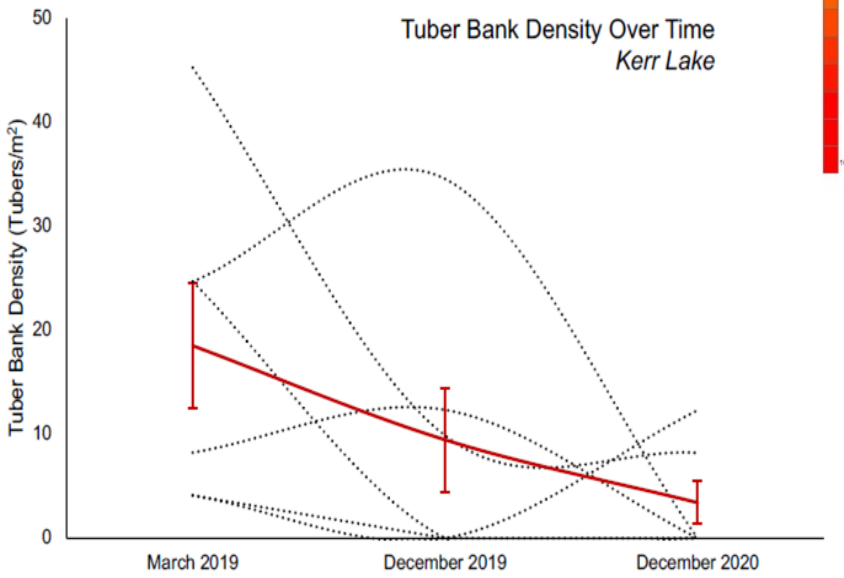
***Study 2: Experimental determination of the role of Iron on the growth of Didymosphenia geminata in the Kootenai River, Montana, downstream from Libby Dam***

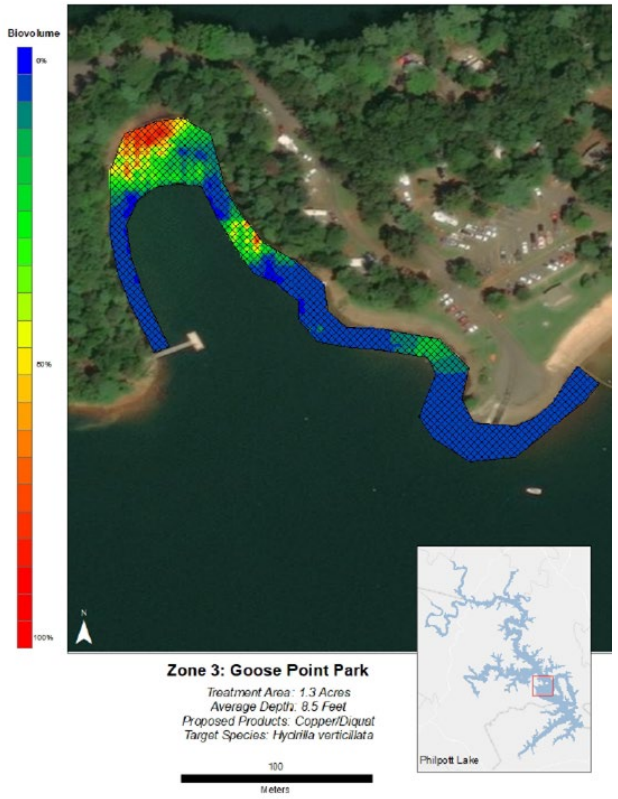
# USACE CESU Project: SAW Lakes, NC

CESU Agreement between USACE and NC State University for Invasive Species Research

Objectives:

- Invasive species surveys and mapping
- Evaluate effects of herbicide treatments
- Evaluate effects of grass carp treatments
- Plant and evaluate native aquatic plant vegetation
- Draft invasive species management plans




Above: Biovolume of hydrilla at a cove in Philpott Lake

# Resources: NRM Gateway

https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/partners/cesu/cesu.cfm

## Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Network and the Corps Civil Works Program

On 21 June 2005, Mr. Steve Stockton, Deputy Director, Civil Works signed an MOU authorizing the US Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program to join the CESU Network. This gave the Corps the ability to join the 17 individual units of the CESU Network.

The CESU Network provides opportunities for federal agencies, NGO's and Universities to collaborate on research, technical assistance and education in the biological, physical, social and cultural sciences needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context.

Each CESU is composed of federal agencies, a host university, and partner institutions. CESU agreements allow each of the participating federal agencies to efficiently transfer funds and duty station employees to university partners through cooperative agreements while maintaining responsibility for agency-sponsored activities within CESU's. CESU's are organized around biogeographic areas and linked together in the CESU network.

To date the Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) has joined 16 CESU's on behalf of the Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program under the authority of Title 10 U.S.C. 2358. A list of CESU's ERDC has joined is provided below.

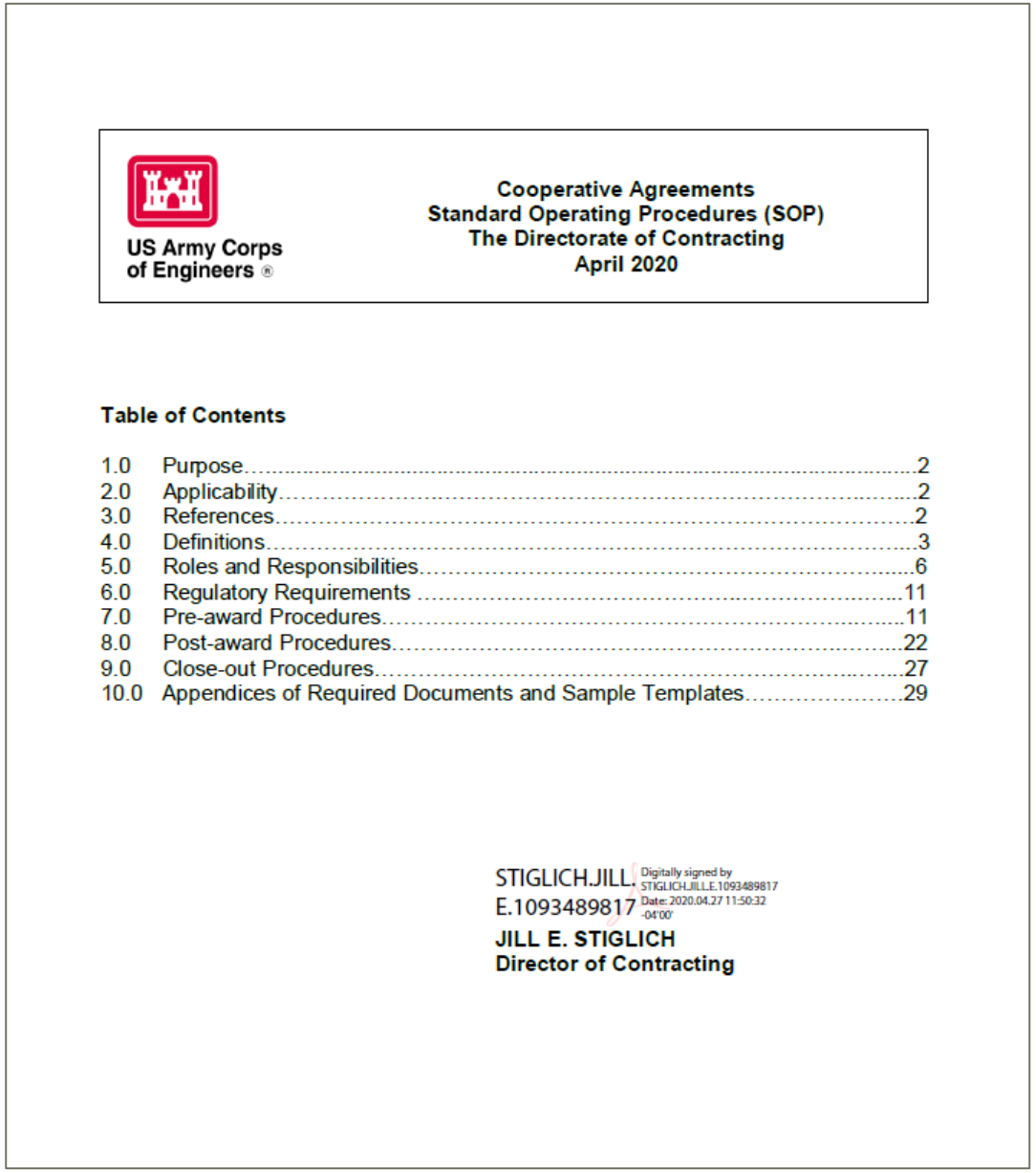
Any Corps office, with the appropriate authority, can participate in CESU activities and have work performed under a cooperative agreement by the four CESU's for which the Corps is a member. See the FAQ's for more information on how Corps offices outside ERDC can participate. The process for ERDC offices to initiate work with CESU's is found under the "policy and procedures" button below.

- Policy & Procedures
- Program Summary
- CESU Summaries
- FAQs
- District Process to Initiate CESU
- CESU Network Map
- Agreements

**List of CESU's ERDC has joined**

# Cooperative Agreement Process

- National Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) published on Contracting Policy page and updated April 2020
- Provides step by step instruction to set up a cooperative agreement.
- Collaborative process between Operations, Contracting (Grants Officer/Specialist), and Counsel from pre-award through closeout.



US Army Corps of Engineers

**Cooperative Agreements**
**Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)**
**The Directorate of Contracting**
**April 2020**

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**JILL E. STIGLICH**
**Director of Contracting**

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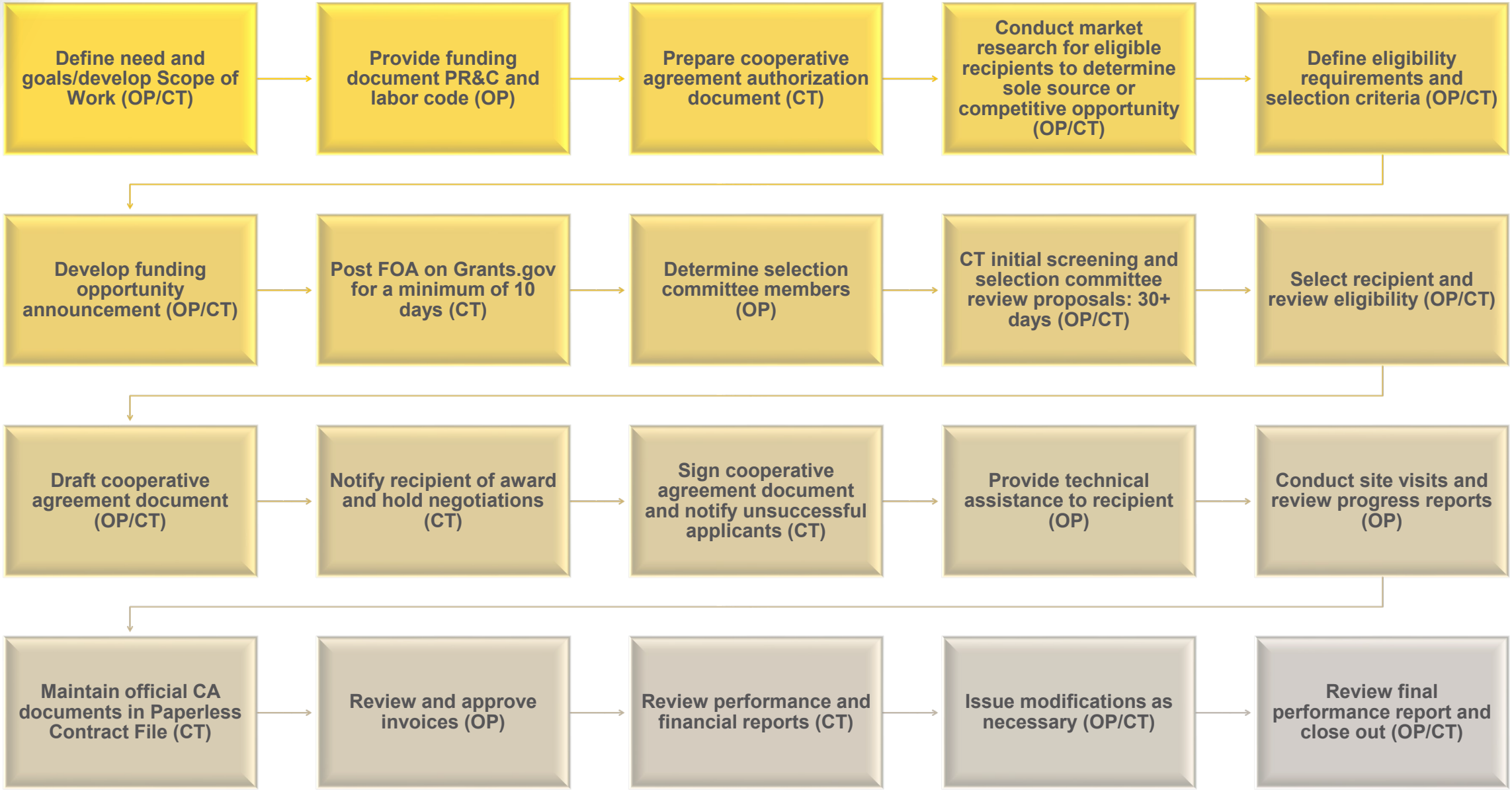
# Cooperative Agreement Process –Steps



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# District Grants/ Agreements Officers

| Division | District | Point of Contact First Name | Point of Contact Last Name | Email | Phone | Grants Officer or Specialist | Warrant $ Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LRD | LRB | Jeff | Ernest | jeffrey.g.ernest@usace.army.mil | 716-879-4173 | Officer | Unlimited |
| | LRC | None | | | | | |
| | LRE | None | | | | | |
| | LRH | None | | | | | |
| | LRL | None | | | | | |
| | LRN | None | | | | | |
| | LRP | None | | | | | |
| MVD | MVK | Zavien | Beal | zavien.t.beal@usace.army.mil | (601) 634-3962<br>(601) 940-2470 | Officer | $5M |
| | MVP | | | | | | |
| | MVR | | | | | | |
| | MVS | | | | | | |
| NAD | NAB | Jeff | May | Jeffrey.B.May@usace.army.mil | 410-962-5617 | Officer | Unlimited |
| | NAE | None | | | | | |
| | NAP | None | | | | | |
| NWD | NWK | Lacy | Kay | lacy.kay@usace.army.mil | 816-389-3509 | Officer | Unlimited |
| | NWO | Lee | McCormick | lee.m.mccormick@usace.army.mil | 402-995-2084 | Officer | Unlimited |
| | | Stephanie | Rostermundt | stephanie.a.rostermundt@usace.army.mil | 402-995-2083 | Officer | Unlimited |
| | NWP | Melanie | Barrett | melanie.a.barrett@usace.army.mil | (503) 808-4617 | Officer | $1M |
| | | Suzanne | Hunt | suzanne.w.hunt@usace.army.mil | (503) 919-8669 | Officer | $100M |
| | NWS | Monique | Paano | monique.a.paano@usace.army.mil | (206) 764-6084 | Specialist | -- |
| | | Sandy | Hutchins | casandra.a.hutchins@usace.army.mil | (206) 947-7916 | Specialist | -- |
| | | Cam | Allen | camilla.allen@usace.army.mil | 206-764-4481 | Officer | $10M |
| | NWW | Victoria | Conway | victoria.l.conway@usace.army.mil | (509) 527-7449 | Specialist | -- |
| | | Brooke | Moore | brooke.n.moore@usace.army.mil | (509) 527-7913 | Officer | $50M |
| POD | POA | Michelle | Mandel | Michelle.R.Mandel@usace.army.mil | (907) 753-2502 | Officer | $50M |
| | | Pamela | Iverson | pamela.iverson@usace.army.mil | (907) 753-2555 | Specialist | -- |
| | POH | None | | | | | |

# District Grants/ Agreements Officers

| Division | District | Point of Contact First Name | Point of Contact Last Name | Email | Phone | Grants Officer or Specialist | Warrant $ Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SAD | SAJ | Griselle | Gonzalez-Aquino | Griselle.Gonzalez@usace.army.mil | (904) 232-3972 | Officer | $10M |
| | SAM | None | | | | | |
| | SAS | None | | | | | |
| | SAW | Ed | Boddie | edward.a.boddie@usace.army.mil | 910-251-4804 | Officer | $5M |
| SPD | SPA | Karen | Irving | karen.k.irving@usace.army.mil | (505) 342-3356 | Officer | $10M |
| | SPK | Rachel | Kinney | rachel.kinney@usace.army.mil | (916) 717-7532 | Officer | $10M |
| | SPL | None | | | | | |
| | SPN | None | | | | | |
| SWD | SWF | Paige | Poorman | paige.e.poorman@usace.army.mil | (817) 886-1124 | Officer | $100M |
| | | Cheryl | Vendemia | cheryl.r.vendemia@usace.army.mil | (817) 253-3341 | Officer | $7.5M |
| | | Robin | Prince | robin.g.prince2@usace.army.mil | 817-357-7073 | Officer | $20M |
| | SWG | None | | | | | |
| | SWL | None | | | | | |
| | SWT | None | | | | | |
| ERDC | ERDC | Derek | Howard | derek.a.howard@usace.army.mil | (601) 634-3310 | Officer | $5M |
| | | Allison | Hudson | allison.b.hudson@usace.army.mil | (601) 634-5337 | Officer | $10M |
| | | Tracey | Lowe | tracey.m.lowe@usace.army.mil | (601) 634-4883 | Officer | $10M |
| | | Zavien | Beal | zavien.t.beal@usace.army.mil | (601) 634-3962 | Officer | $5M |
| | | Melissa | Lynn | melissa.k.lynn@usace.army.mil | (601) 920-9176 | Officer | $50M |
| | | Andrea | Thomas | andrea.j.thomas@usace.army.mil | 217-373-6746 | Officer | $5M |
| HNC | HNC | Katrena | Winchester | Katrena.H.Winchester@usace.army.mil | (256) 895-1145 | Officer | $50M |
| | | Eric | Horcick | Eric.S.Horcick@usace.army.mil | (256) 895-8247 | Officer | $50M |
| Updated Nov 2025 | | | | | | | |

# Resources: NRM Gateway

https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/coopagree/coopagree.cfm

US Army Corps of Engineers

Natural Resources Management Gateway

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News/Events | People | Forums | Learning | GETS | Tools | New Postings | Submit | Index/Search

Cooperative Agreement Task Force

## Cooperative Agreement

Headquarters Partnership POC

The Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977 (FGCAA) sets forth the requirements for using cooperative agreements and grants to transfer funds to non-federal entities. However, use of cooperative agreements must be specifically authorized, and the FGCAA does **not** provide such authority. There is no general authority for the Corps to use cooperative agreements.

A cooperative agreement is a legal nonprocurement assistance instrument as described by 31 USC 63, the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act where funds (or a thing of value) are being transferred to a partner, where the primary purpose is to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation. Cooperative agreements are used when USACE anticipates having "substantial involvement" with the partner for program performance. Substantial involvement may include having the option to halt an activity if specifications aren't met, requiring approval of one phase before allowing the next to start, or monitoring performance to provide specific direction of the work. It wouldn't be considered substantial involvement if the USACE role is solely to approve plans before award, review progress, ensure terms and conditions are met, or provide advice.

These agreements must be executed by a certified grants officer. Procedures for administering these agreements must comply with Department of Defense Directive 3210.06 (Defense Grant and Agreement Regulatory System (DGARS).

USACE authority for cooperative agreements within the NRM CoP is limited to the following specific types/purposes:

- Management of Undesirable Plants
- Educational and training activities
- Research and development
- Agreements with Indian Tribes
- Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU)

- Policy & Procedures
- Authorized Cooperative Agreement Types
- Cooperative Agreement Forms and Templates
- Success Stories
- News / Current Issues
- Existing Cooperative Agreements
- District Grants and Agreements Officers

# USACE NRM Partnership Agreement Decision Tree

(for Recreation and Environmental Stewardship Partnerships)