



Figure 1 (map). The CESU network presently includes four biogeographic regions; the website www.cesu.org/cesu describes plans for five additional regions. Kathy Tonnessen (inset, top) is the new NPS research coordinator for the Rocky Mountains CESU and Ron Hiebert (inset, below) fills that role for the Colorado Plateau CESU. These positions are the first to be filled by the National Park Service in support of the new network.

Staffing CESUs in the Intermountain Region

Taking the first steps to success

By Bob Moon

In an effort to bring this country's brightest talents to bear upon increasingly complex land management issues, the National Park Service has joined with other governmental organizations to craft partnerships with academic and other nongovernmental science institutions that can provide land managers with access to research, technical assistance, and education. Known as cooperative ecosystem studies units (CESUs), these partnerships will provide support in biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences. (Establishment of the CESU network, a list of partners, and a summary of how they function are described on the Web at www.cesu.org/cesu and in the *Natural Resource Year in Review—1998* [pages 27–28]).

In June 1999 the first four cooperative ecosystem studies units became operational: Colorado Plateau, Rocky Mountains, Southern Appalachian Mountains, and North Atlantic Coast (figure 1). Two of these units are within the NPS Intermountain Region and coincide with our Rocky Mountains and Colorado Plateau Clusters.

The Intermountain Region is excited to participate in this new national network of CESUs. With the endorsement of superintendents of the cluster parks, the Inter-

mountain Support Office created two positions to serve as full-time NPS research coordinators to be duty stationed at the host universities: Northern Arizona University for the Colorado Plateau Cluster, and the University of Montana for the Rocky Mountains Cluster. Combined, these two units represent partnerships between five governmental and 14 different partner institutions.

The Intermountain Region is proud to announce the recent selection of Dr. Ron Hiebert (Colorado Plateau) and Dr. Kathy Tonnessen (Rocky Mountains) as our CESU research coordinators (see figure 1 inset photographs). Both will report to their new positions in early December 1999. Many *Park Science* readers already know Ron and Kathy from their current NPS positions.

Ron served for 11 years as Chief Scientist and more recently as Associate Regional Director for Natural Resources for the Midwest Region. No stranger to parks, Ron spent six years as a plant ecologist and Chief of the Division of Science at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana. Ron is equally at home on campuses, having held positions as assistant professor, visiting fellow, and current adjunct professor at the University of Nebraska and Kansas State University. He also brings years of experience

working with American Indian education as Chair of the Natural Resource Advisory Board for Haskell Indian Nations University.

Kathy has been Ecologist and Director of Biological Effects in the NPS Air Resources Division since 1991. Before coming to work for the National Park Service, she spent seven years administering air pollution research for the State of California. While there, Kathy designed and implemented field research of natural water geochemistry in Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks. Kathy is equally familiar with the university setting, having held affiliated faculty positions with the University of Colorado and Colorado State University.

The focus of the Intermountain Region's involvement in the CESUs will be service to parks and partners. In keeping with this commitment, park managers from each cluster and faculty from each host university participated in the selection processes. Additionally, park managers will participate in development of annual work plan priorities in addition to annual evaluations of the Intermountain Region's CESU research coordinators' accomplishments.

Committees craft cooperatives, which can look great on paper. However, in the end, the talents of individuals assigned to carry out the mission make the difference between success and failure. The Intermountain Region now has commitments from talented managers to support and help ensure the success of these CESUs. With the addition of Ron and Kathy, we are optimistic that these partnerships will flourish. With their help, our parks can expect significant improvement in access to research, technical assistance, and educational opportunities. **P**

Bob Moon is the Intermountain Region Support Office Chief for Natural Resources, Research, and Technology. He can be reached at 303-969-2856; bob_moon@nps.gov.