2013 Great Rivers CESU Annual Work Plan

1. **Name Change.** In 2008, the region’s name changed from Upper Middle Mississippi Valley CESU to the Great Rivers CESU (GR CESU). We discussed the name change with the CESU National Office and developed and submitted a justification for the name change. It was approved by the national council.

2. **Work with partners to expand CESU research, technical assistance and training opportunities.** As with any new venture, it will take time to achieve active participation in projects funded through the GR CESU from all partner institutions. From 2003 to 2012, we have actively promoted and assisted with any and all possible projects from partner institutions and agencies. We will continue to work to increase the level of involvement of our less active institutional partners and participating federal agencies.

3. **Explore new research, technical assistance and training opportunities with existing participating federal agencies in the GR CESU.** We have worked diligently to match the needs of participating federal agencies to the institutional partners that are most qualified to provide the research, technical assistance and training that best fits the agency’s needs. We have 21 institutional partners and eight participating federal agencies. We will expand our partner institutions and participating federal agencies in the future, as justified.

4. **Review and revise strategic plan.** A strategic plan was developed within the first twelve months of the inception of the GR CESU. The partners worked together to develop this plan as a guide to future performance and research. Our strategic plan is listed on our website (http://greatrivers-cesu.missouri.edu).

5. **Further develop GR CESU website.** Over the next year, the GR CESU website (http://greatrivers-cesu.missouri.edu/) will be further developed and expanded along the lines discussed at the 2011 annual partners’ meeting. Modifications will take place as additional data become available, more projects are funded, and as forms that partners can use to streamline project initiation and funding processes become available for posting.

6. **Work with Federal partners to establish on-site research coordinator.** In January 2007, Dr. Della Streaty-Wilhoit became the National Park Service (NPS) Research Coordinator, University of Missouri, Midwest Region, GR CESU. She provides the coordination necessary to ensure further growth and development in delivering research, technical assistance, and educational opportunities to national park units. In 2012, Dr. Jill L. Findeis, Director of the University of Missouri’s Division of Applied Social Sciences (DASS), became the new Director of the GR CESU. Her role is to provide coordination to the GR CESU. This includes:
   - Developing partnerships and securing outside sources of support
   - Assisting in the identification of research needs
   - Providing technical leadership in creating integrated and responsive research programs at regional and national levels
• Helping NPS managers to understand the capabilities of the GR CESU and the mechanism for funding task agreements
• Working with superintendents and resource managers to facilitate the development of research priorities and cost share on projects.

Having an on-site Research Coordinator streamlines the approval and funding processes, as well as provides for better communication with regard to the needs of the individual participating federal agencies.

7. Evaluate and possibly establish partnerships with other federal agencies. Many aspects and issues of the GR region are a good fit with the needs and services of several federal agencies not yet established as partners in the GR CESU, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and USDA, Rural Development. We will continue to work with these agencies and partners and the CESU Network to establish new federal partnerships that meet the research, technical assistance, and training needs of federal agencies.