

Ecological Society of America

Application to join Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

A. Expression of desire to enroll in the CESU as a new partner institution/organization.

The Ecological Society of America (ESA) is submitting the accompanying material to support an application to join the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CHWA CESU) as a new nonfederal partner organization. ESA has a distinguished history of collaborating with local, regional, and national partners in support of initiatives advancing the goals and objectives of the CHWA CESU and its partners. We believe that these application materials demonstrate our commitment to the mission of CHWA CESU and the importance of collaborative partnerships in advancing basic research, education, and outreach as it relates to federal CESU members.

B. Confirmation that the institution/organization has read the CESU agreement and agrees to support the CESU mission and goals and fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a nonfederal partner, as described in the CESU agreement.

Chief Financial Officer and Interim Executive Director Elizabeth Biggs is supportive of this application, as described in the attached letter. Through her endorsement she is providing assurance that ESA is willing and able to meet the responsibilities and roles of a nonfederal partner and to support the CESU mission and goals. The primary contact, Dr. Clifford Duke, will also work with staff to ensure that ESA meets these expectations while fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of a nonfederal partner.

C. Description of the institution/organization, its mission, and the primary focus of collaborative activities to be supported through the CESU in the context of the CESU mission.

With close to 9,000 members worldwide, ESA is the largest community of professional ecologists, committed to advancing the understanding of life on Earth. ESA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization of scientists founded in 1915. Its mission is to promote ecological science and its appropriate use in decision-making for a sustainable future. ESA offers programs and services through five major channels: (1) its suite of Publications, from highly regarded peer-reviewed journals to newsletters, fact sheets and consensus reports; (2) its Annual Meetings which convene 3,000 to 5,000 scientists and practitioners each year disseminating the latest research in the science and practice of ecology (3) the Public Affairs Office which works to convey ecological science to the media and the general public; (4) the Science Programs Office, which connects the research and management communities, supports the use of science to inform decision making, and builds capacity among scientists; and (5) the Education and Diversity Programs Office, which works to increase diversity within ecology-related professions and to improve the quality of ecology education at all levels.

As a national scientific society dedicated to being a source of trusted scientific information, we are in a unique position to support the mission, goals and objectives of the CHWA CESU as well as the wider CESU network. Our 25+ professional staff are highly qualified to design and execute all of ESA's programs and services with the participation and leadership of the scientific and educational community. All five departments across ESA routinely work with federal agencies to disseminate scientific research and build competencies and capacity for informed decision-making. We have the means and a clear process to convene the right people to provide research, technical, and education assistance that CHWA CESU is looking for.

While ESA has not been involved in projects specific to the CHWA region until 2017, our Science Office has facilitated the assessment of research and synthesized studies at state and regional levels. For example, as Section H describes in more detail, in 2015-2016, the Office assisted the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Inyo County, CA with a review of the vegetation monitoring and analytical methods that they use to assess impacts of groundwater pumping in the Owens Valley, CA. In 2016-2017, the Office facilitated a detailed peer review of the Northwest Forest Plan Science Synthesis, at the request of the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station.

Similarly, over the past 20 years, ESA's Office of Education and Diversity Programs has built a network of contacts at minority-serving institutions including several within the region. Since 2010, we have introduced a regional approach to SEEDS programming and welcome opportunities to work more closely within the CHWA region. Further, the office is currently leading an alliance in the DC-Baltimore region, [EcologyPlus](#), funded by the National Science Foundation, to integrate partner programs that foster the participation of underrepresented minorities in a broad range of career pathways where ecology plays a role.

ESA also has experience with macrosystems projects, including:

- 1) Two special issues of our journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*:
 - a) [Continental-scale ecology in an increasingly connected world](#)
 - b) [Macrosystems ecology - an emerging perspective](#)
- 2) Staff and leadership involvement on the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) Science, Technology and Education Advisory Committee www.neonscience.org/ and working groups
- 3) A series of workshops, conferences (www.esa.org/ldc) and faculty mentoring networks to promote and develop teaching materials that support data-rich approaches to ecology education at multiple scales (<http://esa.org/fed>).

With reference to the goals in the CHWA CESU Five-Year Plan to identify and increase minority-institution partner strengths and to increase the national visibility of the CHWA CESU, ESA has much experience that we can contribute, particularly in terms of student and faculty engagement, drawing from 20 years of work to broaden participation in ecology.

D. Description or list of the primary programs, departments, or other institutional divisions of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will likely be engaged in CESU activities. Include website addresses for further information, as appropriate.

The mission of [ESA's Office of Science Programs](#) is to connect the research and management communities, support the use of science to inform decision making, and build capacity among scientists. We provide a suite of services to ESA members and the broader scientific community that build capacity through workshops and courses, facilitate engagement of ESA members with agencies that require ecological knowledge and expertise, conduct peer reviews of agency scientific studies and programs, and synthesize information to help make ecology more accessible to managers and the public.

[ESA's Public Affairs Office](#) manages the Society's public policy and media initiatives. Working closely with its elected leadership, we facilitate opportunities for members to engage beyond the scientific community through media contacts, press releases, social media, briefings, and one-on-one meetings with policymakers. We provide media and policy training to our members, in addition to bimonthly updates on national policy developments relevant to this ecological community.

ESA's [journals](#) publish and make broadly available the most significant results of ecological research, particularly those that increase the understanding and applications of general ecological concepts. *Ecology* publishes articles that report on the basic elements of ecological research. Papers published in *Ecological Monographs* provide integrative and complete documentation of major empirical and theoretical advances in the field and establish benchmarks from which future research will build. *Ecological Applications* is concerned broadly with the applications of ecological science to environmental problems. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* consists of peer-reviewed, synthetic review articles on all aspects of ecology, the environment, and related disciplines, as well as short, high-impact research communications of broad interdisciplinary appeal. The scope of the rapid-publication, open-access journal *Ecosphere* is as broad as the science of ecology itself. The journal welcomes submissions from all sub-disciplines of ecological science, as well as interdisciplinary studies relating to ecology. The *Bulletin*, the official record of the business of ESA, also covers ecological events, news, and reports of interest to the ecological community.

ESA's *annual meeting* each August attracts 3,000 to 5,000 ecologists from academia, government agencies, and the private sector who present cutting-edge research and participate in a wide variety of workshops and special sessions. The [104th annual meeting](#) will be held in New Orleans, LA, August 5-10, 2018. The Education, Science, and Public Affairs offices also organize smaller workshops and conferences on particular topics.

ESA strongly believes that a diverse profession engenders new perspectives, new research ideas and enhances the relevance of ecological sciences to all of society. The core mission of ESA's [Office of Education and Diversity Programs](#) is to diversify and advance ecology education. The office supports programs that nurture and support young ecologists and develops professional

development activities for high school and college faculty in partnership with other organizations. The flagship education program of ESA is the *SEEDS - Strategies for Ecology Education, Diversity and Sustainability* - program (www.esa.org/seeds), a diversity mentoring and career development program for undergraduate students. SEEDS offers a) field trips, b) leadership meetings, c) undergraduate research fellowships, d) travel support and mentoring at ESA annual meetings, and e) a campus ecology chapter program.

ESA's *faculty development program* includes a) the EcoEd Digital Library, a catalog of teaching resources (www.ecoed.esa.org); b) workshops at the ESA annual meeting; c) the Life Discovery - Doing Science Biology Education Conference (www.esa.org/ldc) in partnership with three other societies with ESA as the lead partner; and d) faculty mentoring networks with an associated ESA Education Scholar recognition in partnership with the Quantitative Undergraduate Biology Education and Synthesis (QUBES) project (www.esa.org/fed). Most recently, staff is working with ESA's Committee for Diversity and Education members to develop a four-dimensional framework for ecology education (www.esa.org/4DEE) that will help focus the essentials for the public's understanding of ecology and with a new DC-Baltimore based alliance to build a comprehensive approach to ecology career development and pathways for undergraduate through early career stages (www.ecologyplus.esa.org).

E. A list of and brief description of the staff or faculty with expertise in disciplines and subject areas of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies (do not submit CVs).

Dr. Clifford Duke, Director of Science Programs, is an environmental scientist with graduate degrees in botany (Ph.D.) and public policy science (M.A.). Dr. Duke leads a wide range of projects requiring management, organizational, scientific, policy, and fundraising expertise. Examples include support for ESA's [Vegetation Classification Panel](#) and the National Vegetation Classification, participation in the Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable, ESA's [Sustaining Biological Infrastructure](#) Training Initiative, and peer reviews of research programs and studies for federal and state agencies, including the US Geological Survey and US Forest Service.

Jill Petraglia Parsons, Science Programs Manager, holds an undergraduate degree in environmental sciences and policy (B.A.) and a graduate degree in anthropology (M.A.). Ms. Parsons has experience managing a variety of projects that have honed her organizational, communication, and meeting facilitation skills. Examples include managing ESA's [Sustaining Biological Infrastructure](#) Training Initiative (working with an advisory committee and trainers to develop course curricula and materials; overseeing marketing, budgeting, and logistics; and facilitating course sessions) and supporting ESA's [Vegetation Classification Panel](#) (managing teleconferences and meetings with a variety of stakeholders, supporting outreach and education efforts).

Jennifer Riem, Science Programs Coordinator, holds a B.A in biology and has conducted graduate research in zoology. For ESA's Science Office, Ms. Riem manages the ESA publication series [Issues in Ecology](#), which uses commonly-understood language to report the consensus of a panel of scientific

experts on issues related to the environment, and assists on a variety of other Science projects. For ESA's annual meeting, she manages processes for session proposals and abstract submission and review, and scheduling of sessions and presentations.

Alison Mize, Director of Public Affairs, leads ESA's government relations and press programs. Mize works to highlight the use of evidence-based policy in policy decisions through developing official Society policy positions, working with Congress, and providing information to federal agencies. Her expertise in the policy arena and also in working with the press elevates the science of ecology with a broad array of stakeholders.

Liza Lester, Public Information Officer, promotes ecology in press releases, social media, and by working with reporters. Results of her work have garnered national press for ESA and strong followings on ESA social media accounts.

Julia Marsh, Public Affairs Officer, performs analyses of science policy, federal funding, and federal legislation. She writes and distributes a twice-monthly comprehensive *Policy News* to members and coordinates ESA's work with Congress.

Dr. Sue Silver, Editor-in-Chief of Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment gained a B.Sc. and Ph.D. in Zoology, both from the University of London, UK. Later, she switched to scientific publishing and has worked on a variety of journals for different organizations for over 30 years. In 2002, she moved to the USA to launch and edit *Frontiers*, which quickly developed into a high-impact, high-ranking journal, popular with members of ESA. She is the co-author of a book, *What Editors want; an author's guide to scientific publishing* and has travelled extensively in China as well as in the US, teaching workshops and classes on "How to get published".

Steven Sayre (MBA), Director of Publishing and Member Services, leads the publishing operations for ESA's 5 journals, the society's Annual Meeting, and customer service and marketing functions for the society's 9,000 members. Sayre leads the strategic as well as operational functions for these programs, enlisting member and leadership participation, and incorporating the society's broad-based strategies into the publishing, meetings and membership initiatives. His background includes more than 20 years in leadership roles at publishers of scientific, technology, and reference materials. He has spent the last decade as head of operations for professional scientific and medical associations. His broad-based marketing experience encompasses niche and consumer segments, with a specific focus on scientific, medical, and technology sectors.

Teresa Mourad, Director of Education and Diversity Programs, holds an M.S. in Environmental Education and oversees initiatives and partnerships to improve ecology education and broaden participation of minorities in ecology. She directs the Presidential award-winning diversity mentoring program, [SEEDS](#), and is PI of the [EcologyPlus](#) collective impact project involving minority-serving institutions and partners in the DC-Baltimore region to support ecology career pathways. For 10 years, she has worked to prepare faculty and students for the availability of Big

Data from the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) through faculty mentoring networks, workshops, and conferences.

Fred Abbott-Torres, Diversity Programs Manager, is an alumnus of the ESA [SEEDS](#) program and now manages all of its components. He received a B.S. in Biology with a major in Wildlife Management from the University of Puerto Rico in Humacao. Fred identifies all the sites for the ecological field trips and leadership meetings, coordinates travel logistics with students, works with site hosts on education content, and implements mentoring programs at the annual meeting. He also coordinates all the application and review process for the SEEDS program.

F. For academic institutions, include a description of student demographics and the institution's status as a minority-serving institution (e.g., as defined by the U.S. Department of Education).

Not applicable

G. Description or list of facilities, equipment, centers, or institutes that would provide support to the research, technical assistance, or educational activities of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CESU activities.

ESA's offices at 1990 M Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036, include necessary computer, telephone, internet access, and photocopying capabilities to support the research, technical assistance, and educational activities of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CESU activities. With more than 25 years of experience with federal funding, ESA also has the requisite financial and administrative infrastructure for project and grant management. For example, in the five years beginning in 2012, the Science Office has initiated 18 agreements with federal agencies including the Bureau of Land Management, National Science Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Geological Survey. Similarly, the Office of Education and Diversity Programs led in eight grant awards from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service over the last four years.

H. Description or list of past research, technical assistance, and educational services supported through federal financial assistance awards that are of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CESU activities.

NWFP Science Synthesis Peer Review ESA's Science Office facilitated a detailed peer review of this 1300-page document, which was issued by the Pacific Northwest Research Station in October 2016. This study will inform the revision of land management plans (forest plans) for 17 national forests within the Northwest Forest Plan area. ESA's efforts were supported by a grant from the U.S. Forest Service.

Issues in Ecology (esa.org/issues) This publication series uses commonly-understood language to report the consensus of a panel of scientific experts on issues related to the environment. The intended audience is decision makers at all levels for whom an objective presentation of the underlying science will increase the occurrence of ecologically informed decisions. Two recent issues, *Investing in Citizen Science Can Improve Natural Resource Management and Environmental Protection*, and *Species Recovery in the United States: Increasing the Effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act*, were funded by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Forest Service.

Review and Design of Vegetation Monitoring and Analytical Methods for Owens Valley, CA The Science Office assisted the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Inyo County, CA with a review of the vegetation monitoring and analytical methods that they use to assess impacts of groundwater pumping in the Owens Valley, CA. The review was conducted by a panel of three experts chosen by ESA and supported by Science staff. The final report, "Review of Methods for Vegetation Monitoring and Analysis in the Owens Valley, California" was completed in February 2016.

Conservation Effects Assessment Program: Effects on Wetlands With a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Science Office helped to produce a collection of studies, each focused on quantifying the environmental benefits of conservation practices and programs on agricultural wetlands in a particular region of the country. The studies were published in an April 2011 special issue of ESA's journal *Ecological Applications*.

Conference on the Ecological Dimensions of Biofuels This 2008 conference explored the ecological dimensions of biofuels production and identified management strategies and research opportunities to ensure their sustainability. Federal agency sponsors included the U.S. Forest Service and Agricultural Research Service. Conference products included a series of reports for nonscientists (<http://www.esa.org/biofuelsreports/>) and a set of technical reports in *Ecological Applications*.

Between 2009 -2016, ESA received federal financial assistance in four grant awards from the U.S. Forest Service Research and Development to support the ESA [Strategies for Ecology Education, Diversity and Sustainability \(SEEDS\)](#) program. Funds awarded in 2009 and 2010 provided travel support for minority SEEDS graduate student alumni to the ESA Annual Meeting, who provided near peer mentoring to undergraduate student participants. Participants at the ESA Annual Meeting were exposed to the broad range of ecology research and networked with scientists and practitioners. <http://esa.org/seeds/annual-meeting/undergraduate-awards/>. The 2015 and 2016 awards supported the 2016 SEEDS Leadership Meeting held at the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, a U.S. Experimental Forest site, and the 2017 SEEDS Leadership meeting at the EL Yunque National Forest in Puerto Rico. The Leadership Meetings highlighted how science informed decision-making and forest management planning as well as the diverse ecology career paths available to students. <http://esa.org/seeds/leadership-meetings/155-2/#2015>. Video highlights from the 2017 Leadership Meeting and testimonials from alumni are available on www.esa.org/seeds.

I. Description or list of current formal agreements and informal relationships with federal agencies that are of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CESU activities.

[*ESA's Vegetation Classification Panel*](#) develops the scientific standards for the [*National Vegetation Classification*](#), including standards for plot-based survey methods and databases, and a dynamic approach to revising the classification based on peer-review. Panel activities are currently supported by a purchase order from the U.S. Geological Survey and a grant from the U.S. Forest Service.

The Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable (SWRR) brings together federal, state, corporate, non-profit and academic sectors to advance our understanding of the nation's water resources and to develop tools for their sustainable management. The U.S. Forest Service and ESA have a challenge cost share agreement under which ESA staff participate in the SWRR Steering Committee and help organize and facilitate SWRR meetings on a variety of topics. Additional support is provided by a grant from the Bureau of Land Management.

ESA's Sustaining Biological Infrastructure: Strategies for Success course (esa.org/sbi), funded by the National Science Foundation, provides directors of databases, museum collections, field stations, and marine laboratories with the core financial, analytical, and communication skills they need to make their projects more financially sustainable. Participants in this semiannual (formerly annual) 3-day course have included project directors from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Geological Survey.

[*The Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable \(SRR\)*](#), which is supported by funding agreements with federal partners including the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Geological Survey, is a volunteer organization that focuses on identification of social, ecological, and economic indicators of rangeland sustainability and promotes understanding among diverse interest groups, and private and public organizations and agencies. ESA Director of Science Programs Dr. Duke serves on SRR's Board of Directors and has participated in a number of SRR projects.

[*EcologyPlus*](#), recently funded by the National Science Foundation, is a pilot project that aims to connect diverse college students and early career scientists with timely and relevant career opportunities and a community of peers and professionals in ecology and related careers across all sectors. The CHWA CESU and the National CESU are both part of the *EcologyPlus* alliance that will provide access to information about available internship opportunities and facilitate minority participation in the practice of ecology.

J. Confirmation of the institution's/organization's willingness to accept a limited overhead rate of 17.5% and cost items to which the rate is applicable for activities conducted through the CESU, including research, technical assistance, and educational services (this overhead rate applies to the entire institution/organization for CESU activities).

Chief Financial Officer and Interim Executive Director Elizabeth Biggs supports this application and acknowledges that the maximum overhead rate for all work will be 17.5% and that there can be limitations on the cost items where the overhead rate can be applied. As part of ESA's commitment to this partnership we consider the difference between this rate and our federally negotiated overhead cost rate (25.85%) to be an in-kind contribution and supportive of the collaborative work that would be completed by ESA staff.

K. Designation of a technical representative (with full contact information - name, title, full address, phone, fax, email) to serve on the CESU steering committee.

Clifford S. Duke, Ph.D. will serve as the technical representative for the ESA and serve on the CHWA Steering Committee. His contact information is as follows:

Clifford S. Duke, Ph.D.
Director of Science Programs
Ecological Society of America
1990 M Street NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-833-8773 ext. 202
Fax: 202-833-8775
Email: csduke@esa.org

Chief Financial Officer and Interim Executive Director Elizabeth Biggs will be the administrative contact for ESA. Her contact information is as follows:

Elizabeth Biggs
Ecological Society of America
1990 M Street NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-833-8773 ext. 203
Fax: 202-833-8775
Email: liz@esa.org

L. Participation in CESU annual/semi-annual partner meetings, and facilitation of internal and external communication, promotion, and response to CESU correspondence and administrative actions (e.g., announcements, new member applications, processing agreements/amendments, five-year reviews).

ESA will attend and actively participate in partner meetings, will facilitate internal and external communications, and promote and respond to correspondence and administrative actions from the CESU in a timely manner. The primary responsibility for these tasks will be assumed by Dr. Duke. He will work closely with Teresa Mourad, Director of Education and Diversity Programs, and Alison Mize, Director of Public Affairs, on communication and promotion efforts as needed.

M. Agreement to relay agency-specific research, technical assistance, and educational needs and associated funding opportunities to other institutional/organizational members (e.g., faculty, students).

Dr. Duke will relay agency-specific research, technical assistance, and educational needs and associated funding opportunities to the appropriate ESA program offices. These include the Education and Diversity Programs, Public Affairs, Publications, and Science (which Dr. Duke directs) offices. Program directors will develop grant proposals as appropriate in response to announcements of funding opportunities.

N. Signature (or endorsement) from an appropriate official, with authority to commit institutional resources in a binding multi-year federal cooperative and joint venture agreement (e.g., president, executive director, chief financial officer, vice president for research, director of sponsored programs).

Chief Financial Officer and Interim Executive Director Elizabeth Biggs has provided a letter of support and endorsement as part of this application. In her letter she expresses her enthusiasm for ESA's membership as a means of contributing to the good work of the CHWA CESU and partner agencies.

O. Letters of support from one or more CESU federal agency partners sponsoring the new partner's application, including a description of successful past collaborative work supported through federal financial assistance awards.

Letters of support are attached from Michael Eberle, U.S. Forest Service; Alexa McKerrow, U.S. Geological Survey; and Thomas Spies, U.S. Forest Service.



Ecological Society of America
1990 M St, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

10 January 2018

Dr. Eric Davidson
Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
Appalachian Laboratory
301 Braddock Road
Frostburg, MD 21532

Dear Dr. Davidson:

I wish to express my support for the Ecological Society of America's (ESA) application for membership in the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CHWA CESU). ESA, the largest society for professional ecologists, has a 102-year history of promoting the science of ecology and its use in decision-making. ESA works to promote ecological science by improving communication among ecologists through journals and meetings, raise the public's level of awareness of the importance of ecological science, ensure the continuing supply of new ecologists through educational and outreach activities, increase the resources available for the conduct of ecological science, and ensure the appropriate use of ecological science in environmental decision-making at all levels of government and the private sector.

ESA's participation in the CHWA CESU will provide the network ready access to our Education, Science, Public Affairs, Publications, and Meetings programs, as well as the expertise of our 9,000 members. Membership in the CHWA CESU will in turn provide our staff and members with new opportunities to participate in studies and projects in the Chesapeake region where ESA makes its home.

ESA shares the goals of the CHWA CESU and the national network, and our partnership will benefit both CESU and ESA. I strongly endorse our application for membership.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Biggs
Interim Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer



Forest
Service

Washington
Office

1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Date: January 8, 2018

Subject: Letter of Support for Ecological Society of America

To: Whom It May Concern

I am writing in support of the application by the Ecological Society of America (ESA) to participate in the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CWCESU) network. ESA has a long history of working with the U.S. Forest Service, including support for the Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable (SWRR) and the U.S. National Vegetation Classification. SWRR brings together federal, state, corporate, non-profit and academic sectors to advance our understanding of the nation's water resources and to develop tools for their sustainable management. The Forest Service and ESA have a challenge cost share agreement under which ESA staff participate in the SWRR Steering Committee and help organize and facilitate SWRR meetings on a variety of topics.

Based on this successful partnership between ESA and the U.S. Forest Service, I am recommending ESA as a member of the CWCESU. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-689-5890 or by email at mbeberle@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

Michael Eberle, National Surface Water Program Leader





United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, Virginia 20192

IN REPLY REFER TO:
Mail Stop 302

To Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit Members:

I am writing in support of the application by the Ecological Society of America (ESA) to participate in the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CWCESU) network. For more than 20 years, ESA, through its Vegetation Classification Panel and Office of Science Programs, has played a critical role in developing the U.S. National Vegetation Classification (USNVC), supported by federal financial assistance awards from the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Forest Service. The USNVC is a central organizing framework for documentation, inventory, monitoring, and study of vegetation in the United States from broad scale formations like forests to fine-scale plant communities. The Classification allows users to produce uniform statistics about vegetation resources across the nation at local, regional, or national levels. The ESA Panel has assisted federal government agencies, including the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Forest Service, and other agencies, in develop the standards for the USNVC, including standards for plot-based survey methods and databases, and develop and maintain a dynamic approach to revising the classification based on peer-review. ESA also hosts the NVC Proceedings, an official record of the changes to the classification, and also document the reasoning and evidence behind those changes, and maintains VegBank, an open-access vegetation plot database that supports the USNVC.

Based on the long and successful efforts of ESA in supporting the USNVC, I am recommending ESA as a member of the CWCESU. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone (571-218-5474) or email (amckerrrow@usgs.gov).

Sincerely,

12/21/2017

X 

Signed by: ALEXA MCKERROW

Alexa J. McKerrrow Ph.D., Biologist
Core Science Systems
U.S. Geological Survey



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
Northwest
Research
Station

Forestry Sciences Lab.
3200 SW Jefferson Way
Corvallis, OR 97331
Fax: 541-758-7760

File Code: 4000

Date: January 2, 2018

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the application by the Ecological Society of America (ESA) to participate in the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CWCESU) network. ESA has a long history of working with the U.S. Forest Service, including support for the U.S. National Vegetation Classification, coordinating a series of peer reviews of historic range of variation assessments for National Forests, and recently facilitating a peer review of the draft Northwest Forest Plan Science Synthesis, a major study that I directed. This synthesis will inform the revision of land management plans (forest plans) for 17 national forests within the Northwest Forest Plan area. The synthesis was classified as “highly influential science” according to OMB standards, which required special efforts to make the process transparent and communicate with the public. ESA’s Office of Science Programs recruited a team of 30 highly qualified reviewers for this 1300-page study, participated in a public meeting soliciting comments, and completed a detailed review that provided critical input for the Synthesis authors. I was quite pleased with the work that ESA’s Office of Science Programs did for the Forest Service. The peer review met our needs for a diversity of perspectives, was of high quality, and was delivered on time.

Based on these multiple successful partnerships between ESA and the U.S. Forest Service, I highly recommend ESA as a member of the CWCESU. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 541-750-7354. My email is tspies@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

THOMAS A. SPIES

Senior Scientist, Landscapes and Ecosystems Team
Ecosystem Processes and Function Program
and
Courtesy Professor, College of Forestry
Oregon State University

