

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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February 1, 2012

Dr. Tom Fish, National Coordinator  
Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Network  
U.S. Department of the Interior, Main Building  
1849 C Street NW, Room #2737  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Great Lakes Northern Forest CESU Review and Renewal

Dear Tom:

The University of Minnesota wishes to continue at the host university for the Great Lakes Northern Forest CESU (GLNF). The host has invested significant time and resources into the operation of GLNF and is prepared to continue to provide support for building the resources and expertise of GLNF.

Attached please find our brief self-assessment for review and renewal as the host university for the GLNF. We used the criteria and questions you provided for the review and renewal process. We have attached our self-assessment and relevant appendix as a pdf file. Based on conversations with our university partners, we note further that 31 of the 32 university partners wish to continue as partners in GLNF. All nine of our partner organizations also wish to continue their membership.

One partner university, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, has declined to continue membership at this time. In the past five years this partner has been involved in one project through the GLNF. However, during this same period they have completed several projects through the North Atlantic Coast CESU, where they are also member. They indicated that the North Atlantic Coast CESU is a better fit for them.

We see the potential for considerable growth of the GLNF, however, University of Minnesota administrators are concerned that there is little compensation for the considerable support the institution provides. If there was stronger financial support from the agency partners, I believe networking and landscape level collaboration could grow significantly. Thus I would be very interested in discussing options and opportunities for obtaining a truly sustainable level of support for host university CESUs.

Thank you for your help in the review and renewal process for the Great Lakes Northern Forest CESU. We appreciate the time and energy you continue to devote to the success of the CESU network.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have about our self assessment documents.

Sincerely,



Alan R. Ek  
Coordinator, Great Lakes Northern Forest CESU  
Head, Department of Forest Resources

Attachment