a unit may be stressed. Unit leaders must guard the extent of the obligations by a unit and assure the fulfillment of contractual obligations. One of the primary tasks of the unit leader is to diplomatically and continually communicate with each cooperator to balance the efforts.

The University Cooperator

Staff Support

The level of staff support for a unit depends on the work generated. The university cooperator should be aware of a unit’s volume of work and funding and should be ready to assist with additional personnel if needed. Units require a significantly higher level of support than do regular faculty members because of the complicated administrative procedures, the different requirements by each of the three primary cooperators, the increased administrative load in administering operational finances and Research Work Orders, and the amount of required outreach by an effective unit. The provision of adequate support staff by the university cooperator allows a unit to achieve an effective and efficient level of productivity.

Storage of Equipment

The availability of adequate storage facilities is under constant negotiation. Units have federal equipment, state-agency equipment, and university equipment for travel and field research. Boats, boat trailers, travel trailers, nets, large traps, all-terrain vehicles, and other vehicles require accessible and secure storage. The field orientation of most unit research reduces the requirement for expansive and expensive laboratory facilities, but creates a demand for storage. The few unit scientists who conduct primary research in a laboratory, however, do need expansive and expensive laboratory facilities.

Basic Support

Basic support by the cooperators must be stable for efficient operation. Sometimes basic support by a hosting university is neither stable nor predictable. The escape clause in the Cooperative Agreements is used rather liberally in times of financial hardship because some university cooperators give lower priority to support for units than to other responsibilities.

The Federal Cooperator

Possessiveness

Unit headquarters must keep the Service aware of the special nature of the cooperative unit program. The Service often expects unit personnel to show allegiance to the Service by being available for special tasks and responsibilities. The employees of the units are on the federal payroll, and the Service must provide central administrative support for the program and