

**November 17-18, 2011**

**ITEM 153-103-R1111**

**Montana Institute on Ecosystems**

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**THAT**

Establishes an umbrella organization (Montana Institute on Ecosystems) to implement initiatives described in the recent successfully funded NSF-EPSCoR Award.

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**EXPLANATION**

The Montana Institute on Ecosystems is unique in Montana and among the Rocky Mountain states. This will be the first institute designed to function across the MUS. As such, it is a grand experiment that is in keeping with the NSF-EPSCoR program. There are other related academic units across the country, especially at large and well-endowed universities (e.g., University of Minnesota, University of California – Berkeley, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; University of Wisconsin; Harvard University; Stanford University); however, to the best of our knowledge, the Montana IoE will be the first institute of its kind to serve an entire university system. Moreover, the globally renowned and institutionally complex landscapes of Montana and the northern Rocky Mountain region endow us with an unrivaled natural laboratory for ecosystem science and education. The scope of the Montana IoE will allow the MUS to form inter-university and external collaborations that would otherwise be difficult to develop in Montana. Drawing on the enhanced research and education capacity across the MUS, the Montana IoE will rival comparable programs at other major research universities. The Montana IoE will serve as a model for what other low-population states in the region and across the nation can achieve through pooled resources, common purpose, and collaboration.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment