



CHNEP Policy Committee
Friday September 20, 2019
9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Charlotte Community Foundation
227 Sullivan Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950

Draft Minutes

Members Present

Bill Truex	Charlotte County
Brian Smith	US EPA Region 4
Debbie McDowell	City of North Port
Fred Burson	City of Fort Myers
Jessica Cosden	City of Cape Coral
Corey Anderson	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Phil Stevens	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Gary Wein	City of Punta Gorda
Don McCormick	Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

Members Present via WebEx:

Debi Osborne	Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast
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Others Present

Jennifer Shafer	Shafer Consulting
Jennifer Hecker	CHNEP
Nicole Iadevaia	CHNEP
Coral Keene	CHNEP

Others Present via WebEx:

Craig Diamond	The Balmoral Group
Drew Winters	Department of Economic Opportunity

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Introductions — Brian Smith, Co-Chair

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 am by Co-Chair Brian Smith. Introductions were then made.

2. Agenda Additions or Deletions — Brian Smith, Co-Chair

No additions or deletions were made to agenda.

MOTION TO APPROVE POLICY COMMITTEE AGENDA: DON MCCORMICK, JESSICA COSDEN 2ND. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

3. Public Comments on Agenda Items — Brian Smith, Co-Chair

No public comments on agenda items were made.

4. Management Committee Report — Corey Anderson, Management Committee Co-Chair

Management Committee Co-Chair, Corey Anderson, shared an overview of the most recent Management, TAC, and CAC meetings. Highlights included:

- At the previous meeting, the Management Committee reviewed 3 scopes of work for fiscal Year 2020: Water Atlas Maintenance, Upper Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network and Lower Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network as well as the FY20 Workplan and budget. After a few minor revisions, the MAC recommended approval of these documents by the Policy Committee.
- The MAC approved adjustments to the Draft Monitoring Strategy as suggested by the TAC, and will be ready to review comments on the final draft next cycle.
- The CAC reviewed the Communications Strategy Draft and forwarded input and comments to the MAC. This document is posted on the CHNEP website and is now open to general public comments. The CAC also discussed their dual role of not only funneling public input to the CHNEP, but to also to be a community liaison to promote educational and outreach initiatives. The Management Committee recommends that Policy approve the draft Communications Strategy with the suggested CAC edits.
- The MAC reviewed and commented on the Finance Strategy Draft. Members commented that CHNEP would benefit from including Management and Policy Committee members on their communications with city/county staff so the Committee members may act as a liaison to city/county administrators and remind them to pass information on CHNEP policy priorities to their lobbyists as well as support funding requests. Members also suggested that CHNEP invoicing be done earlier in their budget stages (spring) to allow for the preparation of reasonable funding allocations. The MAC supported the possibility of multi-

year agreements or declaring the NEP a special district. The Management Committee recommends that Policy approve the draft Finance Strategy with above revisions.

- All committees had minor suggestions and edits to project fact sheets to prepare them for public viewing to promote CHNEP's mission. These have been incorporated into the fact sheets brought to the Committee today.

Policy members also commented on CHNEP invoice and budget report timing. Members agree it is a good idea to send these out earlier, but would like them sent to policy members, city, and county managers twice a year; preferably once in spring and once toward the end of the year. Ms. Hecker commented that invoicing traditionally is sent at the beginning of the fiscal year (October) however, CHNEP will accept this request and begin with an earlier invoice and budget report cycle starting in 2021.

The Committee members also inquired about financial contributions from each region. Ms. Hecker noted the amounts given to CHNEP is up to the cities and counties however, the CHNEP Work Plan lists the estimated amounts (Cooperative Funding Table on page 16). Committee members discussed how these amounts were developed and wondered if creating budgets based on population sizes were a possibility. Ms. Hecker mentioned population basing the budget plans is a possibility, but CHNEP is currently asking each county to consider going as high as they can towards \$25,000 and each city \$7,500. Policy members supported working with their respective organizations to meet these goals.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN, THIS ITEM WAS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY.

5. Consent Agenda — Brian Smith, Co-Chair

Consent Agenda Items included:

- a. Policy Committee May 30, 2019 Meeting Minutes

MOTION TO APPROVE POLICY COMMITTEE MAY 30TH, 2019 MEETING MINUTES: GARY WEIN, DEBBIE MCDOWELL 2ND. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

- b. FY20 Water Atlas Maintenance Scope of Work

MOTION TO APPROVE FY20 WATER ATLAS MAINTENANCE SCOPE OF WORK: BILL TRUEX, JESSICA COSDEN 2ND. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

- c. FY20 CCHMN Scopes of Work – Upper and Lower Charlotte Harbor

MOTION TO APPROVE FY20 UPPER AND LOWER CCHMN SCOPES OF WORK: BILL TRUEX, JESSICA COSDEN 2ND. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

- d. FY20 Amended Workplan and Budget

MOTION TO APPROVE FY20 AMENDED WORK PLAN AND BUDGET: DEBBIE MCDOWELL, BILL TRUEX 2ND. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

6. Program Update — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP

Executive Director, Jennifer Hecker, presented a summary of CHNEP work carried out since the previous Policy Committee meeting. Highlights included:

- The completion and printing of the proof CCMP, the full printed version will be mailed to Policy Committee members by the next meeting. The CCMP can also be found electronically through the CHNEP website under “The Plan That Guides Us”.
- Over a dozen project scopes were drafted and will be kicking off this year.
- The previous CHNEP Finance and Grants Specialist has accepted a new position with the City of Punta Gorda Finance Department within Punta Gorda City Hall. This CHNEP position opening was filled by a new hire, Andrew Webb, with a start date of next Monday, September 23. Along with this addition, CHNEP has taken on three new conservation associate and outreach interns: Sierra Moen, Sheri Leibman, and Coral Keene.
- The Citizens Advisory Committee re-formation discussed during the previous meeting has now reached its implementation phase. This will help to evenly distribute committee member participation throughout the CHNEP area. New stakeholders from underrepresented areas will be identified and invited to apply as members of the CAC and to attend the next CAC meeting. Applications for the CAC will be discussed next cycle and candidates will be selected by spring.
- CHNEP has received all FY19 annual financial contributions with the exception of Desoto County, which did not have available funding to contribute this year, and the City of Arcadia. CHNEP has submitted 3 grant applications and 5 grant progress reports, with 1 grant awarded and 1 grant verbally committed to the previous cycle. Since last cycle CHNEP has received \$650.82 in private donations.
- In lieu of the regular spring The Harbor Happenings issue, a CCMP summary brochure was produced. This issue discussed the organization goals along with CHNEP’s new boundaries. This document is meant to act as a general brochure for CHNEP outreach use.
- CHNEP is working with a designer to create the 2020 nature calendar which will feature information on current and future technical projects. This year’s calendar will also include a donation page, making it easier for those in the community to participate in or mission.
- CHNEP organized and hosted the C-43 Reservoir Water Quality Summit which was well attended by local and national scientific experts. Public input was gathered and sent to SFWMD who is working with contractors to conduct a feasibility study.
- Planning for the 20th CHNEP Nature Festival is currently underway. The festival will take place in Laishley Park on November 16th from 10am to 3pm. CHNEP is still looking for sponsors, vendors, and exhibitors for this event.

Policy Committee members discussed revising the title of the CCMP document to read ‘From Coast to Heartland’ rather than ‘From Heartland to Coast’. Members decided leaving the original title “From Heartland to Coast” was most beneficial because this stresses the heartland habitat and the new CHNEP expansion area.

The Committee members discussed the Nature Festival event which has a strong focus on the coastal habitat and tends to exclude the heartland habitat of the CHNEP region. Members discussed CHNEP moving to support status for this event in the future and encouraging another organization to spearhead the pinning and implementation to free up more time for staff to attend partnership events throughout the entire CHNEP area. It was agreed that resources would be best spent by attending various festivals (Arcadia Rodeo, Swamp Cabbage Festival, Edison Light Festival, Shrimp Boat Festival, etc.) to reach a broader audience and potentially partner with other organizations to create larger CHNEP sections within these festivals.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN, THIS ITEM WAS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY.

7. CHNEP Executive Director Evaluation — Brian Smith, Co-Chair

The annual CHNEP Executive Director Evaluation took place. All members were given the opportunity to provide written feedback on the evaluation form prior to this meeting. This section was provided for Policy members to contribute direct feedback regarding the CHNEP Executive Director, Jennifer Hecker. Discussion highlights included:

- Policy Committee members commented on the positive direction CHNEP has taken since Ms. Hecker has joined. The program seems to be reaching new target audiences and changing and adapting in a progressive manner. Overall the written evaluations and ratings stand true to Ms. Hecker's performance and how the program is run.
- Members were very pleased with the recent life and excitement brought to the CHNEP program by staff members. CHNEP staff is bringing new ideas and perspectives to the program.
- The CHNEP program seems to be increasing in partnerships, which was thought to be one of Ms. Hecker's greatest strengths. Ms. Hecker mentioned that although CHNEP is increasing in partnerships, these partnerships depend on the organizations themselves to benefit the CHNEP program. With the expansive 10 counties that this program covers, it is difficult to receive full participation and communication, especially in person. The growth and functioning of this organization depends on a collective committed group of partners. Creating multi-year funding agreements may be one small step toward resolving this issue.
- Policy members requested the sending of meeting documents for review farther ahead of time. Some organizations may not have time to fully review all documents before attending meetings.
- Multiple members commented on the low evaluation response rate, as well as the low attendance rate of policy members present. Some members present did not feel comfortable evaluating Ms. Hecker's performance based on such few meeting interactions throughout the year and discussed scheduling quarterly meetings similar to other NEP's or that participating organizations endeavor to allocate more time to attend all of the scheduled meetings. One other solution provided was Ms. Hecker completing a more in-depth self-evaluation with a focus on achievements throughout the year to provide insight and understanding of responsibilities Policy Members might not be aware of otherwise. Ms. Hecker stated this request will be considered in future evaluations.
- Members discussed helping the CHNEP program by speaking with federally elected representatives directly to discuss the CHNEP concept and its importance.

8. CHNEP 2020 Legislative Priorities — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP

Ms. Hecker presented the proposed Legislative priorities for 2020. These Legislative Priorities will be used by CHNEP staff in policymaker education activities (funded exclusively with local funds) in communicating CHNEP legislative priorities related to the implementation of the CHNEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. Members were asked to review this document before CHNEP meetings with state and federal legislators. CHNEP's goal for this document is to share priorities with the Committee so that members of the partnership can collectively communicate with governmental relations/lobbyists about shared partnership goals.

Policy Committee members supported the original priorities, and suggested the following additions and modifications outlined below:

- Revise the wording of Legislative Priority Number 2 to include the term ‘maximize’ in place of the 80% figure. Members worry the removal of 80% of nitrogen and phosphorus might be too specific to include in this document. Members would like this section to instead read ‘to maximize removal rates’.
- Revise the wording of Legislative Priority Number 5 to remove the phrase ‘support full funding’. Policy members worry that although this was left intentionally broad, it may be unclear that this means increase funding to reach the full funding potential. The Committee would like to use the term ‘support increased funding’ in its place.

Members would like to support the CHNEP cooperative mission when members of their county/city are traveling to Tallahassee or Washington for legislative purposes. The CHNEP 2020 Legislative Priorities document will be updated and available on the CHNEP website, along with many other fact sheets and resources for Committee member’s use. If any Policy members or their staff are meeting for legislative purposes, they are encouraged to speak with CHNEP for resources to bring along.

As a side note, members present mentioned that although Legislative Priority Number 2 is necessary, other methods of fertilization that eliminate the use of nitrogen and phosphorus altogether such as potash should be more heavily promoted.

The committee commented that Legislative Priority Number 6 was well worded and think there is a strong need for controlling the flow of fertilizer at a deeper level than commercial applicators. Promoting native vegetation and species that are not as fertilizer-dependent is an important step in this process.

MOTION TO APPROVE 2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES WITH REQUESTED REVISIONS: FRED BURSON, BILL TRUEX 2ND. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

9. New Technical Projects — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP

Ms. Hecker gave an overview of the new technical projects selected for implementation in the FY19 and FY20 Work Plans. A statement of work has been created for each of the selected projects which are now all in various stages of procurement through the City of Punta Gorda. All of the listed projects will be completed prior to September 2021: Alligator Creek Stream Restoration Project, Gateway to Myakka State Park Marsh Restoration, Habitat Restoration Needs Phase II, and Native Upland Plantings at Wildflower Preserve, Quantifying Water Quality Benefits of SAV, and Warm Mineral Springs Creek Restoration.

Ms. Hecker informed Policy Members that an electronic version of the technical project fact sheet handouts will be uploaded to the CHNEP homepage, along with an interactive project map, by the end of the month. Physical copies of the project sheets can be provided to members upon request.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN, THIS ITEM WAS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY.

10. Technical Project Updates — Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP

CHNEP Research & Outreach Manager, Nicole Iadevaia, presented updates on CHNEP Technical Projects currently underway or completed since the previous cycle. This included the

City of Punta Gorda Resiliency Plan Update, the Yucca Pens Hydrological Monitoring project, and the ongoing CCHMN Project and CHNEP Water Atlas projects.

Member discussed the addition of project totals onto all fact sheets, or clarifying language to demonstrate that the listed totals were SOLEY CHNEP costs. Ms. Hecker mentioned many projects are multi-stage and multi-agency and overall costs would be difficult to estimate, but staff could instead clarify language to identify CHNEP funding total for the project. Members also discussed placing the CHNEP Water Atlas link on the CCHMN and Water Atlas fact sheets. Ms. Hecker agreed with this modification and mentioned the project fact sheets and technical reports will be accessible to all Policy members through the CHNEP website or file share service upon request.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN, THIS ITEM WAS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

11. New HUD/ FDEO Project Funding Opportunities — Drew Winters / Aaron Keller, FL Dept. of Economic Opportunity

Deputy Director for the Office of Disaster Recovery, Drew Winters, presented on new funding opportunities for the CHNEP region. Various federal resources from the US Housing and Urban Development agency (HUD) are being awarded to Florida, specifically to the FDEO in relation to Hurricane Irma. These federal Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds can now be used to support resiliency and sea level rise adaptation projects due to a federal policy change that not only focuses these funds on relative measures to address impacts from storms but proactive measures to build communities up to be able to better withstand future storms.

Ms. Hecker would like to point out that these funds can be utilized in future restoration projects to implement CCMP activities by including elements such as solar panels, flood storage systems, and shoreline stabilization, which benefit the environment as well as protect the community from harmful storm effects. **Organizations requesting project funding must submit their information as soon as possible as the deadline is November 1st.** CHNEP offered to work with FDEO to host/advertise workshops within the CHNEP area.

For more Information on this topic contact:

- www.floridajobs.org/CDBG-DR (for project funding submissions)
- 850-717-8462
- drew.winters@DEO.myflorida.com

Policy members were very interested in this discussion and would like to take advantage of this new funding source, especially to help mitigate storm water impacts. Members would like to attend future regional meetings to gather information as the submission deadline is approaching quickly. An email will be sent out to Policy members regarding further information on this topic.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN, THIS ITEM WAS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY.

12. Communications, Monitoring, & Finance Strategies Overview — Jennifer Shafer, Shafer Consulting

Dr. Shafer of Shafer Consulting presented on the development of the EPA required companion document including CHNEP Communications, Monitoring, and Finance Strategies. Highlights included:

- Monitoring strategy- this document handout includes Technical and Management advisory modifications including clarifying guiding questions and identifying additional data parameters being collected amongst partners.
- Communication strategy- this document was created to incorporate the public engagement plan of the new CCMP. The document handout includes Citizen Advisory Committee modifications including addition of a new homeowner/general audience outreach, new NGOs and governmental group partnerships, and CHNEP and CAC methods of raising awareness or funding.
- Finance Strategy-This document works to sustain adequate funding for the CHENP program by identifying existing sources of funding (state/regional, city/county, and Grants donations and in-kind).

Dr. Shafer requested committee input on how to receive recurrent dedicated State or Federal Funding and how to create multi-year agreements for City/County/Agency Funding. Policy members requested CHNEP contact them with information when support is needed on important legislative matters so they can act accordingly and help push priorities forward. Ms. Hecker mentioned recurrent dedicated State or Federal Funding matters were discussed earlier during the 2020 Legislative Document conversation as well.

The committee discussed how multi-year agreements would help to continue consistent budgeting patterns. CHNEP would like to see counties and cities work with us to create these agreements much like other NEPs. The committee had concerns with multi-year agreements being both beneficial in some cases and hurtful in others. Ms. Hecker mentioned other NEPs establish minimum amount multi-year agreements to allow for some flexibility from year to year while maintaining the consistency of that minimum amount.

Policy Members also inquired about CHNEP and special districts. Ms. Hecker mentioned special districts were looked into previously however, this may not be an option currently due to CHNEPs broad and diverse area.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN, THIS ITEM WAS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY.

13. HAB Economic Impacts Study — Craig Diamond, Balmoral Group

Regional Manager of the Balmoral Group in Tallahassee, Mr. Craig Diamond, presented on the economic impacts of water quality issues in the Gulf of Mexico. This project is privately funded by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) and focuses on defining the economic aspect of Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs) in the gulf area and creating an impact reference dashboard with support from CHNEP on the public engagement aspect of vetting the data and dashboard. This project aims to build upon existing work to define economic impacts of environmental events with real rather than implied values (e.g. real estate, restaurant sales, recreation revenue) while fusing information with scientific cell count data and social media data to quantify linkages between HAB, behaviors, and economic outcomes as well as coastal health relating specifically to HABs. The outcome of this project will inform policymakers of community level impacts through an online dashboard. CHENP will organize and host meetings to gather input on this topic and report back to Balmoral Group.

For more information Contact:

- **Craig Diamond-** (850) 201-7165 cdiamond@balmoralgroup.us
- **Courtney Cortez-** (407) 629-2185 x107 ccortez@balmoralgroup.us
- **Balmoral Group-** www.balmoralgroup.us

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN, THIS ITEM WAS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY.

14. Public Comment — Brian Smith, Co-Chair

No public comments were made.

15. Member Comments — Brian Smith, Co-Chair

- Fred Burson shared the Rink to Reef oyster restoration program that is creating artificial reef structures out of broken carbon fiber hockey sticks. These structures are currently being placed below docks to improve water quality in the city of Fort Myers. This program is now looking to install similar reef structures under private docks, along with expanding their reach to Cape Coral, Pine Island, Sanibel, and Punta Gorda.
- Brian Smith presented CHNEP with an acceptance letter from EPA Headquarters for the CCMP update and thanked staff and committee members for aiding in the development of this document.

16. Next Meeting's Topics, Location and Date — Brian Smith, Co-Chair

The next Policy Committee meeting will be held Friday, January 17th, 2020, 9:30am to 1:30pm at Charlotte Community Foundation 227 Sullivan Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950.

17. Adjourn — Brian Smith, Co-Chair

This meeting was adjourned at 1:34 pm by Co-Chair Brian Smith.