



CHNEP Policy Committee Meeting

Friday January 17th, 2020

9:30 am – 1:30 pm

Charlotte Community Foundation,
227 Sullivan Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950

Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Debby Carey	City of Punta Gorda
Jon Iglehart	Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Committee Co-Chair)
James Evans	City of Sanibel (Management Committee Co-Chair)
Holly Smith	City of Sanibel (Alternate for Mick Denham)
Brian Smith	US EPA Region 4
Jessica Cosden	City of Cape Coral
Tara Poulton	Desoto County (Alternate for Judy Schaefer)
Kali Spurgin	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Colon Lambert	Hardee County
James Brooks	Highlands County
Chauncey Goss	South Florida Water Management District
Randy Smith	Southwest Florida Water Management District (Alternate for Jack Bispham)
Priscilla Whisenant Trace	Manatee County
Don McCormick	Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
Karson Turner	Hendry County
Frank Mann	Lee County
Katy Errington	Village of Estero

Members Present via WebEx

Nancy Detert	Sarasota County
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Others Present

Jennifer Hecker	Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership
Nicole Iadevaia	Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership
Andrew Webb	Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership
Chelsea Bojewski	Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership
Sierra Moen	Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership
Ellie Noll	Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership
Corey Anderson	Florida Fish & Wildlife
Mike Savarese	Florida Gulf Coast University
Cortney Cortez	The Balmoral Group
Valerie Seidel	The Balmoral Group
Jennifer Shafer	Shafer Consulting
Richard Larson	Member of the Citizens Advisory Committee
Tracy Doherty	Charlotte County

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 by Co-chair Jon Iglehart. Introductions were then made.

2. Agenda Additions or Deletions

No additions or deletions were made to the agenda.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

No public comments were made on agenda items.

4. Management Committee Report

James Evans, Management Committee Co-Chair, presented the report of the Management Committee on January 7, 2020, as well as Management Committee recommendations on items before the Policy Committee. The Management Committee supported a resolution to conceptually endorse the formation of a SWFL Climate Compact as presented by Dr. Savarese. The Management Committee also heard informational presentations and updates from the TAC and CAC Meetings.

5. Consent Agenda

Jon Iglehart, Policy Committee Co-Chair, together with CHNEP Executive Director Jennifer Hecker, went over Consent Agenda items. On the Agenda were the Policy Committee September 6 2019 Meeting Minutes, the FY2020 Amended Work Plan, and CAC Applications. Questions were answered concerning term limits, the relationship between the CAC and Policy Committee, and the recording of attendance and participation at meetings. In addition, Randy Smith requested his presence be reflected in the September 20th, 2020 meeting minutes.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, WITH RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE SEPTEMBER 6TH MEETING MINUTES: CHAUNCEY GOSS, JESSICA COSDEN 2ND. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

6. CHNEP Update

Executive Director Jennifer Hecker presented on the program activity highlights from the beginning of the last conference cycle to the beginning of this one. Staff has conducted outreach to numerous stakeholder groups through presentations, planning of local volunteer events, and participation in festivals as well as media outreach. CHNEP has also worked on partner support and to implement numerous technical projects. Over the summer and fall, CHNEP produced and mailed personalized invoice packets to participating local government and agency partners: 10 counties and 25 cities in the CHNEP area. These packets included the FY20 invoice, CHNEP 2019 CCMP, 2020 Nature Calendar and Project Fact Sheets. All Policy Conference Committee members were also sent an individual copy of the updated 2019 CCMP, 2020 Nature Calendar, and select Technical Project Fact Sheets. She thanked all of the participating organizations that have paid their 2020 dues. It is presented that Lee County has yet to pay dues which leads to the recommendation of following up with city staff on the receiving of these notices. In addition, topics were discussed concerning Harbor Happenings distribution, the continuation of the Nature Festival, and the possibility of working with Protecting Florida Forever, Governor DeSantis's new water quality website.

Approved 2020 CHNEP state legislative priorities were also personally presented at the DeSoto, Charlotte and Lee Counties Legislative Delegation meetings.

Additionally, Ms. Hecker presented that CHNEP is tracking and helping partners stay informed on \$633M+ of funding coming through the Florida Dept. of Economic Opportunity (FDEO) from HUD to fund resiliency projects to help communities better weather severe climate events. The FDEO recently released a draft State Action Plan as to how it envisions these federal dollars to be spent. CHNEP is working to gather input and provide it back to FDEO during a 45 day comment period leading up to the Feb. 3rd HUD submission deadline. No action was taken, this item was for discussion only.

7. CHNEP Monitoring, Communications, & Finance Strategies

Dr. Jennifer Shafer presented on the CHNEP Monitoring, Communications, & Finance Strategy Appendices, which serve as supplemental documents to the updated Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP). The 2019 CCMP was adopted by the Policy Committee May 30, 2019 as CHNEP's guiding document, and the EPA requires that these Strategy Appendices are adopted within a year of CCMP implementation. Each Strategy Document supports implementation of a different aspect of the CCMP.

Dr. Shafer presented the draft Monitoring Strategy to the CHNEP Technical Advisory Committee and the draft Communications Plan to the CHNEP Citizen Advisory Committee incorporating both committees' input in the revised final drafts before presenting them and the draft Finance Strategy to the Management Committee.

The Policy Committee received a presentation on all three final draft strategies and voted to approve. Dr. Shafer provided a brief overview on the final Monitoring, Finance and Communication Strategies. Once approved, these documents will be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their review and approval.

MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE CHNEP MONITORING, COMMUNICATIONS, AND FINANCE STRATEGIES: JESSICA COSDEN, CHAUNCEY GOSS 2ND. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

8. Climate Compact

Dr. Michael Savarese presented on the current status of an effort to form a Climate Compact in Southwest Florida. Over 50 government officials representing 14 jurisdictions (Charlotte, Lee, and Collier Counties + their municipalities) are currently discussing how to work together and adapt to climate change. The purpose is to plan for a regional resiliency compact like ones formed in other parts of Florida as these may be the vehicle to deliver state funding for regional resiliency projects. The Climate Compact would incorporate a 3-level classification system-Connectivity; Alignment; Production. Different jurisdictions would pool resources to tackle symptoms of climate change through implementing resiliency plans. This presentation gave background on resiliency planning being conducted in the Southwest Florida area.

This presentation was also showcased to the Management Committee, which unanimously approved the endorsement of the compact. Executive Director Jennifer Hecker gave a brief background on CHNEP involvement with regards to resiliency and adaptation planning in the region to demonstrate how participation in a Climate Compact would fold in with current organizational efforts. EPA guidance has directed the National Estuary Program partners to engage with climate science as a part of the Climate Ready Estuaries program. Recent CHNEP

projects related to the subject include: The CHNEP 2018 Vulnerability Assessment, the Habitat Evolution Model (HEM) tracking habitat migration as caused by sea level rise, the Habitat Restoration Needs (HRN) Plan (mapping habitat areas in the floodplain that should be conserved rather than hardened), and the City of Punta Gorda Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2009) and Update (2019).

The Policy Committee was asked to consider an endorsement or resolution to support the collaborative effort to create a Climate Compact in Southwest Florida. If the partnership agreed to support the effort, the next step would be to work with jurisdictions to implement the concept and encourage active cities and counties to participate. Dr. Savarese inquired how best to engage elected leaders in mitigation efforts, especially in reference to the Heartland Communities. Discussion ensued on the specifications of the Climate Compact and how CHNEP could continue to work with partner organizations to share climate compact concerns and goals. Overall, there was a general support for making proactive choices to address climate change and sea level rise.

MOTION TO FORM A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE FORMATION OF CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA CLIMATE COMPACT: HOLLY SMITH, RANDY SMITH 2ND. MOTION WAS APPROVED WITH DON MCCORMICK VOTING TO OPPOSE.

9. NATURAL RESOURCE ECONOMIC VALUATION STUDY

Valerie Seidel from the Balmoral Group presented on the Natural Resource Economic Valuation Study. The CHNEP identified the need for an updated Economic Valuation Study for the newly expanded CHNEP program area. The focus of the Economic Valuation Study is to quantify the economic activity tied to natural resources (water primarily, as well as wildlife and habitat protection). As population pressure grows, it is important to improve understanding of the connection of these resources to the economy in order to better meet the needs of the public. This project will provide information that allows policymakers to evaluate the existing natural capital and its associated services. This presentation was made to the CHNEP Management Committee, Technical Advisory and Citizen Advisory Committees, with their input collected by The Balmoral Group for their use in undertaking of this project.

The Policy Committee asked what factors were included in the study, and it was explained that the analysis would focus on monetary factors, as opposed to intrinsic values, to lend legitimacy to the study. It was suggested the analysis include the dive community and other offshore businesses, the state park system, Babcock Ranch Ecotourism, and birding hotspots on protected lands. Committee members will send Valerie Seidel recommendations and contact information, per her request. No action was taken, this item was for discussion only.

10. Technical Projects Update

Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP Research & Outreach Manager, gave the committee updates on the progress of select research and restoration projects. CHNEP is managing several research and/or restoration projects (or phases of projects) that are funded with CHNEP FY19 and FY20 funds. A number were kicked-off at the end of FY19 or are launching at the beginning of FY20, with all but the Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative Hydrological Modeling Project to be completed by September 2021. An overview of each of these projects is in project fact sheets that are now available on the CHNEP.org website. No action was taken, this item was for discussion only.

11. Policy Committee Member Updates

Each Policy Committee member had an opportunity to update the rest of the Committee on their respective research, restoration, public education and engagement projects.

James Evans from the City of Sanibel requested the support of CHNEP on the water quality feasibility study of the C43 reservoir. He spoke of the importance of maintaining Lake Okeechobee at a sustainable level for the lake, river, and estuary. Actions taken regarding the Governor's Executive Order for water quality, minimum flow, and salinity for the Caloosahatchee River should be monitored.

Tara Poulton from Desoto County commented on the county's work to reduce erosion at a Morgan Park on the Peace River. Phosphate mining in the area has been put on hold, as workshops will be held to determine the impact of the mining on water quality within the area.

Kali Spurgin from FWC shared that she had resources on SW red snook, sea trout, and on mullet runs. She is also looking for input about fishery closings due to HABs.

Colon Lambert from Hardee County shared that Hardee County is increasing its phosphate mining industry. Farmers in the region actively seek to keep their fertilizer on land from running into waterways. Slow release fertilizer is helping.

James Brooks from Highlands County shared that the area was growing slowly (2-3%), with a regional emphasis on farming, citrus and cattle. Impoundment south of Lake Istokpoga has begun.

Chauncey Goss from South Florida Water Management District requested CHNEP's involvement in the C43 water quality component, as well as the organization's input on rulemaking, which is to be done in September of this year. Board member Goss mentioned that it would be beneficial to legislatively protect water quality rather than focusing solely on treatment.

Randy Smith from Southwest Florida Water Management District discussed the organization's 2020 seagrass mapping, SWIM plan, and other upcoming projects that will address water quality evaluation and natural systems restoration.

Don McCormick from the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council brought up the macroalgae bloom occurring in the Harbor, as well as a potential dam removal project on Shell Creek.

Debby Carey of the City of Punta Gorda mentioned a fund to put living shorelines along Charlotte Harbor. She also brought up the City's issue with septic tanks leaking into the canal system.

Karson Turner from Hendry County shared the County's excitement to be building the C43 Reservoir, which is beneficial to the local economy as well as the environment. Commissioner Turner, who also serves on the Lake O Coalition, expressed support for collaboratively advocating for legislative priorities in Tallahassee. Local counties and individuals are often wary of BMAPs, so the messaging associated with publishing new BMAPs should be finessed. Finally, Commissioner Turner also supports the mechanical removal (without using heavy equipment) of vegetation from Lake Okeechobee.

Katy Errington from the City of Estero mentioned the City's conducting of water quality monitoring to determine problems and solutions. Septic to sewer is a big issue. She also presented the fact that CHNEP is not as well known in her area and seeks improvement on how to reach this specific area of potential supporters.

Co-chair Jon Iglehart from FDEP shared there was a meeting about two weeks ago discussing priorities that included bringing the blue-green algae task force recommendations to the governor. This included wastewater residuals.

Brian Smith from the Environmental Protection Agency shared that the CHNEP strategy reviews are very helpful to communicate to congress how NEPs are doing. There will be changes to federal funding programs that include drinking and wastewater.

15. Public Comment

Corey Anderson from the Florida Wildlife Commission commented on the smothering algae blooms affecting fish in Charlotte Harbor due to increased nutrient levels. FWC is working with CHFL to improve fish habitats for juvenile sportfish. FWC is also working to identify tarpon nurseries in the Harbor, specifically in the Cape Haze area. In addition, CHNEP and partners are working on a comprehensive oyster reef mapping and restoration identification, while the FDEP is working on permitting to address the mini reef projects.

16. Future Meeting's Topics, Location and Date

The next Policy Committee meeting will be May 28, 2020 at the Charlotte Community Foundation in Punta Gorda (Note: held virtually due to COVID).

17. Adjourn

Co-Chair Jon Iglehart adjourned the meeting at 1:08 pm.