



CHNEP CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday May 1st, 2019

9:30 am – 1:30 pm

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

Draft Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

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CAC Members Present:

Jeff Anlauf	Manasota Waterways Civic Association
Robert Ballard	Calusa Land Trust
Gary Brownell	National Association of Homebuilders
James Cooper	Lemon Bay Conservancy
Ernesto Lasso de la Vega	Lee County Hyacinth Control District
Kayton Nedza	Hardee County Outdoor Classroom
Ann O’Leary	Venice Area Audubon Society
Debi Osborne	Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast
Sheila Scolaro	Sarasota County Stormwater
Robert Winter	Peace River Audubon Society
Pete Quasias	Audubon of the Western Everglades
Harry Phillips	Cape Coral Environmental Resources Division

CAC Members/Others Present Online:

Others Present:

Danika Hopper	Calusa Belle
Frances Howell-Coleman	Ancient Islands Sierra Club
Scott Perry	La Belle Fossil Camp
Marian Ryan	Ancient Islands Sierra Club
Jennifer Hecker	CHNEP
Danielle Berhel	CHNEP
Nicole Iadevaia	CHNEP
Sierra Moen	CHNEP

1. Call to Order and Introductions – Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

Co-chair Osborne called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. Introductions were then made.

2. Agenda Additions or Deletions – Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

No additions or deletions were made to the agenda.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items – Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

Scott Perry of La Belle Fossil Camp expressed his gratitude and excitement that CHNEP will be working in Hendry and Glades County. He also is happy to be included in the CAC meeting.

4. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) December 19, 2018 Meeting Minutes – Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

ROBERT BALLARD MOVED, SECONDED BY HARRY PHILLIPS, TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 19, 2018 CAC MEETING MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

5. CHNEP Update – Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP

Executive Director, Jennifer Hecker gave this report. The report included a summary of program work since last cycle included the hiring and training of new CHNEP Outreach Associate Intern, Sierra Moen. CHNEP partnered with Charlotte County to receive \$148,650 from road widening mitigation to procure services to do Yucca Pens Hydrogeological data collection. She also reported a partnership with SFWMD to apply for NRDA funding for the Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative for \$635,000.

Numerous in-person meetings about the program were held, including with state and federal legislative offices in Tallahassee and Washington DC. Formal presentations about the CHNEP were made to the Southwest Florida Water Management District Environmental Advisory Council, AWRA Southwest Florida Water Resources Conferences, and Symposium on Rising Sea Level Rise on the Florida Gulf Coast, Bonita Springs Historical Society, Punta Gorda Garden Club, and many more. Staff also manned a booth at the Wings Over Water Festival at Harns Marsh. Additionally, CHNEP arranged a Management Committee member field trip to the Circle B Bar Reserve.

Since the last cycle, annual contributions were received from Sarasota, Charlotte, Polk, Manatee, and Hardee Counties, as well as the Cities of Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Venice, North Port, and the Village of Estero. Online donations and donations by mail resulted in an additional \$3,042.96. Three grant applications were submitted, as were 9 grant progress reports. CHNEP was awarded one grant this cycle. CHNEP has added 57 new volunteers, another 197 Facebook followers (1,145 total), over 161 new subscribers signing up to receive our educational mailings (3,267 total), and 1,032 unique visitors visiting our website. This past cycle, CHNEP staff also completed the Winter 2019 magazine 'Harbor Happenings' which is distributed to almost 9,000 recipients, and launched the 2020 Calendar Contest.

Ms. Hecker also spoke about recent visit to Lake Hancock to see the living shoreline restoration project recently undertaken by CHNEP and partners that Committee members were invited to attend. It was suggested that if management conference members were supportive of another CHNEP field trip that the Committees could visit Blackbeard's Ranch, C43, or Lake Hicopochee in the fall to see land conservation and restoration projects first hand.

6. CAC Co-Chair Election and Bylaw Revisions – Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

To reflect the new name of CHNEP and the CHNEP area boundary expansion into two new counties proposed revisions were brought forward for all Management Committee bylaws by CHNEP staff. The proposed amendments for the CAC bylaws included: updating the CHNEP name and service area boundaries, clarifying the role of CAC members in relation to Conservation Grants and Management and Policy Committees, revising election and nomination procedures, and with the addition of new counties setting '3 member per county guideline' was suggested. Additionally, it

was suggested that Co-Chairs be elected on an alternating basis annually for 2 year terms. Currently both Co-Chairs are elected annually which means that a Co-Chair would potentially only guide one of three annual meetings. The suggested staggered two-year terms would also ensure that a new Co-Chair would always be paired with one experienced Co-Chair, making for smoother transitions after elections.

Committee members discussed the proposed changes and suggested instead that the Rules sub-committee could be reconvened to propose changes to the bylaws. CHNEP staff and CAC Co-Chair explained that all sub-committees had been defunct for some time, as members did not have the time to serve. Members also discussed whether less populated counties should have an equal representation on the CAC as more populated counties. It was explained that diversity in stakeholder viewpoints adds value to the program, and that a watershed-wide approach is necessary to address a watershed-wide issues, and less populated areas also have a part to play in protecting water resources. These issues are fundamental to the objectives laid out in the CHNEP Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP). CAC members expressed concern about the changes to the Committee membership and other proposed bylaw changes, communicating that they believe it will create shifts in the way that the Committee operates. CHNEP staff shared that the fundamental role of this committee remains unchanged, the only thing that has changed is the strategy used to meet the established objectives of the CAC and language used to outline the role of the Committees.

GARY BROWNELL MOVED, SECONDED BY ERNESTO LASSO DE LA VEGA, TO TABLE THE BYLAWS REVISIONS FOR A FUTURE CAC MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

The following CAC expressed interest in attending a bylaw revision meeting: Gary Brownell, Ernesto Lasso de la Vega, James Cooper, Sheila Scolaro, Kayton Nedza, Robert Ballard, Pete Quasias, and Debi Osborne.

The existing and proposed CAC By-Laws call for holding annual elections of Co-Chairs. Nominations were sought in advance of the meeting: Kayton Nedza, Debi Osborne, Shelia Scolaro, Ernesto Lasso de la Vega, and Pete Quasias were nominated for CAC Co-Chair. Ernesto Lasso de la Vega and Pete Quasias withdrew their names from consideration. Shelia Scolaro and Debi Osborne were elected to be the new CAC Co-Chairs, with Kayton Nedza stepping down. Ms. Hecker and the CAC expressed their appreciation for Kayton Nedza's service. Mr. Nedza wished Shelia Scolaro success in her new position.

DEBI OSBORNE AND SHEILA SCOLARO WERE ELECTED AS THE NEW CAC CO-CHAIRS FOR ONE-YEAR TERMS WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

7. Final Habitat Restoration Needs (HRN) Report – Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP.

The HRN Project and Report were created as a plan to guide habitat conservation, sustainability, resiliency and connectivity throughout the CHNEP study area. Nicole Iadevaia gave brief review of the overall goals of the project as a refresher and the remainder of the presentation and discussion focused on the work that has been done since the December 2018 CAC meeting.

Since December, the Habitat Conservation Subcommittee (HCS) met twice to review the draft report and comment before final revisions were made to the report and appendices. The TAC, Management, and Policy Committees also made comments and those revisions were incorporated. These comments included discussion of revisions to the Executive Summary and basin summaries to

address how change analysis and HEM model were used to inform the report, addressing mapping anomalies, refinements to the Recommendations section, separating the report out by basin, and the incorporation of restoration target acreages for coastal wetlands, freshwater wetlands, and uplands. The notes from these meetings and project overview can be found on the Habitat Restoration Planning page on the CHNEP website.

CAC members commented that the HRN report could be used by governments and non-profits alike to justify projects or spend funding on land acquisitions. CHNEP staff added that report outputs will be referenced in the updated Southwest Florida Water Management District Surface Water Improvement Plan (SWIM) for Charlotte Harbor. CHNEP staff also has a plan to synthesize and distribute relevant sections of the plan to policy makers in the area. CAC members are invited to use the plan throughout their own organizations and to share and distribute it to other relevant organizations that they know of in the area (e.g. conservation non-profits, land managers, planners, etc.)

8. Final Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) Revision – Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP

Executive Director, Jennifer Hecker presented the final Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) revision updates. The draft CCMP has been brought through previous Management cycles for comment. All of those comments from all CHNEP Committees as well as comments from EPA have been addressed in this version, the Final CCMP Document.

Substantive changes to the CCMP since the December 8, 2018 CAC meeting were identified using ‘track changes.’ Several items were added, such as an executive summary and sections on climate change and environmental justice, advanced wastewater treatment and Harmful Algae Bloom response. These items came as comment from both the Management and Policy committee as well as from the EPA.

After Executive Director, Jennifer Hecker, reviewed the changes with CAC members, members made the following points: they agreed with the incorporation of the Environmental Justice section and the references to this made throughout the documents, and conveyed that a reference to *Vallisneria americana* (or tapegrass) a species of freshwater aquatic grass, should be added to the Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Protection Section of the document. CHNEP staff will pass these revisions along to the contractor to be incorporated into the final document.

ROBERT BALLARD MOVED, SECONDED BY GARY BROWNELL THAT THE CAC REACH CONSENSUS TO SUPPORT MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINAL CCMP INCORPORATING SUGGESTED REVISIONS. TAC MEMBERS REACHED CONSENSUS ON INPUT WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

9. Communications Strategy – Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP

CHNEP Research & Outreach Manager Nicole Iadevaia led an online ‘Menti-meter’ exercise to discuss and gather input and ideas from the CAC to develop the Communications Strategy that will be incorporated into the 2019 Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP). Once the updated Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) is adopted as CHNEP’s guiding document, several supporting documents will be created to inform implementation of different aspects of the CCMP.

CAC members expressed that social media and online communications through websites were the most effective outreach method in their community (especially for younger communities), followed by volunteer events, workshops and conferences, and printed materials. They shared the biggest hurdles in effective outreach were creating outreach materials that translate science into action to be more accessible to a wider audience. Members also expressed their support for increased education and outreach for Policymakers. CAC members then evaluated the effectiveness of various types of outreach materials: printed publications, online communications through websites and social media, and classroom activities and other educational materials were rated the highest.

Members would like CHNEP to continue effective outreach with the fishing community boaters, and coastal communities; and for CHNEP to continue expansion in outreach efforts with inland communities, farmers, and other traditionally underserved communities. CAC members suggested ways to continue to expand the effectiveness of CHNEP outreach: this included continued work with media, policymakers, area schools, and support or funding for community groups and projects, and to strengthen non-profit partnerships through collaboration on projects.

10. Name Change Update and Tagline Exercise – Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP

On January 24, 2019 the CHNEP Policy Committee approved the name change of the program to Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership. The implementation of the new name will be on June 1, 2019 following the approval of the new Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan Revision by the CHNEP Policy Committee. During the discussion at the January 24, 2019 Policy Meeting, Policy Committee members requested CHNEP staff explore options for potentially revising the CHNEP tagline and TAC members participated in a ‘Menti-meter’ exercise to brainstorm a potential tagline change.

Executive Director, Jennifer Hecker led the discussion and tagline Menti-meter online exercise. Overall, CAC members preferred shorter taglines to the longer taglines and supported the adoption of a new tagline versus keeping the existing tagline(s). Members suggested ‘Protecting,’ ‘Enhancing,’ and ‘Preserving’ as potential verbs. Geographically, members suggested watersheds, counties, and cities to be included in the tagline. Members preferred ‘Uniting Central and Southwest Florida to protect waters and wildlife’ to ‘Uniting Central and Southwest Florida to protect water,’ and stated we are protecting for people too.

11. CHNEP Technical Projects Update – Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP

CHNEP Research & Outreach Manager Nicole Iadevaia presented updates on select CHNEP technical projects. Projects included results from the Lake Hancock (freshwater living shoreline) restoration, FDEP Citizen Seagrass Gardening Grant, Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative, the Trabue Harborwalk Oyster reef year-3 results, and the City of Punta Gorda Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Additionally, Nicole shared that the CHNEP is looking to fund several types of restoration projects (or phases of projects) in the program area that can be completed by September 2020 or September 2021. CHNEP shared a ‘Call for Projects’ link and pertinent information with interested CAC members and their organizations. Interested applicants were informed they must submit preliminary details about the project to CHNEP by May 3, 2019 to be included in the CHNEP Work Plan for approval by the Management and Policy Committees this cycle. Groups in the CHNEP expansion (Glades and Hendry County) area are also encouraged to apply for funding for upcoming projects.

12. Conservation Grants Update – Danielle Berhel, CHNEP

Finance & Grants Specialist Danielle Berhel presented on the current status of the CHNEP grants program. For fiscal year 2020 (which begins October 1, 2019) CHNEP will be combining the Public Outreach Grant and Micro-grant into one application/award, now called the Conservation Grant. This will simplify both the application process and the review process. Awards will be between \$500 and \$3,000 at the discretion of CHNEP staff, with CAC input to avoid conflicts of interest. There will be 3 review periods throughout the year to coincide with CAC Meetings: the summer deadline is August 1, 2019 for an award notice in October; the winter deadline is December 1, 2019 for notice in February; and the spring deadline is April 1, 2020 for notice in June. All projects are to be completed by September 30, 2020.

CAC members were encouraged to communicate funding opportunities with their communities, and suggested CHNEP identify potential projects. Co-Chair Osborne clarified grants must be on public land, though research can be conducted on private property.

13. Nature Festival Planning Committee – Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP

Nicole Iadevaia presented that CHNEP has begun organizing its 20th annual Nature Festival. This annual event is an opportunity for partners and other entities working to protect water and wildlife to directly educate and engage the public. In 2018, over 1,500 attendees and 40+ exhibitors enjoyed the festival. This year, the event will be held at Laishley Park on Saturday November 16th, 2019 in downtown Punta Gorda.

With CAC members being CHNEP partners in various communities throughout Central and Southwest Florida, CHNEP staff requested volunteers from the Committee to serve as part of a Nature Festival Planning group. Shelia Scolaro, Gary Brownell, and Ann O’Leary volunteered their help. Captains for Clean Water, the Calusa Waterkeepers, and the Calusa Land Trust were suggested as potential exhibitors, and Danika Hopper of the Calusa Bell requested a press release.

14. CAC Membership Projects Update – Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

In an effort to raise awareness across the Committee regarding public education and engagement projects currently being completed by CAC membership, as well as topics of interest to CAC members, CAC members were invited to share information about projects in their area.

Debi Osborne shared the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast bought 13 acres of scrub land in Manatee County, costing \$282,000.

Pete Quasias disclosed the Audubon of the Western Everglades purchased 5,000 acres of ranch land near Lake Hicpochee for \$14 million.

Robert Ballard of the Calusa Land Trust shared that through Lee County Conservation 2020, 90 acres of land will be purchased, including a pond on Pine Island. Nature Lover’s Guides to Pine Island are available for \$20. Additionally, 5 acres will be purchased in the Calusa area.

Jim Cooper of the Lemon Bay Conservancy recapped a Water Quality Workshop that had been held on April 6th. Bob Winter had made some CD’s of the event, which will be available on the website.

Sheila Scolaro of Sarasota County Stormwater invited CAC members to an (Sarasota) Alligator Creek Paddle Party on May 18th, from 11-3.

Ann O’Leary of the Venice Area Audubon Society shared that Venice Area Beatification, INC. (VABI) had created an urban forest to attract neo-tropical bird migrants. The land was donated by the county.

15. Public Comment – Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

Each participating member of the public was afforded up to 3 minutes total to speak at this point in the meeting.

Scott Perry of the La Belle Fossil Camp invited CAC members to ‘Fossil Sunday,’ a weekly Fossil Expedition on the Caloosahatchee River. He also shared that this summer’s Fossil Camp will incorporate EarthEcho Water Monitoring, which he learned about at CHNEP’s ‘Wild About Water Quality Event.’

Marian Ryan and Francis Howell-Coleman of the Ancient Islands Sierra Club expressed support for the CHNEP name change and their inclusion in the meeting. They shared that they were unaware that CHNEP had been involved in Lake Hancock restoration and suggested a sign be placed at the Circle B Bar Reserve.

16. Future Meeting's Topics, Location and Date

The upcoming CAC meetings for 2019 will be: **August 21, 2019** and **December 19, 2019** at the Charlotte Community Foundation in Punta Gorda.

17. Adjourn – Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

The meeting was adjourned at 1:28 by Co-Chair Debi Osborne.