

Approved Meeting Minutes
Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Technical Advisory Joint HCS/HAS Subcommittee
November 16, 2006
Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center – Punta Gorda, Florida

MEMBERS PRESENT

Annette Nielsen	Department of Environmental Protection
Mike Jones	Sarasota County
Lizanne Garcia	Southwest Florida Water Management District
Kris Kaufman	Southwest Florida Water Management District
Jim Beever	Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
Bill Byle	Charlotte County

ALSO PRESENT

Lisa Beever	Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Jaime Boswell	Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Catherine Corbett	Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

1. **Call to Order and Introductions**—Mike Jones, HAS Co-Chair
Meeting called to order at 9:00 am.

2. **Agenda Additions or Deletions**— Mike Jones, HAS Co-Chair
No agenda item additions or deletions were suggested.

3. **HCS/HAS/WQOOS Minutes**— Mike Jones, HAS Co-Chair
**MOTION BY ANNETTE NIELSON TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM
SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2006 SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING. SECONDED BY
JIM BEEVER. MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

4. **CCMP Vision Section**—Lisa Beever
On December 6, 2002, the Management Conference requested preparation of a vision map series to augment the CCMP. Committee members agreed that such a picture would be a valuable tool for policy development. The conference agreed that the vision should account for natural and seasonal variation. On July 6, 2006, the Legislative Subcommittee requested that the vision map series be included in the CCMP update. Graphical depictions of the Vision for the Charlotte Harbor study area were presented. Discussion of improvements to text and map designs were made, including; more detail on the purpose of the vision, more detail on how maps were created, change color on the second SAV map to show areas where seagrass is not present as red, revisions of salinity legends to include all colors and data ranges, review salinity information from work done by Peter Doering (Caloosahatchee), Ralph Montgomery (Peace River) and Ernie Estevez (Myakka River), include more salinity data in Estero Bay, mercury impairments should be shown for all coastal waterbodies, clarify the write-up for the stewardship vision and update the map to 2006. A map of the hydrologic alteration areas was suggested. There was discussion on the need to be consistent on SAV targets throughout program documents.

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The portions of the revised CCMP vision section relevant to the HCS/HAS subcommittee were reviewed. Comments and discussion will be reflected by revisions to the document. Changes will include: the addition of Blackburn Canal to the hydrologic alteration map, an update of the exotic species map, and an update of the stewardship map.

5. **Environmental Indicators Update**—Jaime Boswell

The original Environmental Indicators document (2005) was developed as a monitoring program to assess the health of the Charlotte Harbor estuary, and the progress of the Charlotte Harbor NEP. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Charlotte Harbor NEP developed a subcommittee structure to address each of the priority issues within the CCMP:

- fish and wildlife habitat loss
- hydrologic alterations and
- water quality degradation.

The three subcommittees reviewed the Quantifiable Objectives for their priority issue and created a list of indicators meant to address each Objective. This effort incorporated the efforts of the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center to develop indicators in 2001 (see “Proposed Environmental Indicators and Management Goals for the Peace and Myakka Rivers”, 2001 available from the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center). The subcommittees also determined gaps in current monitoring and analysis programs for which the program and its partners will need to follow up in the future.

The Environmental Indicators are being revisited to reflect the revised CCMP (2006) Quantifiable Objectives, increased knowledge on the effective use of indicators, and new monitoring and reporting that has filled previous gaps.

In the working draft of the CCMP there are three quantifiable objectives associated with fish and wildlife habitat, and four associated with hydrologic alterations, for each of these objectives there is generally at least one corresponding environmental indicator. In the new document there were not many major changes to the previously accepted document. However, the committee is asked to review the document and comment.

The committee reviewed the indicators associated with FW-1, with in depth discussion on several of the indicators. Staff will revise the Environmental Indicators to reflect committee discussions. Due to time constraints the FW-2, FW-3 and HA indicators were not discussed.

6. **Volunteer Shoreline Survey**—Jaime Boswell

One of the Charlotte Harbor NEP environmental indicators is shoreline condition, for example presence of mangroves, hardened shoreline or exotic vegetation. The type of shoreline can indicate the level of protection against major storms and pollution, and the amount and quality of habitat available for fish, other aquatic organisms, and birds. Shoreline condition data is not currently available for the Charlotte Harbor area, but could be used in multiple capacities

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including; coastal planning, environmental management, and recreational interests. Involvement of the extensive local boating community in data collection would greatly benefit the project. The end product of the project will be interactive maps available on the internet depicting shoreline condition and shoreline features throughout the entire Charlotte Harbor area extending from Coastal Venice to Estero Bay, and including the tidal Peace, Myakka and Caloosahatchee Rivers. The committee is asked to provide comment on the type of data being collected, methodology and participants.

A short presentation was given to describe the intent and general methodology of the project. All members agreed the project was valuable and that volunteers could effectively collect the data with correct guidance and limited categories of data being collected.

7. **Finger Canals**—Jim Beaver

The construction of finger canals and creation of filled uplands from wetlands and submerged bottoms is a major historical impact in the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program Area. This activity and the subsequent environmental impacts to water quality, hydrology, and fish and wildlife habitat were a major cause of the creation and implementation of federal, state, and local government environmental regulations and protections in relationship to estuaries and freshwater wetlands. Subsequently the construction of these features ceased in Southwest Florida, with the exception of a few grandfathered court-settlement agreement projects, by the end of the 1970's.

Today, approximately 30 years later, there are now new proposals to construct upland-cut and wetland-cut channels that will take the form of navigation canals for proposed navigation channels through islands and for marinas within and outside of the CHNEP study area. There have also been proposals for freshwater-system finger canals. Advocates for these projects have challenged the regulatory and planning agencies to produce documentation to demonstrate that these canals cause negative environmental impacts and, in some cases, are asserting benefits from canals including flushing improvement of water quality and habitat creation from increasing edge.

Most if the studies in regard to this type of project are old and are not known to the new generation of environmental reviewers and regulators. It is necessary to reassemble the published and grey literature that documents the negative environmental impacts of finger fill and cut canals in order to respond to these proposals and prevent further degradation to water quality, hydrology, and fish and wildlife in the CHNEP area.

It is suggested that the TAC assist in assembling a bibliography with copies of the identified material for use by the CHNEP and conference partners in evaluating these new proposals for new impacts to the estuary and riverine systems.

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MOTION BY JIM BEEVER TO RECOMMEND TAC ASSISTS IN ASSEMBLING A TECHNICAL DOCUMENT TO INCLUDE A BIBLIOGRAPHY WITH COPIES OF REFERENCE MATERIALS ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF FINGER CANALS. SECONDED BY ANNETTE NIELSON. LIZANNE GARCIA ABSTAINED FROM VOTING. MOTION WAS APPROVED. KRIS KAUFMAN CLARIFIED THE INTENT OF THE DOCUMENT IS UNBIASED AND WILL INCLUDE ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF FINGER CANALS.

8. **Agenda Items for next meetings**—Mike Jones, HAS Co-Chair
Environmental Indicators
Research and Monitoring Needs Inventory
Co-chair elections

9. **Member's Comments**— Bill Byle discussed that he will be looking into the expansion of the Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves in order to protect the “center of abundance” located in the brackish portion of the Peace River. Jim Beever announced a meeting to be held on density reduction. Annette Nielson commented on the continual discussion on connecting the Flamingo canal to allow residents direct access to the Harbor.

10. **Staff Comments**—No comments were made.

11. **Next Meeting's Date**—February 1, 2006

12. **Adjourn**—Meeting was adjourned at 12:14pm

