

# COASTAL & HEARTLAND~~CHARLOTTE HARBOR~~ NATIONAL ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP ~~PROGRAM~~ CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## PREAMBLE

The Coastal & Heartland ~~harlotte Harbor~~ National Estuary Partnership~~program~~ (CHNEP) is comprised of local, state and federal governmental entities as well as public stakeholders who work together to a ~~partnership that~~ protects the Charlotte Harbor estuaries from Venice to Bonita Springs to Winter Haven ~~by improving the ecological integrity of the watershed~~. This partnership gives citizens, elected officials, resource managers, and commercial and recreational resource users in the 4,700-square-mile study area a voice to address diverse resource management concerns including fish and wildlife habitat loss, water quality, water flow and stewardship. The watershed in the study area includes all or portions of Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, Manatee, Polk, Highlands, Hardee, Glades, Hendry and DeSoto counties.

The Management Conference of the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program is comprised of the Program Office and four committees: Citizens Advisory, Technical Advisory, Management and Policy. Each serves a specialized role but all support the program objectives and implementation of the *Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan* (CCMP). The Citizens Advisory Committee provides input ~~to the CHNEP Management Committee~~.

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Citizens Advisory Committee of the CHNEP, hereinafter called the CAC. The principal mailing address shall be:

Coastal & Heartland ~~harlotte Harbor~~ National Estuary Partnership~~program~~  
326 W Marion Avenue  
Punta Gorda, FL 33950  
941/575-5090, 866/835-5785  
[www.CHNEP.org](http://www.CHNEP.org)

### ARTICLE II: Purposes and Powers

#### Section 1: Purpose

The core purpose(s) of the CAC shall be to:

- ~~a. Make recommendations to the CHNEP Policy Committee on the direction of the CHNEP;~~
- ~~b. Implement the CCMP; and~~
- ~~e.~~ a. Promote public awareness of the CCMP and the issues and goals of the CHNEP National Estuary Program.
- b. Provide public input to the Management Conference on public education and participation activities
- c. Assist in the development and implementation of public outreach and engagement events

The CAC shall conduct the business of the committee so as to ensure compliance with the Florida Government in the Sunshine Laws and the Florida Code of Ethics.

## Section 2: Accomplishing the Purpose

To accomplish the purposes of the CHNEP, the CAC members shall:

- a. Communicate the activities of the CHNEP and the CAC to their respective organizations, communities, and representative interest groups and communicate the comments and concerns of these organizations to the CHNEP Management Conference;
- b. ~~Host~~ Participate in CAC meetings to discuss and provide input for recommend items that the Management and Policy Committees to Conference will consider;
- c. Recommend and participate in public outreach for the CHNEP Management Conference;
- d. Provide input into CHNEP Conservation Recommend, organize, and facilitate Grants applications, as well as disseminate and assist others to apply for them programs; and
- e. ~~Review and make recommendations for the CHNEP annual work plan; and~~
- f. Increase public access to and readability of CHNEP documents and materials.

## **ARTICLE III: Membership**

### Section 1: CAC Composition

The CAC is composed of residents ~~of the Charlotte Harbor watershed as defined by~~ from the CHNEP ~~or individuals representing a cross section of groups and organizations that use or have concerns about the~~ CHNEP Study Area. Two member representatives and one alternate who either live or work in the CHNEP Area will be selected from each of the 10 counties CHNEP serves. Such interests include, but are not limited to, agriculture, business and industry, mining, resource management, research and monitoring, education, the environment, the seafood industry, recreation, tourism, and residential concerns.

### Section 2: Criteria for Membership

People meeting the following criteria may become members. Those who:

- a. Are potentially affected by the management recommendations contained in the CCMP;
- b. Are willing to attend scheduled CAC meetings and are willing to serve on the Committee for a four year period;
- c. Assume responsibility for communicating with citizen, user or interest groups;
- d. Implement the CCMP;
- e. Have interest in CHNEP issues of common concern identified in the CCMP ; and
- f. ~~Are willing to serve on a committee of the CAC.~~

### Section 3: Classes of Membership

- a. ~~M~~Voting members are appointed by the Policy Committee with full voting rights. ~~Nominations may be made by any voting member of the CAC. Applications to serve on the Committee will list each of the counties in the CHNEP that the applicant works or lives in, as well as a corresponding Policy Committee member reference for those counties. Applicants should reach out to establish communication with their~~ corresponding Policy Committee member reference in advance.
- b. Voting members who have not attended ~~three~~two consecutive regular meetings of the CAC (excepting extenuating circumstances) will automatically lose their voting rights

and will be required to attend a meeting and submit an *Application for Voting Status* to the CAC and the Policy Committee in order to reinstate their voting privileges.

b. Non-voting members include CHNEP partners as well as members of the general public. Non-voting members can give input only during “public comment” portions of CAC meeting agendas.

c. ~~The Policy Committee has the authority to remove any member of the CAC for failing to uphold the bylaws, including the Sunshine Law provision within. Honorary members are recognized with this designation upon the recommendation of one member seconded by another member and by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the membership attending the Annual Meeting. Honorary membership may be conferred upon a past member whose long and meritorious service with the CAC or the Program Office is recognized by this designation.~~

#### Section 4: Term Limits

a) CAC membership terms are 4 years each, with ability to serve multiple terms if reselected by the Policy Committee to do so.

### **ARTICLE IV: Officers**

#### Section 1: Officers

Officers shall be:

a. Appointed voting members; and

b. ~~Either 2 Two~~ Co-Chairs serving 2-year staggered terms~~and a Vice Chair or a Chair and Vice Chair as deemed appropriate by the Nominating Committee (with either Co-Chair shall have~~ the full responsibilities as Chair in the absence of the other Co-Chair~~).~~

~~b.c. Other officers may be Elected as required and deemed appropriate~~ by a majority vote of the members present at the election~~hip.~~

#### Section 2: Elections

~~Officers CAC Co-Chairs~~ shall be elected for a ~~one~~two-year terms ~~to and~~ take office at the Annual Meeting they are elected in, which is the first meeting of the CAC each calendar year. ~~The Nominating Committee shall solicit nominations from the floor when it announces its slate of candidates. Any nominations shall be added to the slate of candidates prepared by the Nominating Committee. Officers shall be elected by written ballot of the full slate prepared prior to the meeting by the Nominating Committee.~~ Nominations shall be submitted in writing at least two days in advance of the meeting. Elections shall be held annually on an alternating basis for each of the Co-Chair positions.

#### Section 3: Unfinished Terms

~~Unfinished terms of officers shall be filled by a Co-Chair with the advice and consent of the CAC.~~

#### Section 4: Duties and Responsibilities of Chairs and Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for:

- a. Attending CHNEP Management and Policy Committee meetings;
- b. Reporting ~~input recommendations and concerns~~ of the CAC to the CHNEP Management ~~Committee conference~~; and
- ~~c. Communicating Policy Committee responses, recommendations and concerns to the CAC;~~
- ~~d. Defining CAC meeting agendas with assistance from the CHNEP Staff;~~
- ~~e. Declaring a quorum at each regular or special meeting by calling upon the Membership Committee;~~
- ~~f. Appointing all Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs as needed to accomplish tasks of the CAC or as directed by vote of the membership;~~
- ~~g.c. Presiding over the CAC meetings; and~~
- ~~h. Serving as ex-officio members of all CAC committees except for the Nominating Committee.~~

Section 3: Duties and Responsibilities of the Vice Chair

~~The Vice Chair shall be responsible for all the duties of the Chair or Co-Chairs in the absence of the Chairperson or persons.~~

**ARTICLE V: Meetings**

Section 1: Meetings

Regular meetings of the CAC are scheduled three times per year. The Annual Meeting shall be held at the first CAC meeting of each calendar year (generally in the spring meeting of each year).

Members may participate in meetings of the CAC by means of a conference telephone call or similar communications equipment (by which all persons participating can hear each other at the same time), however participation by such means shall not constitute presence in person at such meeting and therefore shall not constitute a quorum.

Section 2: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Co-Chairs at the request of the Program Office Staff, the Management Conference, or a majority of the CAC members, in which case the Program Executive Director shall schedule a meeting with the Chairs as soon as possible, but not later than 30 days after the request. CAC members shall have 14 days written notification.

Section 3: Agenda Items

Agenda items may be forwarded to program staff for consideration at least thirty working days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting of the CAC. Additional items may be added to the agenda at a regularly scheduled meeting by majority vote of the voting members attending the scheduled CAC meeting.

Section 4: Notice of Meetings

Meetings of the CAC shall be open to the public and notice placed by the Program Office in conformance with applicable federal, state, and local sunshine/public access requirements. A portion of time shall be allocated at each meeting for public comment. Active media

participation in all aspects of the Program is invited and encouraged. The Program Office shall serve as the primary media contact source.

“Notice” and “written notice” may include publication on the CHNEP website and transmittal to CAC members and others via electronic means including internet, email and facsimile.

#### Section 5: Expenses

All members shall serve without compensation.

#### Section 6: Quorum

A minimum of five (5) Voting Members of the CAC physically present at any CAC meeting shall constitute a quorum. Each member shall have one vote.

#### Section 7: Conflict of Interest

No member of the CAC or staff representative shall participate in any decision or vote which could constitute or appear to be a conflict of interest. Members shall state any potential conflicts of interest prior to any discussion and abstain from such discussion and/or vote.

### **ARTICLE VI: Committees of the CAC**

#### Section 1: Standing Committees

Standing Committees are:

- I. Environmental Indicators Committee
- II. Grants Committee
- III. Membership Committee
- IV. Nominating Committee
- V. Standing Rules Committee
- VI. Workplan Committee

Committee members must be voting members of the CAC. Unless otherwise noted, committees shall include a minimum of three members who may serve as either volunteers or appointees of the Chairs of the CAC with the advice and consent of the CAC. Appointments shall be made at the Annual Meeting to last one year or as necessary. Responsibilities of these committees shall be:

I. Environmental Indicators Committee whose duties shall be to:

- a. Evaluate environmental indicators proposed by the Management Conference and recommend environmental indicators for Management Conference consideration, particularly from a public outreach perspective; and
- b. Assist in the formulation of a State of the Harbor report so that relevant environmental indicators are displayed and are accessible to the general public.

H. Grants Committee whose duties shall be to:

- a. Include a minimum of five members in addition to a member of the TAC;
- b. Recommend improvements to the public outreach grant application packets;
- c. Recommend funding candidate public outreach grant projects according to budgets available in the workplan; and

~~d. Recommend improvements to the CHNEP's various grants programs.~~

~~III. Membership Committee whose duties shall be to:~~

- ~~a. Determine the voting status of CAC members in accordance with Article III of these Bylaws. Determination of the voting status of each member of the CAC shall be based upon the official record of attendance kept by the Program Office. A list of voting members shall be transmitted to the Chair prior to each scheduled meeting of the CAC; and~~
- ~~b. Inform the Chair and the CAC when, in their opinion, the geographical distribution of the voting membership is not balanced.~~

~~IV. Nominating Committee whose duties shall be to:~~

- ~~a. Include a minimum of five members. Appointments shall be made as necessary;~~
- ~~b. Recommend candidates for all officers' positions at the November or December meeting whenever possible; and~~
- ~~c. Recommend whether the delegation of officers' duties should be as Co-Chair/Vice-Chair or Chair/Vice-Chair upon consultation with the candidates for those positions.~~

~~V. Standing Rules Committee whose duties shall be to:~~

- ~~a. Be responsible for recommending revisions to the Bylaws;~~
- ~~b. Recommend standing rules for approval by a majority of the CAC; and~~
- ~~c. Ensure proper use of the Bylaws and standing rules.~~

~~VI. Workplan Committee whose duties shall be to:~~

- ~~a. Make appointments as necessary;~~
- ~~b. Assist with the development of public information, education, and outreach needs and proposed projects; and~~
- ~~c. Recommend public information, education, and outreach projects for funding through the CHNEP workplan.~~

Section 2: Ad hoc Committees

~~The CAC may designate Ad Hoc Committees to study or develop particular projects or concerns and present recommendations to the CAC. Ad Hoc Committee Chairs may be volunteers or appointees of the Chair.~~

**ARTICLE VII: Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in the latest edition of Robert's *Rules of Order* shall govern the conduct of the business of the CAC in all matters in which they are applicable and which are not in conflict with any provision of these By-Laws.

**ARTICLE VIII: Amendment of the Bylaws**

These Bylaws, and any amendments thereto, shall be adopted upon an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the voting members of the CAC provided that amendments have been proposed in writing and circulated to the CAC members at least seven (7) days in advance of any regular CAC meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose.

## **ARTICLE ~~VIIIX~~: Staff Support and Records**

Staff support for the CAC shall be provided by the CHNEP. The Staff shall be responsible for recording the minutes of all CAC meetings and maintaining the official record of attendance at those meetings, shall transmit notices and agendas to the membership, and shall provide a copy of the minutes of each CAC meeting to each member prior to the next regular meeting. The Staff shall also ensure that consensus, majority and dissenting views on all matters and issues are recorded and reported. The Staff shall provide assistance in scheduling and procuring appropriate facilities for CAC meetings. The approved minutes of the CAC shall be available for review by the public and will be permanently housed with the CHNEP Program Office.