

CHNEP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NAME: Jennifer Hecker

POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBER'S NAME: Elizabeth Sweigert on behalf of the Policy Committee

Evaluation Period: 9/21/24 to 9/25/25 **Date:** 9/25/25

EVALUATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- **PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES**

The Performance Categories that comprise this evaluation tool may be considered subjective, but they are closely aligned with the duties that are performed regularly by the incumbent. With each Performance Category are listed a few key elements for the evaluator to consider. Please score each Performance Category based on the elements listed and other relevant criteria.

Rating Scale for Quality of Performance:

The following rating scale should be used to rate each specific statement under each of the performance dimensions of the Personnel Performance Assessment and Evaluation, and to rate overall performance in each of the categories.

- 5 **EXCELLENT:** The incumbent consistently demonstrates performance that significantly surpasses reasonable expectations related to the performance dimension.
- 4 **GOOD:** The incumbent consistently demonstrates performance that often surpasses reasonable expectations related to the performance dimension. The individual demonstrates no appreciable performance deficiencies.
- 3 **SATISFACTORY:** The incumbent consistently achieves the reasonable expectations related to the performance dimension. The individual demonstrates an acceptable degree of competence and performance.
- 2 **FAIR:** The incumbent achieves the minimum of expectations related to the performance dimension. The individual requires development in specific areas in order to meet the reasonable expectations for the performance dimension.
- 0-1 **UNSATISFACTORY:** The incumbent occasionally achieves minimum expectations related to the performance dimension and may be unsuited for the position.

ADMINISTRATION

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1. ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE

Provides effective level of communications to CHNEP Policy Committee and the public and follow up regarding issues and services.

- Expresses information orally in a clear and concise manner when making presentations to groups or individuals
- Ensures open lines of communication with the CHNEP Policy Committee and all levels of the organization by providing updates related to policy changes, project status, and other items of importance
- Maintains effective communications with the media, and is proactive in providing information that is important to the public

OVERALL RATING FOR ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE	4.8
ED Comments: Examples of a successful ability to communicate are the in-person presentations and discussions at the Management Committee meetings, where CHNEP update and other ED presentations take place. Written technical and non-technical communication is demonstrated routinely, including in co-authoring a scientific journal article that past year that was published in the <i>Estuaries and Coasts</i> scientific journal. Additionally, have served as CHNEP spokesperson in communicating collective CHNEP accomplishments to policymakers including Congressmen in the CHNEP area, to demonstrate the continued need and efficacy of funding to the CHNEP. This is in addition to the media examples under the following Organizational Representation criteria comments.	
Evaluator Comments: Clear and concise, I appreciate that. (Braswell) Jennifer consistently communicates effectively with stakeholders and policy officials. (Goss) Mrs. Hecker consistently communicates to the Policy Committee about meetings, events, legislative changes and updates. She is routinely communicating through CHNEP to the local communities about water quality and events that support improved water quality. (Howard) Incumbent is an effective communicator verbally and in written medium. (Keene) Jennifer always does a great job effectively communicating during board meetings and at public events. (Kirouac) Based upon updates to Policy Committee, communication is outstanding. (Miller)	

2. LEADERSHIP

Provides leadership and supervision for employees under their authority to insure accountability and productivity.

- Leads by example by adhering to CHNEP's and the County's established policies, rules, and procedures, and ensuring that subordinates do the same
- Gains commitment from others on new or unpopular policies, methods, and procedures
- Capable and composed in high pressure situations

OVERALL RATING FOR LEADERSHIP	4.9
ED Comments: Demonstrated external leadership in serving on the SFWMD Resiliency Coordination team, on the SFWMD Environmental Advisory Board, and on the Science Coordination Group to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force . This year, was also invited to serve on the board of the Science and Environment Council (serving Manatee and Sarasota Counties) along with Executive Directors of Mote, Selby Gardens, and other conservation orgs. in that area. An example of internal leadership is leading a highly productive team that has produced numerous outreach, research, and restoration outcomes this past year.	
Evaluator Comments: Jennifer leads by example and sets the pace well for the organization. (Goss) I concur that Mrs. Hecker leads by example because she makes it possible for subordinates to engage at Policy meetings and helps them display their skills and abilities by the work they produce. (Howard) Incumbent provides outstanding leadership to her staff and to the groups where she serves. (Keene) Jennifer shows strong leadership skills in the organization of her team's roles and responsibilities. (Kirouac) Significant roles in other restoration/resiliency organizations show how her leadership skills are valued. (Miller)	

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3. INTEGRITY

Builds credibility, confidence, and a reputation for professionalism with the public, co-workers, and Commissioners.

- Sets and adheres to high ethical standards of behavior, both personally and professionally
- Leads the organization by example in adhering to CHNEP's and the County's established policies, rules, and procedures, and ensuring that subordinates do the same
- Ensures that all business conducted by the CHNEP is free of conflicts of interest or practices that might be construed as illegal, unethical, or unprofessional

OVERALL RATING FOR INTEGRITY	4.9
ED Comments: An accomplishment related to integrity is the overall good reputation of the CHNEP and its entire staff. This is evidenced this past year with an increasing contribution from Polk County who raised its annual contribution by \$10,000 and receiving notable private donations including a \$5,000 contribution commitment from the Volo Foundation for our upcoming Southwest Florida Resiliency Summit. Serving as an example in upholding those as CHNEP's organizational leader, the CHNEP staff exemplify very high ethical and professional standards in supporting the Partnership members.	
Evaluator Comments: Maintains reputation of organization well. (Goss) Mrs. Hecker leads with strong integrity and ethical standards and with transparency in policy meetings, correspondence, and discussions with federal, state, and local entities. (Howard) Incumbent is recognized by her direct reports, her peers and the public for adherence to high ethical standards. (Keene) Jennifer is a person that you never would have any question of her integrity. She has always handled the policies, rules and procedures of CHNEP and Charlotte County with the utmost transparency and professionalism. (Kirouac)	

4. ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROJECT OVERSIGHT

Provides oversight and ensure progress continues toward completing high priority projects.

- Establishes a sense of purpose
- Follows through on issues
- Structures direct reports work appropriately and brings people together successfully around tasks
- Sets priorities and manages time well

OVERALL RATING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROJECT OVERSIGHT	4.7
ED Comments: Examples of Organizational and Project Oversight accomplishments are holding weekly staff meetings, inputting and tracking project task assignments in project management software to align team members and providing the oversight necessary to ensure the annual Work Plan and Budget is implemented as approved. This past year, we set up interlocal agreements with Polk County, Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Sarasota County, Peace River Manasota Water Supply Authority and others to enable having legal structures to fund projects for them. We also launched new Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Action Planning projects in Polk , Hardee , Highlands , DeSoto and Charlotte Counties . This is in addition to our annual projects such as the Water Atlas , and other responsibilities including outreach projects.	
Evaluator Comments: I was impressed with the vulnerability assessments. (Goss) Mrs. Hecker has consistent "follow through" when asked for assistance and research. She has remained engaged with our County's Vulnerability Assessment and working with our staff to accomplish what has been funded. (Howard) The vulnerability assessments were well organized and the water atlas continues to be an outstanding, up to date tool. (Keene) Jennifer has always met timeline and task completion on schedule. (Kirouac)	

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5. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS

Establishes and maintains productive Intergovernmental Relationships (IGR).

- Consistently acts in a manner that is courteous and professional, including attendance at meetings, returning phone calls/messages, and adhering to scheduled appointments
- Maintains effective working relationships with members of the CHNEP Policy Committee, with citizens, community leaders, other outside agencies, and the media

OVERALL RATING FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS	4.9
ED Comments: Successfully demonstrated intergovernmental relations in planning and facilitating the CHNEP Committee meetings– where governmental staff and elected leaders from across a 10-county area meet every four months to cover regional topics and form consensus on natural resource management goals and priorities. An example of an intergovernmental consensus resulting from these meetings is gaining unanimous support of the Myakka River Wild and Scenic Partnership Designation, which was sent to the two Congressmen in the CHNEP area who expressed appreciation for receiving the letter of support that assist their efforts to file related proposed legislation. These informational Partnership meeting ensure that there is awareness, discussion, and coordination of respective natural resource efforts between all levels of government in the region.	
Evaluator Comments: Has always kept me in the loop. (Braswell) Jennifer is a great advocate and spokesperson for CHNEP. (Goss) I have always found Mrs. Hecker working to maintain a strong relationship with our county, other governmental agencies, and of course our policy committee. (Howard) Incumbent continues to provide effective interaction with policy committee members, outside agencies, community leaders and citizens alike. (Keene) Jennifer has always been very accessible to myself as a Highlands County Commissioner, our Administration, and staff. (Kirouac)	

6. BUDGET PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT

Organizes and presents recommendations to the CHNEP Policy Committee to meet financial requirements and to address challenges facing the organization.

- Ensures that the annual budget process meets the operational needs of the organization, and is submitted in a timely manner that allows appropriate review and modification
- Develops effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the organization is meeting its committed deadlines and timetables

OVERALL RATING FOR BUDGET PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT	4.9
ED Comments: Examples of Budget Planning and Oversight accomplishments are preparing FY25 EPA Master/320 , and FY25 EPA BIL/IIJA Budgets and Work Plans, that were submitted on time and approved by US EPA. They have since been implemented with CHNEP remaining within the approved budgets, as well as CHNEP's annual FDEP and SWFWMD grant work plans and budgets. Other accomplishments are creating FY26 EPA 320 and FY26 EPA IIJA that have been submitted to US EPA, as well as a FY26 Master Work Plan and Budget.	
Evaluator Comments: From my prospective, I have found Mrs. Hecker to have consistent focus on fiscally sound practices and budget management. (Howard) Budget prepared on time and reviewed as necessary. (Keene) Since my involvement as a CHNEP board member Jennifer and her staff have always done a great job in putting together a great budget that is very clear and easy to understand. (Kirouac) Excellent job dealing with funding uncertainties. (Miller)	

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7. ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATION

Publicly represents the CHNEP effectively, highlighting CHNEP's mission and work.

OVERALL RATING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATION	4.7
ED Comments: Examples of organizational representation as an invited speaker at the Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference hosted by the American Water Resources Association, at the interagency South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force Meeting for Everglades Restoration, etc. Also served as CHNEP's organizational and media representative in doing interviews to publicly highlight CHNEP natural resource protection activities. This is in addition to the aforementioned examples under Ability to Communicate criteria comments.	
Evaluator Comments: Mrs. Hecker represents CHNEP without a doubt in the best manner possible. (Howard) Jennifer has always presented herself in a very professional manner when representing CHNEP. (Kirouac)	

8. JUDGMENT AND DECISION MAKING

Exercises sound judgment and decision-making

- Appropriately determines those issues that should appropriately be submitted to the CHNEP Policy Committee for consideration or approval
- Makes logical decisions based on a thorough review of available information and soliciting input from appropriate sources, but is also able to effectively make decisions rapidly in situations where information is limited, and the outcome might be uncertain
- Assumes command of tasks presenting difficult or unusual circumstances and effectively assumes charge of situations or incidents as necessary. Able to discern when to assume charge or provide guidance and support.

OVERALL RATING FOR JUDGMENT AND DECISION MAKING	4.9
ED Comments: This past year entailed two Hurricane events and a substantial disruption to access to CHNEP's federal funding, creating unexpected emergency situations that required extensive judgement and difficult decision-making. In response, CHNEP stood up a high-water mark survey , organized and hosted interagency recovery meetings , created a new Hurricanes Milton and Helene information sharing page, did clean-ups and emergency water quality sampling , and other activities to support recovery efforts. With regards to funding disruption, CHNEP met with host attorney, finance, grants, and purchasing to prepare stop work orders and plans for handling new contracts going forward as task-order based to limit financial and legal liability and risk. With these added challenges, CHNEP still met all of its other standard responsibilities.	
Evaluator Comments: I can attest to the high level of judgement and decision making by Mrs. Hecker as seen through her budgeting and strategic planning. As a policy committee member, the high level she possesses is apparent at each meeting. (Howard) Incumbent demonstrates outstanding judgment making decisions based on the information at hand. (Keene) Jennifer has always demonstrated to me that she very capable of making sound and thoughtful decisions on any issue that has involved CHNEP. (Kirouac)	

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9. **ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS**

To maintain/strengthen CHNEP administration, while ensuring sufficient operational capacity.

OVERALL RATING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS	4.9
ED Comments: Example of successful Org. Management and Operations are accomplishing the finance, grants, budgeting, outreach, 2 websites, management of a dozen plus contracted projects and associated contractors, organizing a dozen plus partnership meetings and events, and other responsibilities with a 5-person team – even with added challenges of hurricanes and funding uncertainties/disruptions. Successful CHNEP management and operations was affirmed in CHNEP’s 5-year EPA Program Evaluation conducted this year, where CHNEP went through an in-depth in-person evaluation by six EPA Headquarters and Region IV officials as well as a NEP Peer Reviewer over three days of site visits . We received positive feedback at the May Policy Committee Meeting discussion , indicating a successful passage of the Evaluation.	
Evaluator Comments: Does a great job. Very put together group. (Braswell) Everything listed above quantifies the organizational skills Mrs. Hecker uses to make each of these things happen each year. (Howard) Because of Jennifer’s very strong organizational and operation skills, she makes being an effective board member much easier, especially for those with busy schedules. (Kirouac)	

10. **ORGANIZATIONAL OUTREACH**

To enhance CHNEP website, public outreach, and social media efforts.

OVERALL RATING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL OUTREACH	4.8
ED Comments: Examples of organizational outreach are continuing to provide internal and external outreach and educational events this past year and getting the 2025 Calendar printed and distributed on time. We also finished redevelopment of and relaunched the CHNEP Water Atlas , which has over 600 customized waterbody pages and analytical tools to serves as a living report card to natural resource managers and the public on the conditions of the various CHNEP waterbodies, basins, and watersheds. All outreach analytics continue to track upwards including the CHNEP website, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram followers.	
Evaluator Comments: Both the calendar and the Water Atlas are enjoyed by stakeholders and useful as outreach tools. (Goss) Mrs. Hecker’s leadership facilitates strong public outreach that reaches beyond the coastal and heartland boundaries. (Howard) Outreach through the annual calendar, educational events, well maintained website and Water Atlas serve as great resources. (Keene) Jennifer always keeps our CHNEP board updated on the many outreach programs that our organization organizes and coordinates every year. Those efforts continue to promote CHNEP’s mission and policies to more people every year. (Kirouac)	

Any Additional Evaluator Comments:

Jennifer does great work, knows what she’s talking about, and shows excellent leadership skills. (Braswell) Jennifer and her staff, again this year, did excellent work for CHNEP. I enjoy working with Jennifer and her Professional “Team”. (Doherty) Each year I am chosen to serve on this committee allows me to experience the leadership, skills, and abilities Jennifer Hecker uses to further the success of the Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership Policy Committee. (Howard) I became a member of the CHNEP board in 2020 as one of my Highlands County Commissioner committee assignments. I have always been very impressed with the job that Jennifer does as CHNEP’s Executive Director. She is a tremendous asset to everyone that she works with and I hope to continue to work with her in the future. (Kirouac) Overall outstanding performance. (Miller) Jennifer has done an outstanding job. (Smith)

Evaluator’s Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

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