

COASTAL & HEARTLAND NATIONAL ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

The Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership (CHNEP) is comprised of local, state and federal governmental entities as well as public stakeholders who work together to protect estuaries from Venice to Bonita Springs to Winter Haven. 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 National Estuary Partnership
1050 Loveland Blvd. Suite D
Port Charlotte, FL 33980-1836
941-833-6580
www.CHNEP.org

ARTICLE II: Purposes and Powers

Section 1: Purpose

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

- a. Promote public awareness of the CCMP and the issues and goals of the CHNEP
- 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. Participate in CAC meetings to discuss and provide input for the Management and Policy Committees to consider;
- c. Recommend and participate in public outreach for the CHNEP Management Conference;
- d. Provide input into CHNEP Conservation Grants applications, as well as disseminate and assist others to apply for them; and
- e.
- 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 from the CHNEP 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.

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.

Section 3: Classes of Membership

- a. Members are appointed by the Policy Committee with full voting rights. 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 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.

Section 4: Term Limits

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

ARTICLE IV: Officers

Section 1: Officers

Officers shall be:

- a. Appointed voting members; and
- b. Two Co-Chairs serving 2-year staggered terms (with either Co-Chair having the full responsibilities as Chair in the absence of the other Co-Chair).
- c. Elected by a majority vote of the members present at the election.

Section 2: Elections

CAC Co-Chairs shall be elected for a two-year terms and take office at the Annual Meeting they are elected in, which is the first meeting of the CAC each calendar year. 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 4: Duties and Responsibilities of Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for:

- a. Attending CHNEP Management and Policy Committee meetings;
- b. Reporting input of the CAC to the CHNEP Management Committee; and
- c. Presiding over the CAC meetings.

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 the spring meeting).

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: 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 VII: 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 VIII: 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.