

CHNEP Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 13th, 2023 9:00 am – 12:00 pm Virtual Meeting

AGENDA

This is a virtual meeting ONLY, Teams meeting link sent via email to Committee Members: Microsoft Teams meeting

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- 1. Call to Order, Meeting Instructions, and Introductions Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
- 2. Agenda Additions or Deletions Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
- 3. Public Comment on Agenda Items Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
- 4. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) August 23rd, 2023 Meeting Minutes Harry Phillips, CAC Co-Chair
- 5. Introduction of New Members Harry Phillips, CAC Co-Chair
- 6. Citizen's Advisory Committee Member Responsibilities and Upcoming Co-Chair Election and Meeting Planning Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
- 7. CHNEP Update Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
- 8. New Conservation Grant Applications Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
- 9. Update on Conservation Grant Projects Church Roberts, Church Environmental and Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
- 10. Updates on Proposed 'Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area' Kathy Burchett, US Fish & Wildlife Service
- 11. CHNEP Resources for CAC Members and Communities CHNEP Staff
- 12. CHNEP Technical Projects and New Tools Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
- 13. CAC Updates & Roundtable Discussion on Topics of Interest Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
- 14. General Public Comment Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
- 15. Future Meetings: Topics, Location and Date Harry Phillips, Co-Chair Upcoming Dates for 2024: 4/24/24, 8/21/24, & 12/18/24
- 16. Adjourn

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

After CAC Co-Chair calls meeting to order, members will introduce themselves.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

CAC Co-Chair will review the agenda and then call for any additions or deletions to it by the CAC membership.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Each participating member of the public is afforded up to 3 minutes total to speak on agenda topics only at this point in the meeting.

4. CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MEETING MINUTES

CAC Co-Chair will call for any additions or revisions to the August 23rd, 2023 draft minutes by the CAC membership.

Recommendation: Approve the minutes from August 23rd, 2023 meeting.

Attachment: Draft CAC Meeting Minutes.

5. Introduction of New Members

Members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee are asked to welcome the newly appointed CAC representative from Charlotte County, Tonya Bramlage and Hendry County, Church Roberts. Their applications were received during the previous cycle and were taken up for approval by the Policy Committee in their September 2023 meeting.

6. <u>CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES AND UPCOMING CO-CHAIR ELECTION AND MEETING PLANNING</u>

For the benefit of the new CAC and applicants this item is intended to give a brief background on the CHNEP as well as the focus of the Citizen's Advisory Committee. The Partnership is guided by the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) which outlines specific objectives and actions for implementation. The CHNEP and its partners are collectively committed to undertaking the activities needed to reach the objectives for: Water Quality Improvement; Hydrological Restoration; Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Protection; and Public Engagement.

CHNEP Citizen's Advisory Committee members are a part of the CHNEP Management Conference. The Management Conference is comprised of four committees and the Program Office. Each committee serves a specialized role to fulfill the goals and objectives in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The Citizen's Advisory Committee is made up of environmental community leaders that act as local liaisons to provide input on community needs and partner opportunities the CHNEP area, as well as to share information with the community about resources and funding opportunities from the CHNEP.

CAC MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Communicate the activities of the CHNEP to their respective organizations, communities, and representative interest groups and communicate the comments and concerns of these organizations to the CHNEP Management Conference;
- Participate in CAC meetings to discuss and provide input for the Management and Policy Committees to consider;
- Recommend and participate in public outreach on behalf of the CHNEP;

- Provide input into CHNEP Conservation Grant applications, also share Conservation Grant opportunities with the community and assist community groups to apply for them;
- Help CHNEP staff to implement 'Communications Strategy', a collective outreach plan built with the help of the CAC.

Nicole Iadevaia, Director of Research & Restoration and staff liaison to the CAC, will be presenting this briefing.

7. CHNEP UPDATE

The following represents program activity highlights since the beginning of the last Management Conference cycle to the beginning of this one.

Program Administration

- Planned and executed the Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (8/10), Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting (8/23), Management Committee Meeting (9/8) and Policy Committee Meeting (9/21), including lining up presenters, drafting agenda packets, creating PowerPoints, drafting minutes, etc.
- Hired and began training of Administrative Specialist. Ms. Keara Abel.
- Drafted project proposal and potential position description at the request of US EPA for the Hurricane Interagency Recovery Coordination Team, for providing support for long-term hurricane recovery from Hurricane Ian.
- Two new Citizens Advisory Committee members, representing Charlotte and Hendry
 Counties respectively, were appointed at 9/21/23 Policy Committee meeting. One new
 Technical Advisory Committee member, representing the Florida Department of Agriculture
 and Consumer Services (FDACS), was added to the CHNEP Management Conference
 Committee in October, with a new member packet mailed to them.
- Amended FY2024 Work Plan and Budget approval received at September Policy Meeting and have been implemented.
- Drafted a <u>Letter of Support</u> for the US FWS proposed Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area, created a <u>CHNEP webpage</u> on the topic, as well as sent out two <u>social media blasts</u> and a mass email linking to webpage asking for public comments in support. Additionally, reviewed the US FWS draft plan and sent technical comments to US FWS staff.
- Drafted Interlocal Agreements for working with Central Florida Regional Planning Council that is being approved in November, as well as one for working with Lee County that is currently being reviewed by legal department.
- Conducted Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network (CCHMN) field audits for the FL Dept. of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission/Research Institute, Lee County, and City of Cape Coral.
- Finished gathering partner data for 2023 NEPORT Congressional Reporting Survey to report on their annual conservation, management, and restoration accomplishments. This was uploaded into the EPA portal by CHNEP staff in September and included over 100 habitat entries.
- Drafted and submitted a letter of support for the SWFWMD proposal for the Cape Haze Ecosystem Restoration Project for NOAA's Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grant.

Finance and Grant Management

- Sent customized invoice letters and information packets to City & County partners who
 contribute to the CHNEP, providing an overview of what value and projects CHNEP
 provides to their areas. This is sent during the fall for FY24 CHNEP annual partner
 contributions that are approved by the Policy Committee.
- Updated CHNEP Conservation Grant Application and webpage for applications to be received for the first FY2024 cycle.
- Reached out to Conservation Grant Awardees to coordinate close out for FY2024.
- Entered Purchase Requisitions for all FY2024 Annual Scopes managed under Interlocal Agreements (Upper and Lower CCHMN and Water Atlas). These FY2024 Purchase Orders were then subsequently issued.
- Drafted a change order to CHNEP Water Atlas FY2023 scope of work to remove Tasks 9 & 11 and to extend the timeline for Tasks 3-7 until May 31, 2024. The change order was sent to USF for full execution in October.
- Approved invoices for Myakka Headwaters and Water Atlas projects.
- Worked with Charlotte County staff to draft and release Request for Proposals for Charlotte County Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment.
- Drafted EPA Summary of Accomplishments and submitted.
- Created draft Interlocal Agreement with Central Florida Regional Planning Council and submitted to legal review by Charlotte County.
- Processed FY2024 EPA 320 Grant in County (CHNEP's fiscal hosts) for BOCC acceptance, which occurred at their October 24, 2023 meeting.
- Created FY2024 Budget Coding Tables with new acct. codes based on recently approved Sept. 2023 Amended FY24 Work Plan and Budget.
- Drafted and submitted EPA End-of-Year Reports for EPA FY2023 320 (EPA Financial Assistance Agreement: CE-02D41623-0) and EPA FY2022-23 BIL (EPA Financial Assistance Agreement: CE-02D42123-0) grants with financials.
- Submitted SWFWMD FY2023 Q4 report and invoices.
- Reviewed and selected abstracts for the 2024 Southwest Florida Climate Summit and 2024 Gulf of Mexico Conference (GOMCON).

Regional and multi-jurisdictional organizational meetings

- Central Florida Regional Planning Council Regular Meeting
- · Central Florida Regional Planning Council Vulnerability Assessments Meeting
- CHNEP Water Atlas Monthly Meetings
- Collaboratory, SCCF, and CSWFL Meeting
- NOAA Climate Resiliency Challenge Meeting
- Charlotte County Vulnerability Assessment Meetings
- Myakka River Management Coordinating Council
- ANEP External Affairs Committee Meetings
- SWFWMD Optical Modeling Meeting
- SFWMD Resiliency Coordination Forum
- Polk County Vulnerability Assessment Meeting

- SFWMD Joint Working Group/Science Coordination Group Meeting
- Highlands County Vulnerability Assessment Meeting
- Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative (CHFI) Quarterly Meeting
- FLERA Water Resources Committee Quarterly Meeting
- High-Resolution Downscaling of Climate Projections for a Resilient Florida Meeting
- Florida NEP/CZMP Coordination Meeting
- GOMCON Session Chair Information Meeting
- Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network (CCHMN) 2023 Annual Partners Meeting
- Corridor Connect: Ecology + Economy for a Better Florida Conference
- NOAA Hydrographic Services Review Panel 2023 Public Meeting
- Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) Wednesday Webinar GOMOD Updates
- Florida Resilience Conference
- SWERT Steering Committee Meeting
- · Regional Ambient Monitoring Program (RAMP) Meeting
- · CCHMN Water Quality Field Data Management Discussion Meeting
- U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) Advisory Committee: Fall 2023 Meeting
- · City of Sarasota and City of Venice Vulnerability Assessments Stakeholder Meeting
- CHNEP/SFWMD Chief Resiliency Officer Meeting
- NEPORT Discussion with TBEP
- NPS Partnership Wild and Scenic River Program Virtual Meeting
- CHNEP/Lee County Pine Island Flatwoods Preserve Project Meeting
- DEP 2022-2024 Biennial Assessment Draft Assessment Lists Public Meeting
- City of North Port Vulnerability Assessment Steering Committee Meeting
- Cyanobacteria Symposium 2023
- CHNEP and Lee County Vulnerability Assessment Discussion Meetings
- Volo Foundation/CHNEP 2024 Southwest Florida Climate Summit Planning Discussion
- FELOS OA Meeting
- Proposed Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area Public Meetings
- SFWMD Water Resources Forum
- Central and Southern Florida (CSF) Section 216 Flood Resiliency Study Evaluation Criteria Workshop
- Southwest Florida Regional Forum/Roundtable Discussion with David Rathke and Jennifer Hecker
- EcoSummit Estuaries Panel Planning Meeting
- NOAA Aquaculture Research Interview
- DEP Quarterly Resilience Forum
- CHNEP Water Quality Trend Analysis and Dashboard Project Meeting
- CHNEP/City of Punta Gorda Tiki Point Living Shoreline Project Meeting
- Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) Conference

CHNEP staff presentations

- Presented at the 27th Biennial Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) Conference and the Association of National Estuary Programs (ANEP) Conference on *Uniting Partners and Resources to Protect Central and Southwest Florida's Future Water, Wildlife, and Habitat.*
- Submitted a proposal to host a session at the upcoming Gulf of Mexico Conference (GOMCON) in 2024. This proposal was accepted and CHNEP will serve as co-chair along

- with Auburn University. Session Title: Advancing coastal resiliency through watershed planning and hydrological restoration.
- Presented at the 2023 Florida Resilience Conference in two sessions on: 1) Building Resiliency through Hydrological Restoration and 2) Habitats Migrating in Response to Climate Change in Central and Southwest Florida.
- Mainstage panel speaker at the Corridor Connect: Ecology + Economy for a Better Florida Conference Served on *Ecosystem Resilience is Economic Resilience*.
- Presented at the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) One Water Summit on a Regional Approach to Watershed Management.

Publications and Outreach Initiatives

- Worked with the designer and the printer to produce the final proof of the <u>2024 Nature Calendar</u>, which is now being printed and will be mailed by end of November. Also, finalized the 2024 calendar mailing list regarding individuals, deliveries, and shipments to provide to the printer who is contracted to handle all aspects of distribution management.
- Produced updated Water Quality Fact Sheets by Basin, available on the CHNEP Water Quality Fact Sheets webpage https://www.chnep.org/water-quality-fact-sheets.
- Created 2023-24 Funding Opportunities Fact Sheet (https://www.chnep.org/federal-funding) to distribute to stakeholders, community members, and anyone who can benefit from current funding opportunities.
- Coordinated with Lemon Bay Conservancy for their Family Day Program focused on hydrology by providing Earth Echo water quality testing kits for volunteers to learn about hydrology, water testing and monitoring.
- Partnered with Lemon Bay Conservancy to distribute free informational brochures and educational materials at the Englewood Water Fest.
- Attended the Wildcat Tailgate in Wauchula hosting estuary trivia and distributing free, environmental education materials for children and adults.
- Partnered with Charlotte County to distribute free informational brochures and educational materials at the Charlotte County Climate Eco Fair.
- Shared the work of two conservation grant recipients on our Instagram and Facebook stories. Both organizations posted of their successful waterway and reef cleanup efforts following their cleanup events.
- Partnered with Charlotte County Sea Grant, UF/IFAS, and FWC to host Florida Horseshoe Crab Watch Training
- Attended the 7 Rivers Water Festival in Winter Haven: distributed free, environmental
 educational materials, seasonal publications, and kid's activity books to around 150
 attendees and families.
- Celebrated and recognized #NationalEstuariesWeek with a series of posts on Facebook and Instagram highlighting estuaries and projects in CHNEP area.
- Hosted cleanup event in observance of International Coastal Cleanup Day in partnership with Keep Charlotte Beautiful and Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center. Volunteers picked up trash at Ponce De Leon Park, a park adopted by CHNEP, in Punta Gorda.
- Worked with designer to finalize 2024 Nature Calendar. This fall 25,000 copies will be printed and distributed to partners, stakeholders and local libraries throughout the CHNEP 10-county area.
- Reached out to all partners and libraries receiving multiple copy shipments or deliveries of the Nature Calendar to confirm their contact info and finalize requested amounts to be sent.

- Sent new member welcome packets to 2 new Citizens Advisory Committee members, appointed at 9/21 Policy Committee meeting.
- Provided a letter of support and comments for the US FWS proposed Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area at public meetings.
- Partnered with Keep Charlotte Beautiful to sponsor and invite CHNEP volunteers to participate in a <u>marine debris clean-up of mangroves</u> (impacted by Hurricane Ian this time last year) along the West Wall and Gasparilla Sound. 48 amazing volunteers collected over 2.800 lbs. of trash.
- Partnered with Lemon Bay Conservancy to contribute outreach materials for <u>'One Dock at a Time' Oyster Gardening</u> outreach initiative Contributed CHNEP outreach materials.
- Held planning calls with South and Southwest Florida Water Management Districts, Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Volo Foundation, and Resiliency Florida to coordinate sponsorship and panels for the 2024 for Southwest Florida Climate Summit. The call for abstracts closed on October 31.
- Attended the Annual Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority (PRMRWSA) BBQ at the Peace River Facility.

Outreach analytics

- 6,041 subscribers for CHNEP educational mailings.
- 1,693 unique visitors and 1,023 page visits to CHNEP website.
- 22 new Instagram followers (550 total followers)- started this year.
- 1,899 Facebook followers
- 3 new Facebook Likes (1,605 total likes)
- 8,395 YouTube Views/57 Subscribers

Media/Press

• Tarpon and snook catch \$1.2 million research grant | Boca Beacon

CHNEP Executive Director Jennifer Hecker will be presenting the CHNEP Update.

8. NEW CONSERVATION GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership's (CHNEP) goal for Public Engagement is to increase the proportion of the population that supports and participates in actions to protect and restore estuaries and watersheds. Since 2001, CHNEP has offered grants to help establish and maintain environmental education efforts and further partnerships to help implement the CCMP. Due to the move to the new fiscal host, the Conservation Grant application was recently restructured to improve access and streamline the payment process. Applications and instructions can be found here: https://www.chnep.org/conservation-grants.

This item is to inform the Citizen's Advisory Committee on new Conservation Grant applications that have been submitted since the previous cycle for the December 1, 2023 due date and to seek CAC input on associated funding awards. The CAC role as related to this program is to seek out groups within their respective communities to make them aware of the CHNEP Conservation Grant program and how it can be beneficial to their projects and programs. Preference will be given to partners and to projects in communities that have been historically underserved. Matrix of applications below.

Project Title	Organization	Contact Name	Amount Requested	Total Project Cost	Short Description	Staff Comments
Myakka River Management Coordinating Council (MRMCC) Website	Myakka River Management Coordinating Council (MRMCC)	FDEP Staff Liason for MRMCC James "Chris" Oliver, Environmental Specialist II James.oliver@dep.sta te.fl.us (941) 882 7206		\$220	Rule (Chapter 62D-15), as well as other matters which may be brought before the Council by the Department, any local government, or any	Fully fund with additional modifications made to the website; 1) all updated affiliated member names and contacts be added to website, 2) CHNEP name is updated, 3) all meeting notices and agenda be added to website.
Implementing the Healthy Lakes Initiative at Heritage Oaks	Heritage Oaks Golf & Country Club	Dr. Michael Barbour, Chair of Lakes & Wetlands Team michaeltbarbour@yah oo.com 941-374-4903	\$4,500	\$14,500	The Healthy Lakes Initiative of Heritage Oaks is an ongoing project to revitalize our 25 lakes (stormwater ponds). This project would involve planting aquatic vegetation (duck potato, pickerelweed, spike rush) along the littoral shelves in our lakes is our goal. With a grant of \$4,500, we anticipate about 3,600 plants for one of our lakes (lake #10) having a perimeter of 1,974 ft. We would plant at the beginning of the rainy season with the plants are mature enough to take hold and survive with minimal loss.	As this project is located on private property and does not have an education or research component that would be provided to the general public, it is ineligible for funding from the CHNEP Conservation Grants program. Staff recommends that it not be funded and has reached out to provide information on alternative funding sources including the Sarasota County Yards and Neighborhoods Program and Sarasota County NEST program which have funding for stormwater pond improvement in private communities.
Total Amount of Requested Funding			\$ 4,720,00			

Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP Executive Director, will be giving an overview of the Conservation Grant applications received this cycle and staff recommendations regarding them.

Recommendation: Gather CAC input on Conservation Grant Applications **Attachment:** December 2023 Conservation Grant Applications

9. UPDATE ON CONSERVATION GRANT PROJECTS

There are a number of Conservation Grant projects where work has been underway this year or is recently completed. CHNEP has invited two of the awardees to share preliminary results and outcomes from the projects with the CAC. Projects were located throughout the 10-county region and were awarded to help protect water and wildlife in their respective communities. The Conservation Grants program is a Public Engagement piece aimed to empower organizations and citizens in the community to undertake activities that implement the CHNEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) priority actions and goals. The CAC plays a pivotal role in this by helping unite community groups and their projects with funding to accomplish both their objectives and those of the CHNEP.

Church Roberts from Church Environmental will be giving a presentation on outcomes from a recent Conservation Grant-funded project 'Caloosahatchee River Drone Wading Bird Nest Survey' and Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP, will be presenting updates on results from additional Conservation Grant projects that wrapped up in the fall.

10. UPDATES ON PROPOSED 'EVERGLADES TO GULF CONSERVATION AREA'

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is working on a new effort to establish a Wildlife Conservation Area in southwest Florida. If successful, a new conservation area would allow the USFWS to work with willing landowners to protect the lands most important to our water and wildlife in one of the most biologically diverse regions in our country. This landscape-level conservation effort would assist and complement the state of Florida's successful efforts to protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor as the region faces increasing threats such as rapid population growth, intensification of land use, and climate change. A new conservation area would aid in recovering the Florida panther and protect many rare and endemic species, including 74 Federally and State listed Threatened and Endangered Species.

The USFWS wrapped up the public comment and final technical comment period in September, technical input was given by CHNEP. CHNEP and others also sent letters of support for the initiative. This briefing will be to update the Committee on the final Plan and proposal that will be presented at the national level.

This item will be presented by Kathy Burchett on behalf of the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

11. CHNEP RESOURCES FOR CAC MEMBERS AND COMMUNITIES

This item is intended to brief the committee on upcoming or ongoing outreach resources that further the CHNEP Goal for Public Engagement: *Create an informed, engaged public making choices and taking actions that increase the protection and restoration of estuaries and watersheds*. CAC members serve as CHNEP partners in various communities throughout Central and Southwest Florida and are invited to work together with CHNEP staff to continue to grow these programs and share educational items within their own organizations, the public and with policy makers.

By request of the Committee members at the previous meeting, CHNEP staff will be giving an overview of the scope and scale of resources that are available. Committee members received a packet in the mail with hard copies and examples of the materials and literature.

This presentation will be given by CHNEP staff.

Attachment: CHNEP Resource Packet

12. CHNEP TECHNICAL PROJECTS UPDATES

In addition to the items featured earlier on the agenda, other research and/or restoration projects (or phases of projects) in the program area are currently underway with CHNEP FY21-24 funds. A brief overview will be given on project progress since the previous CAC meeting.

Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP Director of Research & Restoration, will be presenting this agenda item. Project fact sheets are available on the CHNEP website: https://www.chnep.org/chnep-fact-sheets.

13. CAC UPDATES & ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON TOPICS OF INTEREST

This is a Round-Robin style discussion for the Committee to engage on environmental topics as they pertain to counties they represent and to organize on working toward mutual issues of interest. After learning about available CHNEP resources, what can be done through the CAC to advance Water Quality Improvement, Hydrological Restoration, Fish Wildlife & Habitat Protection, and Public Engagement in the region?

Discussion may include the following topics:

- What are main concerns in the counties currently?
- Where are there 'gaps' in resources/information and possible solutions?
- What are best ways to get educational information to the public?

Harry Phillips, CAC Co-Chair, will be facilitating this discussion.

14. Public Comment

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

15. FUTURE MEETING'S TOPICS, LOCATION AND DATE

Please mark your calendar with these upcoming CHNEP CAC Meetings dates: 4/24/24, 8/21/24, & 12/18/24. If you have ideas of topics for a future presentation, please email them to CHNEP Director of Research & Restoration Nicole Iadevaia at niadevaia@chnep.org.

16. ADJOURN