



CHNEP Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 15th, 2021
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Hybrid In-person & Virtual Meeting

Draft Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2021

Members Present:

Debi Osborne	Manatee
Kayton Nedza	Hardee
Richard Larsen	Charlotte
Ernesto Lasso de la Vega	Lee (alternate)
Nicole Johnson	Lee
Julie Morris	Manatee
Tom Palmer	Polk
Harry Phillips	Lee
Pete Quasius	Hendry
Bridget Washburn	Glades
Aaron Zimmerman	Sarasota

Others Present:

Jennifer Hecker	CHNEP
Nicole Iadevaia	CHNEP
Andrew Webb	CHNEP
Sarina Weiss	CHNEP
Sophia Brown	CHNEP
April Olson	The Nature Conservancy
John Cassani	Calusa Waterkeeper
Jessica Wilson	

Agenda Item #1 – Call to Order and Introductions — Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

Co-chair Debi Osborne called the meeting to order at 10:01 am. Introductions were then made.

Agenda Item #2 – Agenda Additions or Deletions — Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

No additions or deletions were made to the agenda.

PETE QUASIUUS MOVED, SECONDED BY KAYTON NEDZA TO APPROVE THE AGENDA ITEMS AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

Agenda Item #3 – Public Comments on Agenda Items — Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

No public comments on agenda items were made.

Agenda Item #4 – Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) August 25th, 2021 Meeting Minutes — Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

No edits were suggested for the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) August 25th, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

BRIDGET WASHBURN MOVED, SECONDED BY HARRY PHILLIPS TO APPROVE THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) AUGUST 25TH, 2021 MEETING MINUTES. THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

Agenda Item #5 – CHNEP Update — Jennifer Hecker, Executive Director

CHNEP's Executive Director, Ms. Jennifer Hecker, presented on programmatic activity occurring since the last Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting. Highlights are as follows:

Financial support continues to be a priority. CHNEP staff prepared customized 2022 invoice letters to all 10 counties and 25 cities in the CHNEP area. These packets included the FY22 invoices, CHNEP CCMP Summary, 2021 Legislative Priorities, and project fact sheets. FY22 annual contributions have been received from Charlotte County, Polk County, Hardee County, City of Cape Coral, City of Punta Gorda, Town of Fort Myers Beach, City of Venice, City of Winter Haven, Village of Estero, City of Bartow, and the Peace Manasota Water Supply Authority.

In regards public administration the CHNEP was invited to and drafted a grant proposal with the City of Punta Gorda and The Nature Conservancy to submit to the FDEP for the "Tiki Point Living Shoreline Restoration Project." CHNEP staff also submitted the finalized Quality Assurance Project Plan to EPA for "Cyanobacteria Rapid Response Pilot Project" that was approved, Reviewed EPA Climate Ready Costs document, Hosted the "Responding to Rising Waters: A Climate Resiliency Webinar." Additionally, CHNEP received \$493.30 in private donations, three (4) grant applications, completed six (6) grant progress reports, and had two (2) grants awarded. Additionally, the CHNEP will receive an extra \$915,000 per year for 5 years with the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Package that will be used for green and gray infrastructure that enhances community resiliency.

CHNEP hosted the FY21 CHNEP Fall Management Committee Meetings as well as the Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network Annual Meeting and the CHNEP 2022 Nature Calendar Photo Selection Meeting. CHNEP also participated in several partnership meetings to provide comments and technical support. These include: ANEP Board, Water Quality Audit FDEP, Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative, Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Hydrological Modeling Project Management Meetings, South Lee County Hydrological Modeling Project Management Meetings, CHNEP Water Atlas Meetings, EJ/DEI Planning and Workgroup Meetings, EPA Nutrients & Climate Working Groups, Coastal Acidification Network Meetings, Myakka Headwaters Restoration Site Visit, University of Florida Center for Coastal Solutions Data Analysis Project Meeting, Meeting with Village of Estero regarding FDEO CDBG-MIT Resiliency Funding projects, Everglades Working Group/Science Coordination Group Meeting, Southwest Florida Estuarine Restoration Team (SWERT) Steering Committee, SWFL Regional Resiliency Compact Meeting, Living Shoreline Restoration Project Meeting, Science and Environmental Council Meeting, Myakka River Management Coordinating Council Meeting, Southwest Florida Seagrass Working Group, and the Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Hydrological Modeling Project Site Visit. Staff presented on a variety of topics for many groups including the Southwest Florida Seagrass Working Group, Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) 2021 Conference, Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, Team Punta Gorda, Peace River Audubon Society, Punta Gorda Garden Clubs, Florida Lake Management Society State

Conference, Florida Redfish Symposium, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Webinar “Get to know CHNEP and Sarasota Bay Estuaries,” and the Southeast Ocean and Coastal Acidification Network. These partner meetings and presentations have garnered media which include:

- 10/21 Seagrass restoration in Caloosahatchee River provides many benefits – News-Press
- 10/21 Water Quality – Team Punta Gorda Volunteers For a Better Community

In regards to public outreach, CHNEP finalized the design, printed and mailed the 2022 Nature Calendar, completed seagrass loss maps for CHNEP basins for the Water Atlas and Fall Harbor Happenings magazine, and designed the CHNEP Kid’s Activity Book that is currently being printed. In addition, CHNEP updated project factsheets for recently completed projects, created and updated Seagrass Fact Sheets for CHNEP estuaries with 2020 data, and created an FDEO CDBG-MIT Resiliency Funding Fact Sheet. CHNEP has 72 new Facebook followers, 6,376 subscribers to educational mailings, and had 1,207 unique visitors to the CHNEP website.

CHNEP also had an educational booth at the Wildcat Tailgate in Hardee County and at the Miakka Hootenanny in Sarasota County as well as sponsored and hosted a virtual booth at the 16th Annual Sustainable Communities Workshop. Ms. Hecker concluded by thanking the committee members and the CHNEP staff. Additionally, CHNEP hosted monthly volunteer events including a citizen science training for the “Florida Horseshoe Crab Watch” with 40 volunteers, International Coastal Cleanup Day at Ponce de Leon Park, a Kid’s Sustainable Fishing Clinic at the Arcadia Rodeo, and an Earth Echo Water Challenge at Gilchrist Park in Punta Gorda. These are free monthly events to get citizens involved and engaged.

A committee member commented that the additional funding is good news and asked how that funding is planned to be used. Ms. Hecker responded that this new funding will be a part of today’s discussion which is to work with the CAC members that are the liaisons in their communities, to identify what needs those communities have in regards to resiliency. There has been an increase in Federal funding for resiliency projects and the CHNEP would like to see as much of that come to the CHNEP region as possible. Today’s discussion will be about how the Partnership can directly engage these communities to communicate the new funding opportunities and have conversations about community needs and how the CHNEP can assist them. The committee member added that committee members should think about what sustainability needs are needed in their community and how the Partnership can work together to support those projects.

Agenda Item #6 – New Conservation Grant Applications — Andrew Webb, Finance & Grants Specialist

Andrew Webb, CHNEP Finance and Grant Specialist, provided an overview of new conservation grant applications that were received for the Winter FY2022 Cycle. The Conservation Grants program supports the public engagement pillar of the CHNEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) by increasing the proportion off the population that supports and participates in actions to protect and restore estuaries and watersheds.

The first conservation grant application is for the project titled the “Inclusion of Charlotte Harbor in the Go Hydrology Journal.” This project will help increase public water awareness and engagement by using Go Hydrology’s unique blend of expertise in science communication. The

proposed project will result in a series of user friendly and easy to read charts and diagrams, along with narrative explanations and other innovative multi-media creative content on the Go Hydrology Website that will illuminate and celebrate the regions unique water cycle. The applicant has requested \$3,000 in funding for a total project cost of \$6,000. CHNEP staff recommends to fully fund project with the stipulations that the CHNEP logo is added, pertinent infographics and other content is shared with the CHNEP upon request, and links to the added website tools and pages are shared.

The second conservation grant application is for the project titled “2022 Great American Cleanup – Clean YOUR Block.” This event is in addition to the Great American Cleanup, but they will be encouraging people to commit to keeping their block clean. Volunteers will receive their own bucket, grabber, vest, gloves, hand sanitizer, and shirt. These items will be used at cleanups throughout the year. The applicant has requested \$1,875 for a total project cost of \$4,925.20. CHNEP staff recommends to fully fund the project with the stipulations that the CHNEP name or logo be added to promotional materials related to the event.

The third conservation grant application is for the project titled “What you See on the Land, Lands in the Sea: A Children's Art Exhibit.” This project is to provide scholarships and materials for 24 underserved children to attend the Lovers Key Eco-Arts Camp where they will create artwork interpreting the impact of land use on coastal habitats and waterways. Their work will be displayed in an exhibit at Lovers Key State Park entitled, “What You See on the Land, Lands in the Sea” that represents the culmination of campers’ learning experiences in environmental science, artistic expression, and nature-based recreation. The applicant has requested \$3,000 for a total project cost of \$18,404. CHNEP staff recommends to fund the full cost for scholarships for 12 campers that would be identified by a partner organization that serves underserved communities and assurance that transportation will need to be provided.

The last conservation grant application is for the project titled “Myakka River Management Coordinating Council Website.” The project is for continued financial support for the MRMCC’s website which is an educational resource about the watershed in the CHNEP service area. The applicant has requested \$220 for a total project cost of \$720 and CHNEP staff recommend to fully fund the project.

A committee member commented that they are very interested in the third application and that they artwork produced by the children could potentially be used in next year’s calendar if they are shared. Another committee member asked how the kids would be identified. Mr. Webb responded that CHNEP staff propose that a third party organization that works with underserved kids is used to identify kids and ensure that they would not have been able to attend otherwise and urged committee members to share any organizations they know of in that area. Ms. Hecker commented that a Boys and Girls Club in Lee County could be used and CHNEP staff will work with the applicant to identify the organization. A committee member urged CAC members in Lee County to share any suggestions of an organization that serves underserved kids in the community that would fit with the project. Ms. Hecker commented that the CHNEP looks to the CAC for input on these applications to guide the distribution of funds and that organizations CAC members are affiliated with can apply so long as that committee member abstains from the conversation regarding that application. Another committee member commented that these are a

range of projects that give committee members an idea of what their community could do and urged other members to take advantage of the next round of funding.

Agenda Item #7 – Climate Change Needs Assessment Discussion & Exercise — Bridget Washburn, Growing Climate Solutions & Debi Osborne, CAC Co-Chair

Bridget Washburn, Growing Climate Solutions, provided an overview of the background for creating a Climate Change Needs Assessment survey. Highlights are as follows:

Growing Climate Solutions is a regional climate initiative that aims to build climate awareness throughout their project focus areas of Collier, Glades, Lee, Charlotte, and Hendry Counties. Their focus area activities include education, project expertise, and communication. The Climate Change Needs Assessment survey aims to gain a picture of the status of all the communities within their focus area in regards to sustainability and resilience. Working towards Climate Resiliency is a multistep process that includes identifying and mapping assets, quantifying risk, conducting a vulnerability assessment, selecting and planning where to invest, protecting, restoring, and insuring assets, as well as engaging community stakeholders. Climate change impacts include flooding by sea level rise, extremes in precipitation, degraded water quality, water supply constraints, higher temperatures, and impacts on agricultural crops and yields. There are many paths a community can take to improve their resiliency include protecting shorelines through plantings, utilizing natural solutions like bioswales, comprehensive planning, and using green infrastructure. The Climate Change Needs Assessment Survey can be used as a baseline to assess current infrastructure, community knowledge, and their goals and needs related to resiliency within communities.

Debi Osborne, CAC Co-chair, and Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP Executive Director, led a round table discussion with committee members about the use and implementation of the Climate Change Needs Assessment Survey. Ms. Hecker stated that this survey can be used as a tool to strengthen and expand the relationships committee members have within their community in regards to community resiliency. Additionally, Ms. Hecker stated that the survey should be used as an internal tool for committee members to have a conversation and gauge the needs and interests of their communities. A committee member commented that some communities may not have any idea of what type of projects could be accomplished with this new funding and said that if there was a menu of examples of projects that have been successful then that would be helpful. Ms. Hecker responded that the CHNEP could provide those types of resources that would be helpful and that these conversations will hopefully stimulate ideas and help gauge what types of projects communities need. The results of the survey can help CHNEP direct funding to different regions and assist communities in securing funding. Another committee member expressed concerns about implementing the survey with the resources needed in the given timeframe before the next CAC meeting in April. Ms. Hecker responded that one conversation by April is what the target is for this survey to start the process of building community conversations. Additionally, Ms. Osborne commented that in the counties with multiple CAC representatives, CAC members can coordinate with each other to contact different community members. Ms. Hecker commented that there is some urgency to gather ideas as funding will be coming available starting in June 2022 and will continue for 5 years. At the next CAC meeting, the CHNEP is hoping to have some ideas for potential projects based on CAC feedback. Ms.

Hecker stated that some funding could be allocated to turn-dirt projects and some to studies like vulnerability assessments so those counties would be eligible for additional funding.

As Ms. Hecker led committee members through the survey, she stated that committee members do not need to read or ask all the questions, but use their discretion to use the survey as a basis for a conversation. Committee members expressed concerns about how the survey information will be shared unless they knew the purpose and limits their responses would be used for. Ms. Hecker responded that the funding would be for public projects and needs, but it may be helpful to start making conversations with Policy Members on the CHNEP Policy Committee that are already familiar with the CHNEP and understand the value of sharing information. Additionally, a committee member expressed interest in having information about the different funding sources that will be available. Ms. Hecker responded that the CHNEP can create a fact sheet about the funding. Another committee member asked if there has been any thought about how the funding will be distributed to different counties. Ms. Hecker stated that it depends on what types of needs each community has along with other constraints, but identifying the needs first with the survey will serve as a guide. Another committee member commented that the community development department might be a helpful contact. Committee members also asked if there was a list of potential government officials that have already been contacted. Ms. Hecker responded that CAC members should pick who they would like to contact and coordinate with the other county representative to prevent any overlap. Moreover, a committee member asked if the CHNEP would be completing applications for funding on behalf of local governments. Ms. Hecker responded that it would depend on the type of project and funding, but the CHNEP could be able to do pieces of projects to assist communities in the best way available.

Lastly, CAC members asked CHNEP Staff to create few items to aid the use and implementation of the survey including a fact sheet on the different funding sources available, hotlinks of funding sources information in the survey, statute language that is relevant to some survey questions, and resources on examples of projects that could be funded. CHNEP Staff will email the survey and resources to CAC members.

Agenda Item #8 – Technical Projects Update — Nicole Iadevaia, Research & Outreach Manager

CHNEP's Research and Outreach Manager, Nicole Iadevaia, presented on updates to technical projects that are already underway, in-progress, or have been completed since the last cycle. Highlights are as follows:

The CHNEP Water Atlas (<https://chnep.wateratlas.usf.edu/>) is an ongoing project which is funded on an annual basis and undergoes annual standard service including data management, site updates, revisions and enhancements. New features on the Water Atlas include the Habitat Restoration Needs page, the Habitat Resiliency to Climate Change Interactive StoryMap, and Seagrass pages. The Habitat Restoration Needs page displays information and findings from the Habitat Restoration Needs project and includes an interactive mapping tool with tabs for each sub-basin for easy-viewing. For more details about the Habitat Restoration Needs Plan, visit <https://chnep.wateratlas.usf.edu/habitat-restoration-needs/#hrn-plan-home>. Another recent addition is the Habitat Resiliency to Climate Change StoryMap which illustrates how sea level rise and climate change will impact different habitat types in the CHNEP area moving forward. The Habitat Resiliency to Climate Change StoryMap can be found on the CHNEP Water Atlas at

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/dff06f74bc3c4011a5e29078714b498b>. Finally, the CHNEP seagrass pages were created to bring together all of the existing seagrass data in the CHNEP area. Seagrass pages are broken up by basin for easy-viewing and provide data and analysis of aerial seagrass data provided by the Water Management Districts as well as field data collected by the Aquatic Preserve, Sarasota County, DEP, and the Districts. Additionally, seagrass pages include an interactive map displaying seagrass monitoring sites as well as seagrass coverage and loss in the CHNEP area. Seagrass pages can be found on the CHNEP Water Atlas at <https://chnep.wateratlas.usf.edu/seagrass>.

The Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Hydrological Restoration is a modeling project to create integrated surface/groundwater models for hydrological restoration of the Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods area. The goals of this project include sheet flow enhancement, natural flow enhancement, water quality improvement, groundwater recharge, and flooding reduction. Currently, all six data downloads have been completed and modeling of existing conditions is underway. The modelling of future scenarios will occur in spring 2022 with the Draft Report expected in April 2022 and the Final Report by July 2022.

The Cyanobacteria Rapid Response Pilot Project is an upcoming project that the CHNEP is funding and working in cooperation with FGCU and AquaFlex to respond to cyanobacteria blooms in the moment. The project will involve conducting research regarding the efficiency of new technologies in removing nutrients, cyanobacteria, and its associated toxins. It will be a large scale assessment of AquaFlex, open-cell foam technology, on the Caloosahatchee River. AquaFlex works by soaking up cyanobacteria out of the water without disrupting the water column or removing water that can then be disposed of. An independent study to collect water and air quality data before and after AquaFlex deployment will be conducted by FGCU to test the effectiveness of AquaFlex technology. The Environmental Protection Agency recently approved the Quality Assurance Plan for this project and project results will be shared with local governments for them to potentially use this technology as a mitigation technique.

The South Lee County Watershed Initiative Hydrological Restoration is a modeling project to create integrated surface/groundwater models for hydrological restoration of the South Lee County Watershed. This project aims to restore more natural water flows, improve water quality and environmental conditions, increase natural water storage and moderation of flooding events. All tasks for this project have been completed, except the draft and final reports. The draft report was presented to the South Lee County Watershed Initiative and comments have been received. The Final Report will be provided by the end of the year.

Lastly, the Wild Turkey Strand Restoration project is an upcoming project in Lee County to restore former agricultural lands and wetlands and upland habitat in the Wild Turkey Strand Preserve, part of the Lee County DRGR area. The project will help restore hydroperiods which will benefit ecosystem function and recharge. Design and permitting are funded by Lee County and CHNEP was awarded an RAE RESTORE Coastal Watershed Grant to fund restoration activities.

Agenda Item #9 – Gateway to Myakka Restoration — Debi Osborne, Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast

Debi Osborne, Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, shared an outreach video that they created about the recently completed restoration of the Gateway to Myakka Marsh. The Gateway to Myakka Park Marsh Restoration project site was 65 acres acquired by the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. The site includes 3 acres of floodplain marsh and one mile of riverfront north of the Myakka River State Park, identified as an important piece of the Myakka River Corridor. Exotic invasive vegetation was removed and native planting occurred to restore the property.

Agenda Item #10 – CHNEP Seagrass Fact Sheets — Sarina Weiss, Research Specialist

Sarina Weiss, CHNEP Research Specialist briefed committee members on the new CHNEP Seagrass Fact Sheets. Highlights are as follows:

Florida Seagrass beds are a valuable natural resource that have been declining in our estuaries, including a 23% loss in Charlotte Harbor. Seagrass beds provide food, habitat, and nursery grounds for over 70% of recreationally and commercially important species of fish and shellfish. Seagrass beds improve water quality by stabilizing sediments, filtering nutrient pollution, storing carbon, and reducing wave action and coastal erosion. They thrive in clean and clear water which makes them an important indicator of water quality that local agencies and governments can use. Recent anecdotal data in Charlotte Harbor shows a shift from seagrass to an algae dominated system which suggests high nutrient loading. Many agencies monitor the health and status of seagrasses regularly which is done by mapping changes in spatial coverage by Water Management Districts and on-the-ground monitoring to characterize species composition, density, complexity, and stability of seagrass meadows by many organizations including the FDEP Aquatic Preserve, FWC, municipalities, and the Florida Sea Grant “Eyes on Seagrass” citizen science program.

The CHNEP has taken data from the various monitoring programs to create Seagrass Fact Sheets broken down by basin and sub-basin. The Southwest Florida Water Management District recently released 2020 seagrass data for Dona & Roberts Bay, Lemon Bay, Myakka River, Peace River, and Charlotte Harbor which is in the newly updated fact sheets. An example of a seagrass fact sheet was provided from Lemon Bay. Each fact sheet features a bar graph of seagrass acreage, for Lemon Bay there was a loss of 14% overall from 2018 to 2020. Additionally, aerial mapping data was used to create maps that show the loss in red and 2020 mapped seagrass in green. Seagrass quantity was analyzed that showed the mean abundance of different species present in that bay. The Seagrass Fact Sheets are available at <https://www.chnep.org/seagrass-fact-sheets> and on the CHNEP Water Atlas.

A committee member commented that these are great resources to spread the word about the health of our estuaries to the CAC communities.

Agenda Item #11 – CHNEP Kid’s Activity Book — Sophia Brown, Public Outreach Specialist

Sophia Brown, CHNEP Public Outreach Specialist, provided an overview of the CHNEP Kid’s Activity Book. The CHNEP recently completed a Kid’s Activity Book in place of the Summer

Harbor Happenings Magazine. It features environmental education and activities for grades 3 through 5 on topics including the water cycle, watersheds, habitat, wildlife, and sustainable fishing. This new outreach tool will be used at community events and is currently in the process of being printed. Ms. Brown gave a preview of the contents of the activity book.

A committee member commented that the new outreach tool shows the diversity and range of CHNEP staff. Ms. Hecker stated that these resources shown today are created for CAC members to use in their communities and that CAC members can request copies be mailed to them.

Agenda Item #12 – Regional Water Quality Impairment Assessment — John Cassani, Calusa Waterkeeper

Mr. John Cassani, Calusa Waterkeeper, provided a review of the regional impairment assessment by the Calusa Waterkeeper, issued last march. The report summarizes water quality impairments in nine counties using FDEP assessment criteria. Highlights are as follows:

Calusa Waterkeeper is part of the Waterkeeper Alliance. The project area is a homogenous hydrologic system and includes Lake Okeechobee, the Caloosahatchee River, and greater Charlotte Harbor.

Mr. Cassani raised concerns about the increased impairment of regional waters. For example, Matlacha Pass has been impaired for nutrients since 2015. In 2017, committee members and CHNEP staff surveyed Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) within the project study area. The survey found that 88 OFW WBIDS were impaired in the CHNEP study area: 46% impaired for fecal indicator bacteria and 27% impaired for nutrients. In October 2017, CHNEP wrote a letter to the FDEP indicating the problem of OFW impairment and indicated priorities for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development. CHNEP prioritized five regional OFW estuaries as high priority for TMDL development for nutrients. These estuaries included Matlacha Pass, Lemon Bay, Dona Bay, Roberts Bay, and Blackburn Bay.

The regional impairment assessment aimed to summarize water quality impairment on a county basis from the FDEP annual comprehensive list of verified impaired waters for 2018, 2019, and 2020 for WBIDS in nine southwest Florida counties. Seven of the nine counties were coastal counties with similar meteorology, significant urban land use, westerly flowing rivers, and FDEP Basin Groups 1-3 where 5-year assessments had been adopted by 2018. The goals of the project were to summarize water quality on a county or geopolitical basis and understand the factors that drive water quality decline specific to local governments in order to prevent impairment or improve planning for restoration.

The study found that urban population growth and associated development are the underlying cause of water quality impairment in most southwest Florida counties. Fecal bacteria was the most frequently occurring impairment parameter in the area. However, nutrients represented the highest proportion of impaired WBIDS in Collier County, Glades County, and Hendry County. Overall the project found that water quality restoration is lagging behind the growing list of impairments, and that OFW represent an increasingly high proportion of impaired waters.

Mr. Cassani concluded that there are potential remedies to improve water quality in the region. For example, improved MS4 compliance emphasizing monitoring that defines net change consistent with required BMAP pollutant load reduction with less emphasis on presumed progress from projects. Additionally, increased state and local funding for TMDL development and implementation with BMAPs is needed for successful restoration of impaired waters.

A committee member asked what the 4e alternative TMDL is. Mr. Cassani responded that the 4e alternative TMDL is where a load reduction parameter is identified and local government and stakeholders work through it and typically work through the MS4 program. Ms. Hecker followed up that the 4e alternative is a precursor to a reasonable assurance plan for waterbodies that are verified impaired with current restoration projects underway. Another committee member commented that it is important for citizens to be involved in these issues and for them to understand how development is impacting water quality.

Agenda Item #12 – CAC Member Updates — Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

Each member present provide an update and are as follows:

- Tom Palmer, Polk County, updated that they are in the process of obtaining a second referendum to buy environmental lands.
- Pete Quasius, Hendry County, updated that the Charlotte County Zoning Commission selected to ban phosphate mining in Charlotte County.
- Nicole Johnson, Lee County, updated that there is a new application into the county to remove DRGR lands at a parcel called Daniels Parkway South near the Airport. In regards to the Troyer Mine, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida has written to the FDEP and EPA to ask them to take a closer look at the mine application, and the EPA has asked for more time to evaluate the application. The Conservancy is also working with Conservation Florida to purchase a conservation easement in Hardee County on the Peace River. Additionally, in regards to the Statewide Stormwater Rule, the TAC has wrapped up their meetings and FDEP staff will start drafting of the rule that will probably go in to the 2023 legislative session. The Conservancy is concerned about how some of the TAC members recommended decreasing the percent required for nutrient removal as well as the definition of pre-development. The Lake Okeechobee Operating Manual is sufficiently balanced and will provide better benefits to the West Coast and Caloosahatchee.
- Kayton Nedza, Hardee County, updated that they have a new RV park that will be on the Peace River and in the spring they will be doing their 5th Grade Charlotte Harbor Boat Trips.
- Bridget Washburn, Glades County, updated that Moore Haven had some road work recently that may be of interest.
- Aaron Zimmerman, Sarasota County, updated that the Sarasota Citizen Seagrass Survey just finished and was county wide over two weeks including Lemon Bay. They expanded the Water Goat program, which is mostly maintained by volunteers and county staff, to Alligator Creek. Lastly, the Alligator Creek Fest was very successful with about 300 attendees that learned about Alligator Creek and how to protect the watershed.
- Harry Phillips, Lee County, updated that they have ongoing oyster surveys in the river and they are upgrading and retrofitting stormwater systems in Cape Coral. Additionally they have been completing dry plantings in stormwater retention ponds and in the wet

retention ponds they have been using B-Mats that have emergent aquatic plants to buffer some nutrients. Lastly, they have the Burrowing Owl Festival in February.

- Ernesto Lasso de la Vega, Lee County, updated that the Florida Lake Management Society will have their annual meeting in 2022 in Bonita Springs at the Coconut Hyatt with a special session for homeowners about stormwater ponds.
- Debi Osborne, Manatee County, updated that Manatee County passed the Land Acquisition Fund Program about a year ago and the County Commission is now going through to approve the process and have the funding mechanism in place with about \$5 million in general funds that could be available. They are hoping the process will be approved and application can start being reviewed in February.

Agenda Item #13 – General Public Comment — Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

No public comments were made.

Agenda Item #14 – Future Meeting's Topics, Location and Date — Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

The next meeting will be on April 27th, 2022 and there will be a Committee Co-Chair Election. The next meetings for the 2022 cycle are 8/24/22 and 12/14/22.

Agenda Item #15 – Adjourn — Debi Osborne, Co-Chair

Meeting was adjourned at 1:58 pm

KAYTON NEDZA MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.