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An Appendix to the
2025 Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan
of the Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership



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INTRODUCTION

The Coastal ~~and~~ Heartland National Estuary Partnership (CHNEP) was created pursuant to Section 320 of the Clean Water Act as one of 28 National Estuary Programs (NEPs) in the country. As a Clean Water Act Program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guides the NEPs and manages Section 320 funding annually distributed to NEPs. While EPA funding is one of the primary sources of revenue for its work, each year the CHNEP leverages cash and in-kind investments by state, regional, local, and private organizations through collaborative and strategic partnerships. The CHNEP's Finance Strategy develops dedicated and diverse sources of funding to implement its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The CCMP addresses Water Quality Improvement, Hydrological Restoration, Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Protection, and Public Engagement, ~~and Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Protection~~ priorities identified by the Partnership and guides development of annual work plans and budgets. This Finance Strategy includes a) priorities for funding; b) current funding and other support; c) short- and long-term resource needs; and d) strategies to maintain and secure new resources for CCMP implementation and their timeframe. Refer to ~~2025~~ 2019 CCMP Action Plans for descriptions of resource management aActions and their potential annual costs and funding sources.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

CHNEP has the partnerships and strategic alliances to identify and secure resources to implement its CCMP. Sources of funding include federal, state, and local partners; cash and in-kind contributions from public and private sectors; and grants. CHNEP currently receives ~~\$600~~ \$850,000 of base program funding from the EPA under Section 320 of the Clean Water Act.

Under a Cooperative Agreement with EPA, the CHNEP must match this funding with non-federal dollars in a 1:1 ratio ~~and include this information in its annual Workplan. A CHNEP member, the South Florida Water Management District, has provided an in-kind match with match documentation to meet CHNEP's federal match obligation. These are funds used for projects that implement actions or activities in the CHNEP CCMP and are reserved as match solely for CHNEP's grant (i.e. not used as match towards other grants).~~

Additionally, CHNEP has ~~been successful at meeting — and exceeding — its non-federal match obligation in partner contributions. It also has be~~ continued to receive ~~en steadily increasing~~ financial cash contributions from non-federal sources, including from state and local governments, and private sources. For example, CHNEP is expecting to ~~received~~ \$274 ~~602,000~~ 420 ~~matching support in FY2019 through continuing cash funding~~ from local, regional, and state governmental entities in 2026 and through grants (Table 1 below).



Table 1. Annual financial support from state, regional, and local governmental partners ~~and grants used to match EPA's annual \$850,600,000 Federal support~~ in FY2026~~19~~.

Non-Federal Cooperative Funding Sources	Amount	Increase from FY <u>19</u> 18	Type
Sarasota County	\$25,000	0	County Appropriation
Charlotte County	\$215,000	<u>10,000</u>	County Appropriation
-	<u>\$148,650</u>	\$148,650	County Appropriation
Lee County	\$25,000	0 <u>\$10,000</u>	County Appropriation
Polk County	\$215,000	<u>10,000</u>	County Appropriation
Manatee County	\$5,000	0	County Appropriation
Hardee County	\$500	0 <u>\$500</u>	County Appropriation
DeSoto County	\$500	<u>\$(500)</u>	County Appropriation
City of Cape Coral	\$7,500	0	City Appropriation
City of Fort Myers	\$5,000	0	City Appropriation
City of Punta Gorda	\$5,000	0	City Appropriation
City of Sanibel	\$2,500	0	City Appropriation
<u>Peace Manasota Water Supply Authority</u>	<u>\$3,500</u>	0	City Appropriation
-	<u>\$2,500</u>		
City of Fort Myers Beach	\$2,500	0	City Appropriation
City of Venice	\$2,500	0	City Appropriation
City of North Port	\$1,000	0	City Appropriation
City of Winter Haven	\$1,500	0	City Appropriation
Village of Estero	\$5,000	0	Village Appropriation
City of Arcadia	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$(500)</u>	City Appropriation
City of Bartow	\$500	0 <u>\$500</u>	City Appropriation
Total Local Government	\$143,000 <u>69,650</u>	\$158,150 <u>21,000</u>	



FDEP	\$75,000	0	District Appropriation
-	\$50,000	\$50,000	District Appropriation
SWFWMD	\$130,000	0	District Appropriation
Peace Manasota Water Supply Authority	56,000	0	District Appropriation
-	\$3,500	0	District Appropriation
-	\$14,270	0	District Appropriation
Total State and Regional Government	\$131,000	\$50,000	
	72,770		
- Mosaic Company Foundation	\$50,000	0	Grant
- Charlotte County MAC	\$5,000	\$5,000	Grant
City of Punta Gorda Climate Change	\$5,000	\$5,000	Grant
- Grant	\$5,000	\$5,000	Grant
- Total Grants	\$60,000	\$10,000	
Total Non-Federal Cash Match Annual Financial Support	\$274,000		
	02,420		

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The CHNEP annual budget supports CHNEP office administration and CCMP planning and implementation to support the goals and objectives of the Ppartnership.

CHNEP ADMINISTRATION

The annual budget provides resources for CHNEP staff to continue program planning, development, implementation, evaluation, and reporting (Workplan Task 1). The CHNEP administrative budget ~~for overhead administrative fees on~~ includes host fees, materials and supplies, travel, meeting support, and communication software and fees. Additionally, CHNEP administration includes personnel costs associated with carrying out the following activities~~all necessary costs of these administrative activities including a portion of salaries and benefits, supplies, equipment, and overhead support from CHNEP's host entity, the City of Punta Gorda~~Charlotte County, altogether totaling \$427,725~~246,120 in FY2026~~19.

Administrative activities of CHNEP staff include:

- Organizational and logistical support for all Management Conference committees and their meetings;
- Preparation of EPA-required documents and reporting, including updated Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans; Finance, Monitoring,



Communications and Outreach, and Habitat Restoration Plans; Program Evaluation documents; annual Work pPlans and budgets, etc.;

- Development and administration of local, state, and federal grants and contracts to obtain and utilize funding for CCMP implementation, as well as administering a Conservation Grant award program;
- Research and Restoration project management, including scope development, procurement, technical input and deliverable review, and invoicing;
- Coordination and communication with user groups, professional groups, local, state, and federal agencies, and other groups relevant to CCMP development and implementation; and
- Development of public environmental education and engagement events and materials as well as maintenance of two websites, three social media platforms, and other outreach activities to support CCMP implementation.

~~CCMP PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES~~

~~In addition, the CHNEP budget supports staff lead activities related to CCMP implementation (Workplan Tasks 2-5), which totaled \$823,2891,882,621 in FY202619:~~

- ~~• CHNEP citizen science and volunteer programs;~~
- ~~• CHNEP public outreach education programs and events, including policymaker education and legislative activities;~~
- ~~• CHNEP technical projects;~~
- ~~• Overall coordination of CCMP implementation; and~~
- ~~• Facilitation and coordination of research and restoration projects among and in collaboration with partners.~~

~~The Management Conference has supported adding staff to manage additional projects, studies, and analyses as resources allow.~~

PARTNER PROJECT SUPPORT

Partnering cities, counties, states, non-profits, businesses, and industries implement many projects specifically included or conceptually described in the CCMP. The CHNEP office supports CCMP implementation by its partners through several activities, including:

- EGrant funding or technical project support services to partners for project implementation;



- Partnership CCMP implementation tracking [and reporting to Congress as required for continued federal funding](#); and
- Joint watershed planning efforts [including organizing and facilitating Partnership meetings, regional Watershed and Resiliency Summits, and other joint events](#).

In 2024~~19~~, CHNEP leveraged an additional \$72.37~~.98~~ million in partner-funded projects related to CCMP implementation (NEPORT 2024~~19~~). CHNEP assists and facilitates partners in securing grants for CCMP related projects, [including writing letters of support for partner grant applications](#). Assisting a partner to capture funding for activities that support CCMP implementation is as effective as securing funding directly for CHNEP. CHNEP also provides Conservation Grants [that request in-kind or financial contributions from requiring a 50% match to](#) community partners to help accomplish CCMP objectives through leveraged projects.

LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM FUNDING NEEDS FOR CCMP ACTIVITIES

The Management Conference identified priority 2025-2030~~19~~ CCMP Actions for funding [in the 2025 CCMP, including:](#)

[Water Quality Improvement Action 1: Support a comprehensive and coordinated water quality monitoring and assessment strategy;](#)

[Water Quality Improvement Action 3: Reduce urban stormwater and agricultural runoff pollution;](#)

[Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Protection Action 1: Protect, restore, and monitor estuarine habitats;](#)

[Hydrological Restoration Action 1: Conduct data collection, modeling, and analyses to support hydrological restoration;](#)

[Hydrological Restoration Action 2: Increase fresh surface water and groundwater availability to support healthy ecosystems; and](#)

[Hydrological Restoration Action 3: Protect and restore natural flow regimes.](#)

Due to the large scale, complexity, and cost of these Actions, most are multi-partner, multi-phase, and multi-year [– requiring long-term funding in order to implement. Each of these Actions are broken into Activities and then those Activities are translated into specific projects outlined in CHNEP’s annual Work Plans and Budgets. Those projects typically are one to three year projects requiring shorter-term funding to initiate and complete. Therefore, both long-term and short-term funding strategies are needed in order to execute all of the actions and activities outlined in the CCMP.](#)

[Short-term funding priorities also include:](#)

- [Continued support for a comprehensive and coordinated water quality monitoring and assessment strategy to establish water quality baselines and pollution source identification within watersheds \(Water Quality Improvement Action 1\); and](#)



- ~~Full and increased funding through state appropriations for Florida Forever and Rural Family Lands protection programs (Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Protection Action 2).~~

DIVERSIFYING AND AUGMENTING FEDERAL FUNDING

CHNEP continually works toward diversifying and augmenting funding sources with a plan that includes goals, responsibilities, and milestones. CHNEP has identified the following potential strategies for diversifying and increasing CHNEP and CCMP funding support:

STATE/REGIONAL FUNDING

- Continue working with the Florida Estuaries Alliance on a dedicated recurring State appropriation for Florida's four NEPs; and
- ~~Identify and engage new state and regional government partners~~
- ~~Sand seek state funding for CHNEP member new projects and initiative opportunities; in the 2019 CHNEP expansion area,~~ for example, local cost-share projects for wastewater treatment upgrades and septic to sewer conversions, land acquisitions, and stormwater retrofitting projects.

CITY/COUNTY FUNDING

- Identify and engage new County and Municipal government partners ~~and seek new project and initiative opportunities in the 2019 CHNEP expansion area;~~
- Secure interlocal agreements with city and county governments for providing and receiving financial resources ~~ongoing committed annual support;~~ and
- Request ~~increased~~ counties and cities that they consider increasing their contributions to CHNEP.

GRANTS, DONATIONS, AND IN-KIND FUNDING

- Seek grants, sponsorship, and donations from external funders ~~to directly support CHNEP Workplan expenses;~~
- ~~Develop relationships with community foundations and other philanthropic entities to assist in~~ identifying and nurturing relationships with potential donors;
- ~~Develop partnerships with research universities, such as Florida Gulf Coast University and USF School of Marine Science;~~
- ~~Seek strategic partnerships with businesses and business associations that have large constituencies with economic interests in natural resource conservation, for example state and local marine industries associations, local realtors, boat manufacturers, regional land developers, and Chambers of Commerce; and~~
- Continue to investigate grant opportunities for CHNEP and our partners and post appropriate partner grant opportunities on the CHNEP website.



- [Continue to provide letters of support for partner grant applications](#)

GOALS & MILESTONES FOR FUNDING DEVELOPMENT

CHNEP attracts and secures funding and support through strategic partnerships and alliances ~~with diverse and numerous organizations~~ and has leveraged the support provided by partners to implement high-value projects and programs identified in the CCMP. Maintaining and expanding these strategic partnerships is critical to the ability of CHNEP to sustain support for the current budget and for additional growth over the coming years. [Below are the goals and milestones for funding development:](#)

~~CHNEP staff has the following funding goals and milestones over the next 5 years:~~

DEDICATED RECURRENT STATE FUNDING

CHNEP staff will routinely engage CHNEP-area state legislators to inform them about CCMP implementation funding needs. Specific actions and related milestones include:

- ~~State legislative priorities formed and brought to CHNEP established with~~ Policy Board Members ~~to annually approve and who can share these priorities within their organizations and with their legislative support staff;~~
- ~~Approved state legislative priorities, with Annual invitation extended to every state legislative office to meet personally to discuss CHNEP and CCMP implementation needs, mailed to every CHNEP-area state legislative office annually as well as the need for dedicated recurrent state funding for Florida's four NEPs; and~~
- ~~In-person presentations at state legislative delegation meetings as opportunities allow;~~
- ~~Issue summaries provided to Policy Board Members who can share with their advocates and staff when their support is needed on important legislative matters; and~~
~~Legislative priorities established with Policy Board Members who can share these priorities within their organizations and with their support staff.~~

DEDICATED RECURRENT FEDERAL FUNDING

CHNEP staff will routinely engage CHNEP-area federal ~~senators and~~ Congresspersons [and Congressional staff](#) to educate them about CCMP implementation funding needs. The specific action and related milestone are:

- ~~State~~ [Federal](#) legislative priorities formed and brought to CHNEP Policy Board Members [to annually approve and share within their organizations and with their legislative staff;](#)



- Approved federal legislative priorities, with invitation to meet personally to discuss CHNEP and CCMP implementation needs, mailed to every CHNEP-area federal legislative office annually; and Annual invitation extended to every Congressional office to meet personally to discuss CHNEP and CCMP implementation needs, as well as the need for dedicated recurrent federal funding for the National Estuary Program and recurrent state funding for Florida's four NEPs.
- In-person meetings with federal legislators in D.C. annually.

INCREASED AND EXPANDED LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING AGREEMENTS

CHNEP staff will routinely engage CHNEP-area local governments to inform them about CCMP implementation funding needs. Specific actions and related milestones include:

- Invitations extended to present ~~ations to to each~~ local governments as requested ~~council or commission at least once every three years;~~
- Annual invoices to local government partners timed to their respective budget process timelines, asking them to consider ~~contribut~~ inge at a higher level ~~—optimally a minimum of \$25,000 for Counties and \$7,500 for Cities;~~
- Annual invoices to local governments will be cc'd to their respective Policy Board ~~and Management Committee~~ members who can voice their support during the budget process; and
- ~~Annual CHNEP presentations and~~ project fact sheets provided to local government boards and administrators prior to budget meetings ~~to educate on the beneficial work of CHNEP and the leveraging of partnership funds; and~~
- ~~Multi-year agreements as interest and opportunities arise with local government partners secured by sharing examples of multi-year agreements with Policy Board and Management Committee Members to familiarize and encourage this type of funding mechanism.~~

PRIVATE SECTOR AND INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

CHNEP staff will routinely engage the private sector to educate them about CCMP implementation funding needs. Specific actions and related milestones include:

- Continue to promote donations online through website and social media platforms, as well as through publications such as the CHNEP magazine and annual calendar, thanking and publishing donor information per their wishes; and



- Continue to ~~pursue train CHNEP senior staff on how to include fundraising opportunities at events, particularly developing corporate sponsorships for CHNEP Summits and events as staff time and capacity allows;~~
- ~~Continue to build the volunteer base and transition them into donors, as well as record their volunteer hours as in-kind service and non-cash match for potential grants; and~~
- ~~Publicize the new CHNEP Conservation Grant program to fund projects throughout the expanded CHNEP area.~~

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This Finance Strategy provides a framework for funding implementation of the CHNEP CCMP to protect and restore the natural lands and waters of Central and Southwest Florida. These investments help sustain the health of ecological and human communities by producing real value in improved environmental quality and enhancements in the region's economy and quality of life.

