



CHNEP Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 24, 2022
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Hybrid In-person & Virtual Meeting

Draft Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
August 24, 2022

Members Present:

Members Present via Zoom:

Julie Morris	Manatee
Tom Palmer	Polk
Harry Phillips	Lee
Aaron Zimmerman	Sarasota
Debi Osborne	Manatee
Kayton Nedza	Hardee
Robert Winter	Charlotte

Others Present:

Jennifer Hecker	CHNEP
Nicole Iadevaia	CHNEP
Sarina Weiss	CHNEP
Jessica Scott-Dunda	CHNEP
Matt Delisle	Member of the Public Manasota Sand Piper Key Association
Kristian Dunda	Member of the Public

Agenda Item #1 – Call to Order and Introductions Harry Phillips, Co-Chair

Co-chair Harry Phillips called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. Introductions were then made.

Agenda Item #2 – Agenda Additions or Deletions — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair

No additions or deletions were made to the agenda.

DEBI OSBORNE MOVED, SECONDED BY TOM PALMER TO APPROVE THE AGENDA ITEMS AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

Agenda Item #3 – Public Comments on Agenda Items — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair

No public comments on agenda items were made.

Agenda Item #4 – Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) December 15th, 2021 Meeting Minutes — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair

No edits were suggested for the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) December 15th, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

DEBI OSBORNE MOVED, SECONDED BY KAYTON NEDZA TO APPROVE THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) DECEMBER 15th, 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:

The CHNEP submitted a grant application for FY23 to EPA and progress reports to SWFWMD, FDEP, and EPA as well as submitted a full application and letter of support for the NWF Coastal Resilience Fund 2022. The CHNEP planned and executed the Spring 2022 Management and Policy committee meetings and archived highlights online. Currently in the process of transitioning fiscal hosts to Charlotte County and have moved the CHNEP office on a new temporary lease agreement to the 1050 Loveland Blvd, Port Charlotte office. The CHNEP provided multiple letters of support as requested from partners and stakeholders for projects, draft amended FY22 and FY23 work plans and budgets, invoices, grants, and progress reports. Multiple partnership meetings were coordinated and executed including SOCAN, OIMMP/FORS, SWERT, RAE, and many others.

The CHNEP hosted outreach events and presentations in multiple counties, both internal and external including Earth Echo water quality training, FWC horseshoe crab monitoring, Sea Grant Seagrass monitoring, Hardee County Wildcat Tailgate, Native Florida community gardening and others. 4,000 copies of the CHNEP Kids Activity Book was distributed to all ten counties library systems, schools, and other public locations. The latest Harbor Happenings magazine was designed, printed, and distributed to 6,000 individual subscribers, and made available to libraries in all ten counties. The CHNEP calendar entries were judged by the CAC at a special meeting and the design is underway. The CHNEP continues to communicate programmatic and technical projects in presentations throughout the ten county service area. Public Outreach statistics continue to increase including YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Water Atlas, and the CHNEP website. Upcoming summits hosted by the CHNEP for 2023 are the Climate Summit March 15-16 and Watershed Summit June 20-22. A member asked if there was any presenter information available yet for the two upcoming summits to which Ms. Hecker noted that the CAC should seek out individuals who may be interested in presenting and send their information to the CHNEP.

Agenda Item #6 – New Conservation Grant Applications — Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP Research & Outreach Manager

Ms. Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP Research & Outreach Manager, provided an overview of new conservation grant applications that were received for the Spring FY2022 Cycle. The Conservation Grants program supports the public engagement of the CHNEP CCMP by increasing actions to protect and restore estuaries and watersheds.

The first conservation grant application is for the project entitled: The Economic Value of Tarpon Fishing in Florida. The amount requested was for \$3,000 to purchase gift cards, which is not in the CHNEP's ability to fund; as well, there were privacy issues pertaining to requested FWC licensing. The recommendation was to not fund this project. A member stated they understood the reasoning behind not funding gift cards in lieu of a hard deliverable.

The second conservation grant application is for the project entitled: Monthly Water Quality Testing of the Manchester Waterway. The amount requested was \$3,000. After discussions with

the applicant and County the permit-related activities would not be within the funding ability of the CHNEP and thus the project is not recommended for funding. A member asked for general clarification and Ms. Hecker reviewed past funding of this project with the present phase in need of permitting which the CHNEP cannot participate in. Another member asked if the UF Lake Watch could possibly help this project to which Ms. Hecker specified it was an open waterway and asked if that would apply to the UF Lake Watch program. The member stated the UF Lake Watch works in Rotonda, but there are locks present which may be different than the Manchester Waterway. Ms. Hecker stated she would provide the UF Lake Watch information to the project applicants.

The third conservation grant application is for the project entitled: Suncoast Waterkeeper Water Sampling. \$3,000 is requested to expand bacteria water sampling and reimbursement for equipment and lab costs. CHNEP staff recommendation to fully fund requested amount for hard deliverables of materials and equipment to exclude diving costs. A member asked if the sampling data would be published somewhere and specified the Water Atlas. Ms. Iadevaia stated she would ask them to submit the data to the Water Atlas.

The fourth conservation grant is for the project entitled: Educational Signage & Habitat Restoration for Cape Coral Wildlife Trust Properties. \$3,000 is requested to install educational signage on 18 properties about gopher tortoises and burrowing owls in addition to planting native grasses and flowers. Signage would include CHNEP logos with proofs and final installations submitted to CHNEP. CHNEP staff recommends to fully fund requested amount. A member commented that especially with burrowing owls signage is important when considering parking, walking, and visiting the preserves.

The fifth conservation grant is for a project entitled: Pederson Preserve Pine Restoration Area Habitat Improvement. The requested amount is \$3,000 to fund habitat restoration of an old upland citrus grove with funding signage to include the CHNEP logo, proofs of signage submitted and photos of installed signage once the project is completed. The CHNEP staff recommends fully funding the request. A member stated they are familiar with the program and this is a significant part of a long term strategy for restoration for the future.

The sixth conservation grant is for a project entitled: Caloosahatchee Rover Drone Wading Bird Nest Survey. The requested amount is \$1,200 salaries, to which CHNEP cannot cover salaries but will recommend fully funding the same amount in the hard deliverables of drone footage and the technical report. A member asked why the original application could not be funded and Ms. Hecker explained that salaries are not as straight forward as the requested hard deliverables and the member stated they understood this reasoning. Another member asked if bird surveys with drones were a pioneering strategy and Ms. Hecker stated that methodologies are being created and would keep abreast of their progression.

Ms. Hecker asked the CAC to give their overall opinions, feedback, recommendations, concurrence, or input for final consideration of the grants. A member stated they have definitely promoted the grant and that it is intuitive and easy to apply for and encouraged other CAC members to reach out to agencies, NPOS, and schools and encourage them to apply. A member stated they felt the grants were going to different and diverse groups especially inland. Another

member stated they agreed with the recommended grants and also those to which were not recommended for funding. Another member stated they approved and thanked the CHNEP for bringing these to the CAC.

Agenda Item #7 – Completed Conservation Grants

There are a number Conservation Grant projects that have been recently completed and CHNEP would like to share final reports and outcomes from the projects with the CAC. Ms. Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP Executive Director presented this information.

The first grant CHNEP funded was entitled: “Inclusion of Charlotte Harbor in the Go Hydrology Journal” whereas \$ 3,000 was funded for the development of charts, diagrams, explanations, and multi-media content to celebrate the area’s water cycle. The final report is slated to be delivered in September.

The second grant CHNEP funded was entitled: “2022 Great American Cleanup” whereas \$1,875 was funded for supplies related to the clean-up. CHNEP received the final report of 70,000 lbs. of debris documented for removal from the environment and photos of the event as the acceptable deliverable to close out the grant.

The third grant CHNEP funded was entitled: “What You See on the Land, Lands in the Sea: A Children’s Art Exhibit” whereas \$3,000 was funded for 24 underserved children to attend the Lovers Key Eco-Arts Camp. CHNEP received the final report and photos of the children participating in the camp as the accepted deliverable to close out the grant.

The fourth grant CHNEP funded was entitled: “Myakka River Management Coordinating Council (MRMCC) Website” whereas \$220 was funded to provide web support in the form of hosting fees for the organization. The final report and photos of the CHNEP logo on the site is the accepted deliverable to close out the grant.

The fifth grant CHNEP funded was entitled: “A Bird’s Eye View of Caloosahatchee Conditions: A Weekly Collection of Aerial Photos of the Effects of Lake Okeechobee Regulatory Releases” whereas \$1,353 was funded to the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) to produce a long term, photographic archive of the coastal conditions of the estuary weekly. The project report and photos of the CHNEP logo visible on all photography taken, website, and weekly reports published on the SCCF website, and links to the CHNEP Water Atlas page are the accepted deliverable to close out the grant.

The sixth grant CHNEP funded was entitled: “The Scrubby Flatwoods Lot Restoration Project” whereas \$665 was funded to the Environmental Conservancy of North Port to plant native species to restore scrub jay habitat on a specified lot. The final report and photos were provided to the CHNEP as the accepted deliverable to close out the grant.

The seventh grant CHNEP funded was entitled: “Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC) Digital Audio Guided Hikes” whereas \$3,000 was funded to CHEC to create and install signage with QR codes with educational audio about the six miles of hiking trails. Final report and photos were provided to CHNEP as the accepted deliverable to close out the grant.

The eighth grant CHNEP funded was entitled: “CHNEP Videos” whereas \$3,000 was funded to create programmatic educational videos. The videos were delivered and placed on the CHNEP YouTube site as the accepted deliverable to close out the grant.

One member commented that SCCF is engaging with USACE and other stakeholders to gather stats reports in relation to this aerial project, so many stakeholders are using these images, for example having the aerial 7 day moving average for what is coming from upstream is a great visual for making decisions. Ms. Hecker added that the CHNEP Water Atlas has Caloosahatchee and Lake Okeechobee tracker pages which are constantly updating flow rates, health levels, and most recent areas in the recovery targets for ecological envelopes for maximum and minimum flow rates. Ms. Iadevaia noted that when grant applicants are completed with their projects they will be invited to present to CAC.

Agenda Item #8 – Climate Change Needs Assessment Discussion & Results

This was a working group discussion for Committee members to share the results from their recently completed Climate Change Needs Assessment surveys. Harry Phillips, CAC Co-Chair, lead this discussion.

- Debi Osborn- Manatee County partnered with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council to determine needs in infrastructure, the environment, and society. There is a website outlining the details to the plan.
- Aaron Zimmerman- Sarasota County identified needs for groundwater / potable water supplies, wastewater and septic to sewer conversion conversations, flood amendments, sea level rise, and a point disaster development plan need. Ms. Hecker commented she would like additional information the Point Disaster Development once Mr. Zimmerman has that information available and he agreed to bring information to CHNEP as it is made available to him.
- Bridget Washburn for Glades County identified infrastructure needs of road improvements, inventory of parks, erosion risk, rural area flood and stormwater protections, dam safety analysis, ground / potable water concerns, and wastewater / sewer to septic needs, and educating the public.
- Tom Palmer- Polk County identified need for county wide vulnerability assessment, mapping of groundwater, a water quality monitoring program, a stormwater master plan needed, ground / potable water concerns about septic to sewer, protecting drinking water, and public education.
- Nicole Johnson- Estero (Lee County) identified native plantings, salinity and water table levels, cleaning the Estero River, walking / biking trails, acquiring new stormwater protection areas, pond watches, water quality testing, septic to sewer, FDCU Environmental Research Center groundwater and wastewater procedures, and public education.
- Harry Phillips- Cape Coral (Lee County) identified continuing improving existing new seawall standards, raising outfall pipes, stormwater pond efficiency, continuing to build a new climate resiliency office which is in the beginning hiring stages now. Ms. Hecker commented she could send Mr. Phillips a contact from Naples for the greenhouse gas

inventory the County is completing currently. Mr. Phillips commented he was encouraged that each of the distinct departments such as the fleet management was proactive in combatting greenhouse emissions as it pertains to climate change and were keeping accurate records of electric vehicle captures.

- Debi Osborne- Manatee County partnered with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council to determine needs in infrastructure, the environment, and society. There is a website outlining the details to the plan.

Ms. Iadevai commented that CHNEP would be accepting all information as it becomes available from each County as this meeting and survey results are first steps in the vulnerability assessments and to continue to circle back to stakeholders and keep communication open. Ms. Hecker stated the CAC is the community liaison for the CHNEP and serves an incredible role for feeding information out to the communities. For events like the climate summit the CHNEP needs the CAC to encourage people to participate. The money is unprecedented for addressing resiliency and there is a need for well thought through and science-based strategies to be used effectively and efficiently and the CHNEP needs the CACs to brainstorm ideas. CAC is a working group to engage and to help enhance resiliency and is interconnected to everything CHNEP does. She noted this is just the start of the work and thanked the CAC for taking the time to complete the survey and encouraged a continuation of communication with stakeholders. Ms. Hecker continued that the federal funding fact sheet will be a useful guide to resiliency-related funding and when the CAC knows of a project that would benefit from federal funding to disseminate this new fact sheet. A member commented that as the CAC reaches out to city officials and the public in the community, the factsheet will be helpful. Ms. Hecker reiterated to send interested parties to the CHNEP Climate Summit. Another member commented that using the Climate Summit as a networking opportunity so different municipalities can meet together. Ms. Hecker stated the CHNEP's goal is for every county to have current vulnerability assessments completed that meet state statutes and to support updating existing plans to insure eligibility for additional state funding and that CHNEP is committed to find where people need the resources.

Agenda Item #9 – Funding Opportunities for Addressing Resiliency

As a follow up on next steps from the Climate Change Needs Assessment Survey Project, CHNEP shared updates on funding opportunities to help prepare local communities to be climate ready. Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP Executive Director presented on this item to explain the Federal Funding Opportunities for Resiliency with highlighted areas of weather/climate events, infrastructure, jobs, disaster relief, and others associated to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL). Societal needs for underserved communities area high priority and funding agents include NOAA, FWS, FEMA, FHWA, DOT, NFWF and others. Letters of support can be supplied from CHNEP upon request for grant applications. The CHNEP created a new Federal Funding Fact Sheet to allow for easy communication with the public and stakeholders that is highly recommended to use as a talking point. Ms. Hecker noted the CHNEP can write a letter of recommendation for applicants. A member noted the funding fact sheet would definitely be used at networking events as an easy visual to start conversations.

Agenda Item #10 – CHNEP Technical Projects Updates

CHNEP Technical Project updates were presented by Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP Research & Outreach Manager and included the CHNEP Water Atlas, Lower Charlotte Harbor Flatwood Hydrological Modeling, Tiki Point Restoration, Myakka Headwaters Preserve Restoration, and many others to which fact sheets are available online at <https://www.chnep.org/chnep-fact-sheets>. A member asked if there is a fact sheet for Tiki Point because they were considering a similar project and Ms. Iadevaia noted there is a fact sheet. A member commented that they route residents to the Water Atlas and the ease of use is increasing.

Agenda Item #11 – CAC Member Discussion for New Project Ideas and Member Engagement

This discussion is for the Committee to engage in environmental topics as they pertain to counties they represent and to working toward mutual issues of interest to which Mr. Phillips facilitated.

A member commented that the Kids Activity book and recent Harbor Happenings have been popular and he has been giving out the publications and the connections to climate resiliency is apparent. Ms. Hecker continued that as a collective reminder going back to the original CAC visioning that the CCMP and CHNEP goal for public engagement is targeted messaging like fact sheets, social media, accessing all levels of understanding, Spanish translations, involving children, throughout a variety of approaches. She emphasized using the conservation grant to build and empower community groups and that the CHNEP Communications team, relies on the CAC and taking publications out to the community is exactly what the goal specifies along with being a voice for community concerns and aspirations. A member noted that CHNEP makes it easy to promote the CHNEP with their published materials, YouTube videos, fact sheets, and the calendar inevitably starts a dialogue. Another member stated that amongst the various resources that new Kids Activity education book being translated into Spanish would assist their efforts at their local Myakka River Elementary in conjunction with their restoration efforts in that same area.

Ms. Hecker asked if anyone could think of gaps in resources or information that should be created to which a member suggested that mostly he identified linking people to the actual resources. Ms. Hecker offered the current strategy that CHNEP does festivals in all counties every year to imbed the programmatic message into those popular events and asked for out of the box suggestions to increase engagement. A member suggested going into more traditional educational settings and using classrooms and school libraries to get resources directly to the teacher level. Ms. Hecker noted the new outreach specialist was a teacher and has started targeting schools and teachers.

Another member suggested creating an exclusive page or tab within the Water Atlas for educators where they can access classroom-ready content from age ranges K-5, 6-8, 9-12. Currently educators have told him they get lost in the Water Atlas and would like to see academically appropriate PDF versions of resources to be placed on the Water Atlas. The member stated that his County is attempting to begin talks on creating an educator draft page to group the information into the age groups educators have asked for so they can easily find exactly what they want that is classroom ready. Their vision includes a hub of information containing the main contacts where they can network, talk and plan trips, and provides links to

locations in one central place- ultimately to get students out into the field. Ms. Hecker explained there is a Learn tab on the Water Atlas which goes to the Pinellas Water Atlas found under Home Learning and Education Curriculum for Teachers. To create something like his vision on the CHNEP Water Atlas would start with a discussion with USF, and to help streamline the design, they like to see a model of something that is already created. She asked if the member could find something in terms of education that is existing that meets their vision and needs CHNEP could possibly begin drafting ideas for an educator page, to which the member agreed they would begin looking for an exemplar.

Ms. Hecker then asked the group for ideas about making connections, getting resources, identifying funding needs. A member responded that networking with local Chamber of Commerce organizations, City Halls, Resorts, and even novel ideas like coasters for restaurants with messaging printed on them to get a better reach into the community. Another member added that the current festivals and events in each county CHNEP does and how it would be advantageous for CAC members to help with those events in their respective Counties and asked how to get information on upcoming events to prepare in advance. Ms. Hecker explained the CHNEP sends out a monthly email, as well as the website has calendar of events, but that staff could also create a special email blast for CAC members moving forward.

Another member commented that The Climate and Watershed Summits are great for the public and CAC because it is science-based and acts as a starting point for dialogue and change. Another member noted that the Peace River Audubon Society will resume meetings this fall and as they grow their own membership, meet and talk with people that they plug CHNEP at every meeting.

Agenda Item #12 – CAC County Updates

Each member will have an opportunity (up to 5 minutes) to update the Committee on research, restoration, public education and engagement projects currently being completed in their respective county to protect and restore the CHNEP program area.

- Tom Palmer- The County and Commission are working towards securing property near Lake Hamilton for conservation. Polk County Natural Resources will be placing new signage for when floodwaters are high for safety, and Polk Forever is pushing a referendum for the Environmental Lands Program.
- Kayton Nedza – Completed 7 trips with 5th graders kids to Charlotte Harbor and Cayo Costa Island. Another highlight was a Turtle Walk in Sarasota with students where we saw 12 sea turtles and were trained by the turtle authorities to assist in releasing them into the water. We're working towards a Peace River clean-up but we'll wait and see if we're able depending on the water levels.
- Aaron Zimmerman- The Neighborhood & Environmental Stewardship Team (NEST) program is working towards solutions to avoid red tide. Also local HOAS and Communities partnering for pond water quality monitoring with newest partners: Venice Golf and Country Club and the Windwood Community in Venice. The Sarasota Stormwater Environmental Utility was asked by the board in July to restructure the stormwater rates based on impervious areas. We have finished our County Seagrass Monitoring for 2022 and will begin working with that data soon and had a citizen

seagrass survey festival in April. We're also participating in the upcoming International Coastal Clean-up featuring three of our Water GOAT locations to encourage sign ups and promote what Water GOATS do and how they are used to collect floatable pollution in the canals. We also have the Adopt-A-Waterway Program and the ability to Adopt-A-Water GOAT as well.

- Harry Phillips- B-Mats have been installed in the city with floating islands and plants which help uptake nutrients and then are replaced once they reach a certain biomass and we're having success with that. Another popular idea we're working on that we took from a CHNEP program is for Vertical Oyster Gardens, within our Canal Watch Program, where citizens who live on canals participate as citizen scientist. Keep Lee County Beautiful is partnering for an international coastal clean-up, and most of our parks have volunteers covered for this event with the Friends of Wildlife helping, and local teachers and their students are helping.
- Debi Osborne- The Conservancy closed on 10 acres today for conservation and panther connections. Also next week Sarasota will close on the final 180 acre Crowley connector nature center for the environmental education center.
- Robert Winter- Lemon Bay Conservancy made educational trail videos with QR codes. CHNEP, NOAA and SWFWMD, helped with a major habitat restoration completed in January 2021, and now we have 10 new trail videos, including the history of the 80 acre property which was an abandoned golf course, and now it is a mini-estuary with fresh and salt water in 80 acres property. Its primary use is environmental education and we invite everyone to come and have nature walks and engage in the property. The link is here: https://youtu.be/TbtHsQU_2-M

Agenda Item #13 – General Public Comment — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair

Matt Delisle- Thanks for having me and it was great to be here.

Agenda Item #14 – Future Meeting's Topics, Location and Date, Harry Phillips Co-Chair

The next meeting will be on December 14, 2022. The next upcoming meetings for the 2023 cycle are: April 26, 2023, August 23, 2023, and December 13, 2023.

Agenda Item #15 – Adjourn — Harry Phillips, 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.