

# COASTAL & HEARTLAND NATIONAL ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## PREAMBLE

The Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership (CHNEP) is comprised of local, state and federal governmental entities as well as public stakeholders who work together to protect water and wildlife in the estuaries and watersheds of Central and Southwest Florida. This partnership gives citizens, elected officials, resource managers, and commercial and recreational resource users in the 5,400-square-mile study area a voice to address diverse resource management concerns including water quality improvement; hydrologic restoration; fish, wildlife and habitat protection; and public engagement. The CHNEP area includes all or portions of Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, Manatee, Polk, Highlands, Hardee, Glades, Hendry and DeSoto counties.

The Management Conference of the Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership is comprised of the Program Office and four committees: Citizen's Advisory, Technical Advisory, Management and Policy. Each serves a specialized role but all support the program objectives and implementation of the *Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan* (CCMP).

The **Citizen's Advisory Committee** (CAC) provides the critical link between the Partnership and the public, providing input about public concerns and ideas. The CAC is also an essential mechanism for sharing program information and resources with key community organizations and individuals that may not be directly involved with the Partnership and provides input to the CHNEP Management Committee.

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Citizen's Advisory Committee of the CHNEP, hereinafter called the CAC. The principal mailing address shall be:

Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership

1050 Loveland Blvd.  
Port Charlotte, FL 33980-1836  
941-833-6580  
[www.chnep.org](http://www.chnep.org)

### ARTICLE II: Purposes and Powers

#### Section 1: Purpose

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

- a. Promote public awareness of the CCMP and the issues and goals of the CHNEP
- b. Provide public input to the Management Conference on public education and participation activities
- c. Assist in the development and implementation of public outreach and engagement events

The CAC shall conduct the business of the committee so as to ensure compliance with the Florida Government in the Sunshine Laws and the Florida Code of Ethics.

#### Section 2: Accomplishing the Purpose

To accomplish the purposes of the CHNEP, the CAC members shall:

- a. Communicate the activities of the CHNEP and the CAC to their respective organizations, communities, and representative interest groups and communicate the comments and concerns of these organizations to the CHNEP Management Conference;
- b. Participate in CAC meetings to discuss and provide input for the Management and Policy Committees to consider;
- c. Recommend and participate in public outreach for the CHNEP Management Conference;
- d. As CHNEP Conservation Grants applications are received, provide input on those. If Conservation Grant funds are available, assist in disseminating information and assisting others to apply for them; and
- e. Increase public access to of CHNEP documents and materials

### **ARTICLE III: Membership**

#### Section 1: CAC Composition

The CAC is composed of individuals living or working in the CHNEP area representing a cross section of groups and organizations that use or have concerns about the CHNEP area. Two member representatives and one alternate who either live or work in the CHNEP area will be selected from each of the 10 counties CHNEP serves.

#### Section 2: Criteria for Membership

People meeting the following criteria may become members. Those who:

- a. Are potentially affected by the management recommendations contained in the CCMP;
- b. Are willing to attend scheduled CAC meetings and are willing to serve on the Committee for at least a two-year period,
- c. Assume responsibility for communicating with citizen, user or interest groups;
- d. Implement the CCMP; and
- e. Have interest in CHNEP issues of common concern identified in the CCMP

#### Section 3: Classes of Membership

- a. Members are appointed by the Policy Committee with full voting rights. Applications to serve on the Committee will list each of the counties in the CHNEP that the applicant works or lives in, as well as a corresponding Policy Committee member reference for those counties. Applicants should reach out to establish communication with their corresponding Policy Committee member reference in advance.
- b. Voting members who have not attended three consecutive regular meetings of the CAC (excepting extenuating circumstances) will lose their membership status. The member could reapply or the seat will be refilled.
- b. The Policy Committee has the authority to remove any member of the CAC.

## **ARTICLE IV: Officers**

### **Section 1: Officers**

Officers shall be:

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

### **Section 2: Elections**

CAC Co-Chairs shall be elected for a two-year terms and take office at the Annual Meeting where they are elected, the Annual Meeting is the first meeting of the CAC each calendar year. Nominations shall be submitted in writing in advance of the meeting or taken from the floor. Elections shall be held annually on an alternating basis for each of the Co-Chair positions.

### **Section 4: Duties and Responsibilities of Co-Chairs**

The Co-Chairs shall be responsible for:

- a. Attending CHNEP Management Committee meetings following the meeting that they served as Co-Chair;
- b. Reporting input of the CAC to the CHNEP Management Committee following the meeting that they served as Co-Chair; and
- c. Presiding over the CAC meetings.

## **ARTICLE V: Meetings**

### **Section 1: Meetings**

Regular meetings of the CAC are scheduled three times per year. The Annual Meeting shall be held at the first CAC meeting of each calendar year (generally the spring meeting).

### **Section 2: Notice of Meetings**

Meetings of the CAC shall be open to the public and noticed one week in advance on the CHNEP website. A portion of time shall be allocated at each meeting for public comment.

### **Section 3: Expenses**

All members shall serve without compensation.

### **Section 4: Quorum**

A minimum of five (5) Voting Members of the CAC participating at any CAC meeting shall constitute a quorum. Each member shall have one vote.

### **Section 5: Conflict of Interest**

No member of the CAC shall participate in any decision or vote which could constitute or appear to be a conflict of interest. Members shall state any potential conflicts of interest prior to any discussion and abstain from such discussion and/or vote.

## **ARTICLE VI: Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in the latest edition of Robert's *Rules of Order* shall govern the conduct of the business of the CAC in all matters in which they are applicable and which are not in conflict with any provision of these Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VII: Amendment of the Bylaws**

These Bylaws, and any amendments thereto, shall be adopted upon an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the voting members of the CAC provided that amendments have been proposed in writing and circulated to the CAC members at least seven (7) days in advance of any regular CAC meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose.

## **ARTICLE VIII: Staff Support and Records**

Staff support for the CAC shall be provided by the CHNEP. The Staff shall be responsible for recording the minutes of all CAC meetings and maintaining the official record of attendance at those meetings, shall transmit notices and agendas to the membership, and shall provide a copy of the minutes of each CAC meeting to each member prior to the next regular meeting. The Staff shall also ensure that consensus, majority and dissenting views on all matters and issues are recorded and reported. The Staff shall provide assistance in scheduling and procuring appropriate facilities for CAC meetings. The approved minutes of the CAC shall be available for review by the public and will be permanently housed with the CHNEP Office.