



CHNEP Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

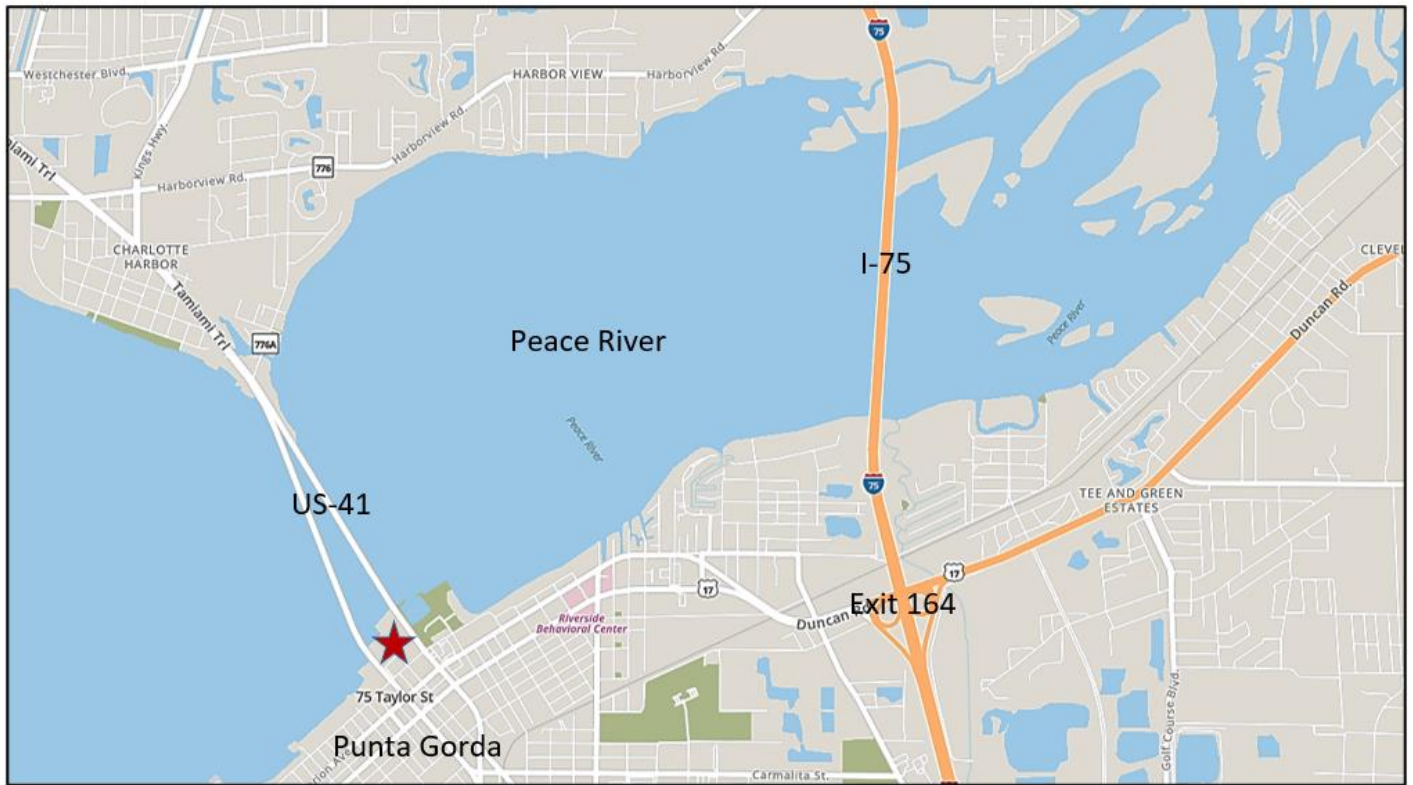
Thursday April 11th, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm
Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center
75 Taylor St, Punta Gorda, FL 33950

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Introductions — Mark Walton, Co-Chair
2. Agenda Additions or Deletions — Mark Walton, Co-Chair
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items — Mark Walton, Co-Chair
4. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) November 30th, 2023 Meeting Minutes — Mark Walton, Co-Chair
5. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Co-Chair Election — Mark Walton, Co-Chair
 - Nomination Form: <https://forms.gle/CxHgyijTs4LKQaC2A>
6. CHNEP Update — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
7. Iron: A Limiting Nutrient for Benthic Macroalgae in Florida Springs? — Madison Trowbridge, PhD, Southwest Florida Water Management District
8. Overview of the CHNEP Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) 5-Year Update — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
9. Action Plan 1 Update: Water Quality Improvement — Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
10. Action Plan 2 Update: Hydrological Restoration — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
11. Action Plan 3 Update: Fish Wildlife and Habitat Protection — Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
12. Action Plan 4 Update: CCMP Public Engagement — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
13. CHNEP Technical Projects Updates and New Tools — Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
14. TAC Membership Project Updates and Discussion — Mark Walton, Co-Chair
15. Public Comment — Mark Walton, Co-Chair
16. Future Meeting's Topics, Location and Date — Mark Walton, Co-Chair
 - Upcoming Dates for 2024: 8/8/24, 12/5/24)
17. Adjourn — Mark Walton, Co-Chair

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING LOCATION

[Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center \(75 Taylor St, Punta Gorda, FL 33950\)](#)



Coming From the North (Tampa, Sarasota)

- Take I-75 South
- Take Exit 164 (US-17-Punta Gorda)
- Take left onto US-17(towards Punta Gorda) for 2 miles
- US-17 becomes West Marion Avenue
- Turn right onto Taylor Street
- Event Center will be 2 blocks ahead on the left

Coming From the South (Ft. Myers, Cape Coral)

- Take I-75 North
- Take Exit 164 (US-17-Punta Gorda)
- Take left onto US-17(towards Punta Gorda) for 2 miles
- US-17 becomes West Marion Avenue
- Turn right onto Taylor Street
- Event Center will be 2 blocks ahead on the left

In-person CHNEP TAC meetings have resumed.

If you are unable to attend in person or to arrange for an alternate do so, please email Nicole at niadevaia@chnep.org or call (941) 833-6580.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

After TAC Co-Chair Mark Walton calls meeting to order, members will introduce themselves.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

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. TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Recommendation: Approval of the minutes from November 30th 2023 meeting.

Attachment: Draft November 30th 2023 TAC Meeting Minutes.

5. TAC CO-CHAIR ELECTION

TAC bylaws stipulate that Co-Chairs are elected on an alternating basis annually at each spring meeting for 2-year terms. The staggered two-year terms ensure that a new Co-Chair will be paired with an experienced Co-Chair. Nominations are being sought for one of the Co-Chair positions in advance of the next meeting for staff to compile into a nominations list. TAC members can nominate themselves or another TAC member whom they have previously conferred with to confirm they are willing to serve. The list of nominees will be brought forward for consideration at the meeting.

- *Nominations are requested to be submitted by COB Wednesday, April 10th using the link provided: <https://forms.gle/CxHgyijTs4LKQaC2A>*

TAC Co-Chairs alternate chairing of TAC meetings, as well as alternate attendance of Management Committee meetings to brief them on TAC comments on items before them for discussion. The TAC Co-Chair attending the Management Committee meeting has voting privileges at that meeting as well. CHNEP staff provides email meeting notices of future Management meetings to the Co-Chairs, as well as personal pre-meeting briefings to assist the TAC Co-Chairs in their role.

TAC Co-Chair Mark Walton will be facilitating this discussion.

6. CHNEP UPDATE

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

Program Administration

- Planned and executed the Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (11/30), Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting (12/13), Management Committee Meeting (1/12) and Policy Committee Meeting (1/25), including lining up presenters, drafting agenda packets, creating PowerPoints, drafting minutes, etc.
- At the January Policy meeting, the Committee approved updates to the Policy Committee Bylaws and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Charlotte County.
- In follow up from the Winter Management Conference meetings, CHNEP reached out to participating agencies, cities, and counties with committee vacancies to designate new representatives. Based on responses, all internal lists for each committee were updated and new member emails and packets were sent out.

- Received USEPA Region 4 and Headquarters approval for 2023 NEPORT Congressional Report for annual partner conservation, management, and restoration accomplishments.
- CHNEP provided letters of support for the following research project proposals focused on the CHNEP area: *Sarasota County Gottfried Creek Stormwater Improvement Project* and *Septic to Sewer Conversion on Charlotte County Barrier Islands*.
- CHNEP partnered on a letter of interest and provided a letter of acknowledgement for the following research project proposals focused on the CHNEP area: *Testing the effectiveness and suitability of Vallisneria sp. plantings in stormwater canals for improving water quality in a southwest Florida estuary* and *Coastal Habitat Monitoring*.
- At the request of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, CHNEP served on the Management Advisory Group for the Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area Management Plan update, providing comments and data to assist in development of management intent, goals and objectives, and challenges and strategies for the ten-year Management Plan.

Finance and Grant Management

- Received fully executed SD015 FDEP funding agreement.
- Sent customized budget 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 spring for FY25 to help with partner budgeting.
- Interlocal agreement with Central Florida Regional Planning Council fully executed.
- Interlocal agreement with Lee County fully executed.
- Sent FY24 Q1 reports for SWFWMD FY21 and FY24 cooperative funding agreements. After these were approved, the final reimbursement request for the SWFWMD FY21 agreement was prepared approved by the District in March.
- Worked with EPA to update the FY24 BIL Work Plan and submit a revised grant request package for FY24 BIL funds from EPA.
- Worked with EPA and City of Punta Gorda to update a grant request package for Novated funds from FY22-23 from EPA, which is presently being processed by EPA.
- Received the draft Cooperative Agreement 24CN0004327 for FY24 funding from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. This was subsequently entered into the County grant award acceptance system and is presently scheduled to go to CHNEP's fiscal host for partial execution, prior to being sent back to the District for full execution.
- Updated the Conservation Grant form and website landing page to reflect changes to the program and increases to available funding.
- Work plan and budget amendments for EPA 320 Master Work Plan reviewed and approved at January Policy meeting.
- Received and processed all annual partner contribution checks for FY24.

Regional and multi-jurisdictional organizational meetings

- CHNEP Water Atlas Monthly Meetings
- Charlotte County Vulnerability Assessment Meetings
- Hardee County FDEP Vulnerability Assessment Steering Committee Meetings
- North Port Vulnerability Assessment Steering Committee Meetings
- Myakka River Management Coordinating Council
- SFWMD Water Resources Forum

- CHNEP/City of Punta Gorda Tiki Point Project Meeting
- Yucca Pens/Designing Wetland Habitat Enhancement and Flooding Improvements for Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Stakeholder Meeting
- Regional Ambient Monitoring Program (RAMP) Meeting
- Lehigh Acres “LA MSID” Watershed 2024 Biennial Meeting
- Babcock-Webb SWIA/Bond Farm/Yucca Pens Project Site Visit
- ANEP External Affairs Committee Meetings
- All Clams on Deck Advisory Panel
- SFWMD Joint Working Group/Science Coordination Group Meeting
- Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative (CHFI) Quarterly Meetings
- Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network Data Management and Water Quality Trends Meetings
- Myakka Headwaters Preserve Restoration Project Site Visit
- SEC Seagrass Meeting
- Babcock Webb Wildlife Management Area Management Advisory Group Meeting
- CHNEP/Mote Meeting to Discuss Beach Conditions Reporting System
- EPA National Estuary Program OAH Monitoring Meeting
- SWERT (Southwest Florida Estuarine Restoration Team) Meeting
- GOMA Data & Monitoring All Teams
- USEPA Future Flood Vulnerability Analysis Project Kick-off Meeting
- Everglades Coalition Conference
- AWRA 33rd Annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference
- One Charlotte One Water Workshop
- Science and Environmental Council EcoSummit & Green Living Expo
- Gulf of Mexico Conference
- Southwest Florida Climate Summit
- Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) Community Conversations on Coastal Heritage at Risk Meeting
- League of Environmental Educators in Florida (LEEF) Spring Conference
- NEP EJ Community of Practice (CoP) Meetings
- Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) Meetings
- Charlotte County Water Quality Dashboard Meetings

CHNEP staff presentations

- Plenary Panelist at the 2024 EcoSummit (hosted by the Science and Environmental Council in Sarasota) on the [Recharging Nature with Estuary Restoration](#) panel along with other Florida Gulf Coast National Estuary Program Directors.
- Session proposer/host at Gulf of Mexico Conference (GOMCON) with Auburn University. Session Title: *Advancing coastal resiliency through watershed planning and hydrological restoration.*
- Presented on hydrological restoration planning initiatives in the CHNEP: *Moving Water to Restore Rivers, Wetlands and Estuaries* at Gulf of Mexico Conference.
- Presented on updates to the CHNEP Water Atlas in *CHNEP Water Atlas: An Interactive Estuaries Report Card* presentation at the 2024 AWRA Geospatial Water Technology Conference.
- Presented Presentation on *CHNEP Water Atlas: An Interactive Habitat & Estuaries Report Card* at the Coastal Habitat Integrated Monitoring and Mapping Program Workshop.

- Poster presentation on *CHNEP Habitat Restoration Needs Plan* at the Coastal Habitat Integrated Monitoring and Mapping Program Workshop.
- Submitted abstracts for Restore America's Estuaries Conference 2025.

Publications and Outreach Initiatives

- Hosted and organized the [2024 Southwest Florida Climate Summit](#) in Punta Gorda. Approximately 200+ attendees each day, including members of the public, scientists, experts from industry, academia, and government with information and ideas on building increased resiliency in Central and Southwest Florida. Created and facilitated interactive question and answer sessions after each panel for audience to interact with the presenters. Advertised through NGOs, WGPU radio ads, and other partners leading up to the event. Sent out personalized invitations to all city and county councils/commissions and managers/administrators, as well as federal and state senators and representatives.
- Prepared a link and hard copy packet of [CHNEP science communication/education tools](#) and resources that were sent to each CAC member to assist their community environmental education and outreach efforts.
- Attended [Water, Wings & Wild Things Festival](#) at Circle B Bar Preserve in Polk County. [Engaged attendees with fish habitats educational activity](#) this included over 200 students from schools throughout the county. Handed out Nature Calendars and Kids Activity Books to chaperones.
- Provided environmental education materials (2024 calendars, Kids Activity Books, Climate Summit flyers, etc.) for partner events including LAMSID Wings Over Water Festival and the Cape Coral Waterways Festival in Lee County, as well as Lemon Bay Conservancy Open House and City of North Port Public Works Road-E-O in Sarasota County.
- Held exhibitor booths at the One Charlotte One Water Workshop, Annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference, and the Everglades Coalition Conference. Distributed calendars, fact sheets, CCMP brochures, upcoming volunteer event information, and 2024 Southwest Florida Climate Summit. Also assisted Charlotte County in gathering stakeholder feedback related to water quality via surveys at the One Charlotte One Water Workshop and provided environmental education materials to the public and policymakers present.
- Attended the [Highlands Hammocks Civilian Conservation Corps Festival](#). Over 300 people visited CHNEP booth, which included a bird trivia wheel, Backyard Bird Week information, Kid's scratch off ocean crafts, and general education materials.
- Attended the [Myakka Headwaters Preserve Tree Planting](#). This volunteer event was co-hosted with the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast and Sarasota Bay Estuary Program. Volunteers planted over 600 tree saplings in two hours.
- Attended the [Swamp Cabbage Festival](#) in LaBelle, FL. Over 60 people came to CHNEP booth, where children played a fish habitats game and educational materials about CHNEP and calendars, CCMP brochures, and Kids Activity Books were distributed.
- Updated the 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.
- Attended the Chalo Nitka Festival in Moore Haven, FL. Over 40 people came to the CHNEP booth, where children played a fish habitats game and learned how to measure popular game

fish. Educational materials were distributed including Kids Activity Books, calendars, and CCMP brochures.

- Celebrated and recognized #IHeartEstuaries month in February with a series of posts on Facebook and Instagram highlighting estuaries and projects in CHNEP area.
- Attended the Hardee County Schools Field Trip to Charlotte Harbor with CHNEP CAC Member Kayton Nedza, who manages the Hardee County Water Resources Education Program. CHNEP staff assisted in providing hands-on environmental and water resources education to 50 fourth grade students. Additionally, provided 50 copies of CHNEP *Kid's Activity Book* to Hardee County Water Resources Education Program.

Outreach analytics

- 6,041 subscribers for CHNEP educational mailings
- 2,513 unique visitors and 6,585 page views of CHNEP website since start of 2024
- 43 new Instagram followers this year for a total of 576 followers
- 1,943 Facebook followers
- 9,660 YouTube Views/62 Subscribers/297 Videos

Media/Press

- [Experts: Flooding puts flat Florida at risk / Charlotte Sun Newspaper](#)
- [Experts will gather in Punta Gorda next week to present the latest climate science and the public is invited to attend | WGPU PBS & NPR for Southwest Florida](#)

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

7. IRON: A LIMITING NUTRIENT FOR BENTHIC MACROALGAE IN FLORIDA SPRINGS?

CHNEP TAC members have expressed interest in continued investigations on the proliferation of filamentous macroalgae in places like Lemon Bay. This presentation on macroalgae drivers in the springs area is being provided by Spring Scientists in the SWFWMD SWIM Program to provide further context to discussions on macroalgae drivers.

Rainbow River is a spring-fed river designated as a Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) priority water body. As such, a SWIM plan was developed and adopted (see SWFWMD 2015), which covers priority issues, management actions, and quantifiable objectives. The quantifiable objectives list targets for invasive aquatic vegetation, which includes filamentous algae. A previous assessment of Rainbow River by the University of Florida in 2017 sought to characterize how nutrients impacted the submerged aquatic vegetation in the river. Historically, nitrates were considered the eutrophication source, but a 2017 study indicated that iron may play a role in filamentous algae growth. The objective of the project was to investigate if there was in fact a correlation between iron concentrations and filamentous algae. Algae needs iron more than other plant species, therefore increased iron levels in the water may give algae a competitive advantage. A follow-up study the "Iron Project" also investigated iron concentrations in the water column and porewater as related coverage of benthic algae, porewater iron emerged as a driver, noting that areas with more clay and pockets of exposed limestone could be the sources of porewater iron.

This topic will be presented by Dr. Madison Trowbridge Springs Scientist for the Surface Water Improvement & Management (SWIM) Program from the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

8. OVERVIEW OF THE CHNEP COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (CCMP) 5-YEAR UPDATE

The USEPA recognizes that National Estuary Program (NEP) Comprehensive Conservation Management Plans (CCMP) are critical components of their model of adaptive management as it facilitates a continual process of integrating new data and results. CCMPs are living documents and as such should be re-examined and updated on a regular basis. EPA requires each NEP to review their CCMP every 5 years to determine if updating or revision is needed. The CHNEP recently undertook a major revision of its CCMP in 2019 with the expansion of its program area and name change, which was approved by the Management Conference Committees and the EPA. Therefore, it was determined that only an update would be needed at this time.

The discussion at this meeting will be focused on gathering committee member input on the update made on behalf of their respective organization. The CCMP should capture the latest science as well as the consensus on the direction of the Partnership's collective work to further water quality and habitat goals for the region. It guides how the NEP can provide programmatic or funding support to assist partner research, restoration and public engagement efforts outlined therein.

CHNEP staff have read through the full CCMP to provide initial comments based on research shared by members of the Partnership and discussions held at recent Management Conference meetings, major comments are highlighted. In preparation for the meeting, Committee members are asked to review the 2019 CCMP and staff comments and help identify other items not currently captured. This could include new and emerging research or issues that the Partnership is working on, inaccuracies or old projects and initiatives that have since been retired, as well as any adjustments that need to be made to an 'Activity' identified for implementing the four CHNEP CCMP 'Action Plans'. After comments are gathered at the Spring Management Conference meetings (held in April and May) staff will procure a contractor to make the agreed upon updates to the CCMP. This revised draft will be brought back for review and final comment on how issues were addressed at the Fall Management Conference meetings (held in August and September). The finalized CCMP will be sent to USEPA for final approval in 2025, with new copies provided to Committee members and partners afterward.

This overview will be given by CHNEP Executive Director Jennifer Hecker.

Attachments: CHNEP 2019 CCMP (Word Version)
CHNEP 2019 CCMP Update Staff Comments Document

9. ACTION PLAN 1 UPDATE: WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

This item will be focused on gathering committee input on the CHNEP CCMP Water Quality Improvement Section. CHNEP staff will give an overview on this section of the CCMP and share current recommendations for changes to the narrative or activities. Afterward, there is time set aside to for facilitated discussion to gather committee comments and consensus on those items.

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

VISION: Waters that meet their designated human uses for drinking, shellfish harvesting, or swimming and fishing, while supporting appropriate and healthy aquatic life.

GOAL: Water quality improvement.

OBJECTIVE: Meet or exceed water quality standards for designated uses of natural waterbodies and waterways with no degradation of Outstanding Florida Waters.

STRATEGY: Support comprehensive and coordinated water quality monitoring programs, and projects and programs that reduce pollutants entering waterways.

CHNEP Director of Research & Restoration Nicole Iadevaia will be facilitating this discussion.

10. ACTION PLAN 2 UPDATE: HYDROLOGICAL RESTORATION

This item will be focused on gathering committee input on the CHNEP CCMP Hydrological Restoration Section. CHNEP staff will give an overview on this section of the CCMP and share current recommendations for changes to the narrative or activities. Afterward, there is time set aside to for facilitated discussion to gather committee comments and consensus on those items.

HYDROLOGICAL RESTORATION ACTION PLAN

VISION: Appropriate freshwater flow across the landscape to sustain healthy wetlands, rivers, and estuaries.

GOAL: Enhanced and improved waterbodies with more natural hydrologic conditions.

OBJECTIVE: Adequate aquifer recharge and freshwater volume and timing of flow to support healthy natural systems, meet water quality criteria, and protect the designated use.

STRATEGY: Support data-driven watershed planning and hydrologic restoration projects to protect and restore natural flow regimes and provide sufficient fresh surface water and groundwater to natural systems.

CHNEP Executive Director Jennifer Hecker will be facilitating this discussion.

11. ACTION PLAN 3 UPDATE: FISH WILDLIFE AND HABITAT PROTECTION

This item will be focused on gathering committee input on the CHNEP CCMP Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Section. CHNEP staff will give an overview on this section of the CCMP and share current recommendations for changes to the narrative or activities. Afterward, there is time set aside to for facilitated discussion to gather committee comments and consensus on those items.

FISH, WILDLIFE, and HABITAT PROTECTION ACTION PLAN

VISION: A diverse environment of interconnected, healthy habitats that support natural processes and viable, resilient native plant and animal communities.

GOAL: Natural habitat protection and restoration.

OBJECTIVE: Permanently acquire, connect, protect, restore, and manage natural terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

STRATEGY: Promote and facilitate permanent acquisition and effective protection and management of critical natural habitats including wildlife dispersal areas, movement and habitat migration corridors, wetlands, flowways, and environmentally sensitive lands and estuarine habitats.

CHNEP Director of Research & Restoration Nicole Iadevaia will be facilitating this discussion.

12. ACTION PLAN 4 UPDATE: CCMP PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This item will be focused on gathering committee input on the CHNEP CCMP Public Engagement Section. CHNEP staff will give an overview on this section of the CCMP and share current recommendations for changes to the narrative or activities. Afterward, there is time set aside to for facilitated discussion to gather committee comments and consensus on those items.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

VISION: An informed, engaged public making choices and taking actions that increase protection and restoration of estuaries and watersheds.

GOAL: Public education and engagement.

OBJECTIVE: Increase the proportion of the population that supports and participates in actions to protect and restore estuaries and watersheds.

STRATEGY: Promote environmental awareness, understanding, and stewardship to the general public, new target audiences, and policymakers; and strengthen non-profit partner collaboration in education and engagement programs.

CHNEP Executive Director Jennifer Hecker will be facilitating this discussion.

13. CHNEP TECHNICAL PROJECTS UPDATES

In addition to the items featured earlier on the agenda, other research and/or restoration projects (or phases of projects) recently completed or currently underway with CHNEP FY21-24 funds. A brief overview will be given on project progress since the previous TAC 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. TAC MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Each member will have time to update the Committee on research or restoration currently underway or recently completed to protect and restore natural resources in the CHNEP area. This time also serves as an opportunity for members to make announcements or discuss other topics of interest to the Committee members.

TAC Co-Chair Mark Walton will be leading and 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 TAC Meetings dates: 8/8/24 & 12/5/24.

If you have ideas of new research and restoration topics and/or presenters (including those outside the CHNEP area if applicable to CHNEP CCMP efforts), please email CHNEP Director of Research & Restoration Nicole Iadevaia at niadevaia@chnep.org.

16. ADJOURN