



CHNEP Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 23rd, 2025 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

AGENDA

This is a virtual meeting ONLY, Microsoft Teams meeting link below:

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Meeting ID: 295 712 973 742 4

Passcode: yW6ZB7zA

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1. Call to Order, Meeting Instructions, and Introductions — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
2. Agenda Additions or Deletions — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
4. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) December 18th, 2024 Meeting Minutes — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
5. Citizen's Advisory Committee Co-Chair Election — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
 - Nomination Form: <https://forms.gle/Xxx9P1bWcG19p9mNA>
6. CHNEP Update — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
7. Community Science Application: Citizen's Pond Survey — Madeline Aadnes and Dr. Ernesto Lasso de la Vega, Lee County Hyacinth Control District
8. CHNEP Water Atlas 2.0 Primer — Sarina Weiss, CHNEP
9. CHNEP Technical Projects and New Tools — Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
10. CAC Updates & Roundtable Discussion on Topics of Interest: Science Communication Engagement — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
11. General Public Comment — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
12. Future Meetings: Topics, Location and Date — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair

Please Save the Date for Upcoming CHNEP CAC 2025 Meetings:

 - August 20th, 2025 (In-Person) CAC WORKSHOP at Centennial Park in Port Charlotte
 - December 17th, 2025 (In-Person) CAC MEETING & FIELD TRIP at Centennial Park in Port Charlotte
13. Adjourn

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

After CAC Co-Chair calls the 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. **CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Recommendation: Approval of the minutes from previous meeting.

Attachment: Draft December 18th, 2024 CAC Meeting Minutes.

5. **CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) CO-CHAIR ELECTION**

CAC 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. CAC members can nominate themselves or another CAC 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 Tuesday, April 22nd at:*
<https://forms.gle/Xxx9P1bWcG19p9mNA>

CAC Co-Chairs alternate chairing of CAC meetings, as well as alternate attendance of Management Committee meetings to brief them on CAC comments on items before them for discussion. The CAC 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 CAC Co-Chairs in their role.

CAC Co-Chair Harry Phillips 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 both the Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (12/5), Citizens Advisory Committee meeting (12/18), Management Committee meeting (1/10), and Policy Committee meeting (1/23) including lining up presenters, drafting agenda packet, updating Committee webpage, creating PowerPoints, drafting minutes, etc.
- Sent on-boarding materials to two new Technical Advisory Committee members, John C. Morgan, an Environmental Supervisor for Sarasota County, and Mollie Holland, an Environmental and Community Resiliency Coordinator representing Charlotte County. Additionally, sent on-boarding materials to three new Citizens Advisory Committee members, Brooke Langston representing Manatee County, Cheryl Cook representing

Sarasota County, and Zachary Franco representing Highlands County who were approved at the January Policy Committee Meeting.

- Sent on-boarding materials to new Management Committee member, Brandon Moody – Water Quality Manager representing Charlotte County. Additionally, sent on-boarding materials to seven new Policy Committee members, Commissioner Tim Wells, representing Hardee County, and Councilmember Jeannine Polk, representing the City of Punta Gorda, Becky Allenbach, representing the U.S. EPA and serving as the new Policy Committee Co-Chair, Commissioner Brian Hamman, representing Lee County, Commissioner Carol Ann Felts, representing Manatee County, Councilmember Joe Kilraine, representing the City of Cape Coral, and Commissioner Phil Stokes, representing the City of North Port. This included creating a new 2025 Policy Committee Briefing Book that is sent to provide orientation information to new Policy Committee members.
- Began drafting the CHNEP 2025 Program Evaluation and planning the May site visit.
- CHNEP held discussions at the Management and Policy Committee Meetings review information on partner responses, problems encountered, and lessons learned during Hurricanes Helene and Milton recovery. At their respective meetings, CHNEP Management and Policy Committees spoke with Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) team who were in attendance (this group included representatives from multiple federal agency staff posted in Southwest Florida to surveyed areas that were heavily impacted by 2024 Hurricanes and provide informational resources). Members of the committees gave feedback on resources needed to aid recovery time and had several questions for the IRC team. These questions were compiled by CHNEP staff and sent to the IRC in February so they can provide follow up responses which will be shared with CHNEP Management Conference members.
- Updated all federal, state, county and city contact lists to reflect current elected leaders in CHNEP area, as well as their relevant staff. Began to contact federal legislative offices to obtain Programmatic Appropriations Forms to submit those available for FY26 federal funding.
- Co-hosted and facilitated the Southwest Florida Federal Interagency Resource Exchange (FIRE) and Economic Recovery Workshop listening session with the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, which included creating agenda and PowerPoints, coordinating with federal representatives and inviting officials from the Partnership members. Afterward, videos from the listening session and notes summarizing the discussion were made available on the Hurricanes Milton and Helene recovery resources webpage on the CHNEP website: <https://www.chnep.org/hurricanes-milton-and-helene>.
- Drafted and sent a letter to new CHNEP member organization LeHigh Acres Municipal Services Improvement District (LAMSID) regarding their approval to joint CHNEP Management Conference at January Policy Committee Meeting and requesting which committees they would like to participate in.
- Drafted and sent a Letter of Support for Federal Designation of the Myakka Wild and Scenic River to the US National Park Service and Congressmen Buchanan and Steube's office following approval at the January Policy Committee Meeting.
- Sent out Spring budget reminder letters to all CHNEP partners (counties and cities) to ensure consideration of respective dues' amount in their respective FY26 budgets.

- Contacted federal legislative offices to obtain Programmatic Appropriations Forms, submitting those available for FY26 federal finding,
- Secured all 2026 meeting dates and venues and updated the website to reflect that information.

Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) Update

- Received initial CCMP layout for review.
- Received, reviewed and processed consultant invoice for finalization of CCMP Update and presentation to Management Conference.
- Completed final review for copy edits to word doc, edited with new preferred terminology and added reference to 2024 storm season impacts where appropriate in text and figure captions.
- Held meeting with Consultant regarding the layout/design of 2025 CHNEP CCMP.
- Sent meeting notes and other items needed for CCMP layout including updated states for selected figures, updated GIS for selected map figures, photos from 2024 storm season, new cover photo, list of priority projects for photo selection in layout, and the original comments spreadsheet (highlighting specific photos and figures identified for updating or removal at start of project).

Finance and Grants Management

- Processed and tracked annual contribution checks that have been received thus far.
- Ensured donation files are up-to-date and sent out acknowledgement letters for donors' tax records.
- Updated the [funding opportunities fact sheet](#) and sent out historic funding opportunities notification to all CHNEP Committees about a number of special large state and federal funding opportunities of interest.
- Processed sponsorship checks for the Annual Southwest Florida Resources Conference and the Cape Coral Burrowing Owl Festival.
- Drafted spreadsheet of revised codes for CHNEP accounts and projects to be entered into administrative hosts new financial software. This was sent to fiscal staff for review and approval.
- Successfully obtained commitment for \$5,000 sponsorship of upcoming CHNEP 2025 SW FL Resiliency Summit from the Volo Foundation.
- In response to EPA request, CHNEP worked with administrative host to provide response and additional documentation for the EPA BIL FY25 application. Approval of materials and EPA notice of EPA BIL FY25 grant award received.
- Received reimbursement from Southwest Florida Water Management District for staff support expenses incurred in FY24 in the amount of \$56,000.
- Submitted annual dues for continued membership in the Association of National Estuary Programs.
- Received, reviewed and processed project invoices for payment: Upper and Lower CCHMN Water Quality Sampling, CCMP Update, 2025 Nature Calendar printing mailing shipping and delivery.
- Prepared and submitted reimbursement request for the FY24 Upper CCHMN Water Quality Sampling Project to the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

- Processed a Change Order to the USF/ Water Atlas agreement for \$875. Additional budget is needed to cover the costs of programming the acquisition and display of the daily Chlorophyll-a layer on the Water Atlas maps.
- Held FY24 Close Out Finance Meeting with County grants staff.
- Finalized FY24 and FY25 Match Documentation for EPA 320 grants to keep on file.
- Drafted alternate FY25 work plans and budgets to address potential BIL funding changes and held meetings with County fiscal and grants staff to discuss federal funding pause and planning.
- Created preliminary list of Potential CHNEP/County Budget Adjustments & Project Account Strings needed and sent to County grants staff.
- Processed all private donations through checks and PayPal and updated the FY25 tracking spreadsheet as needed.
- Received FY25 grant agreements with Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Southwest Florida Water Management District, which were approved by Charlotte County and fully executed.
- Processed quarter 1 invoice for USF Water Atlas Project. Received the executed change order for purchase order for additional work associated with updating interactive map layers.
- Processed invoice from Lee County Environmental lab for post-storm event sample analysis.
- Submitted quarter 1 report and deliverables for the Upper CCHMN water quality monitoring project to the Southwest Florida Water Management District.
- Assisted in filling out a State Legislative Appropriations Request together with the other Gulf National Estuary Programs, which was filed (#2880) in both the House and Senate. Drafted and received three Letters of Support for the cities of Arcadia and Sanibel, as well as Strickland Ranch. Sent out email with information about it to the CHNEP Policy Committee and City/County Lists, as well as emails to each CHNEP legislative legislator on key committees where the request will be heard. Finally, presented the request at the Charlotte County Legislative Delegation meeting (2/28).

CHNEP staff participated in the following meetings:

- ANEP External Affairs Meetings (multiple)
- Hardee County-CHNEP Coordination Meeting (multiple)
- DeSoto County-CHNEP Coordination Meeting (multiple)
- Highlands County-CHNEP Coordination Meeting (multiple)
- Polk County-CHNEP Coordination Meeting (multiple)
- Charlotte County Vulnerability Assessment Monthly Meetings (multiple)
- Charlotte County Vulnerability Assessment Stakeholder Meetings (multiple)
- Southwest Florida Federal IRC Listening Session Meetings (multiple)
- CHNEP Water Atlas Monthly Meetings (multiple)
- Nutrients & Red Tide Symposium Committee Meetings (multiple)
- GOAA and Gulf Estuaries Collaboration Meetings (multiple)
- One Water One Commission Monthly Meetings (multiple)
- Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Program (RAMP) Meetings (multiple)
- Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative Quarterly Meetings (multiple)

- GOAA Data & Monitoring Quarterly Meeting (12/9)
- Tampa Bay Estuary Program Open Science Subcommittee Meeting (12/10)
- Myakka River Management Coordinating Council Meeting (12/13)
- University of Florida Water Quality Post Hurricane Report Meeting (12/16)
- Lemon Bay Nutrient Management Planning (12/17)
- CHNEP Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting (12/18)
- CHNEP Water Atlas Header Redesign Working Group (1/7)
- CHNEP & Sarasota County Resiliency Project Meeting (1/7)
- DeSoto County Underserved Community Meeting (1/7)
- Florida Economic RSF with Economic Recovery Partners Meeting (1/8)
- Hardee County Workshop AAAs & Underserved Communities Meeting (1/9)
- CHNEP Management Committee Meeting (1/10)
- Peace River Study Planning Meeting (1/13)
- SWFWMD Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting (1/14)
- CHNEP & Lee County Vulnerability Assessment Meeting (1/14)
- Vulnerability Assessment Risk/Sensitivity Methodology Meeting (1/14)
- Charlotte County Resiliency Working Group Kick-Off Meeting (1/15)
- Heal Our Harbor Ambassadors Training (1/22)
- CHNEP Policy Committee Meeting (1/23)
- CHNEP Water Atlas Automation of Master List Discussion Meeting (1/24)
- 34th Annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference (1/24)
- ANEP Communications Working Group Meeting (1/28)
- Lee County Parks Volunteer Association (1/29)
- Central Florida Federal Interagency Resource Exchange (FIRE) and Economic Recovery Workshop (1/30)
- Red Tide Mitigation & Technology Development Initiative Workshop (1/30-31)
- Everglades Coalition Conference (1/30-31)
- SEC Meeting (2/5)
- Central Florida Regional Planning Council Meeting (2/12)
- CHNEP CCMP Contractor Layout Meeting (2/13)
- Southwest Florida RPC Meeting (2/20)
- NOAA RESTORE Coastal Sportfish Ponds Team Meeting and Site Visit (2/24-2/25)
- Charlotte Board of County Commissioners Meeting (2/25)
- CHNEP Water Atlas Header Redesign Discussion Meeting (2/26)
- CHNEP Water Atlas Partners Meeting (2/27)
- Resilient Manatee Community Workshop Meeting (2/27)
- Charlotte County Legislative Delegation Meeting (2/28)
- Charlotte Harbor & Lemon Bay Seagrass Mapping Results Discussion Meeting (3/6)
- City of Punta Gorda Council Workshop Meeting (3/11)
- Southwest Florida Eco-Alliance Steering Team Meeting (3/12)
- Hardee County Vulnerability Assessment Steering Committee Meeting (3/13)
- Water Quality Playbook Update Meeting (3/14)
- Highlands County Vulnerability Assessment Steering Committee Meeting (3/21)
- Charlotte Harbor Algae Working Group Meeting (3/25)

- 2025 EPA-NEP Workshop Meeting (3/26)
- Southwest Florida Seagrass Working Group Meeting (3/26)

CHNEP Staff Presentations

- Prepared presentation for and presented “[Resiliency Lessons](#)” at the *Nature-Based Solutions Symposium* hosted by Conservancy of Southwest Florida - covering key takeaways from existing projects and pathways for moving forward with resiliency planning and projects.
- Presentation on CHNEP and *Landscape Scale Planning and Restoration* to Heal Our Harbor as a part of their annual Ambassador Training Program.
- Presentation on CHNEP and *Habitat Protection & Restoration* to Lee County Friends of Manatee Park volunteer association.
- Panelist presentation in the *Hurricane Recovery* session of the 34th Annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference.
- Presentation on CHNEP to [Central Florida Regional Planning Council](#).
- Gave opening remarks and facilitated session on [Fisheries & Agriculture](#) at Southwest Florida Federal Interagency Resource Exchange (FIRE) and Economic Recovery Workshop listening session.
- Presentation on [Nitrogen Contributions to Red Tide](#) journal article to the County Coalition for Responsible Management of Lake Okeechobee, the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries, and Lake Worth Lagoon.
- Provided an update on CHNEP and partner projects related to the Peace River Watershed and bird conservation to the [Peace River Audubon Society](#).

Publications and Outreach Initiatives

- Sent out monthly Constant Contact emails to subscribers about relevant upcoming public engagement events in the CHNEP area.
- Continued making functional improvements to the CHNEP website including streamlining document uploading processes, adding to staff guidance document, and integrating an ArcGIS [home page map](#) in both mobile and desktop view. Also continued making website improvements that include: 1) Matching font style and size for Headers, Sub Headers and Body throughout- replacing selected font styles on non-matching pages with the brand tool kit font, 2) Making all Body Text Boxes the same width as home page, 3) On ‘News’ page, adding related photos from CHNEP drive to add interest, 4) Updating formatting on buttons, and 4) Checking formatting spacing and all edits on both desktop and mobile views.
- Provided photos of CHNEP projects for the 2023 NEP Accomplishments Report.
- Awarded two Conservation Grants for the FY25 winter cycle for the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council Website and the Lee County Hyacinth Control District Pond Watch Survey Tool.
- Created and published a new [Resources & Publications page](#) that is more intuitively organized for visitors and easier for staff to keep updated.
- Created an updated [Legislative Priorities page](#) for partners and citizens to access.

- Updated the [Community Resiliency page](#) to include details on CHNEP-funded components of Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessments in each of the ten service counties with relevant fact sheets.
- Attended the [Water, Wings, and Wild Things Kids Festival](#) at Circle B Bar Reserve in Polk County. Over 160 second graders (plus chaperones) visited the CHNEP booth to learn about unique Florida wildlife and how to care for the environment. Kids Activity Books and Nature Calendars were distributed to participants.
- Completed deliveries and shipments of the [2025 Nature Calendar](#) to partners through coordination with contractor. Received back-up documentation for shipping and deliveries, reviewed, held call with vendor, and processed all invoices and check requests for reimbursement to close out this project.
- Compiled notes for improving procurement and design of the 2026 Nature Calendar.
- Provided calendars, brochures, and Kids Activity Books to LA-MSID for the annual [Wings Over Water Festival](#).
- Created a NEP informational handout highlighting national assets (like national parks, airports, and principal ports) that the National Estuary Program helps to protect, for federal policymaker education.
- Displayed and distributed informational materials at the [SWFL Federal IRC Listening Session](#) for the 2024 Hurricane Season co-hosted by CHNEP.
- Attended the [Burrowing Owl Festival](#) in Cape Coral, where CHNEP manned a booth to share information with 478 visitors. Calendars and other printed educational materials were distributed, and visitors were encouraged to participate in an educational nature-based trivia game.
- Continued to foster engagement with our work through social media campaigns and the sharing of events such as for [I Heart Estuaries week](#), the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#), and [Valentine's Day](#).
- Shared collective [2024 achievements](#) from Florida's Gulf Coast NEP organizations on social media in a series of graphics.
- Attended the annual [Chalo Nitka Festival](#) in Moore Haven to host activities for visitors and distribute free resources.
- Attended the [Citizen Summit](#) in Punta Gorda to speak with attendees about CHNEP's work and share free resources.
- Shared information about [World Seagrass Day](#) and [World Water Day](#) via social media.

Outreach Metrics

- 5,845 subscribers for CHNEP educational mailings
- 2,048 unique visitors and 2,727 page views of CHNEP website since last cycle
- 0 new Instagram followers for a total of 618
- 22 new Facebook followers for a total of 2,018
- YouTube: 13,266 Views (+1.2k), 88 Subscribers (+10), 325 Videos (+18)

Media/Press

- [Burrowing Owl fest provides fun, advocacy](#)
- ["They're just trying to live"](#)
- [Nature-based solutions help address Florida's climate challenges](#)

- [Five Reasons for Southwest Florida to Consider Nature-Based Solutions](#)
- [Hurricane Threats: Is there a plan to keep region safer?](#)

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

Attachments: [State and Federal Funding Opportunities Fact Sheet](#)
[2019-2025 CHNEP Program Evaluation Report](#)

7. COMMUNITY SCIENCE APPLICATION: CITIZEN’S POND SURVEY

The Lee County Hyacinth Control District Pond Watch program was created in 1993 to educate, guide and help citizens of Lee County in the management of storm water ponds. When volunteers are out in the field collecting data on pond conditions, it can be difficult to accurately document observations on paper. To better support their volunteers and enhance data collection, Lee County Hyacinth Control District came up with a project to adapt a prototype for their broader volunteer base.

Their goal was to refine and distribute this survey tool to all Pond Watch volunteers and other storm water monitoring organizations in different counties, allowing the collection of data that can help other citizen science water quality programs. This revised survey tool will enable the immediate recording of temperature, aquatic plant cover, littoral shelf, and other water quality indicators, in addition to photos of the condition of the ponds. By transitioning from paper-based data collection to a digital format the tool will streamline data management and improve the assessment of pond health. The presentation will include information on tools that may be helpful for members of the committee interested in engaging in similar work in their communities.

This item will be presented by Madeline Aadnes and Dr. Ernesto Lasso de la Vega from the Lee County Hyacinth Control District.

8. CHNEP WATER ATLAS 2.0 PRIMER

This presentation is a primer and tutorial on the CHNEP Water Atlas, a web-based resource center providing both users a one-stop shop to find everything from water quality, flow, and habitat data to information about local initiatives and projects in Central and Southwest Florida. The site is a readily accessible way to find more information about local waterways with real-time and up-to-date data, interactive maps, graphs, and charts, and easy-to-understand explanations of what the data tells us. CHNEP recently launched the Water Atlas 2.0 that is geared for all audiences and integrated by waterbody, basin, and watershed pages that encompass all publicly accessible data related to water quality, hydrology, wildlife habitat, and climate change. CHNEP staff will walk through tools and topics of interest to CAC members and answer member questions in hopes CAC members utilize and educate others about how to use this fantastic resource.

Sarina Weiss, CHNEP Research & GIS Coordinator, will be presenting this agenda item.

9. CHNEP TECHNICAL PROJECTS & NEW TOOLS UPDATES

This item will be an overview on research and restoration projects recently completed or currently underway with CHNEP FY22-25 funds since the last meeting. New research and tools of interest to the CAC will also be covered.

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/resources>.

Attachments:

[Water Quality Trends in Southwest Florida Summary Fact Sheet](#)

10. CAC UPDATES & ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON TOPICS OF INTEREST

This is a Round-Robin style discussion for CAC members and new applicants to engage on environmental topics as they pertain to counties they represent and to organize on working toward mutual issues of interest. After learning about available CHNEP resources, discussion may center on what can be done through the CAC to advance Water Quality Improvement, Hydrological Restoration, Fish Wildlife & Habitat Protection, and Public Engagement in the region.

Harry Phillips, CAC Co-Chair, will be leading and facilitating this discussion.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

Each participating member of the public is afforded up to 3 minutes total to speak at this point in the meeting.

12. FUTURE MEETING'S TOPICS, LOCATION AND DATE

Please Save the Date for upcoming *in-person CHNEP CAC 2025 Meetings*:

- **August 20th, 2025 CAC WORKSHOP** at Centennial Park in Port Charlotte
This will be an in-person strategic planning workshop for members to discuss ideas for shaping the future of the CHNEP CAC moving forward.
The CAC provides the critical link between the Partnership and the public, initiating input about public concerns and ideas, and as an essential mechanism for sharing program information and resources with key community organizations and individuals. Discussion will focus on format and content for future meetings and how to best provide opportunities for growing capacity of groups/individuals working on conservation, outreach and education throughout the region.
- **December 17th, 2025 CAC MEETING & FIELD TRIP** at TBD Location.
Please note that lunch will be provided and there will be time for members to share updates and network with each other – so we very much appreciate you blocking these dates and planning to attend these upcoming meetings in person. If you have ideas of topics for future agendas, please email them to CHNEP Director of Research & Restoration Nicole Iadevaia at niadevaia@chnep.org.

13. ADJOURN