



CHNEP Management Committee Meeting
Friday September 5th, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Centennial Park Large Multipurpose Room
1120 Centennial Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL 33953

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Introductions — Jamie Wolanin, Co-Chair
2. Agenda Additions or Deletions — Jamie Wolanin, Co-Chair
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items — Jamie Wolanin, Co-Chair
4. Management Committee May 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes — Jamie Wolanin, Co-Chair
5. TAC Report — Mark Walton, TAC Co-Chair
6. CAC Report — Aaron Zimmermann, CAC Co-Chair
7. CHNEP Update — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
8. Amended FY26 Master Work Plan and Budget — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
9. Extreme Rainfall Events on the Rise — Ana Carolina Coelho Maran, Ph.D., South Florida Water Management District
10. Planning to Flood-proof Your Community from Future Flooding — Amy Wicks, Wicks Consulting Group
11. CHNEP Technical Projects Updates — Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
12. Management Committee Member Updates — Jamie Wolanin, Co-Chair
13. Public Comment — Jamie Wolanin, Co-Chair
14. Future Meeting's Topics, Location and Date — Jamie Wolanin, Co-Chair
 - Upcoming Meeting Dates: January 9, 2026, May 8, 2026, and September 4, 2026
15. Adjourn — Jamie Wolanin, Co-Chair

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING LOCATION

[1120 Centennial Blvd, Port Charlotte, FL 33953](#)



Coming from the North:

1. Take I-75 S to Sumter Blvd (exit 182) in North Port.
2. Follow Sumter Blvd for 8 miles to US Hwy 41 S, then Turn left onto US Hwy 41 S
3. Follow US Hwy 41 S for 4 miles to Centennial Blvd., then Turn right onto Centennial Blvd.
4. Follow Centennial Blvd. ½ mile down, turn **LEFT** into Centennial Park/Pool Parking Lot.
5. Check in at Front Desk and they will direct you to the Large Multipurpose Room

Coming from the South:

1. Take I-75 N to Kings Hwy in Charlotte County (exit 170)
2. Use the left 2 lanes to turn left onto Kings Hwy (signs for Port Charlotte/Charlotte Sports Pk)
3. Follow for ½ mile, then Use the right 2 lanes to turn right onto Veterans Blvd.
4. Follow for 7 miles, the Turn right onto US Hwy 41 N
5. Follow for 2 miles, then Turn left onto Centennial Blvd.
6. Follow Centennial Blvd. ½ mile down, turn **LEFT** into Centennial Park/Pool Parking Lot.
7. Check in at Front Desk and they will direct you to the Large Multipurpose Room

In-person attendance is strongly preferred. If you are unable to attend in person or to arrange for an alternate do so, please email Jennifer Hecker at jhecker@chnep.org or call (941) 833-6580.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The CHNEP Management Committee Co-Chair Jamie Wolanin will call the meeting to order and then Management Committee members will introduce themselves, followed by CHNEP staff and any members of the public who are participating.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

If any Management Committee member would like to make an addition or deletion to the agenda, this item is the time to suggest such. Members will be asked to vote to approve the final meeting agenda.

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. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MAY 9, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

If any Management Committee member would like to make a revision or addition to the prior meeting minutes, this item is the time to suggest such. Members will be asked to vote to approve the final prior meeting minutes.

Action: Approval of the minutes from May 9th, 2025 meeting.

Attachment: Draft May 9th, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

5. TAC REPORT

The TAC meeting held on August 7, 2025 was chaired by Mark Walton. The agenda and prior meeting's minutes were approved. The meeting agenda included presentations and discussions on the following topics:

- Arielle Taylor-Manges from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection – Aquatic Preserves presented on the **Charlotte Harbor Algae Working Group Update**. In 2024, a working group was formed in Southwest Florida to address ongoing marine cyanobacteria and macroalgae blooms. They have met multiple times to identify research needs, assess data gaps, and outline immediate, medium, and long-term action plans for management, mitigation, and public outreach. Immediate goals include assessing data availability and analyzing monitoring programs, while medium-term objectives focus on understanding the ecological drivers of blooms and potential nutrient sources. Long-term goals involve characterizing environmental risks and developing policies for nutrient management. The group emphasizes collaboration, ongoing monitoring, and public education to effectively tackle the algae issues in the region. Members commented that they're excited that the Eyes on Seagrass program is expanding into Lee County, focusing on algal monitoring and nutrient hotspots. Members also said that groundwater issues are being investigated, particularly concerning an underground river on Sanibel that contributes to coastal nutrients. Finally, there was discussion that local researchers and comparisons to historical data from Charlotte Harbor may provide more insight into water quality and algae impacts. Future presentations and potential mitigation projects are also being discussed.
- Kevin Kalasz from the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service presented on the **Southwest Florida Estuarine Restoration Team (SWERT)**. The SWERT aims to restore and enhance estuarine habitats across Southwest Florida, involving over 100 members since its inception in 2018. The group focuses on collaboration among researchers and agencies to prioritize and implement restoration projects, addressing coastal marshes, mangroves, oyster reefs, and seagrass. Recent discussions highlighted challenges in securing funding and navigating the permitting process,

exacerbated by staffing shortages in regulatory agencies. To tackle these issues, SWERT plans to form a task force to streamline permitting and improve communication with regulators, ultimately benefiting local restoration efforts and the broader community. Members expressed interest in joining the regulatory task force due to experiences with the permitting process. Members also asked for clarification regarding the roles of SWERT and CHNEP, with Mr. Kalasz explaining that SWERT is a voluntary, non-regulatory organization focused on collaboration among researchers and practitioners in a broader geographic area, while CHNEP concentrates on specific projects within its service area. However, he mentioned both groups share overlapping goals and support each other in identifying priorities, funding opportunities, and initiatives. Members also emphasized the importance of communication and collaboration among all participants to enhance regional efforts under the NEP's framework.

- Brooke Langston of Big Waters Land Trust presented on the **Big Waters Land Trust Strategic Conservation Plan**. Big Waters Land Trust (BWLT) aims to conserve land and water in Southwest Florida, serving multiple counties with a focus on clean water, wildlife habitat, and sustainable agriculture. Over 21 years, BWLT has protected over 20,000 acres and identified nine key areas for future conservation efforts, including Cape Coral and Charlotte Harbor. The organization employs data-driven methods to establish conservation priorities and enhance public access to natural spaces. Current initiatives involve collaboration with various stakeholders to secure unprotected land parcels, with a total of 1,302 identified, valued at approximately \$2.37 billion, and plans for fundraising and community engagement underway. Members asked about carbon sequestration, and Ms. Langston highlighted that large old trees and muck soils, particularly in areas like the Everglades, are significant for capturing carbon. While mangroves also contribute, they are less effective than cypress trees. Members also commented on the importance of land conservation efforts, with CHNEP supporting initiatives like the Peace River Long Leaf Pineland's Project and challenges which include public misconceptions about land conservation's economic impact. Members discussed the need for better communication on the economic benefits of preserved lands and suggested that fully funding payment-in-lieu-of-tax programs could alleviate concerns for rural counties affected by land conservation efforts.
- Jordan Varble and Gabby Santucci from Johnson Engineering presented on the **City of Sanibel Surface Water Management Plan Update**. Sanibel's stormwater management plan has been updated for the first time since 2017, focusing on challenges from major storm events and sea level rise. The city, a low-lying barrier island, aims to preserve its vital freshwater wetlands ecosystem. Hurricane Ian caused significant infrastructure damage, prompting the mapping of over 4,800 culverts for improved flood management, supported by a \$10 million grant. Public education efforts have highlighted the differences between riverine flooding and storm surge. Recent data indicates a decline in plant health post-hurricane, though recovery is underway. Future plans include adjusting roadway elevations and weir operations to better manage flooding risks associated with rising sea levels. Members discussed concerns about rising sea levels and their impact on groundwater and stormwater management in Sanibel. There was also discussion about the variability in water loss rates across different land types with lawns generally retaining less water than wetlands. The conversation also touched on the feasibility of raising roadways to combat flooding and the challenges posed by existing infrastructure. Additionally, plant adaptations to changing temperature and water conditions were discussed, revealing complexities in ecosystem responses to saltwater intrusion and changing climates.
- CHNEP TAC held a **Storm Season Follow-Up Discussion**. Facilitated by TAC Co-Chair Mark Walton, the Committee discussed new storm response resources and continued the discussion on next steps to increase responsiveness and resilience to storms and other environmental disaster events for the future. During the 2022 and 2024 TAC meetings, discussions centered on improving

water quality data collection through enhanced coordination among CHNEP and CCHMN partners. The aim is to establish a communication framework that outlines responsibilities and capacities while standardizing data collection protocols. A public GIS map has been developed, detailing key sampling sites and resources for post-storm monitoring. Members and CHNEP staff discussed focusing on enhancing post-storm water sampling and coordination among various agencies, emphasizing the need for a clear contact list for sampling responsibilities. There was also discussion that even though mobile labs are limited, there is potential for improved local lab capacity, as demonstrated by Manatee County's self-sufficient lab. Members also discussed challenges with timely bacteria analysis, and communication between agencies were highlighted, along with the importance of establishing SOPs and resource sharing. A new survey tool for capturing flood data was introduced, promoting public involvement. Overall, the goal is to streamline processes for effective preparation, response, and data sharing around future storm events.

The TAC heard the CHNEP Program Update and Technical Projects Update presentations and shared updates with each other on their respective counties and communities regarding natural resource-related activities and projects. There were no recommendations formed by the TAC pertaining directly to Management Committee agenda action items this cycle.

This presentation will be given by Mark Walton, TAC Co-Chair.

6. CAC REPORT

The CAC meeting held on August 20, 2025 was chaired by Aaron Zimmermann. The agenda and prior meeting's minutes were approved and then the committee heard the CHNEP Program and Technical Projects update presentations that are also coming before the Management Committee today. The meeting included an interactive workshop to gather CAC member input on the Role of the CAC, CHNEP Outreach Resources, the CAC Bylaws, and the CHNEP Communication and Outreach Strategy Documents. This update includes a summary of the discussion on those topics:

CAC Role: CHNEP staff presented on the role of the CAC as outlined in the CHNEP Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP). Members each had time to share ideas about the external role of the CAC members within their County. Responses highlighted the responsibility to educating their communities about watershed issues and sharing CHNEP resources with community groups and members. Members identified that their role is vitally important to amplifying CHNEP's outreach, serving as a crucial conduit between the local community and CHNEP staff and Partnership members. Members also discussed the internal role of the CAC within the CHNEP. They emphasized that members are responsible to share information and concerns related to environmental resource protection from their respective communities with the Partnership, facilitating a two-way flow of information that supports both CHNEP's objectives and local environmental needs. The feedback is integral to shaping CHNEP's outreach and education initiatives, ensuring that the organization remains responsive to community needs.

CAC Meetings: Members discussed the value they see in attending meetings as well as suggestions for planning and logistics moving forward. When asked what motivated them to be involved and attend meetings, their responses included their desire to learn about watershed issues, network with peers, and contribute to collective environmental solutions. This engagement highlights the recognized importance of collaboration among environmental advocates to maximize impact and foster a shared understanding of regional challenges. Suggestions included: presenting more updates on CHNEP outreach resources to the CAC including a guide of all the resources CHNEP offers, sharing a Water Atlas Bite-Size Tutorial on new Water Atlas features at each CAC meeting, discussing at each meeting ways for CAC members to help organize and plan future in-person meetings in sharing their personal

expertise or bringing in speakers they know, and being assigned ‘homework’ on specific actions to follow up on between CAC meetings to foster engagement.

Review of CAC Bylaws/ CHNEP Communications & Outreach Strategy: Members reviewed staff suggested edits to the CAC Bylaws and CHNEP Communications & Outreach Strategy that would update both documents to bring them into alignment with the approved 2025 CHNEP CCMP. Members agreed to the suggested edits and offered a few other small changes. All the proposed edits will be brought back to the CAC for formal votes to amend the CAC Bylaws and the CHNEP Communications and Outreach Strategy at the December 2025 CAC meeting.

CHNEP Outreach Resources: The final topic discussed at the workshop was CHNEP Outreach Resources. Members were asked about what resources they found most effective as well as ideas for the CAC to implement in the future. CAC input on this topic is important for refining organizational strategies and enhancing community outreach. Resources that were used most frequently by members in the past year included: the Water Atlas, annual Nature Calendar, and annual Summit. Resources that members would like to help promote in the coming year included: sharing CHNEP social media, sharing CHNEP printed materials at events in each County, helping to promote annual Summits and sharing Water Atlas Tutorials with new organizations. By actively engaging stakeholders, the CAC can better fulfill its mission of promoting environmental stewardship and ensuring that local interests are represented in CHNEP initiatives.

Finally, CAC members shared updates with each other on their respective counties and communities regarding natural resource-related activities and projects. There were no recommendations formed by the CAC pertaining directly to Management Committee agenda action items this cycle.

CAC Co-Chair Aaron Zimmermann will be presenting this cycle’s CAC Report.

7. CHNEP UPDATE

The following represents program activity highlights since the beginning of the last Management Conference cycle to the beginning of this one, with the exception of technical project updates that are covered in a separate item later in this agenda.

Program Administration

- Planned and executed both the Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (4/10), Citizens Advisory Committee meeting (4/23), Management Committee meeting (5/9), and Policy Committee meeting (5/22) including lining up presenters, drafting agenda packet, updating Committee webpage, creating PowerPoints, drafting minutes, etc.
- Sent on-boarding materials to three new Policy Committee members, Commissioner Barbara Langdon, representing the City of North Port, Councilmember Lloyd Weed, representing the City of Venice, Councilmember Jeff Hunt, representing the Village of Estero.
- Completed available Programmatic Appropriations Forms for FY26 federal finding and remitted them for consideration.
- Held meeting with new EPA Region 4 representative to CHNEP Felicia Burks.
- Submitted the CHNEP 2025 Program Evaluation Report and supporting documents can be found here: <https://www.chnep.org/2025-program-evaluation>
- Conducted the 2020-2024 CHNEP Program Evaluation May site visits, coordinating with local partners as well as EPA evaluation team members. Sent follow up emails and photos to all attendees.
- Final editing and design of CCMP was completed. It can be viewed online at: https://www.chnep.org/files/ugd/252fd8_a33bc404c3404c1da9b65d00a06ce771.pdf
- Secured all 2026 Management Conference meeting dates and locations with venues.

- Outlook meeting invitations/meeting links for September Policy and Management Committee meetings were sent out. Management and Policy Draft Minutes from last cycle were completed.
- Drafted and sent out CHNEP ED Evaluation Form for Policy Committee member input.

Finance and Grants Management

- 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.
- Did Excel budgeting tables and drafted Word [Draft FY26 Master Work Plan and Budget](#), [Draft FY26 EPA 320 Work Plan and Budget](#), and [Draft FY26 EPA IIJA Work Plan and Budget](#). These were input into host Grant Administrative Approvals (GAA) software for host review and approval to apply.
- Received and processed final CHNEP member FY25 local govt. contribution from the City of Fort Myers, as well as a few private donations from individual citizens.
- Submitted draft FY26 Work Plans to Charlotte County grant approvals system and submitted Legal Service Request for County staff review.
- Processed CHNEP Water Atlas Change Orders #1 and #2 were processed for additional task and work to supplement existing tasks. CHNEP staff also worked with the County to process Change Order #3 to remove \$900 from another Task, reducing work on that and moving to the coming fiscal year. Additionally, processed CHNEP Water Atlas Change Order #3 invoice to remove \$910 from a task, reducing work on that and moving to the coming fiscal year.
- Submitted FY25 FDEP Grant SD016 quarter 2 report and attachments.
- Submitted EPA CE-02D41623-3 Section 320 Midyear Progress Report and attachments.
- Submitted EPA 4T-02D4123-2 IIJA Midyear Progress Report and attachments.
- Submitted Upper CCHMN Quarter 2 report and field data deliverables to Southwest Florida Water Management District.
- Compiled all approved habitat projects submitted to NEPORT in FY24 to produce the FY24 Annual GPRA NEPORT Report and provided to FDEP in grant reports.
- FY26 EPA 320 and IIJA Grant Applications processed for County Approvals and then entered into Grants.gov.
- The Sarasota County/CHNEP ILA received Charlotte County approval and was fully executed. Notification of the approval and hard copies of the agreement were transmitted to Sarasota County.
- Submitted Q3/Final report for programmatic support FDEP grant funding. These were subsequently approved. Working with County grants staff to gather documentation needed to submit final invoice.
- Submitted purchase requisitions and documentation for FY26 annual projects including Lower Charlotte Harbor Water Quality Monitoring and CHNEP Water Atlas Maintenance. Purchase orders were issued to vendors (Lee County and University of South Florida).
- Submitted purchase requisition for printing and mailing of the 2026 CHNEP Nature Calendar.
- Reviewed and processed Conservation Grant invoice for Lee County Pond Watch Project.
- Received draft FY26 Agreement for SWFWMD annual programmatic support funds. Submitted legal service request for County attorney review. Additionally, in response to proposed SWFWMD funding reduction, met with three Governing Board members individually as well as SWFWMD Executive Director, legal counsel and staff. Attended June 24th SWFWMD Governing Board meeting to request maintaining current funding level along with Big Waters Land Trust and Suncoast Waterkeeper (with Audubon, Conservancy of Southwest Florida and

Heal Our Harbor sending letters of support); however, unfortunately the budget was approved with the funding reduction.

- Received and processed invoices for the following projects: Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan Update, Water Atlas quarter 2, Water Atlas FY25 Improvement Tasks, Upper CCHMN quarter 2, Lower CCHMN, Charlotte County Vulnerability Assessment project, Highlands County Adaptation Action Area project.
- Provided Charlotte County grants and finance staff with summary of changes to process for CHNEP grant drawdowns from federal ASAP account as shared by CHNEP's EPA liaison.
- Processed private donations received via check or PayPal.

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)
- Science & Environmental Council (SEC) Meetings (multiple)
- CHNEP Water Atlas Monthly Meetings (multiple)
- Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative Meetings (multiple)
- GOAA and Gulf Estuaries Collaboration Meetings (multiple)
- One Water Commission Monthly Meetings (multiple)
- Southwest Florida Regional Ambient Monitoring Program (RAMP) Meetings (multiple)
- CHNEP/SFWMD 2026 Contract & CCHMN Meetings (multiple)
- CHNEP/Calusa Waterkeeper Water Atlas Coordination Meetings (multiple)
- 2025 Marine Pollution Forum (4/1)
- CHNEP TAC Hurricane Season Talking Points Meeting (4/2)
- Tropicalization of Gulf Coast Habitats Meeting (4/2)
- Charlotte County MPO Consensus Building Workshop Meeting (4/7)
- SFWMD Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting (4/8)
- Caloosahatchee River & Estuary BMAP & Everglades West Coast BMAP Update Meeting (4/8)
- Water Atlas/GOMOD/TAC "Catch Up with Team" Meeting (4/8)
- Southwest Florida Eco-Alliance Steering Team Meeting (4/9)
- CHNEP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting (4/10)
- City of Fort Myers's Participation & Contribution to CHNEP Meeting (4/18)
- Nutrients & Red Tide in Florida State of the Science Symposium (4/21-4/23)
- ANEP Communications Working Group Meeting (4/22)
- CHNEP Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting (4/23)
- Hardee County and City of Wauchula Project Meeting (4/23)
- City of Punta Gorda – CHNEP Tiki Point Discussion Meeting (4/25)
- EBAP Algae Data on CHNEP Water Atlas Discussion Meeting (4/25)
- Water Quality Trends Presentation Preparation Meeting (5/1)
- Gulf of America Alliance [All Hands Conference](#) (5/5-5/8)
- FDEP Quarterly Resilience Forum 2025 (5/7)
- CHNEP Management Committee Meeting (5/9)
- South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force WG/SCG Meeting (5/14)
- CCHMN GAM Water Quality Trends Presentation Meeting (5/15)

- CHNEP & EPA Program Evaluation Site Visits (5/20-5/22)
 - Lower Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Hydrological Restoration Site Visit (5/20)
 - Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network Site Visit (5/20)
 - DeSoto County Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment Site Visit (5/21)
 - Myakka Headwaters Preserve Restoration Project Site Visit (5/21)
 - Everglades to Gulf Coast Conservation Area & Florida Wildlife Corridor Site Visit at Blackbeard's Ranch (5/21)
 - Warm Mineral Springs Restoration Project Site Visit (5/21)
- CHNEP Policy Committee Meeting (5/22)
- SFWMD Resiliency Coordination Forum Meeting (5/28)
- CHNEP – CFRPC Data Review Meeting (5/29)
- Urban Waters Federal Partnership Meeting (5/29)
- Florida Wildlife Corridor Connect 2025 Conference (6/2-6/5)
- CCHMN Project Implementation Meeting 1 (6/3)
- Lemon Bay Watershed Plan Workshop (6/4)
- FLERA Water Resources Committee Meeting (6/5)
- Charlotte BCC Meeting- Approval of Sarasota County ILA (6/10)
- Resiliency Summit Planning Meeting (6/10)
- CAC Member Outreach Meeting (6/12)
- CHNEP – SFWMD Flood Survey Tool Meeting (6/12)
- Bivalve Seagrass Restoration Consortium Project Update Meeting (6/13)
- NOAA Disaster Preparedness Program – CHNEP Meeting (6/13)
- CHNEP – FWC Meeting (6/12)
- Florida Floodplain Conference Planning Meeting (6/16)
- SWFRPC Council Meeting (6/19)
- CHNEP – Finance Grant Invoicing Meeting (6/19)
- Florida Floodplain Managers Association Annual Conference (6/24)
- Calusa Waterkeeper Rangers Water Atlas Training (6/26)

CHNEP Staff Presentations

- Presented on the *CHNEP Water Atlas 2.0* to the CHNEP Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting.
- Presented *The Health of Our Waters & Water Quality Trends* at the Barrier Island Parks Society Marine Pollution Forum.
- Presented on the *Lower Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Hydrological Restoration* during the EPA program Evaluations Site Visit.
- Presented on the *Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network* during the EPA program Evaluations Site Visit.
- Submitted an abstract for [Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation \(CERF\) Biennial \(National\) Conference](#) *Leveraging conventional partnerships with novel tools for holistic water quality and ecosystem management*, which has been accepted. Co-authored additional abstracts submitted: *Leveraging Long-term Water Quality Data and Partnerships for Assessment of the Greater Charlotte Harbor System* and *More than just monitoring: a co-production story to conserve sport fish habitat in Southwest Florida*.
- Presented *A Regional Approach to Restore and Manage Water* to talk about alignment between the work of the NEPs on natural resources and flood management in the built environment at the [Annual Florida Floodplain Managers Association 2025 Annual Conference](#).

- Provided [CHNEP Water Atlas training](#) to the Calusa Waterkeeper Rangers in-person and online. The training session included an in-depth overview of the data and analyses available on waterbody pages and interactive maps, as well as step-by-step instructions on how to download data from the Atlas. This also included the creation of videos that can now be accessed on the CHNEP YouTube channel under the [CHNEP Water Atlas Tutorials Playlist](#).

Publications and Outreach Initiatives

- Sent out monthly Constant Contact emails to subscribers about relevant upcoming public engagement events in the CHNEP area.
- Shared new 2025 Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan on [website](#) and [social media](#).
- Shared posts for National Wildlife Week on CHNEP Facebook and Instagram showcasing Southwest Florida wildlife through local photography.
- Attended the [Englewood Earth Day Festival](#), discussing how to protect natural resources, distributing CHNEP publications, and making native wildflower seed bombs with over 170 visitors. Also attended the [Ding Darling Conservation Carnival](#) in Ft. Myers, where staff had conversations about how to protect wildlife, shared resources, and did wildlife trivia with over 200 guests.
- Created and shared [infographics](#) breaking down water quality trends in Southwest Florida as highlighted in a recent [scientific article](#) CHNEP co-authored.
- Compiled relevant resources, project information, and maps and created Site Visit Booklets for the 2019-2024 Program Evaluation.
- Worked on narrative and shot list for upcoming CHNEP 30th Anniversary video. Created maps and other graphic content to appear in the video.
- Created a NEP informational handout highlighting national assets that the National Estuary Program helps to protect, for federal policymaker education.
- Launched the [2026 Annual Nature Calendar Photo Contest](#) on a number of platforms and continued advertising through June. This also involved receiving and organizing photos as well as responding to inquiries. Also, finalized scope of work/request for bid documents for 2026 CHNEP Nature Calendar.
- Social media posts on EPA site visits as part of the Program Evaluation under the themes of the three EPA Pillars: [Strong Communities](#), [Clean Waters](#), and [Healthy Ecosystems](#).
- Conducted a media interview, with CHNEP's comments featured in [Sarasota Bay's sea grass population soars; setting benchmark for other marine reclamation efforts | WGCU PBS & NPR for Southwest Florida](#)
- Sent invitations to apply and information about CHNEP to prospective Citizens Advisory Committee members to fill open seats.
- Celebrated [World Oceans Day](#), sharing information about how CHNEP works to protect Southwest Florida's waters and wildlife.
- Celebrated [Pollinator Week](#), sharing resources from partners and sharing about work the CHNEP does.
- Continued improvements to the CHNEP website, such as organizing [CHNEP Summit and Workshop](#) pages and archives in a more intuitive and easily navigated format.
- Coordinated with Conservation Grant recipients to wrap up currently open grant projects. Received and reviewed final deliverables for Lee County Pond Watch project.

- Recorded 4 tutorial videos on how to use the CHNEP Water Atlas. The videos focused on topics including the home page and how to find a waterbody, waterbody pages, maps and data, and how to download data. Uploaded the videos to YouTube and created a public [Water Atlas Tutorials Playlist](#) for trainings and public reference.
- Held planning meetings with Florida Resilience Conference to coordinate on event location logistics and A/V for the CHNEP Southwest Florida Resiliency Summit which will precede the conference.

Digital Outreach Insights

- 5,809 subscribers for CHNEP educational mailings
- 2,079 unique visitors and 2,869 page views of CHNEP website since last cycle
- 14 new Instagram followers for a total of 632
- 17 new Facebook followers for a total of 2,035
- YouTube: 15,241 Views (+1.9k), 99 Subscribers (+11), 336 Videos (+11)

Media/Press

- [Sprinkle list: \\$10M flows from Senate to Caloosahatchee basin](#)
- [Alligator Alley trail at Circle B reopens after 8-month closure from Hurricane Milton damage](#)
- [GAMIFY LEARNING: Carnival fun teaches conservation at Lakes Park Earth Day event](#)
- [Commissioners support NOAA tidal gauge project](#)
- [Sarasota Bay's sea grass population soars; setting benchmark for other marine reclamation efforts | WGCU PBS & NPR for Southwest Florida](#)

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

Attachment:

[Final EPA Program Evaluation Letter](#)

8. AMENDED FY26 MASTER WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

For fiscal year 2026, CHNEP prepared a master EPA320 Work Plan approved by the Policy Committee on May 23, 2024, which was submitted to US EPA on June 1, 2025 to accompany the FY26 EPA grant applications for federal funding. As is customary, amendments are made throughout the year to reflect changes in funding amounts or timing, new identified projects coming online in need of approval, and other factors. Amended Work Plans and Budgets are posted on the CHNEP website once approved but are not formally submitted to US EPA, as the grant application Work Plan has already been submitted and is in the review/award process. Below is a list of the amendments to both being proposed this cycle:

Introductory Section

- On Cover, added “Amended September 25, 2025”
- In Table of Contents, changed “2026” to “CHNEP” before Publications
- Under Policy Committee list, updated Policy Member names to Mr. Craig Hesterlee for US EPA, Hon. Tim Stanley for Glades County, Hon. Petrina McCutchen for City of Fort Meade
- Under Technical Advisory Committee, changed one Co-Chair name to Arielle Taylor-Manges

Table 1

Revenue

- On Partner Revenue Contribution line, reduced from \$205,000 to \$131,000 due to SWFWMD programmatic funding contribution reduced from \$130,000 to \$56,000. This reduced the total from \$2,789,741 to \$2,715,741.

Expenditures

- On Research and Restoration (FY26 SWFWMD, Local, and EPA 320 Funding), reduced from \$947,821 to \$873,821 due to reduction of SWFWMD programmatic funding and removal of Upper CCHMN project. This reduced the FY26 Expenditures from \$2,727,741 to \$2,653,741 and the Total Expenditures from \$2,789,741 to \$2,715,741.

Table 3

- Removed CCHMN project and the associated budgeted \$74,000 for it that had been paid from CHNEP's SWFWMD programmatic funding

Table 4

- Adjusted SWFWMD Funding from \$130,000 to \$56,000. This reduced Total State Revenue from \$205,000 to \$131,000, the Non-Federal FY26 Revenue from \$348,000 to \$274,000, and the Total FY26 Revenue being reduced \$2,107,800 to \$2,033,800.

Table 6

- Increased CHNEP Events from \$4,500 to \$14,500 to account for having two large events planned for 2026, the Triennial Watershed Summit in Spring 2025 and the 2026 Southwest Florida Resiliency Summit in early Fall 2026. Note: this is local funding that had gone to reserves, so decreases local going to reserves by \$10,000 such that it is now \$52,000 budgeted to be added to reserves at end of FY26 (similar to FY26's budgeted added reserve). With \$791,142 of existing reserves (based on current balance and anticipated FY25 funds added), this would bring reserve total at end of FY26 to \$843,142 – approximately a year of staff salaries and base operating expenses, the baseline reserve target standard.

Table 7

- Removed projects complete/to be completed by end of FY25 including FY23, FY24 and FY25 Water Atlas projects. Also removed associated asterixis and footnote regarding this.
- Removed Upper CCHMN – Water Quality Monitoring with budgeted amount of \$74,000, so the SWFWMD, Local & EPA 320 FY26 Total reduced from \$947,821 to \$873,821.
- Moved CHNEP Water Atlas Improvements from 2026 EPA IJA to 2026 EPA 320 FY26, thus reducing EPA 320 FY26 Clean Water Research & Restoration TBD from \$753,000 to \$703,000 and increasing the EPA IJA FY26 Clean Water Research & Restoration TBD from \$480,800 to \$530,800.
- The FY26 Total Research & Restoration Project Budget was revised from \$1,857,621 to \$1,783,621.

Narrative

- Task 2.3 Budget adjusted from \$4,500 to \$14,500
- Task 2.2 Title adjusted from 2026 Publications to CHNEP Publications
- Task 3.1 Budget adjusted from \$87,000 to \$13,000, with SWFWMD FY26 Funding of \$74,000 removed from FY26 Budget and Budget Details including In-Kind Contributions (adding SWFWMD as an In-kind Contributor to CCHMN Water Quality Monitoring Project).

CHNEP Executive Director Jennifer Hecker will be presenting this item.

Action: Vote on whether to recommend Policy Committee approve the Draft Amended FY26 Master Work Plan and Budget

Attachments: Draft Amended FY26 Master Work Plan and Budget

9. EXTREME RAINFALL EVENTS ON THE RISE

South Florida is experiencing an increase in localized extreme rainfall events. Recent headline-making floods—such as the April 2023 Fort Lauderdale event, which dumped over 25 inches in about 12 hours, and the June 2024 Invest 90L event—have overwhelmed flood control infrastructure and set new records. Rainfall events above 20-inches and equivalent to 500- to 1,000-year events, are reoccurring. Underpinning these trends is a warming atmosphere carrying more moisture—making rare, extreme rainfall events more frequent. For communities, the impacts are real. Months’ worth of rain can fall in mere hours, inundating homes, airports, roads—and resulting in significant economic impacts.

In response, the South Florida Water Management District is doing cutting-edge modeling and ramping up both operational and structural flood control mechanisms. During heavy rain events like Invest 90L, they activate pumps and flood gates, lower canal levels, and coordinate with local agencies to enhance drainage and clear debris.

On the planning side, the District is working proactively through several initiatives:

- Resiliency planning, including tracking rainfall trends, sea-level rise, and the implications for flood control infrastructure and operations.
- Collaborations with the Florida Flood Hub, UM, FSU, FIU and USGS to model future extreme rainfall scenarios, informing infrastructure design and operations.
- Joint Flood Resiliency Studies with Broward County, Miami-Dade County and USACE to modernize the aging Central & Southern Florida (C&SF) flood-control system.
- Securing State and Federal Grants to upgrade pump stations, retrofit spillways, and enhance basin drainage—particularly in areas where systems rely increasingly on pumps over gravity due to rising sea levels.

Ana Carolina Coelho Maran, Ph.D., Division Director of Flood Control and Water Supply Planning and Chief of District Resiliency at the South Florida Water Management District, will be presenting virtually and answering member questions.

10. PLANNING TO FLOOD-PROOF YOUR COMMUNITY FROM FUTURE FLOODING

Babcock Ranch has become a model for flood-proof urban planning by approaching stormwater design differently. Rather than fighting water, the engineers of this master-planned community in southwestern Florida near Fort Myers and Cape Coral embraced it through innovative engineering and urban design so that it could withstand even the most intense storms. Some of the principles utilized included:

- Flood-friendly road design: The roads are intentionally built to flood during hurricanes, allowing water to flow naturally across surfaces without damaging houses or other infrastructure.
- Smart stormwater management: Babcock Ranch features an advanced network of remote-controlled dams and smart ponds that, in large stormwater events, are tied into large natural wetlands on-site. These systems can proactively adjust lake water levels—lowering them before storms hit—to reduce flood risk.

- Integration with nature: The town's layout preserves natural drainage patterns and green spaces. By working with the landscape rather than reshaping it, the infrastructure enhances resilience while minimizing environmental disruption.

As a result, Babcock Ranch has a proven track record of not having houses flooded despite having endured several major hurricanes—including Irma, Ian, Milton, and Helene.

Amy Wicks, a Water Resources Engineer involved in the design and engineering of the Babcock Ranch community, is coming in person to share her insights on lessons learned, challenges, successes and recommendations to other communities who wish to take additional measures to reduce or prevent flooding. She will also be available to answer member questions. [Note: this agenda item will begin with a showing of the 7-minute [Hurricane Proof Florida Town Video](#)].

11. CHNEP TECHNICAL PROJECTS UPDATES

In addition to the items featured earlier on the agenda, updates will be provided on other research and/or restoration projects (or phases of projects) recently completed or currently underway.

Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP Director of Research & Restoration, will be presenting this agenda item.

Attachment: [CHNEP Technical Project Fact Sheets](#)

12. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 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.

Management Committee Co-Chair Jamie Wolanin will be leading and facilitating this discussion.

13. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

14. FUTURE MEETING'S TOPICS, LOCATION AND DATE

Please mark your calendar for upcoming Management Committee Meetings on January 9, 2026, May 8, 2026, and September 4, 2026. All meetings will be held in the same location at Centennial Park as this cycle's meeting.

15. ADJOURN