



## CHNEP Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Zoom Virtual Meeting

### AGENDA

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**This is a virtual meeting ONLY, Zoom meeting link here:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84949394665?pwd=SFk0MEtheko4OThsaDNuOEo1Qktmdz09>

Meeting ID: 849 4939 4665

Passcode: 639936

Call in Number: +1 929 205 6099

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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 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Meeting Minutes — Harry Phillips, CAC Co-Chair
5. New CAC Member Welcome — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
6. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Co-Chair Election — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair  
Nomination Form: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sv/ZqpPwhN/TAC>
7. CHNEP Update — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
8. New Conservation Grant Applications — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
9. Proposed Establishment of the Southwest Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Area — Julie Morris, National Wildlife Refuge Association
10. CAC Hurricane Ian Discussion Follow up — Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP
11. Upcoming CHNEP Outreach Opportunities — Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
  - 2023 Watershed Summit
  - 2023 CHNEP Outreach Schedule
  - Calendar Photo Contest
  - Seagrass Fact Sheets
12. Myakka Headwaters Preserve Project Updates — Debi Osborne, Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast
13. CHNEP Technical Projects and New Tools — Nicole Iadevaia, CHNEP
14. CAC Updates & Roundtable Discussion on Topics of Interest — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
15. General Public Comment — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair
16. Future Meetings: Topics, Location and Date — Harry Phillips, Co-Chair  
Upcoming Dates for 2023: 8/23/23, 12/13/23
17. Adjourn

## **1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

After CAC Co-Chair calls meeting to order, members will introduce themselves.

## **2. AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS**

CAC Co-Chair will review the agenda and then call for any additions or deletions to it by the CAC membership.

## **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 (CAC) MEETING MINUTES**

CAC Co-Chair will call for any additions or revisions to the December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 draft minutes by the CAC membership.

**Recommendation:** Approve the minutes from December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting.  
**Attachment:** Draft CAC Meeting Minutes.

## **5. NEW CAC MEMBER WELCOME**

Applicants to the Citizen's Advisory Committee are asked to welcome the newly appointed CAC representative from Charlotte County, Phyllis Wojcik. Phyl's application was received during the previous cycle and was taken up for approval by the Policy Committee in their January 2023 meeting.

## **6. CITIZENS 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.

- *Nominations are requested to be submitted by COB Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup> using the link provided: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sv/ZqpPwhN/TAC>*

The list of nominees will be brought forward for consideration at the meeting.

CAC Co-Chairs alternate chairing of CAC meetings, as well as alternating 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.

## **7. CHNEP UPDATE**

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

### **Program Administration**

- CHNEP met with Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) team as they surveyed areas that were heavily impacted by Hurricane Ian. This group included representatives from multiple federal agency staff.
- CHNEP held discussions at the Technical and Citizen’s Advisory Committees to gather information on partner response, problems encountered, and lessons learned following Hurricane Ian. This and other information is shared on the newly created [Hurricane Ian](#) landing page on the CHNEP website, which is intended to be an educational resource for both partners and the public.
- Planned and executed both the Management Committee Meeting (1/13) and Policy Committee Meeting (1/26); including lining up presenters, drafting agenda packets, creating PowerPoints, drafting minutes, etc. CHNEP held discussions at the Management and Policy Committee Meetings review information on partner responses, problems encountered, and lessons learned during Hurricane Ian 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 Hurricane Ian 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 then sent to the IRC. CHNEP compiled the [responses from the IRC](#), including information on federal resources and contacts, and sent back out to the CHNEP Management Conference committee members in February.
- CHNEP coordinated with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council to create maps that would inform the CHNEP Equity Strategy for EPA BIL funding project planning. The draft Equity Strategy and maps were sent to EPA for review at the end of February.
- Opened call for abstracts for 2023 Southwest Florida Climate Summit and 2023 Watershed Summit.
- CHNEP advised the Southeast Coastal Acidification Network (SOCAN) and the Gulf of Mexico Acidification Network (GCAN) on creating a stakeholder feedback survey to inform the acidification community on stakeholder monitoring needs.

#### Finance and Grant Management

- Revised CHNEP Conservation Grant Applications which are now available on the web: <https://www.chnep.org/conservation-grants>.
- Amended FY23 budget and associated Work Plan narrative figures.
- Adjusted and completed FY24 & FY25 County Budget.
- Input and Calculated Payroll Data through Pay Period 12 and reconciled.
- Submitted EPA BIL Grant to County/Legistar for Approval.
- Met with County Procurement regarding procedures for future projects.
- Worked with County Attorney’s Office (CAO) and submitted Legal Services Request (LSR) to recreate interlocal agreement for execution by Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC).
- Completed Manatee County ILA and submitted to County Administrator for approval.
- Submitted FY23 SWFWMD to Legistar for board approval.
- Submitted FY23 Quarter 1 FDEP Report.
- Submitted FY23 Quarter 1 SWFWMD Reports for all fiscal years open: FY19, FY21, and FY23.
- SWFWMD FY19 Final Reimbursement packaged and submitted.

- Researched and submitted request to South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) for updated match expenditure information.
- Reviewed “Partnership Agreement” for County Fiscal Support and suggested pertinent changes based on current processes established with County support staff so far.
- Worked with County fiscal staff to continue updates to County financial coding (ledger and project strings) and into CHNEP’s spreadsheet of budget details by account for FY23.
- Sent out award notices and instructions to Received 7 Conservation Grant Applications received and approved in December for the FY23 program.
- Processed all final FY23 quarterly invoices for Q1 as well as additional invoices for ongoing deliverable-based technical and outreach projects.

Regional and multi-jurisdictional organizational meetings CHNEP staff participated in

- Hosted CHNEP Winter Management Committee Mtgs. (4)
- Hosted Myakka Headwaters Preserve Site Visit w/partners and Contractor
- ANEP External Affairs Committee Meetings
- ANEP Directors Meetings
- ANEP Executive Committee Meetings
- Attended the Restoring America’s Estuaries (RAE) Coastal & Estuarine Summit in New Orleans, LA
- Everglades Coalition Conference
- American Water Resources Association’s 32nd Annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference
- Southwest Florida Seagrass Working Group Meeting
- Barrier Island Parks Society (BIPS) Marine Pollution Forum
- Caloosahatchee River Estuary Storage and Treatment (CREST) Project Phase 2 Groundbreaking
- Everglades Restoration Science Coordination Group (SCG) Post-Ian Technical Workshop
- Myakka River Management Coordinating Council (MRMCC) Meeting
- Artificial Reef Meeting/ UF
- FWC/CHNEP Snook Management in Charlotte Harbor
- SWFL Climate & Community Summit
- Heartland Regional Resiliency Action Plan Stakeholder Virtual Kick-Off Meeting
- Everglades Restoration Working Group/Science Coordination Group Meeting
- Regional Ambient Monitoring Program (RAMP) Meeting
- CHNEP/CFRPC Natural Resource Emergency Plan Element Discussion
- CHNEP/CFRPC Resiliency Coordination Meeting
- SWERT Steering Committee Meeting
- SWFRPC Federal Economic Recovery & Resiliency Workshop (3/14)
- Caloosahatchee River and Estuary and Everglades West Coast BMAPs Annual Meeting
- SWF Regional Ambient Monitoring Program (RAMP) HAB Subcommittee Meeting
- Association of National Estuary Programs (ANEP) and EPA Conference and meetings with CHNEP region federal legislative representatives
- Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative Meeting
- CHNEP Water Atlas Meetings with USF
- SFWMD Science Coordination Group and Working Group
- Post Hurricane Ian Southwest Florida Water Quality Sampling Coordination Meetings
- EPA NEP Environmental Justice (EJ) Forum
- SOCAN Stakeholder Working Group Call
- Science and Environment Council Meetings

### CHNEP staff presentations

- Presented at the [American Water Resources Conference](#) on *Data Acquisition/Collaboration for Water Quality Post Hurricane Ian* and hosted an educational booth.
- Presented at the [Southwest Florida Climate & Community Summit](#) hosted by Growing Climate Solutions, FGCU Water School, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, and Everglades Foundation presenting on CHNEP's climate-related scientific and educational initiatives.
- Presented at the Barrier Island Park Society Marine Pollution Forum on: *Collaboration/Outreach Water Quality Data Post Hurricane Ian*.
- Presented 'Moving Water to Restore Rivers Wetlands and Estuaries in Central and Southwest Florida' at the Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) Coastal & Estuarine Summit in New Orleans, LA.
- Presented 'Uniting Partners and Resources to Protect Central and Southwest Florida's Future Water, Wildlife, and Habitat: A Habitat Restoration Needs Plan for the Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership Area' at the Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) Coastal & Estuarine Summit in New Orleans, LA.
- Presented on *Regional Watershed Changes: Restoring for the Future* at the 2023 Southwest Florida Climate Summit.
- CHNEP staff submitted an abstract for the Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Conference (GEER) to be held in April and was selected to give a presentation on *Moving Water to Restore Rivers, Wetlands and Estuaries in Southwest Florida and the Caloosahatchee Basin*.
- Sponsored and attended the 38<sup>th</sup> annual [Everglades Coalition Conference](#) "A Watershed Moment for America's Everglades", hosting an organizational booth.
- Prepared a presentation and with water quality updates on CHNEP estuaries within Sarasota County for the Sarasota Water Quality Summit, which was held in December.

### Publications and Outreach Initiatives

- Planned and hosted the [2023 Southwest Florida Climate Summit](#), which was held in-person in Fort Myers, FL on March 15 & 16, 2023. Gathered scientists, local community leaders, citizens, and key leaders in climate solutions to discuss expanding capacity to respond to climate challenges and building increased community resiliency. Created and facilitated an interactive question and answer sessions after each presenter session for audience to interact with the presenters. Sent out personalized invitations to federal and state senators and representatives.
- Spoke on air with [WGCU to invite listeners to SWFL Climate Summit](#)
- Attended the [Chalo Nitka Festival](#) and Rodeo in Moore Haven. Distributed environmental education materials and nature calendars to approx. 200 visitors Directly interacted with around 50 families and children.
- Attended the [Civilian Conservation Corps Festival at Highlands Hammock State Park](#). Distributed environmental education materials and nature calendars to approx. 100 visitors Directly interacted with around 50 families and children.
- Attended the [Swamp Cabbage Festival in LaBelle](#) with Environmental Defense Fund. Spoke to over 150 attendees
- Attended Water, Wings, and Wild Things festival in Polk County providing an educational lesson and resources to over 2,000 2nd graders in attendance along with their parents and teachers.
- Hosted January [ReNEW Year's Cleanup](#) at Ponce De Leon Park
- Hosted CHNEP 2022 Christmas Bird Count in partnership with Peace River Audubon Society. This is the largest and longest running community science driven effort in the county.

- Attended a Healthy Ponds Workshop hosted by the Sarasota Science and Environment Council with over 100 registered participants and provided resources to community members on the CHNEP and Florida Friendly yard practices.
- 26,000 copies of the [CHNEP 2023 Nature Calendar](#) (with educational insert on blue carbon) were printed and distributed to individual subscribers, partners at agencies and other governmental offices and non-profits and libraries within the 10-county service area. They are also shared with attendees at outreach events and community festivals where CHNEP participates.
- Sent welcome packet and educational fact sheets to newly appointed Citizen's Advisory Committee member representing Charlotte County.
- Updated and streamlined Conservation Grant applications, making available on the CHNEP landing page [CHNEP Conservation Grants](#). The CHNEP provides Conservation Grants (up to \$4,999) to community organizations for projects that address clean water, wildlife habitat protection and restoration, and outreach priorities in the CHNEP area, as outlined in the CCMP.
- Updated [CHNEP Funding Factsheet](#).

#### Outreach analytics

- 6,041 subscribers for CHNEP educational mailings.
- 2,950 unique visitors and 9,519 page visits to CHNEP website.
- 22 new Instagram followers (502 total followers)- started this year
- 1,902 Facebook followers
- 36 new Facebook Likes (1,602 total likes)
- 6,128 YouTube Views/52 Subscribers

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

#### **8. NEW CONSERVATION GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership's (CHNEP) goal for Public Engagement is to increase the proportion of the population that supports and participates in actions to protect and restore estuaries and watersheds. Since 2001, CHNEP has offered grants to help establish and maintain environmental education efforts and further partnerships to help implement the CCMP. Due to the move to the new fiscal host, the Conservation Grant application was recently restructured to improve access and streamline the payment process. Applications and instructions can be found here: <https://www.chnep.org/conservation-grants>.

This item is to inform the Citizen's Advisory Committee on new Conservation Grant applications that have been submitted since the previous cycle for the April 1,2023 due date and to seek CAC input on associated funding awards. The CAC role as related to this program is to seek out groups within their respective communities to make them aware of the CHNEP Conservation Grant program and how it can be beneficial to their projects and programs. Preference will be given to partners and to projects in communities that have been historically underserved.

Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP Executive Director, will be giving an overview of the Conservation Grant applications received this cycle and staff recommendations regarding them.



Project Title	Organization	Contact Name	Amount Requested	Total Project Cost	Short Description
Underwater Marine Debris Reporting and Removal in Lee County	The Healthy Earth Organization	Falon Taberes Falon@thehealthyearth.org	\$ 4,999.00	\$ 11,327.85	This project is a 3 month initiative which seeks to monitor and combat marine debris at artificial reefs throughout lee county with a total of 3 underwater reef cleanups.
2023 Great American Cleanup/International Coastal Cleanup with a focus on Waterway Cleanups	Keep Charlotte Beautiful, Inc.	Rhonda Harvey Rhonda.Harvey@charlottecountyfl.gov	\$ 4,400.00	\$ 6,900.00	For the Great American Cleanup, we have been focusing most of our efforts on waterways. The Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup is not only a cleanup but also a citizen science event. KCB, with partnerships, will be continuing the cleanups through the CHNEP grant period and beyond.
Sarasota Bay Watch – Robert's Bay Revitalization Initiatives	Robert's Bay Revitalization Initiatives via Sarasota Bay Watch	Melinda Short mlsvenice@gmail.com	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 45,000.00	To promote coastal stewardship and environmental aid as well as keeping our waterways clean and support life using environmentally friendly solutions by using artificial mini reefs and oyster vertical gardens.
<b>Total Amount of Requested Funding</b>			<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ 11,899.00</b>	

**Recommendation:** Gather CAC input on Conservation Grant Applications  
**Attachment:** April 2023 Conservation Grant Applications

**9. PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREA**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is working on a new effort to establish a Southwest Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Area. If successful, a new conservation area would allow the USFWS to work with willing landowners to protect the lands most important to our water and wildlife in one of the most biologically diverse regions in our country. This landscape-level conservation effort would assist and complement the state of Florida's successful efforts to protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor. Southwest Florida faces increasing threats such as rapid population growth, intensification of land use, and climate change. A new conservation area would aid in recovering the Florida panther and protect many rare and endemic species, including 74 Federally and State listed Threatened and Endangered Species.

The USFWS recently completed public scoping meetings, which were attended by CHNEP staff, input given at these meetings will be included in the development of a draft plan and environmental analysis document. CHNEP also submitted a technical comment letter and GIS maps to be considered during the planning process. The Service will make the draft plan and environmental analysis document available for review and comment in late summer/fall 2023. CAC members are asked to share this information with their respective communities and organizations so that they can submit comments and/or support during the upcoming public comment period.

This item will be presented by the CAC representative for Manatee County, Julie Morris, on behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

**Attachment:**

CHNEP Southwest Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation  
Area Technical Comment Letter

**10. HURRICANE IAN DISCUSSION FOLLOW UP**

CHNEP held discussion on Hurricane Ian aftermath, lessons learned and next steps at the winter Management Conference meetings. All partners were impacted in one way or another by the event, and meetings were used as an opportunity to hear from various entities regarding their initial experiences, data collection, and suggestion for process improvement. Following this information gathering effort, CHNEP staff have been working with the Regional Planning Councils to build tools for local governments and to increase resiliency and responsiveness during ‘environmental disaster’ events in the form of a Natural Resource component for potential adoption into County and City Emergency Response Plans.

CHNEP Executive Director Jennifer Hecker will brief the committee on progress of these efforts following the information gathering session held at previous meetings.

**11. UPCOMING CHNEP OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES**

This item is intended to brief the committee on upcoming or ongoing outreach efforts that further the CHNEP Goal for Public Engagement: *Create an informed, engaged public making choices and taking actions that increase the protection and restoration of estuaries and watersheds.* CAC members serve as CHNEP partners in various communities throughout Central and Southwest Florida and are invited to work together with CHNEP staff to continue to grow these programs or share educational items. These are described below:

- 2023 Watershed Summit
- 2023 CHNEP Outreach Schedule
- Calendar Photo Contest
- Seagrass Fact Sheets

CHNEP Staff will be presenting on this item.

**12. MYAKKA HEADWATERS PRESERVE PROJECT UPDATES**

Many entities including Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast (CFGC), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) are working to acquire and restore habitats within the Myakka River basin, especially in Manatee County where there is not as much protection for the River or watershed. CFGC recently acquired 363 acres within Flatford Swamp, the river’s largest forested wetland, located at the headwaters of the Myakka River. This new preserve, Myakka Headwaters Preserve, is home to a diverse array of species including orchids, air plants, and lowland loose strife. This area is also heavily-infested with invasive species that prevent native species from thriving. The CHNEP is working with SWFWMD and CFGC to fund and manage a project to remove exotic species and install native plants in selected critical areas on the property. Project fact sheet is available on the CHNEP website: <https://www.chnep.org/chnep-fact-sheets>.

Debi Osborne, CAC representative for Manatee County, will be presenting on this item on behalf of Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast.

**13. CHNEP TECHNICAL PROJECTS UPDATES & NEW TOOLS**

In addition to the items featured earlier on the agenda, other research and/or restoration projects



(or phases of projects) in the program area are currently underway with CHNEP FY21-23 funds. A brief overview will be given on project progress since the previous CAC meeting. Additionally, there will be an update on discussions that were held at the winter Management Conference meetings regarding a technical comment letter on Outstanding Florida Waters (specially designated waters that are to be protected from any degradation) which are not meeting state water quality standards and are in need of Total Maximum Daily Load limits ("impaired"). The original letter was sent to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on behalf of the CHNEP in 2017. An updated letter was sent in 2022 based on new and ongoing impairments.

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>. Technical comment letters can be viewed here: <https://www.chnep.org/letters-resolutions>

#### **14. CAC UPDATES & ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON TOPICS OF INTEREST**

Each member will have an opportunity to update the Committee on research, restoration, public education and engagement projects currently being completed in their respective county to protect and restore the CHNEP program area. This time also serves as an opportunity for members to discuss topics of interest to the Committee members, potential Conservation Grant partners, and emerging environmental concerns or actions from their regions.

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

#### **15. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

#### **16. FUTURE MEETING'S TOPICS, LOCATION AND DATE**

The CAC meeting schedule for 2023 is as follows; please mark these dates in your calendar:

- 8/23/23, 12/13/23

Meetings will be held at the same location at Harold Avenue Park Recreation Center (Port Charlotte). If you have ideas of topics for a future presentation, please email them to CHNEP Director of Research & Restoration Nicole Iadevaia at [niadevaia@chnep.org](mailto:niadevaia@chnep.org).

#### **17. ADJOURN**