**Draft CCMP Update Objectives, Actions, and Example Narratives**

 **For CAC & STAC Review**

**November 2023**

*The following is a list of objectives and actions to be carried forward into an update of the 2012 CCMP, based on guidance by the Leadership Council, STAC, and CAC, as well as APNEP staff. Only minor changes for clarity and consistency have been made since June 1, 2023. Items that will be identified as Match Support or BIL priorities are also noted.*

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**A 1: Assess the impacts of targeted ecosystem threats**

The estuarine ecosystem and its various components are sensitive to local and regional, or individual and multiple/concurrent changes. Population growth and associated development, climate change, sea level rise, increasing demand for freshwater, invasive species, nutrients, sediment, and introduced pollutants are among the most significant stressors to the ecosystem. Scientific knowledge of the individual and cumulative impacts of these stressors can be established further, and research is needed to identify and evaluate thresholds for ecosystem resilience.

**A 1.1 Facilitate mapping the distribution of significant ecological, bathymetric, geologic, demographic, and cultural features. (BIL Priority)**

Collaborate with partners to collect data and map the distribution of significant natural and cultural features to support accurate and timely information in support of environmental management decision-making. Activities will focus on mapping SAV, estuarine shorelines, oyster habitat, wetlands, impaired waters, disadvantaged communities, and resilience attributes.

**Lead**: APNEP

**Action:** Lead mapping activities for targeted resources

**Key Partners**: NC-DMF, SECAS, USFWS, USGS, NOAA, NC-DLWS, NC-DCM, NC-WRC, NC-NHP, VA-NHP

**CCMP Outcomes Supported**: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d

**Outputs:** Maps and GIS data

**Results:** Quality environmental data to support resource management decisions

**A 1.2 Facilitate improved projections of land and water use, and climate change related impacts on the ecosystem to enhance the coordination of multi-scale planning and management. (BIL Priority)**

Forecasting potential impacts will allow managers to undertake proactive measures and consider environmental management initiatives. Collaborate with partners to improve the capabilities of federal, state, regional, and local governments to support ecosystem and resilience planning and management in the region.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Collaborate with partners to develop projects or actions that will support climate change, ecosystems, and resiliency considerations into planning and management within the region

**Key Partners:** EPA, SECAS, NOAA, USFWS, USFS, NC-DEM, NC-DLWS

**CCMP Outcome Supported:** 2a

 **Outputs:** Climate change impact models; land and water use projections

**Results**: Quality science-based threat assessments and other data to support resource management decisions

**B 1: Protect and restore areas containing significant natural communities and habitats**

The natural communities and habitats of the Albemarle-Pamlico region support a diverse and vibrant collection of species. The ecosystem services provided by these systems include shelter, food sources, spawning, nesting and nursery areas, passage or travel, and important habitat for threatened and endangered species. Loss or fragmentation of these habitats can have severe and possibly irreversible impacts to the species that rely on them.

**B 1.1 Refine and implement a submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) protection and restoration strategy. (BIL Priority)**

Collaborate with partners in protecting and restoring SAV habitats through monitoring (Objective E 1), examination of water quality and habitat issues, rules, regulations, and polices, and produce educational programs. This work will require study of effective restoration techniques involving bathymetric mapping (A 1.1) and water quality monitoring.  APNEP will continue to facilitate its SAV Team to develop and promote a SAV protection and restoration strategy.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** APNEP will continue to support collaborative development of a SAV protection and restoration strategy

**Key Partners:** NOAA, USFWS, NC-DCM, NC-DMF, NC-WRC, VA-VMRC, VIMS, USACE

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:**2a, 2b

**Outputs:** Collaborative SAV protection and restoration strategy

**Results:** Collaborative planning to support the management of water quality and ecosystem biodiversity and ecological integrity for SAV habitats

**B 1.2 Protect and restore targeted natural communities, habitats, and ecosystem processes.**

**(BIL Priority)**

Collaborate with the Management Conference and other partners to identify areas and assist in the development and implementation of plans to protect, restore, and manage targeted natural communities, habitats, and ecosystem processes. Focal habitats include SAV, wetlands, primary nurseries, oyster habitats, floodplains and riparian areas, wetland buffers, and Significant Natural Heritage Areas. Active government support of private landowners (homeowners, farmers, foresters, and businesses) with is crucial to protect and restore the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine ecosystem due to their dominant land ownership in the region.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** APNEP will collaborate with its Management Conference and other partners to identify areas and assist in the development of protection and restoration action plans and their implementation for priority habitats, natural communities, and sites.

**Key Partners:** NC-WRC, NC-NHP, NC-DLWS, NC-DMF, SECAS, CTNC, TNC, NC-SWC, VA-DSM, USFWS, USDA, SAMSI

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d

**Outputs:** New incentives for easements and other land protection efforts. Workshops and engagement materials on land conservation

**Results:**  Increase in protected and/or restored natural communities, habitats, and ecosystem process or sites

**B 1.3 Facilitate the development of policies to minimize dredge and fill activities in naturalized areas and sensitive habitats.**

Portions of the extensive drainage network in several coastal counties has become naturalized and currently provides important habitats for fish and wildlife. Collaborate with partners to develop policies that ensure these habitats are considered in drainage maintenance and where possible work to restore natural processes. APNEP will facilitate discussions relevant to its role in the Scuppernong Study and other hydrological projects. In concert with this action, APNEP will participate in crafting the [NC Flood Resilience Blueprint](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/mitigation-services/flood-resiliency-blueprint) to help guide policy development.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** APNEP will collaboration and coordinate with its partners to assess the status of the naturalized areas and propose policies to ensure that these habitats are considered in drainage maintenance

**Key Partners:** NC-DMS, NC-DMF, NC-DCM, NC-DWR, USACE, VA-DEQ, NC-WRC, USFWS, EPA, UNC-IMS, CSI, VIMS

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 2a, 2b

**Outputs:** Coordinated policies and regulations regarding dredge and fill activities

**Results:** Improved policies to support managing water quality and ecological integrity

**B 1.4 Refine for federal approval and facilitate the implementation of a *North Carolina Integrated Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan*.**

An approved plan will improve the State’s ability to address aquatic invasive and aquatic nuisance species with the goal of preventing and controlling their introduction, spread, and negative impacts. Approval will allow North Carolina to seek additional federal funds for plan implementation.

**Lead:** APNEP, NC-DWR

**Action:** Develop draft plan for state and federal approval

**Key Partners:** NC-DWR, NC-WRC, NC-DACS, NC-NHP, VA-NHP, TNC, VA-DGIF, NC-NERR, NC-DMF, NC-DLWS, VA-DGIF, USFWS, NOAA, USDA

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 2b, 2c, 3d

**Outputs:** A State supported, and federally approved North Carolina integrated aquatic invasive species management plan

**Results:** Coordinated prevention and control strategies leading to reduced adverse impacts associated with aquatic invasive species

 **B 1.5 Facilitate the construction of new oyster habitats.**

Where conditions are deemed optimal for native oyster habitat, APNEP will provide funds to support the replanting of cultch material and seed oysters. APNEP also will support the development of oyster sanctuaries and shellfish management areas to provide continued propagation of wild oysters. APNEP can also provide letters of support to construct or expand oyster habitats.

**Lead:** NCCF, NC-DMR,

**Action:** APNEP will fund or support the construction of new wild oyster habitat

**Key Partners:** NC-DMF, NCCF, TNC, NOAA, USACE, NC-DCM, EPA, CSI, IMS, VIMS

**CCMP Outcome Supported:** 2b

**Outputs**: Oyster habitat restoration projects

**Results:** Increased oyster habitats, improved water quality, and ecological integrity

**C 1: Protect and restore water quality by minimizing or eliminating targeted sources of water pollution**

The Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system contains many degraded and polluted streams and waterbodies. Where waters do not meet established water quality standards, they are listed as impaired. Ideally, an impairment designation triggers the development and implementation of contaminant management strategies, including restoration activities such as improving damaged riparian and estuarine shorelines and reducing spills and overflows from wastewater treatment facilities. Existing developments, infrastructure and activities that create substantial polluted runoff will be prioritized for retrofitting with low impact development practices.

**C 1.1 Support the development of water quality standards and any subsequent development of new management strategies for estuarine waters. (BIL Priority)**

APNEP will continue to support the establishment and implementation of the [NC Nutrient Criteria Development Plan](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-sciences/nutrient-criteria-development-plan)’s (NCDP) section for the Albemarle Sound as an important first step to develop new standards for estuarine waters and the subsequent development of any new management strategies required.

**Lead:** NC-DWR

**Action:** Continue to participate in the NCDP process for estuarine waters and may continue to support additional scientific investigations needed to address questions that may arise during the process (e.g., identification of water clarity metrics, modeling).

**Key Partners:** VA-DEQ, NC-DEQ, EPA, NC-DACS, NC-SWC, VA-DSM, UNC-IMS, USGS

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1d

**Outputs:** Coordinated development of contaminant management strategies

**Results:** Improved protections and restoration of water quality and ecological integrity; fewer impaired waters.

**C 1.2 Facilitate the implementation of existing contaminant management strategies.**

Collaborate with partners to support full implementation of existing management strategies for pathogens, toxics, and nutrients by providing support to regulatory agencies, stakeholders, and other partners as needed.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** APNEP will fund or support actions to support implementation of existing contaminant management strategies.

**Key Partners:** NC-DWR, NC-DCM, VA-DEQ, VA-DCR, NC-LWTF, NC-SWC, EPA, USGS

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1d, 3b, 3c

**Outputs:** Coordinated implementation of management strategies

**Results:** Improved water quality and ecological integrity

 **C 1.3 Protect, restore, and enhance targeted shorelines and riparian buffers to reduce and treat runoff, and to support ecosystem function/services. (BIL Priority)**

Vegetated riparian buffers trap and filter polluted runoff, preventing sediments, nitrogen, phosphorus, pesticides, and other substances from entering our waters. APNEP will lead and facilitate collaborative management activities along shorelines and riparian buffers to reduce and treat runoff, and to support ecosystem function/services. APNEP will collaborate with its Management Conference and other partners to identify areas and assist in plan development and implementation of management measures. Where feasible, bulkheads and riprap structures will be replaced with living shorelines or structures that control erosion with the least impact to natural shoreline function.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** APNEP will work with its Management Conference and other partners to identify areas and assist in the development of plans and the implementation of management measures.

**Key Partners:** NC-DWR, NC-DCM, VA-DCR, NC-WRC, NC-LWTF, VA-WQIF, VA-VOF, CTNC, NC-DMS, NC-SWC, VA-DSM, USACE, NC-DMS, NCCF, USFWS, NOAA, TNC, NFWF, NRCS, VA-DCR, DU, UNC, CSI, Sea Grant

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 2a, 2b, 3b, 3d

**Outputs:** Actions and project to protect or restore riparian buffers to support natural shoreline ecosystem functions

**Results:** Improved water quality, habitat availability and ecological integrity

**C 1.4 Facilitate voluntary retrofitting of existing development and infrastructure to reduce runoff.**

Collaborate with partners to target existing stormwater systems that require improvements to reduce runoff. Where development or infrastructure has a high percentage of impervious surfaces, implementation of low impact development practices will be encouraged. Provide workshops, letters of support or grants for retrofitting of existing development and infrastructure.

**Lead**: APNEP

**Action:** Provide grants, workshops, or letters of support.

**Key Partners**: EPA, NC-DWR, NC-DWI, VA-DCR, NOAA, NC-LWTF, VA-WQIF, NCCF, Sea Grant, CSI, NC Cooperative Extension

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 2b, 3d

**Outputs:** Implementation of stormwater retrofitting projects / green infrastructure / nature-based solutions to reduce runoff

**Results:** Reduced runoff leading to improved water quality and ecological integrity

**C 1.5 Minimize the introduction of toxics into receiving waters by applying approved best management to marinas, boatyards, stormwater discharges and wastewater facilities.**

APNEP will support the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) that curb introduction of toxic materials into the estuarine system. Targeted sources of toxic pollution may include new marinas, boatyards, stormwater discharges, and wastewater treatment facilities to improve water quality for the protection and restoration of SAV and oyster habitats.

**Lead**: APNEP

**Action:** APNEP can offer grants for BMP implementation, hold focused workshops, or participate educational opportunities.

**Key Partners:** NC-DWR, NC-DWI, VA-DEQ, VA-DCR, EPA, NC-LWTF, VA-WQIF

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1b, 1d, 2b, 3c

**Outputs:** Implementation of tested pollution control measures, BMPs, nature-based solutions to remove toxics

**Results:** Widespread BMP adoption leading to reduced toxics concentrations within targeted waterbodies

**C 1.6 Minimize contaminant loads to receiving waters through wastewater management and system upgrades. (Match Support)**

The reduction of contaminants entering the estuarine system helps improve ecosystem integrity and resiliency. Aging wastewater infrastructure and rising sea levels are two challenges that must be addressed to reduce pollutant loads such as nutrients plus bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms from entering public waters through identified sources. Collaborate with municipalities whose wastewater infrastructure need repairs or upgrades. To address this action APNEP will collaborate the NC-DWI and other partners to support upgrades to wastewater treatment facilities and associated infrastructure that account for future risks.

**Lead:** DWI

**Action:** APNEP will continue to collaborate NC-DEQ, NC-DWI, and other partners to support upgrades to wastewater treatment facilities and associated infrastructure to protect and restore receiving waters.

**Key Partners:** NC-DWR, VA-DEQ, VA-DCR, NC-DMF, NC-DCM, EPA, NC-LWTF, VA-WQIF, SRF

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1d, 2b, 3b

**Outputs:** Wastewater treatment systems upgrade projects. Additional pollution control measures, upgraded infrastructure, BMPs implemented

**Results:** Improved water quality and ecological integrity. Reduction in pathogens and other contaminates within targeted water bodies

**C 1.7 Apply approved best management practices (BMPs) on targeted agricultural and silvicultural lands to improve water quality for the protection, and restoration of SAV and oyster habitats.**

Best management practices (BMPs) include a variety of methods and techniques to reduce pollutant runoff from lands modified by human use.  BMP application may be targeted by APNEP and its partners to address pressing water quality issues. Promote BMPs  through educational resources, workshops, and demonstration projects.  APNEP has facilitated BMP use by funding BMP manual updates for stormwater and silviculture activities, and hosting training workshops.  Continue support by assisting partners in hosting focused workshops or offering grants.

**Lead: APNEP**

**Action:**Targeted BMP application to benefit APNEP focus areas

**Key Partners:**NC-SWC, VA-DSM, NC-NCFS, VA-VDOF, NC-DWR, NC Cooperative Extension, NC-DACS, NRCS. NC & VA Assn. of Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:**2b, 3b, 3d

**Outputs:** Background information and guidance to adopt tested/approved BMPs for agricultural and silvicultural activities

**Results:** Increased use of BMPs leading to improved water quality and aquatic biodiversity

**C 2: Ensure hydrological processes in rivers and estuaries support significant natural communities and ecosystem functions**

Hydrology in many areas of the AP region is highly altered. An increase in impervious surfaces resulted in increased runoff and higher erosion rates. Streams were physically altered and diverted, sometimes eliminating habitats, or leaving poor conditions for natural growth.

**C 2.1 Facilitate the development and implementation of coordinated landscape-scale hydrological restoration strategies.**

Much of the region’s lowland agricultural areas are characterized by modified drainage networks that incorporate ditches and pumps. A coordinated hydrologic strategy is the best way to ensure restoration is accomplished at scale. Continue to facilitate the coordination of landscape-scale efforts including the Scuppernong Regional Water Management Study on the northern Albemarle-Pamlico peninsula.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Lead or participate in collaborative and coordinated landscape-scale hydrological restoration planning efforts

**Key Partners:** SECAS, USFWS, TNC, NCCF**,** USFWS, EPA, NOAA, USACE, NC-LWTF, NC-DWR, NC-DCM, NC-WRC, NC-DMS, NC Cooperative Extension, NC-DSWC, USGS

**CCMP Outcomes Supported**: 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3d

**Outputs:** Coordinated landscape-scale hydrological restoration strategies

**Results:** Development, adoption, and implementation of strategies leading to improved water quality and ecological integrity

**C 2.2 Facilitate the hydrologic restoration of floodplains and streams.**

Floodplain restoration will include restoring wetland function and planting riparian vegetation. Removing channelization and improving stream banks can restore streams that have been altered. Continue to collaborate and coordinate with partners to support hydrologic restoration of floodplains and streams, including the offer of project support letters and grants. Additionally, participating in [NC Flood Resilience Blueprint](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/mitigation-services/flood-resiliency-blueprint) development will also contribute to the success of this action.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Provide funds or support for the hydrologic restoration of floodplains and streams in targeted areas

**Key Partners:** NC-DMS, TNC, NCCF, USFWS, EPA, USACE, NC-WRC, VA-DCR, NOAA, NC-LWTF, NC-DWR, NC-DCM, NC-DSWC, VA-DSWC

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 3a, 3b, 3d

**Outputs:** Letters of support and funding for floodplain restoration projects

**Results:** Completed restoration projects leading to improved water quality, hydrology, and ecological integrity

**C 2.3 Develop and refine ecological flow requirements for each major river for inclusion in basin-wide water management plans.**

Many of the fish, aquatic plants, and other species that live within the estuarine system depend on adequate amounts of flowing water to survive. Identifying these ecological flow regimes will help ensure that these species and ecosystems are protected. Strive to provide scientific information and engage regional stakeholders to develop and implement water management plans that account for both human and ecological requirements.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Continue to support development of ecological flow requirements for each major river

**Key Partners:** NC-DWR, USFWS, USGS, NC-WRC, VA-DCR, VA-DEQ, USACE, SECAS

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a

**Outputs:** Hydrologic models of each river basin and associated ecological flow requirements to support better resource management decisions. Draft management plans establishing minimum in-stream flows.

**Results:** Science-based management of in-stream flows to support both human and ecological demands and management of river flows that support ecological integrity.

**C 3: Restore spawning areas for diadromous fish**

Many of the rivers and streams of the Albemarle-Pamlico region have been modified to meet needs for water supply, irrigation, flood control, and other infrastructural, industrial and development requirements. These changes have often come to the detriment of diadromous and catadromous fish, and eels, which depend on both rivers and the ocean for their survival. A single impassable barrier between these two environments can prevent miles of otherwise acceptable habitat from being utilized by these species. Remove barriers where feasible to facilitate fish movement around obstructions and restore degraded habitats.

**C 3.1 Facilitate the installation of fish bypass infrastructure and operations protocols on existing dams and other permanent barriers.**

Fish ladders and eel-ways can preserve passage across dams that are otherwise providing societal benefits like drinking water supplies or electricity. Support the siting, construction, and maintenance of mechanisms for fish and eel passage around in-stream barriers. APNEP can also offer letters of support or grants to install fish ladders and eel-ways.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Provide funds or support for the installation of fish bypass infrastructure in targeted areas

**Key Partners:** NC-WRC, VA-DGIF, USACE, NOAA, USFWS, NFWF, SECAS, American Rivers, NC-DMF, NCCF, TNC, NC-DWR, NCSU, USGS.

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 2a, 2b

**Outputs**: New fish ladders and eel-ways

**Results:** Improved fish populations and ecological integrity

**C 3.2 Facilitate the removal of dams, culverts, and other in-stream barriers.**

Structures that have surpassed their designed lifespan or intended use will be targeted for removal. In-stream barriers scheduled for replacement also present opportunities to implement technologies that improve fish passage. Support the siting, construction, and maintenance of mechanisms for fish passage around in-stream barriers. Offer letters of support or grants to assist in barrier removal where appropriate.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Provide funds or support to removal in-stream barriers in targeted areas.

**Key Partners:** NC-WRC, VA-DGIF, NC-DMF, USACE, NOAA, USFWS, SECAS, NC-SWC, VA-DSM, NFWF, NC-DMS, American Rivers, NC-DOT, VA-VDOT, FHA, SEPA, NC-DCM, NCWF.

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 2a, 2b

**Outputs**: In-stream barrier removal projects

**Results:** Improved fish populations and ecological integrity

**C 3.3 Restore degraded anadromous fish spawning habitats.**

Anadromous fish spawning habitat is dependent on suitable current velocities, adequate dissolved oxygen levels, and low turbidity. APNEP will work to support suitable hydrologic flows and restore submerged aquatic vegetation in streams and rivers that contain anadromous species. In support of implementation of the [NC](https://www.ncwildlife.org/Plan) and [VA](https://www.ncwildlife.org/Plan) Wildlife Action Plans, and the [NC Coastal Habitat Protection Plan](https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/habitat-information/coastal-habitat-protection-plan), APNEP can offer partners letters of support or grants to promote anadromous fish spawning habitat restoration.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Provide funds or support to restore degraded anadromous fish spawning habitats.

**Key Partners:** NC-DMF, NC-WRC, VA-DGIF, USACE, NOAA, USFWS, NFWF, NC-DCM, CTNC, NCCF

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 2a, 2b

**Outputs**: Spawning habitat restoration projects

**Results:** Improved spawning habitat leading to greater fish populations and ecological integrity

**D 1: Foster watershed stewardship**

The Albemarle-Pamlico region’s inhabitants and visitors recognize its beauty and rich natural resources. Through targeted engagement, education, and communications efforts, APNEP and its partners will encourage citizens to reduce their environmental impacts and provide meaningful opportunities to protect and restore the ecosystem. APNEP will further efforts to find areas of mutual benefit between citizens, businesses, and governments related to the protection and restoration of the region’s resources.

**D 1.1 Communicate the importance of stewardship and offer opportunities for volunteerism to further APNEP’s mission.**

APNEP will continue advocating for environmental stewardship and providing citizens with meaningful volunteer opportunities that improve the environment while engaging and educating the public about the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system. APNEP can offer our partners grant funding for projects and activities and assist them in communications supporting stewardship and opportunities for volunteerism.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Incorporate into APNEP’s Engagement Strategy methods to communicate the importance of stewardship and offer opportunities for volunteerism to further APNEP’s mission.

**Key Partners:** NC-DENR, NC-ODMSA, VA-OEE, VA-DCR, VA-DEQ, NCCF, TNC, EPA, NOAA, PfS, IMS, CSI, VIMS, NC-NERR, NC-AQ, VA-AQ

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1d, 1e, 2a

**Output:** Workshops and engagement materials on stewardship and volunteer opportunities

**Results:** Increase in voluntary citizen action to protect and restore the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system

**D 1.2 Provide and promote opportunities for outdoor experiences that connect individuals with the Albemarle-Pamlico ecosystem.**

A meaningful and educational outdoor experience can change the lens through which a person views the natural world. A person who is connected to the estuarine system is more likely to take the steps necessary to ensure that it thrives. APNEP will continue to collaborate with its partners to provide and promote opportunities for meaningful outdoor experiences. We will continue to assist partners implementing watershed-scale activities in the region, such as [Shad in the Classroom](https://apnep.nc.gov/resources/educators/shad-classroom).

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Provide funds and promote opportunities for outdoor experiences by the public.

**Key Partners:** NC-DNCR, VA-DCR, NC-NERR, NC-WRC, PfS, VA-OEE, NC-ODMSA, USFWS, NPS, NCCF, NC-DOC, VA-DOC, NC-DACS, NC-AQ, VA-AQ

**CCMP Outcome Supported:** 2a

**Outputs:** Activities for the public to become engaged in experiencing the Albemarle-Pamlico ecosystem

**Results:** Increased public awareness and engagement via CCMP implementation

**D 2: Conduct targeted environmental education efforts regarding estuarine habitats, water quality, and ecosystem services**

Environmental education is a learning process that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges while developing the necessary skills and expertise to address these challenges. Environmental education also fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action with respect to the environment. APNEP is committed to educating children and adults about the rich natural resources found throughout the Albemarle-Pamlico ecosystem, with the purpose of increasing their ecological knowledge and equipping them with the skills to effectively approach environmental issues.

**D 2.1 Provide environmental education training opportunities for educators.**

By teaching educators about the Albemarle-Pamlico region and its associated environmental issues and providing them with science-based resources, APNEP works with its partners to enrich the education of thousands of students annually. APNEP will continue to assist with providing training opportunities for educators within the region.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Provide funds for environmental education training opportunities for educators that support the APNEP mission and CCMP implementation

**Key Partners:** NC-NERR, PfS, NCCF, NC-DPR, Sea Grant, NC-MNS, NC-ODMSA, VA-OEE, VIMS, CSI, UNC, NC-AQ, VA-AQ

**CCMP Outcome Supported**: 1c, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3b

**Outputs:** Workshops and materials for educators

**Results:** Increased awareness and engagement via CCMP implementation.

**D 2.2 Increase public understanding of the relationship between ecosystem health and human health advisories relating to water, fish, and game.**

Few people fully understand the relationships among the environment, human activity, and health advisories. APNEP will work to help people make these connections, allowing people to take concrete steps to address pollution sources. APNEP will continue to produce or support the development and distribution of materials and fund studies/programs (*i.e*., ecosystem metric reports, swim guide, NC Division of Marine Fisheries’ Recreational Water Quality Monitoring,) to increase public understanding of these relationships.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Develop and implement a strategy to increase understanding of the relationship between ecosystem health and human health advisories.

**Key Partners:** Sea Grant, USFWS, NC-WRC, EPA, NC-DWR, NC-DMF, VA-VDH, NC-DPH

**CCMP Outcome Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1d

**Outputs:** Outreach and educational materials

**Results: Public policies to support** improved water, fish, and game quality

**D 3: Provide tools and training to support ecosystem-based management**

Many decisions that affect the integrity of the estuarine ecosystem are made within localities whose inhabitants have little incentive to consider their broader impacts. Regional and local leaders are tasked with making decisions based on a wide range of political, economic, and social factors. Often environmental considerations represent only a small part of a given issue. Because these leaders come from all disciplines and face many issues, APNEP recognizes the need to provide government officials with tailored information necessary for efficient and informed environmental decision-making. APNEP will collaborate its partners to ensure that local and state governments have access to quality educational opportunities, mapping resources, and other pertinent information necessary to make informed environmental and natural resource decisions.

**D 3.1 Develop and implement a strategy to improve decision-makers’ understanding of the return on investments in environmental protection, restoration, planning, and monitoring.**

While the costs of environmental protection are easy to see on a balance sheet, the benefits can be harder to quantify. Collaborate with partners to provide science-based information to government officials and the public regarding the monetary and non-monetary value of ecosystem services and help them incorporate this information into the decision-making process. Continue to support the creation of ecosystem services assessments and economic evaluations.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Conductecosystem services assessments and economic evaluations

**Key Partners:** NC-DCM, NC-DWR, NC-DWR, IOG, COGs, PDCs, APA, Sea Grant, IOG, NC-NHP

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1d, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3c, 3d

**Outputs:** Communication strategy and materials on ecosystem services

**Results:** Informed decisions by environmental management

**D 3.2 Enhance the coordination of targeted ecosystem management by federal, state, regional, and local governments, and communities by assisting with the incorporation of resilience, climate change and sea level rise considerations into planning processes. (BIL Priority)**

APNEP and its partners have made significant strides forecasting and mapping climate risks, but much work remains to be done.  APNEP will continue to collaborate and coordinate with partners, including local governments and Tribal communities, to integrate climate considerations and information into their planning process, including the development of tools and resources to promote the use of natural and nature-based infrastructure to build community and ecosystem resilience. APNEP will work across sectors to identify and leverage mutually beneficial climate adaptation opportunities and mechanisms to collaborate across jurisdictional boundaries.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Implement activities to support partners in the incorporation of ecosystem resilience, climate adaptation, and sea level rise considerations into planning processes

**Key Partners:** Sea Grant, NC-DCM, NC-DMF, NC-DEM, EPA, SECAS, VA-CZM, USFWS, NC-WRC, NOAA, NC-DOT, NC-DHHS, IOG

**CCMP Outcomes Supported**: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d

**Outputs:** State, regional, and local plans that address climate risk and vulnerability including sea level rise

**Results:** Improved climate resiliency for human and natural communities.

**E 1: Develop and maintain an integrated monitoring network to collect and disseminate information for assessment of ecosystem outcomes and management actions associated with CCMP implementation**

Implementation of CCMP actions should produce positive outcomes in the regional ecosystem, and monitoring should be designed to confirm these changes are indeed proceeding as intended, all to support adaptive management and social learning. Measuring progress toward desired outcomes will require the establishment of a coordinated and integrated monitoring strategy. If fully implemented, these monitoring actions will support a systems-level understanding of the region’s environment, conveyed by APNEP’s assessment reporting.

**E 1.1 Facilitate the development and implementation of an integrated monitoring network through the guidance of regional monitoring and assessment teams. (BIL Priority)**

APNEP resource-themed teams (SAV, aquatic fauna, water, wetlands, terrestrial, air, human dimensions) will help assure that ecosystem outcomes stemming from environmental management efforts can be measured, and that management initiatives can be tailored based on the results of environmental assessments. APNEP will continue its collaborative development of integrated ecosystem monitoring to support CCMP implementation.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Develop plans to support development of integrated monitoring network.

**Key Partners:** NC-DEQ, NC-DCNR, VA-DEQ, VA-DCR, SECAS, EPA, NOAA, USGS

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d

**Outputs:** Regional integrated monitoring network

**Results:** Improved spatial and temporal data to detect APNEP indicator status and trends for ecosystem assessments and resource management decisions.

**E 1.2 Facilitate the expansion of volunteer monitoring into a core element of the integrated monitoring network.**

Evaluate and where feasible incorporate a volunteer monitoring component for active ecosystem and management indicators.  A rigorous quality assurance protocol will help maximize the utility of volunteer-produced data in APNEP assessments. Continue to integrate volunteer monitoring as a component of the Partnership’s integrated monitoring network strategy.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Incorporate a volunteer monitoring component where feasible into monitoring strategies

**Key Partners:** NC-MNS, NCCF, NOAA, USFWS, NC-DEQ, NC-DRP, NC-NHP, VA-DEQ, VA-DCR

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d

**Outputs:** High-quality volunteer monitoring data for select ecosystem and management indicators

**Results:** More comprehensive and effective monitoring network to support management decisions

**E 1.3 Develop and maintain an online resource that clearly conveys regional information in support of ecosystem-based management.**

In addition to creating a regional database, strive to make APNEP deliverables easily and readily available. Continue to evaluate media to effectively convey regional ecosystem information (maps, reports, metric reports, etc.) to our partners and other engaged stakeholders.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Lead development of accessible environmental **information systems.**

**Key Partners**: SECAS, NC-WRC, NC-DLWS, NOAA, NC-DEQ, NC-DNCR

**CCMP Outcomes Supported**: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d

**Outputs:** Publicly accessible (external) and partner-accessible (internal) environmental information systems

**Results:** More informed management decisions and public knowledge based on current shared data and assessments.

**Proposed Additional Items not derived from 2012 CCMP:**

**B 1. Refine and implement a regional wetland protection and restoration strategy. (BIL Priority?)**

Collaborate partners in identifying, protecting, and restoring wetland habitats through mapping, monitoring, examination of permitting requirements, water quality and habitat issues. APNEP will continue to facilitate its Wetlands Team to develop and promote a SAV restoration strategy.

**Lead:** APNEP

**Action:** Support development of a regional wetland protection and restoration strategy

**Key Partners:** NOAA, USFWS, NC-DCM, NC-DMF, NC-DMS, NC-NHP, VA-NHP,NC-WRC, VA-VMRC, VIMS, USACE, USGS

**CCMP Outcomes Supported:** 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d

**Outputs:** Collaborative wetland protection and restoration strategy

**Results:** Improved coordination and planning to support the management of water quality and ecosystem biodiversity and ecological integrity

**A 1. Develop and refine a second-generation regional ecosystem assessment and supporting assessments such as indicator metric reports and syntheses.**

Within the first-generation (2012) APNEP ecosystem assessment, a strong case for the value of environmental assessment in general, assessment’s role in APNEP, and proposed “next steps” were articulated to garner support for both that preliminary ecosystem assessment product and future improvements toward a more comprehensive ecosystem assessment. Despite some progress during the intervening period in developing additional indicator metric reports (a core feature in the 2012 effort), it has become clear that a sustained campaign and infusion of resources is required to make that vision for APNEP’s ecosystem assessment a reality. After a decade-plus of CCMP 2.0 implementation and future CCMP 3.0 implementation, a commitment to continual improvement of ecosystem assessments to bolster support of a key step in adaptive management (“learning by doing”) is most appropriate.

**Lead:**  APNEP, STAC Executive Board

**Action:**  Updated and expanded Ecosystem Assessments

**Key Partners**: NC-DEQ, NC-DCNR, VA-DEQ, VA-DCR, SECAS, EPA, NOAA, USGS

**CCMP Outcomes Supported**: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d

**Outputs:**  Ecosystem Assessment 2.0 in 2024, Ecosystem Assessment 3.0 in 2028.

**Results:**  Quality environmental data to support resource management decisions