

Communications and Engagement Plan

May 5th, 2026



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Goals



Target Audiences



Programs & Activities



Next Steps



1. FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF APNEP'S 2025 CCMP, ENSURING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND OWNERSHIP



2. PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND VOLUNTEERISM



3. ENHANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF ECOSYSTEM HEALTH



4. BUILD CAPACITY FOR ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE



5. STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS

Goals



Target Audiences

Management Conference Members (incl. ad hoc teams and workgroups)

Government (State, Local, Federal, Regional)

Academic Institutions & Researchers

Educators (K-12, Adult, Informal)

Nonprofits & Funders

Residents & Landowners

Tribal Communities

Visitors & Recreational Users

Businesses

Programs & Activities



MANAGEMENT
CONFERENCE



SPONSORSHIPS



GRANTS &
CONTRACTS



PRINT & DIGITAL
MATERIALS



INTERNSHIPS



RESEARCH
COLLABORATION
& DISSEMINATION



NETWORKING &
DEVELOPMENT



Management Conference



Description: APNEP's Management Conference consists of the LC, STAC, and CAC. Ad hoc working groups and Monitoring and Assessment Teams (MATs) are formed as needed.



Opportunities: Create a baseline questionnaire to determine how members perceive APNEP's communications and engagement efforts. Keep track of LC, STAC, and CAC member participation in APNEP meetings, projects, ad hoc groups, MATs, and events to target outreach opportunities.





Sponsorships



Description: Direct and indirect support for outreach and engagement activities helps raise awareness of APNEP's mission, strengthen partnerships, and ensure visibility of the Partnership's contributions.



Opportunities: More proactive planning for social media promotion of events and collect feedback on presentations/workshops. Reassess current communication material inventory and partner needs for updated copy. Ensure APNEP logos are provided for sponsored events.

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ABSTRACT ACCEPTED!

APNEP and partners will be presenting, **From Blooms to Solutions: Connecting Science, Communities, and Policy to Fight Harmful Algal Blooms in Eastern North Carolina and Beyond**, at the NC Water Resources Research Institute (WRRRI) Annual Conference March 25-26, 2026.

Stay tuned for the conference agenda!

More info & Registration
<https://wrrri.ncsu.edu/events/conference/>

Logos for sponsors: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, DEQ, Duke University, CIVIL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING, nc-cape, and NC STATE UNIVERSITY.





Grants & Contracts



Description: APNEP provides direct financial support to partners for various initiatives which assist in implementing at least one of the CCMP actions. APNEP can also collaborate with partners to apply for external funding sources or provide letters of support.



Opportunities: When possible, simplify grant application process for applicants and administrators who face limited capacity. Request feedback on application and review process.



Proposals due by April 30, 2026

APNEP CAC Engagement & Stewardship Grant

The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership (APNEP) is releasing a request for proposals with guidance from their Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) for community-based engagement and stewardship projects in the APNEP region. Proposals are due by April 30, 2026, and awards may range up to \$100,000. Visit apnep.nc.gov for more information!

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Print & Digital Materials



Description: Website, Blog, Social Media, Newsletter, Listservs, etc.



Opportunities: A workflow for tracking metrics across all platforms and mechanisms is in development. Potential for optional questionnaire to determine how target audiences perceive APNEP's communication efforts. APNEP one-pager for tabling.

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Internships



Description: APNEP has hosted numerous interns throughout the years who have produced outreach and communications products, plans, and evaluations.



Opportunities: Feedback from internship evaluations can provide insights into the program's effectiveness, helping to identify strengths and weaknesses in areas like onboarding, mentorship, and work assignments.





Research Collaboration & Dissemination



Description: APNEP's network of professionals allows the Partnership to consistently access and apply advanced scientific knowledge. Many CCMP actions outside of Engagement include communication and engagement components.



Opportunities: Better inclusion of communications staff regarding major project milestones or announcements. APNEP research project materials (StoryMaps, infographics, etc.) engagement is not monitored but could be helpful in realizing how much time should be invested by staff.





Networking & Development



Description: APNEP staff members work to develop and maintain relationships with partner organizations, participate in working groups and committees, and attend events that align with Partnership priorities.



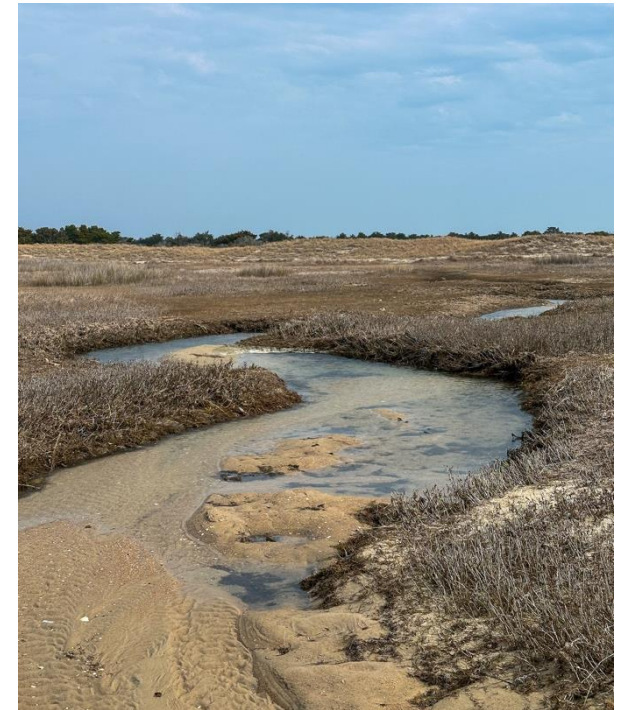
Opportunities: APNEP may consider repeating the analysis or refocusing on the results from the 2013 network analysis. After staff attend events, share during staff meeting what was learned and/or opportunities for follow-up.



Next Steps

- APNEP Leadership Council Review
- EPA Staff review
- Publish to website
- Implement!

Questions?



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