

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **Compilation of Responses from the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership January 14-15<sup>th</sup> 2020 Leadership Council Strategic Planning Meeting Preparation Interviews**

#### **Background**

As an integral part of the preparation for the January 14-15, 2020 Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership Leadership Council meeting, the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership's (APNEP) office's consultants, CoastWise Partners, conducted individual telephone interviews with the Leadership Council members, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee chair, the Executive Director and the rest of the members of the APNEP office staff.

All these individuals were contacted individually by either Rich Batiuk or Holly Greening of CoastWise Partners to schedule an in-person interview over the phone. CoastWise Partners conducted 20 interviews between December 5 and 19.

The interviewees were asked the same series of questions to get their feedback on the past and present performance of the Partnership and their recommendations on the future direction of the Partnership. To help prepare for the interview, a set of interview questions were shared with each interviewee in advance of their scheduled interview date.

Due to the unique nature of the CoastWise business model, no Federal or State funds were used to carry out these interviews or their compilation and summarization.

All of the interviewees were notified in writing in advance that all their verbal answers and narrative feedback would be kept fully confidential. CoastWise Partners did not share their specific responses with anyone, including the APNEP Office staff.

Interviewees were also made aware, in writing in advance, that their answers and feedback would be summarized, without attribution, along with feedback received from other in-person interviews, for presentation to the APNEP's policy decision-makers.

This document contains a comprehensive compilation of answers and feedback provided during all the in-person interviews organized by each of the interview questions, edited only as needed to ensure against attribution of specific responses to specific individuals interviewed without changing the context or meaning of any answers or feedback and to adhere to the bulleted text format. Responses targeting a specific individual partner or APNEP staff member were omitted.

The order of the bulleted responses under each question has no significance. CoastWise Partners did not attempt to group or otherwise order the feedback other than to keep related series of bulleted text together if the interviewee was making an expanded point or statement.

## Compilation of Interview Responses

**To date, what are the various restoration and protection topical areas—e.g., water quality, fisheries, habitat restoration, education—which the Partnership has been focused on?**

- There are theoretic focus areas are dictated by the CCMP—52 different actions which cover an array of different topics.
- Everything is a priority, but we don't like to use the word "priority".
- The focus areas might change over time in response to our partners.
- SAV, water quality and quantity and associated education and outreach efforts, with a focus on the estuarine environment, seem to be the partnership's focus areas.
- It would be very helpful to have a clearly stated set of priorities so that outreach and communications could be effectively targeted to the right audience.
- The Partnership can't demonstrate concrete success given it has such a wide set of focus areas.
- Originally there was a lot of research and engagement on documenting the issues facing the sounds and developing the original CCMP.
- Now on our 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> CCMP, the Partnership still without a clear focus on a select set of issues/topics.
- Huge geographic area—really too big to wrap your hands around with the limited resources available.
- The CCMP tries to cover every issue, from A to Z, that effects the watersheds.
- The big challenge has been not being able to focus down.
- First decade of the Program was focused on funding research on an array of topics.
- Then the Program developed the initial CCMP and the Program went through a series of ups and downs due to changes in the political administrations.
- About 2005, based on discussions with Virginia Institute of Marine Science colleagues and others, the Program embraced ecosystem-based management and the focus of the Program became monitoring and assessment.
- The most recent CCMP should have focused the Program down on a select set of priorities, but it didn't.
- In fact, the current CCMP does the exact opposite—it expanded the focus of the Program across an array of topics.
- Recently, the Partnership Office has turned its attention to SAV and oyster restoration as part North Carolina Coastal Habitat Protection Plan.
- One staff person is a state agency funded position devoted full time to helping implement the plan.
- APNEP has contributed funding for water quality monitoring, for a water quality conference and to the development nutrient criteria. However, the Partnership doesn't have a clear plan to how to go about addressing water quality.

- When the North Carolina Governor asked for a coastal resiliency policy for the state through an Executive Order, APNEP got involved in living shorelines.
- APNEP Office staff are focused on outreach and communications, with APNEP being the principal funder for 'Shad in the Classroom' as well as funding a summer teacher institute.
- APNEP Office staff are not involved in fisheries issues with the exception helping to address fish habitat, as they were told to avoid politically contentious issues.
- For the past 10 years, APNEP Office staff have been focused on a lofty goal based on ecosystem-based management and a strong emphasis on monitoring and assessment.
- Concerns about the broad nature of the lofty monitoring and assessment goals and vision as well as EPA's concerns about lack of progress have been discussed with the Leadership Council, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and other committees, however, they never reached a consensus agreement on how to address these concerns given general lack of resources.
- Through the past and present EPA program evaluations, the Partnership has been called out on the lack of progress towards development of indicators and the implementation of the monitoring programs needed to generate the data to track progress towards those indicators.
- They have worked across water quality, fisheries, habitat restoration, outreach and education.
- This organization has been talking about the same issues, the same things for the past 20+ years.
- One broad topic is environmental education, with a K-12 focus, with the best example being 'Shad in the Classroom.'
- The second category of priorities is implementation of very localized, restoration-oriented projects, essentially a patchwork across the coastal areas of both sounds.
- Third, is a limited amount of funds focused on research—SAV and ecological flows are two current examples.
- Even given these three focus areas, there have been and still are a lot of distractions as well that draw on the time of the APNEP Office staff and even the partners themselves.
- An extraordinarily broad number of topics are addressed by APNEP.
- Not sure that there has been a consistent focus over the decades—it has been an all or nothing attitude.
- APNEP has made the most advances on SAV.
- There are other components of APNEP which are not having the same level of success as SAV due to less APNEP Office staff involvement.
- But even in the case of SAV, APNEP has been successful in setting up monitoring and assessment, but not in changing the direction of the declining trends in SAV through management actions.

- By trying to implement the CCMP, which is written so broadly, APNEP is essentially taking a shotgun approach with efforts scattered all over the place.
- APNEP focus is from communications and education to water quality.
- To others in the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, it's very unclear as to what really is APNEP's role given APNEP is trying to do everything in the workplan.
- Have not been enough engaged to know what APNEP's priorities are.
- APNEP has worked hard on getting a handle on the SAV issue and has been successful in getting that effort going.
- There has been a lot of work on education, for example, the 'Shad in the Classroom' program.
- There have been two areas where APNEP has excelled in: 1) engagement and education, and 2) gathering information.
- APNEP has successful partnerships with teachers, with building green school yards, but it's hard to measure benefits of such programs.
- And given the EPA's focus on measuring water quality benefits, it's difficult to quantify the water quality improvement benefits of such engagement and outreach activities.
- The other area has been gathering information and SAV has been APNEP's success in this arena.
- There was a clear need to understand the SAV resource and what factors were impacting the resource.
- APNEP now has a complete map of SAV across the sounds and has a second and third one coming through soon.
- A new area of focus for APNEP has been economic impact analyses.
- APNEP's CCMP has been based on an ecosystem-based management but does include too many topics and actions for the partners to focus on.
- Need to keep the focus broad to demonstrate ecosystem-based management.
- A total of 12 Implementation Action Teams have been set up, based on topics (such as SAV and nutrients; Ecological Flows, etc.)—results from these teams should be integrated.
- Way too broad—the APNEP Office staff and partners are stretched thin and have not assessed the success (or lack of) of existing programs.
- APNEP has too many Implementation Action Teams.
- There has been too much focus on setting up and convening these teams, and not enough on getting to implementation.
- The perception is that APNEP is busy, but there are not a lot of results from all the work.
- APNEP seems to have the appropriate areas of focus.
- Ecosystem-based management is an important conceptual framework.
- Seems like too many areas; not sure of the specifics.

- The Partnership has been trying to maintain engagement to some extent in all these areas, a matter of some concern to some on the Leadership Council and possibly to USEPA staff, but not to all the members.
- Despite the limited budget, with all the APNEP staff positions having been filled, the Program can work with partners to have some level of effective engagement in all of the topical areas.
- Having partner engagement is certainly a key factor in making that happen, and that has, to some degree, been problematic.
- APNEP has already narrowed the Partnership's topics to mainly WQ and SAV, and it has been frustrating to see it being narrowed.
- APNEP does not conduct habitat restoration but works with partners who do and supports those partners when they are writing proposals for grants.
- Living shorelines has recently become a priority for APNEP.
- Too many Implementation Action Teams and Monitoring/Assessment Teams, especially since the teams are run by volunteers.
- Need to refine and finalize endpoints and answer the question: what are the goals of each team?

**Has the Partnership been effective in addressing these topic areas? Why or why not?**

- With SAV, water quality/quantity and associated outreach/communication, the Partnership has been effective.
- SAV mapping and monitoring has been the best example of where APNEP has been successful and shown progress.
- About to prepare the 3<sup>rd</sup> version of the sound-wise map of SAV.
- Education and outreach have been long term focus areas of the APNEP.
- APNEP has been helpful in terms of value added when there are partners already engaged on specific issues—two examples being oyster restoration and living shorelines.
- APNEP is most effective when its resources—staff and funding—are aligned with the existing resources of other organizations or agencies.
- In terms of SAV, this has been APNEP's main success in terms of monitoring and assessment as well as developing policy and outreach strategies for protecting and restoring SAV.
- In the case of oysters, success is dependent on a large number of partners.
- APNEP has been the lead partner of SAV and just one of many partners in the case of oysters.
- With the shift from oyster restoration to mariculture expansion, the focus has shifted from APNEP's focus of taking advantage of oysters' natural ecosystem services.
- APNEP has been effective, including actually having survived, through time.

- They had strong enough partners in place to maintain credibility and their ability to maintain to their mission even when they did not have the support of the state administration at that time.
- Some have expressed if APNEP is not focused on all aspects of the ecosystem, then the Partnership is not effectively carrying out ecosystem-based management.
- APNEP tries to do everything when they should really have fewer goals and fewer focus areas.
- The success APNEP has achieved with SAV is unique compared with all the other issues the Partnership has focused on—need to figure out why APNEP has been so successful with SAV and apply those lessons learned to the other key issues.
- APNEP is very effective of getting funds out to universities and other partners.
- There has been some effectiveness in the education aspects which APNEP has focused on.
- Some programs, like ‘Shad in the Classroom’, have reached the point of diminishing return on the investment of staff time and funding resources.
- The APNEP sponsored SAV work has stalled and has not been innovative. For example, there has been a massive invasion of non-native species, but the partners did not pay attention and kept on monitoring.
- The focus on ecological flows has been effective, particularly when others have not focused on this. The focus is on better understanding the hydrological flows of nutrients, sediment and other pollutants (e.g., fecal coliform, pharmaceuticals) through the watershed. The name—ecological flows—is a bit misleading.
- Effectiveness has really been a mixed bag.
- The work on SAV has been effective due to strong partnerships with agencies like NOAA and North Carolina Department of Transportation.
- For other areas, it has been less effective due to just forming a team and then expecting someone to take the lead and work to make it effective. Some of the groups are just not ready to move forward.
- APNEP Office staff are effective in bringing the teams together, but less effective in making the groups actually work together and make progress.
- There is a lot of fatigue by the partners and the staff just due to the sheer number of teams.
- And the physical size of the watershed and the two sounds make it difficult to be effective.
- APNEP has not been effective in addressing every topic the Partnership are listed as responsible for in the CCMP.
- APNEP has its strengths—SAV work and our communications.
- APNEP relies a lot on our partners to carry out the on-the-ground implementation work but doesn’t really communicate well with its partners.

- It is known that APNEP's partners are doing work which is focused on elements of the CCMP, but the APNEP Office staff doesn't hear back from them on what progress they have been making.
- The lines of communications between APNEP Office staff with APNEP's partners are essentially dotted lines, not solid lines.
- Don't have the level of involvement to answer this question.
- APNEP has been effective in coordination and facilitation aspects of bringing agencies and institutions to work together on assessment of the SAV resource.
- APNEP has also been successful somewhat with their education work, particularly 'Shad in the Classroom' and actually undertook efforts to evaluate their effectiveness and were found to be so.
- But they aren't very focused.
- The list of tasks in the CCMP are just way too long.
- There is an inability to determine if they are successful or not.
- There is no accountability.
- Some partners have been pressing APNEP to go forward and start building in accountability to the work of the Partnership.
- APNEP has done some reviews of the need for accountability, but they never implemented anything as a result—they are still trying to cover way too many bases.
- They are essentially working to 'check the box' on a long list of issues.
- APNEP has the ability to separate themselves from APNEP as part of a North Carolina state agency to APNEP as a partnership.
- They can then separate out what they as an agency can do and be accountable for doing the facilitation and coordination work. And they can then help the larger partnership in conducting work directed towards outcomes the partners should be accountable towards accomplishing.
- It's not fair for APNEP as an agency to be judged on the what the APNEP as a partnership should be held accountable for.
- APNEP has not been as successful in broad scale in making water quality improvements measured in terms of removing water bodies from the list of impaired waters.
- EPA is always wanting APNEP to get waterbodies off the list of impaired waters.
- EPA has also put pressure on APNEP to work on nutrients.
- The state is doing a good job on that front, but as a nonregulatory program, APNEP can only work on implementing BMPs.
- Another area that other National Estuary Programs have been successful in and APNEP hasn't been is habitat restoration.
- APNEP just don't have the resources needed to make significant progress in habitat restoration. The state has a habitat restoration program with funds, but its focused statewide and not just on the sounds.
- The words "identify, restore and protect" are in Partnership's mission statement.

- APNEP does a good job in identifying, but a lot less so for restoring and protecting.
- It's hard to say whether the Implementation Action Teams have been effective.
- However, if APNEP wasn't bringing the partners together, they wouldn't be making much progress either.
- Not sure if APNEP has really been effective due to how many topics and areas they are trying to cover.
- Everyone recognizes that the SAV Team is the most effective—the partners see the value of being involved.
- Area is so large and diverse, with rich and poor, it has been frustrating to get traction and show progress that is not nebulous.
- Not sure how effective APNEP has been.
- The answer depends on how you define “effective.”
- Aware of APNEP Office staff engagement in ALL of the topical areas listed in the above question, including:
  - In the water quality arena, staff are participating in the effort to develop nutrient criteria for APNEP estuaries;
  - In the fisheries and habitat arena, staff have been instrumental in developing a long-term monitoring plan for SAV, and developing a highly effective partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation for getting the necessary aerial imagery secured at greatly reduced cost, and conducting on-the-ground monitoring and truthing; and
  - In the education realm, APNEP has partnered with multiple other organizations (i.e., North Carolina State University, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—both the Ecological Services and Fish and Aquatic Resources divisions) in the ‘Shad in the Classroom Program’, to educate students in North Carolina about American Shad, their life cycle, and their management.
- The SAV Action Team and ‘Shad in the Classroom’ have been highly successful.
- There are a lot of Implementation Action Teams and Monitoring/Assessment teams—have a hard time getting someone to lead some of them, staff ends up trying to do this.
- The Water Quality Team has been slow to develop because there are so many other groups involved in one or more aspects of water quality and some consider the APNEP Action Team to be duplicative.
- Some of the teams are effective whereas others are struggling to find an identity.
- The SAV Team is built on an existing group already established before APNEP, who were glad to have APNEP take on the facilitation and logistics.
- It's a similar case with the Oyster Team as they also are built on an existing group.
- The Education Team is a big group with lots of ideas, but not a lot of follow through.
- Mixed results with asking volunteers to lead the Implementation Action Teams.



- The volunteers typically have full-time jobs without a lot of extra time to put into leading the teams.
- There needs to be capacity at the staff level to carry on the work between the team meetings.

**Into the future, should the Partnership work to narrow down or broaden its focus (topics and/or geographic extent) of restoration and protection actions?**

- Yes!
- The Partnership needs to select a few areas of priority and focus in on those priorities.
- Need to then develop a game plan to focus the limited staff and funding resources, particularly important as different state administrations have come and gone and support for the Partnership has waxed and waned.
- Absolutely, there is a need to narrow down the focus.
- Need to narrow the focus down considerably.
- Pick one or two issues from the various 30+ issues listed in the CCMP.
- The North Carolina Coastal Federation has significantly narrowed down the focus of the federation—this has really helped make progress by focusing the collective efforts on a very select set of issues.
- Need to get the APNEP Office staff to focus on one or two issues that they can really make a difference.
- The CCMP has a large list of tasks and resulting in formation of way too many teams—all of us agree that this is too much.
- Narrowing down their topics makes sense given the limited resources.
- Concerned that the narrowing process could also be applied to geography. We need to narrow down the number of topics covered but broaden the geographic focus where appropriate.
- Need to narrow down the focus to what is the charge of a National Estuary Program.
- There has been a push in APNEP to move forward with ecosystem-based management, but they are missing the core function of a National Estuary Program.
- Really critical to focus in on SAV and water quality not only the next year but for the next several years
- For something like SAV, the geographic focus needs to be broad not further narrowed down.
- The focus areas need to be narrowed down.
- That would clarify what APNEP Office staff needs to do and what their specific roles and responsibilities should be.
- APNEP is weakest at implementation of restoration of projects, given limited resources.
- APNEP relies on its partners to carry out that implementation, but the partners never share data on what's being implemented on the ground in the watershed.

- APNEP should take the lead on specific projects/specific focus areas—that would give the Partnership better visibility and enable others to understand what we really do and what and where we can contribute.
- APNEP should narrow down the specific focus areas.
- Concerned that APNEP has not focused down on a select set of issues after all this time.
- Narrow the focus down to a very small select set of areas/topics.
- Have seen other National Estuary Programs focus on specific topics and carry out their work effectively.
- Where these National Estuary Programs have been effective, they have outside funds to carry out more large projects.
- APNEP should function more like Puget Sound given they are of a similar geographic scale, but Puget Sound has funding sources that we have not been able to attain.
- Puget Sound has had the buy-in from their Governor’s office that the Sound is important to the state—in North Carolina, we have never had that level of recognition across the different governors.
- Keep it broad to implement ecosystem-based management.
- Narrow the focus, both in terms of topics (to address goals) and geographic extent.
- Too many Implementation Action Teams.
- APNEP Office Staff and partners are stretched thin with 20+ Teams, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and other committees.
- The concept behind the establishment of Implementation Action Teams was that team members would have shared goals and would do the work of the team, but that has not been the case in many instances.
- Need to narrow the focus to be effective, but just how to narrow is challenging.
- Don’t narrow the focus of the Partnership.
- Different areas of the watershed have different issues, so APNEP should address all areas.
- The Partnership should not broaden its topical focus—it already has a full plate of action items to accomplish, generated from the CCMP.
- The EPA has encouraged more focus, along with some of our colleagues at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (Drs. Havens and Hershner), in order to increase effectiveness as they define it, so there is a current focus on water quality, which is certainly a key habitat parameter.
- Support the geographic expansion of the Partnership to include the portion of the Roanoke River Basin above the dams, something which has been avoided in the past, in part for political reasons, but also because the Partnership’s geography is already so large.
- But don’t narrow the topic focus areas.
- Definitely need to narrow the focus.
- Pick a few priorities rather than try to focus on all 50+ actions in the CCMP.

- APNEP is struggling without a process in place to focus on a few priorities.
- Narrow the focus to what is realistic, given the staff and volunteer capacities.

**What would be your recommendations for narrowing down or broadening out the focus areas of the Partnership?**

- Beyond SAV, water quality/quantity, and associated outreach and communication, we should include a focus on climate change.
- It would be good for APNEP to align itself with the priorities of the current administration, looking for an alignment between the goals of the CCMP and those of the state's administration and the Department of Environmental Quality.
- The North Carolina Coastal Federation has a clear set of priorities—need to tease out priorities from the other partners and see how these align with the administration's priorities.
- APNEP has done itself a great disservice by embracing ecosystem-based management given very limited staff and program funding resources.
- Need to put definitive bounds on embracing ecosystem-based management.
- SAV should remain a priority, particularly given it a great indicator of the health of the overall estuarine ecosystem.
- APNEP has been effective when the partners focus on understanding and filling gaps.
- Some type of broader gap assessment should be undertaken so the Partnership can better understand where it can best help fill critical gaps in data and information.
- If APNEP continues to focus on SAV and habitat (wetlands, oysters, water quality in general), that alone will take up most of the APNEP Office's staff and annual funding resources.
- APNEP should adopt the focus areas of the North Carolina Coastal Federation—oyster restoration is a great example of what APNEP could focus on.
- Projects like cleaning up abandoned crab pots and other marine debris should be pursued as well as ones that make a real difference and are based on a sound scientific foundation.
- APNEP has to address sea level rise along the coastal communities.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee should focus on how the partners can best help people who are being directly impacted by sea level rise.
- Salt intrusion is a great example of a real issue which we can focus on.
- Whether you believe climate change is based on human causes or not, sea level rise is real and is happening now.
- North Carolina's coastal fisheries are changing as a result of changes in the salinity as you head up our tidal rivers.
- Changes in salinity are changing where different species of fish are now located compared with the past.

- Our small towns need to start looking at their failing septic systems, runoff from their parking lots, and funding their wastewater treatment facilities.
- We know we are losing SAV, then why are we paying to quantify how fast we are losing them.
- We did need to understand why we are losing them not how fast we are losing them.
- APNEP is funding monitoring which is sure not telling us what we need to know.
- Not so much as a change in the topics, but a change in the orientation on how the Partnership addresses them is needed.
- For example, for SAV, the focus is on monitoring and scientific research, but is limited by the funding. This is a great opportunity for engaging the community with citizen science.
- Same for oyster restoration, invasive species, and climate change—focus on better engaging the local communities in the actual work at the same time keeping a science focus and an active communication effort.
- The state won't address some aspects of these issues, e.g., climate change, that APNEP could, in turn, address.
- Up in the watershed, other groups are already present and delivering support around the Triangle and other places—the Partnership really needs to show success in other places and help move it forward.
- APNEP is missing great opportunities to work with university faculty members and their undergraduate and graduate students.
- There is no conduit for getting students directly involved in the work of APNEP and focus their research on issues and challenges of direct interest to the Partnership.
- There is no program for recognizing the students or members of the community that are actively working to support the mission of APNEP.
- Focus essentially on the same topics but undertake different ways of doing things within those topic areas.
- There are lots of opportunities where citizen science that can be better taken advantage of.
- The narrowed down set of focus areas should be a direct reflection of the charge under the Clean Water Act.
- Therefore, the priority should be water quality with SAV being a great indicator of clean water.
- There will be pressure to add other topics but given the sheer magnitude of the estuarine system and watershed we need to keep focused.
- Concentrate on the SAV work including the mapping work.
- Water quality is another area APNEP can focus on in terms of monitoring and the interpretation of the monitoring data and its presentation to the public.

- APNEP needs to focus on an economic analysis of the larger Albemarle and Pamlico sounds ecosystem so that the public understands the values of the sounds leading to more support for and recognition of our restoration and protection efforts.
- In these programs where agencies support restoration, funds from EPA and the state are small compared to programs in USDA and FEMA (e.g., pre-disaster mitigation program).
- Could use APNEP grant funds and APNEP Office staff in concert with the USDA and FEMA resources where all the individual agencies' and partnership's sets of priorities overlap—examples being flood plain mitigation, re-establishing wetlands and re-building back in meandering streams and rivers.
- Need to better understand the missions and focus areas of these two agencies so they can use their funds for implementation more effectively and APNEP can use its funds for planning and priority setting to help these two agencies be more effective.
- Not exactly sure which topic areas should that APNEP focus in on.
- The APNEP Office staff should be the ones to really determine which topics should they focus down on and where they can be effective.
- One focus area could be the shared waterways between Virginia and North Carolina.
- One of APNEP's niches is the studies, either economic valuation or conditional assessment studies, of our sounds.
- Educational engagement activities with teachers is another area in which APNEP has excelled.
- Keep the focus areas broad to implement ecosystem-based management.
- Start on a few key goals/topics, get agreement on ways forward, move to other topics as resources allow.
- APNEP has not been able to articulate how to integrate the Implementation Action Teams' topics into specific goals.
- There are currently 58 actions in the CCMP—these should be narrowed down or at least prioritized.
- The APNEP Office staff could use some help with drafting this, for discussion by the Leadership Council.
- Focus on an issue or goal that has multiple implications.
- SAV could be a good focus—stressors are coming from upstream, ecosystem services provided by SAV include fisheries, carbon sequestration and resiliency. Would need to increase awareness of the importance of SAV. Incorporates and integrates a number of topics.
- More communication with the public and education with kids—most people don't know what the Albemarle-Pamlico watershed is or what their impact on it and the sounds are.
- Broaden the geography to include the rest of the Roanoke River Basin.
- From a topical perspective, the APNEP Office staff and partners could afford to tackle at least one other focal area, perhaps education.

- It is time for the Leadership Council to take another look at all of the action items from the CCMP and come up with a focal list on which to concentrate.
- Include Virginia by having Virginia assign a staff person to support APNEP's mission.
- Depending on the role of APNEP (i.e., more of a facilitator), then the geographic extent may not be too large.
- Struggles with having Virginia as part of the APNEP study area—there is supposed to be a liaison between APNEP and Virginia, but there does not appear to be any communication.
- APNEP has been successful in their education and, to some extent, science efforts to date, but would like to hear what the Partnership wants to do in terms of focus.
- Water quality, habitat restoration, education have strengths as areas to focus on.
- Fisheries is not the best choice as an areas of focus because others are doing this work.
- The geographic extent is doable, depending on the role that APNEP plays.
- Virginia is becoming more important, so the Partnership needs to ensure the liaison is actively engaged.

**What do you see as the roles that the Partnership has played to date towards achieving shared restoration and protection goals?**

- There are a lot of great organizations in our region that are working on issues, actions and goals listed in the CCMP.
- The Partnership Office staff are effective at bringing people together to work together, but not effective at bringing the partners together and working collaboratively.
- APNEP currently doesn't give the partners a good reason to come together and work collaboratively together towards common objectives.
- Some partners see the Partnership Office strictly as a source of funding and a group that convenes meeting.
- As a collective partnership, including the Partnership's Office, APNEP has made progress with living shorelines and the oyster restoration priorities by working together over the past 20 years.
- APNEP has made some attempts at working on stormwater management and has made some progress there.
- APNEP has made limited progress on reducing nutrient pollutant loads.
- APNEP has made progress in documenting the status of SAV along the coastline, but the key need is to translate what that means in terms of management.
- From a partnership office perspective, the APNEP staff have been very effective in bringing together people and working on a common set of goals—they are good facilitators.
- From a partnership perspective, to tackle these diverse sets of issues, APNEP needs to bring together a wide array of expertise and skills to bear on a common problem.
- The best example is the Partnership's work on the SAV resource.

- Gap filling is another role played by both the APNEP Office staff and the partnership.
- Given the Partnership is still trying to find its place in the larger world of estuary restoration and protection, APNEP is still important as gap fillers.
- APNEP provides funding for research, for monitoring, for engagement and communications
- Given APNEP is hosted by a state regulatory agency, the APNEP Office staff has fostered a relationship where the agency has, for the first time, brought funds to the Partnership to help pay for the SAV survey.
- APNEP is focused on handing out the funds and using those funds to 'leverage' other organizations and agencies and claim that leveraging as their measure for success.
- In regard to some of these small restoration projects, APNEP Office staff have facilitated getting the funds to local communities.
- APNEP Office staff have helped write letters of support for research projects for faculty members.
- Connecting faculty members with others working in the community is something the APNEP Office staff have done but could do more of.
- Coordination across agencies has been a key role for the APNEP Office staff.
- APNEP's major role has been as a convener as well as being a catalyst for those projects or focus areas which are not being as successful as needed.
- APNEP has been effective in being more proactive than reactive.
- But, if the area of focus does not match well with other partners' priorities, then we will not be successful regardless of how much staff effort is applied
- In the past, APNEP has been an important funder of research, but much less so now.
- Facilitating and convening meetings are APNEP Office staff's key roles.
- Funding meaningful projects is a weakness given the limited funds.
- APNEP doesn't get any state funds for implementation.
- North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality does fund two staff positions both of whose offices are located on the coast.
- As in the past, the APNEP Office Director and staff are still too aligned to the state government and they are too tightly tied to the state politics, therefore they have not been nearly as successful as the Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay National Estuary Programs.
- The APNEP Office staff are too deeply embedded with the state politicians to be as objective as they need to be.
- The larger Partnership really doesn't understand what the APNEP Office staff can do for them as partners.
- Given the lack of focus on a specific list of priorities, that only further separates the APNEP Office staff from the partners.
- APNEP Office staff have identified some gaps in various arenas and stated they are willing to take the lead on filling these gaps if partners want to come and join them.

- Providing services as an independent body is one of the APNEP Office staff's key roles.
- The ecosystem-based management structure provides the framework to identify gaps and encourage partners to implement.
- The roles that APNEP plays or could play need to be defined.
- Coordinating across agencies has been useful.
- APNEP sits at the nexus of federal, state and local government—not in the driver's seat, but as a convener.
- Being in a state agency is hindering APNEP's role as a neutral convener.
- Convening and coordinating across agencies is a good role.
- Public outreach and communication could be an especially effective role.
- APNEP has some new staff that want to move forward but are being held back for some reason.
- Convener.
- Supporter of research and restoration efforts.
- In the past, APNEP also focused on outreach and education, but has shifted away from this.
- APNEP provides a 'partnership platform', which all the partners can use.
- APNEP will need to find traction for this concept and get respect and recognition for providing this platform for the partners.
- Important role is connecting with people and organizations, working together.
- APNEP has the talent to get people working together.
- Coalition building is key role.
- The Partnership has served as an integrator to provide a focus for documenting and developing actions to address resource issues in the four topical areas, within the North Carolina/Virginia watershed.
- It has done so through development of ecosystem assessments through time (three of them to date) and also through development of the CCMPs (in the second iteration of that document).
- A major role has been to adopt, and encourage partners to adopt, an ecosystem-based approach to management, so the Partnership has also served as an innovator in that respect, thanks again to the encouragement of our Virginia Institute of Marine Science colleagues.
- Such a holistic approach is really the key to implementation of effective change.
- APNEP plays four key roles: Innovator (ecosystem-based management approach); Integrator (watershed perspective, potentially a big role); Instigator; and Inspiration.
- Facilitating projects, meetings.
- Over the past 5-6 years, APNEP has risen in status, and is seen favorably by the partners.
- In addition to facilitation, APNEP is seen by some as a potential funding source for seed money for small projects.
- Not sure what the roles are.



- Could help facilitate among the folks doing the work.
- Could also support research, if funding was available.
- APNEP does a good job as conveners and have maintained a neutral political voice.
- Rural education in science and STEM could be good role.
- 'Shad in the Classroom' is a great model.

**Has the Partnership been effective in carrying out those roles over the time frame that you have been directly involved with the Program?**

- APNEP is really a little bit of everything, but not standing for anything in particular.
- When people refer to the Partnership, they are really referring to the Partnership Office.
- There is references to little APNEP and big APNEP.
- For a number of years, the program has been invisible given the past administration.
- As a partnership, we really don't have any authority—we derive our power from the funding and the support of the administration.
- Been successful at getting people to the table and supporting discussions, but not good that translating that into meaningful actions that help move the CCMP goals and objectives forward.
- No.
- There were periods of time during which there was a direct effort to quell anything environmental in orientation by the state's administration, across state agencies, universities, and APNEP itself.
- The Leadership Council looked at potentially moving the APNEP Office outside of state government given the loss of staff and staff being moved between agencies.
- Since then, things have stabilized and there is a growing recognition that the CCMP was too broad and there were too many topics to address, but efforts to make changes have been slow to essentially ineffective.
- Yes, in roles as convener and catalyst.
- Yes, in terms of the facilitation and convening roles.
- The partners struggle in having the resources and expertise in these two areas, with the exception of the North Carolina Coastal Federation.
- APNEP provides these services free to its partners' organizations and agencies.
- EPA's program evaluations from more than 10 years ago are the same as the most recent EPA evaluations.
- Nothing has essentially changed over the life of this program.
- This is a principal reason why partners are choosing not to engage with the program.
- The APNEP Office staff have been interested and active in trying to make all this work.
- The APNEP Office Director is located within North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and a lot of what is in the CCMP is located with many other North Carolina state agencies and departments.

- If APNEP was located within the Governor’s office, the Director and their staff could work more effectively across the different state agencies.
- APNEP has been able to get recognized as a group able to undertake studies, the ecosystem assessment is a good example.
- APNEP has also been effective in supporting monitoring and could have a broader integrative role into the future.
- It depends on the topic.
- Mixed.
- APNEP should be more of a watershed-based program, working with partners to identify shared interest throughout the watershed.
- APNEP should take the opportunity to re-evaluate and realign goals and interests.
- Most people cannot distinctly define what APNEP does.
- Hard to say.
- Believe that APNEP has been successful in coalition building, but not sure.
- Yes, to some extent.
- The first manifestation of the Partnership (APES) was hampered from developing a fully effective CCMP by virtue of politics, after seeing how the draft CCMP was ultimately watered-down, largely as a result of the lack of will by partners to implement serious measures for addressing resource issues.
- The second CCMP and Partnership manifestation has been highly effective in implementing an ecosystem-based approach, and in developing a slate of actions which, if implemented, will make a difference.
- The challenge has been, and continues to be, implementation using limited staff and financial resources, and limited engagement by some partners that should be heavily engaged (e.g., the North Carolina Division of Water Resources, and NC Department of Environmental Quality, and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission).
- Partners need to be more engaged.
- Becoming more recognized as a facilitator.
- There was a perception that APNEP took the credit for everyone else’s work.
- Yes, as conveners for some topics.
- Education elements, like ‘Shad in the Classroom’, have also been effective.

**Do you see the Partnership playing the same roles or a different set of roles into the future towards achieving that goal or those goals?**

- If we are re-starting the Partnership, hope this means groups of people and organizations coming together and truly working together towards a core set of focus areas.
- Would like to see what has been accomplished with the focus on SAV be replicated in other focus areas.
- Would like to see a much more limited set of focus areas into the future.

- The Partnership can incrementally work on these issues/focus areas and only move onto other areas as the original issues are effectively addressed.
- We have good representation from Virginia, but we need to be clear with our Virginia partners what are our expectations from them and their part of the watershed.
- Without tangible outcomes, we should not be trying to spread our resources over the two-state watershed.
- The partners have a blueprint for oysters which is updated every 5 years, with an acreage goal for oyster beds and a goal for oyster production.
- For living shorelines, the APNEP Office staff helped set up a team focused on this topic and its working on specific goals and targets for permitting living shorelines
- Recently the state of North Carolina and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a general permit putting living shorelines on an equal footing as bulkheading when it comes to receiving a permit.
- APNEP could play a key role in reducing the barriers to permitting stormwater management approaches.
- Do we want to move to a different host—another state agency, a university? That decision will influence the importance of some roles versus others.
- If we moved to a non-regulatory state agency, we could more actively raise funds for the Partnership.
- Supporting the partnering organizations to be successful in carrying out their missions which support achieving a common set of goals should be a principal role of APNEP into the future.
- Some of the structure in place in the plan is still workable if it is reduced in scope and complexity.
- But something new is still needed, whether its organizational change or in how the work is carried out—don't have the recipe, but something different is needed.
- Need to think further about how to do things geographically—we have the upper watershed and the southern watershed and there have been limited efforts to connect these watersheds in North Carolina and Virginia.
- From the outside, others see APNEP more as a program than a partnership.
- There is an important difference between what is in APNEP plan and what conservation partners see as their priorities. “Oh, that’s in APNEP’s plan, not ours” is generally their response.
- APNEP Office staff needs to take ownership of certain things.
- When opportunities are brought to the attention of the Partnership, it’s not the staff that will be doing the work, but they are the ones who need to align the partners that need to be involved in order to be ultimately successful.
- Beyond the SAV work, the APNEP Office staff needs take a lead, and come along with funds, to show the community the importance of this work and that it’s important for the community to get engaged and directly involved.

- If APNEP can narrow its focus to specific SAV, education and water quality topics, the partnership could free up resources to put more emphasis on on-the-ground implementation.
- North Carolina has a North Carolina Coastal Habitat Protection Plan—the partnership could increase its focus on this area, but it has such limited resources.
- Need to focus individual APNEP Office staff towards providing more expertise in the field for on the ground implementation.
- APNEP Office staff could tap into other resources—e.g., state agency boats—to help support on the ground implementation efforts as well.
- They should pull APNEP out of state government and make it quasi-governmental organization like has been done in the Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay Nation Estuary Program and narrow down their focus.
- APNEP could then build on early successes by focusing on the small scale and clearly demonstrating what the partners can do by working together.
- Continue with the current roles the APNEP Office staff has now but focus those roles on a narrowed down list of goals and outcomes.
- The larger Partnership needs to understand from the top down that this is a group that we need working effectively to carry out the restoration and protection actions needed for these areas of North Carolina and Virginia.
- One of the key roles of any National Estuary Program has is to be public engagement, no matter what else APNEP is doing.
- Being citizen-driven and having a strong scientific core has got to be what APNEP is and how the Partnership works.
- The monitoring and assessment roles are critical to support evidence-based decisions.
- APNEP is a bridging boundaries program (science, policy, practice).
- A focus on short-term objectives hinders focus on long-term goals.
- Also need a stronger focus on engagement with the public to support ecosystem-based management principles.
- APNEP should conduct a survey of various interests in the different parts of the watershed, determine how do these interests intersect (if at all) and then focus on these intersecting interests.
- APNEP is playing an important role as convener for the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge—this could be a model for other partner engagements.
- This is a huge watershed, too large for existing APNEP resources to deal with effectively.
- Could work on pilot efforts in smaller segments, but this would not be consistent with the ecosystem-based management concept as defined by APNEP staff members (i.e., requires assessing everything).
- One concept—focus on economically depressed areas contributing to the Albemarle Sound as a pilot.
- APNEP is doing the right kinds of things, but they can't be everything to everybody.

- Continue coalition building.
- Don't really see the roles changing, to the extent that they are nationally driven by USEPA and implemented locally by the Partnership.
- There are opportunities to evolve, but sees the current roles played by APNEP as appropriate for the community.

**What do you see as the barriers or challenges to the Partnership and its partners being even more effective in carrying out these roles into the future?**

- The CCMP itself is a barrier as it lays out a million different priorities.
- There aren't any shorter documents which enable the partners to focus down our efforts.
- The CCMP is written in very vague and broad terms with no real sense of how progress could be measured.
- Beyond lack of measurable outcomes, limited staff and funding resources, and lack of a narrowed down set of focus areas, the Program is faced with the question what to do about how its structured to deal with future changes in administration.
- When we have the support of the administration, we can be effective. But when we don't, the Program essentially becomes invisible.
- We need to be thinking about a longer-term structure that makes it less susceptible to changes in administration.
- Consideration has been given to moving APNEP from North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to another cabinet agency or an academic institution.
- That longer-term structure solution is forming their own non-profit organization which would be the host entity. That would be a difficult move given the presence of state agency staff.
- Another option would be establishing a collaborative agreement where the Leadership Council would be given the authority to truly manage the Partnership and all the partners would be committed to supporting the program financially. The agreement would spell out the roles and responsibilities of the different partners with the fiscal agent handling the distribution of National Estuary Program funds based on funding priorities established and agreed to by the Partnership.
- APNEP has a mixture of science and policy outcomes and initiatives—needs to do a better job of bringing these sets of initiatives together.
- Currently, the partners focus separately on science versus policy initiatives as opposed to working on both in tandem.
- By narrowing down our focus, that will greatly help the partners to work on both science and policy initiatives in tandem.
- The bottom line is we are trying to do too much with too little.
- Question has been raised if they could partner up with North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to remove the regulatory 'stink' on APNEP.

- Being outside of North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, the relationships APNEP would need to build within Department of Environmental Quality would end up be strictly external, working personal relationships.
- North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality needs to make APNEP part of the fabric of the Department and getting them access to more resources and support from other parts of the Department.
- The size of the watershed alone is a huge barrier.
- Got the sense that the APNEP Office wants to stay close the where the political decisions are being made and not getting out to work with partners in the field.
- Buy-in from staff persons who have been at the APNEP Office for a long time to any changes is difficult to impossible—they are very comfortable with the status quo.
- There is a physical barrier in terms of geographic distance given the large size of the watershed and the lack of travel funds to support attendance at meetings given the size of the watershed.
- Could move the APNEP meetings around or could set up geographically based meetings to bring out the local and regional partners.
- A bit more geographic spread would be very helpful.
- More di-centralization.
- Thinking beyond Raleigh’s boundaries is definitely needed.
- The North Carolina Coastal Federation has placed its staff up and down the North Carolina coast. The same for the Nature Conservancy. APNEP has not embraced this approach.
- Beyond funding and staff capacity, one of the major barriers is the cultural shift that is needed to turn the program into a true partnership.
- We have working on metrics and monitoring indicators for more than a decade, and nothing has happened!
- There needs to be a cultural shift for the APNEP Office staff in order to demonstrate here’s how we will work effectively as a partnership.
- APNEP Office Staff needs to lead by example and demonstrate why the investment of partners’ time is essential to making progress.
- The current bureaucracy is a barrier given APNEP is under the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, a regulatory agency.
- The partners believe there will be additional baggage—more reporting requirements, additional regulatory oversight—by working with the APNEP Office.
- The mission and the CCMP being so broad and diverse continues to cause the Partnership problems, limiting its effectiveness.
- The partners see this as a challenge.
- APNEP can’t take ownership of anything given the partnership is so broad in its mission and objectives.
- Funding is also limited but calling this a barrier is really a cope out.

- APNEP needs to show they are relevant to their partners, that they have the ability to accomplish something and that working with APNEP will help partners and stakeholders accomplish even more than working separately.
- The Director should not worry about what EPA wants, but focus on what his partners and stakeholder want to accomplish.
- The geographic extent is a challenge.
- Virginia is supposed to have a staff person from Virginia to work with APNEP, but it is not evident that one currently is.
- Virginia has a large impact (25-30% of the area) and needs to be at the table.
- How to encourage Virginia to become engaged with APNEP and support a staff person to do so remains a challenge.
- Funding, geographic scope, and a complex ecosystem are three top challenges.
- The various governmental boundaries—states, counties, municipalities, EPA regions, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Districts, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service boundaries, etc.—makes it exceedingly difficult to work across a large watershed.
- Making the public connection to Albemarle and Pamlico sounds from up in the watershed is difficult.
- Our big cities are separated from the sounds by a large swarth of agricultural lands.
- There is a direct conflict between EPA’s priorities for the National Estuary Programs, including a set of annually changing priorities on top of a constant focus on water quality and nutrients, and what our partners see as the priorities for the Partnership.
- In the past, EPA has restricted how National Estuary Programs went about seeking other sources of funds and how the National Estuary Programs’ funded staff could go about seeking and raising funds.
- APNEP has not been successful in getting the attention of the rest of North Carolina’s Department of Environmental Quality and getting them focused on specific issues of interest to APNEP’s partners.
- Our partners and even some of our members of the Leadership Council see us as a program versus a partnership.
- We have made efforts to talk differently and are trying to take steps towards being a partnership, but we have not been successful.
- Having a host entity that shifts emphasis every four years is difficult, especially for long-term ecosystem-based management processes.
- Funding is limited to EPA 320 and some grant funding with some county and local government in-kind matching funds.
- APNEP needs to demonstrate that their efforts are making progress towards specific goals.
- Focus on fewer topics which are related to goals; focus on elements that are common interests throughout the watershed.

- It's difficult to get consensus from the Leadership Council, as they don't have a shared vision.
- Funding is limited by being located within a state agency.
- Some may consider APNEP as a regulatory entity.
- The state does not allow some fundraising activities given APNEP is part of a state agency.
- Money is in short supply.
- Not sure that APNEP is doing everything it can in terms of tapping into different sources of funding.
- In North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (where APNEP is located), there are people paid by the state to write grants to public and private funding sources, including Foundations. Maybe tap into those grant writing resources?
- The major barriers continue to be insufficient funding and staff resources, and minimal engagement by other partners.
- Under the previous North Carolina administration, and continuing into the present administration as far as the North Carolina Legislature goes, and under the present national administration, the ideological and political climate has been hostile to the Partnership.
- Although that has changed somewhat under the current North Carolina Governor, things remain difficult in the North Carolina Legislature.
- It would also help if the Partnership could find the time to apply for more external funding and be successful in securing it.
- Difficult to fully engage the partners.
- Important to have upper levels engaged to demonstrate their commitment to APNEP and to encourage lower level staff members to participate fully in the Implementation Action Team and Monitoring/Assessment Teams.
- Geographic extent is a challenge with Virginia.
- There is no accountability to follow-up on past efforts to prioritize.
- Staff had a 2-day meeting to prioritize indicators, but nothing has changed.
- The same challenges we all have. How to prioritize resources, how to say no to things that are shiny.

**Do you see the existing management structure and governance procedures as the right management structure to effectively carry out the mission of the Partnership and support work directed towards achieving the goals of the Partnership? Why or why not?**

- APNEP's management structure has not been effective, or not effective as it could be.
- Leadership Council members are smart but are chosen because they are high level individuals in their respective agencies and organizations, not for their commitment to APNEP.



- A number of Leadership Council members have been members for a really long term and have become stagnant in their thinking or responsiveness.
- Have been some Leadership Council members that have actually competing among each other for resources, not really a direct conflict of interest, but certainly a concern.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee is a huge committee with broad goals which has not been very effective over time. Last time they were very productive was producing a series of issues papers in the 2008-2011. Recently been working on a monitoring strategy.
- On paper there are a huge number of Implementation Action Teams reflective of the large number of actions in the CCMP. With a limited staff, the APNEP Office staff have been stretched thin and have not been able to effectively support all these teams.
- Don't think it's totally out of kilter.
- As a member of the Leadership Council, we have only met once in the past year.
- Ultimately, it comes down to picking the right priorities and bringing in the right people to the table, given the interest of your partners, that will help make thing happen.
- Having a Leadership Council and a Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee is typical of most other National Estuary Programs.
- APNEP has always tried to model itself after other National Estuary Programs.
- There have had some dramatic changes to the members of the Leadership Council.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee is quite large, having about 35 members.
- Modeled after the Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee—it's a great model to follow, recognizing you need a broad array of experts to address a broad array of issues. However, APNEP does not have the resources to support the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and its role compared with the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee has been solely focused on provide reviews and feedback on APNEP's monitoring and assessment program.
- Under the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee there is 11 Implementation Action Teams and 7 Monitoring and Assessment Teams.
- Individual APNEP Office staff members may be helping co-lead multiple teams, however, this is a very difficult challenge to manage effectively.
- There are APNEP Office staff co-leads working directly with the team lead which should be a partner, but for most of the teams, we have not gotten a partner to take on the team leadership role.
- The Leadership Council meets once a year and is basically a rubber stamp for the APNEP Office's annual plan.
- It's very difficult to understand the annual plan as its written.
- The Leadership Council really doesn't understand what the larger Partnership is doing and the members don't know what the staff are focused on.

- If we had fewer implementation committees and they were participating with the Leadership Council more often, that would be helpful.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee is going through a low point right now and many partners don't know what the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee is doing and accomplishing.
- Who chairs the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee may need to be reconsidered so that there is clear leadership and incentives to get something done.
- The Program Director is under a lot of pressure to quantify leveraged funds from distribution of the \$600,000 in National Estuary Program funds.
- The APNEP Office staff should be more focused on what else is leveraged from the allocation of those funds, things that are not easy to quantify, but have a lot more impact on achieve APNEP's mission than strictly accounting for leveraging someone else's funds.
- There are way too many Implementation Action Teams, too many topics and too much overlap, all of which prevents a limited number of partners from being truly engaged.
- You spread these same partners way too thin across so many teams and topics and you end up with little to nothing to show from all the effort.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and the Leadership Council are good as structured and important to the overall management structure.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee's recommendations need to be taken seriously by the Leadership Council.
- The problem seems to be the fact that the work is just not moving forward.
- Having a diverse Leadership Council really helps the partnership to do its work—the partners get unbiased advice and direction from the members.
- The action teams are great and effective with a diversity of organizations and academic institutions on these action teams.
- Leadership Council members are on each of the action teams.
- The governance structure is improving slowly.
- However, they really need to get higher level decision makers and policy makers as members on the Leadership Council.
- The Leadership Council's membership does include the Deputy Secretaries from two state agencies, but they need to also include other state agencies' Deputy Secretaries, for example agriculture, which have roles and responsibilities which match with a narrowed down set of priorities for APNEP.
- There is no mid-level, implementation-focused committee within the management structure, although the need for such a committee has been discussed but no action has ever been taken.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee has been effective on the SAV issues, they have generated white papers, and they are responsive to questions from the Leadership Council.

- However, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee has absolutely no funding resources to support their work, but without these resources they are doing a good job.
- APNEP's existing management structure has way too many teams resulting in too much work on the part of the staff.
- Given the limited number of partners, they are also stretched thin trying to participate in as many teams and committees as possible.
- Many individual partners are asked to be members of too many teams, and they don't see progress or the benefits of their participation.
- Some partners don't see their participation as core to their own mission.
- We have had challenges in getting the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee to be effective.
- Internally and externally, the challenge is how we go about being meaning to public engagement.
- APNEP use to have a Citizen Advisory Committee, but they were not effective in reaching back to the parts of the community that they represented—for example, county commissioners.
- APNEP could do more but is limited by the current host entity.
- APNEP can't raise funds from the private sector, for example, and may also be perceived as being a county program.
- APNEP used to have a Citizens Advisory Committee and Management Board, but these were dissolved during the years when only 1.5 staff were supported.
- An Implementation Committee was identified (including citizens) but never implemented.
- Having citizen input is critical to the scope of ecosystem-based management, for accountability.
- The Leadership Council is not engaged enough.
- There needs to be a Management Board to integrate the work of the Implementation Action Teams.
- The Implementation Action Teams are each doing their own thing and are not integrated.
- The management structure is too complicated.
- The Implementation Action Teams take a lot of time and effort.
- The concept that Implementation Action Teams will be self-led is not working; depending on members who have other full-time jobs is not working.
- APNEP Office staff is providing logistics for all these meetings, plus the Management Conference meetings—these are unrealistic expectations resulting in limited progress.
- There are too many Implementation Action Teams.
- The Leadership Council is essentially an advisory committee, without decision-making authorization.

- Don't have enough knowledge of the management structure to say whether its function well or not.
- The existing management structure and governance procedures are largely adequate, although the Partnership still don't have an Implementation Advisory Committee.
- What could be improved is the effectiveness, particularly of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and the partners.
- Need to find ways to motivate the members to produce products that will make a difference and influence the decisions being made in regulatory and management agencies.
- Not sure how the Implementation Action Teams are working out—some are functioning well while others have not gotten traction.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee only meets two times per year, not enough to get to know each other.
- In terms of the Implementation Action Teams, some are working okay while several are not functioning at all.
- A challenge is that a lot of the same people serve on multiple teams, so time and energy are constraints.
- How the Implementation Action Teams are currently functioning is backwards of what was intended. The teams are supposed to do the work, with APNEP Office staff providing logistic support. However, the teams are advisory to staff, with staff doing the work.
- The current model is not working well, with the exception of the SAV group and to some extent Living Shorelines Team and a couple of other teams which are at least meeting.
- Too many teams—there is no way for the teams to move forward with the current number of efforts they have going.
- Worried that partners will disengage if they keep going to multiple meetings and do not see some sort of progress being made.

**What changes, if any, are needed to ensure the Partnership's management structure can effectively carry out its roles and functions?**

- The Partnership should be eliminating those Implementation Action Teams which are not covered by a more much limited set of focus areas.
- Beyond having fewer teams, APNEP needs a clear blueprint for what the Partnership needs to focus on.
- Even when APNEP brings the teams together, the members have no ideas on what they collectively should focus on.
- The team members don't understand the benefits of working together.
- Understand that in the Chesapeake Bay Program, all the committees follow a consistent approach to developing their priorities and annual workplans.

- APNEP Office staff tried to better understand that approach and apply it to APNEP, but that effort was not supported.
- Need to be clear what level of resources in terms of funding from APNEP will be made available to the different action teams so they understand what they have to work with.
- The Implementation Advisory Committee exists only on paper.
- Really need to remove committees that are not active or aligned with APNEP's narrowed set of focus areas.
- Don't have a Citizens Advisory Committee currently—once existed but it was dissolved.
- There was a commitment at that time to incorporate the Citizen Advisory Committee members into the other existing committees and teams.
- The Partnership really needs their perspective—their voices need to be heard within the Partnership to ensure we are effectively serving the needs to the larger community.
- The direction of the Partnership is generally driven more from the staff than from the committees.
- The Leadership Council should be setting the priorities and ensuring the Partnership and its management structure is able to carry out the work necessary to achieve those priorities.
- Leadership Council's only real role has been to approve an annual workplan.
- At all begins with partners' vision as a National Estuary Program—APNEP has identified itself as an ecosystem-based management monitoring and assessment program.
- Need to get agreement on what is the Partnership's collective vision as an National Estuary Program.
- Better integration of the Partnership's science, policy and outreach efforts is also critical.
- We often have science related work focus on one issue, a policy focus on other issue and an outreach focus on a third issue.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee only meets twice a year.
- Of the 36 members, only about 15 maybe 20 members actually participate in the meetings.
- The Leadership Council was supposed to meet twice a year, but they have only met once a year over the past several years.
- APNEP dropped its Citizens Advisory Committee based on commitment to get citizen feedback through the other committees by inviting citizen representatives to provide that feedback.
- The organization has a technical committee which is determining the direction for the partnership, not the Leadership Council.
- Maybe the Leadership Council should be meeting with the technical committee to determine the priorities for the Partnership.
- The Leadership Council should not hesitate to question the technical committee—why are you doing this, why should we be doing this?

- Thought as members of the Leadership Council, we were going to set policy, but we aren't setting policy.
- The Leadership Council just reviews and approves the budget once a year, but that's it.
- When Leadership Council members have attempted to have actually policy discussions, but most of that time has been focused on the actual survival of APNEP.
- The Leadership Council could have short, virtual meetings as well as several face to face meetings a year.
- The Leadership Council should take a select set of themes and address them one by one, setting priorities and making policy-oriented decisions as they proceed through each theme area.
- The level of detail for the Monitoring and Assessment Teams is too detailed at this point of the discussions.
- Need to figure out how to elevate the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and its standing within the Partnership—provide them a budget to work with, things to energize the members, and work on how to select the chair will lead.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee could pick a big issue to focus on.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee has focused a lot of effort on SAV without much to show for it.
- APNEP's management structure is likely the right one, but the flow of work and decisions is not working.
- Need to clarify what their different roles and responsibilities are.
- Need to formalize the communications and give and take between the Leadership Council and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, for example.
- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee needs more feedback to confirm that the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee is delivering what the Leadership Council wants and is the Leadership Council really listening to and acting on the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee's recommendations.
- Other than seeking a home entity outside of the state regulatory agency, don't see the need for changes to the APNEP management structure.
- If APNEP is left in a state government agency, they should remain structured as they currently.
- If APNEP is pulled out of the state government, they should then structure themselves more like the Tampa Bay, Indian River, and Sarasota Bay National Estuary Programs where they are more advisors to the local governments.
- If we could do only one thing to change the management structure, we should request that one member of the North Carolina Governor's staff become a member of the Leadership Council to ensure the state departments and their secretaries are paying attention to the priorities of APNEP and the work would get done across the separate state departments and across the region.

- Some changes to the management structure are going to be needed, but not sure what those exact changes need to be as they depend on how the partners narrow down APNEP's focus.
- There are 12 Implementation Action Teams (divided by topics), each of which has 4-5 CCMP actions to address.
- APNEP Office staff facilitates these teams, but each team is expected to self-lead, and one of the partners is expected to take the technical lead.
- Difficult to effectively carry out this approach, since all team members have full-time jobs.
- Several teams have been in place for 5 years, without coming up with specific recommendations.
- Frustrated that the Implementation Action Teams are perceived as not able to implement.
- Suggest an intermediate Management Board to integrate the Implementation Action Teams' findings and bring to the Leadership Council.
- Need to understand the interests of the partners.
- The Leadership Council does not provide direction, only guidance.
- APNEP is trying to be everything to everybody, without a lot of follow-up to ensure results.
- If the Leadership Council remains advisory only, it's probably okay as is.
- If the Leadership Council wants to become more strategic, with decision making responsibilities, it may need to meet more frequently.
- Does the Leadership Council want to be active or reactive? Right now, they seem to be reactive only.
- The Leadership Council members need to show up at the meetings, rather than sending substitutes.
- Consider whether APNEP moving from North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources would be a good fit.
- North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality is a regulatory entity, and APNEP may be viewed by some as one also— North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources is not.
- Such a change may require an act of the Legislature.
- Get the Implementation Advisory Committee up and running.
- Move the program to a host that will insulate it from political interference.
- Find a way to motivate the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee to engage effectively in resource management issues.
- Develop some criteria against which to measure the Partnership's effectiveness, if USEPA hasn't already done so, and annually evaluate to assess and measure progress.

- An idea for the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee—schedule work during the meetings themselves and define what deliverables the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee is responsible for.
- Could include writing white papers or peer-reviewed publications; non-govt members could lobby political leaders.
- TIME is a challenge for both staff and partners—many things going on by many partners.
- APNEP is housed right where it should be now— North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.
- Staff and the Director can reach out to the Department of Environmental Quality Director now; and may lose that ability if APNEP moved to North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.
- Many of the departments at North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality work on the same issues as APNEP, so there are lots of opportunity for coordination
- If APNEP did move to North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, the partnership may lose two staff positions—Coastal Habitats Coordinator and Watershed Manager—since they are paid by a state appropriation to North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.
- Need to try and increase the diversity of the Leadership Council—its members are currently mostly white, older males.

**Are changes needed in the current roles and/or the areas of focus of the Partnership’s Office staff? If so, what changes are needed to the current roles/areas of focus?**

- APNEP Office staff have a difficult time determining whether to lead or follow.
- It’s a crowded space with lots of other organizations and agencies, so it’s been difficult to figure out not only which issues to focus on much less where to take a leadership position.
- Given the large focus on ecosystem-based management, that is taking a lot of resources away from other priorities.
- The coastal habitat restoration role/function has become muddied up—not clear what unique function is being played here.
- There is the need for each staff person to have a clear set of goals and objectives on which to base their day-to-day roles on.
- They are very a very talented and capable staff.
- If the staff were given clear expectations on what they should focus on and produce, they could be productive.
- We are called a partnership but in the end it’s the APNEP Office staff who are accountable to EPA on the progress or lack of progress.
- Not sure there are any real measurable outcomes on which to focus their work.



- Believe they would greatly appreciate having such measurable outcomes—not just counting how many meetings are held or what web pages have been uploaded, but the effect those actions are having.
- It all goes back to what is the collective vision for the Partnership.
- If there is agreement to shift back to more of a policy and programmatic focused partnership, then there will be a need to shift staff expertise in a different direction.
- If there is agreement to put more emphasis on monitoring and assessment, then there would be a need to shift more staff towards scientific expertise.
- By having a focus on ecosystem-based management at the core of APNEP, all the staff are forced to work on issues outside of their wheelhouse, their recognized areas of expertise.
- For example, in the case of SAV, the work on this focus area is being split between four staff members versus dedicating a staff person to the topic full time.
- The APNEP Office staff needs to be held accountable for what they are doing and not doing.
- The Leadership Council does not understand what the APNEP Office staff do or what their priorities are.
- APNEP Office staff is even disconnected between individual staff members. For example, the work on communications should be showcasing the work of the other staff and the partners.
- APNEP Office staff need to focus on process. For example, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee comes up with an issue or idea to work on. Staff works on this issue and the outcomes are clearly communicated after the programmatic and policy decisions are made. This is not happening now or even in the past.
- Beyond a Program Director, on the APNEP Office's staff there needs to be program or project directors with implementation staff associated with them.
- One of the key jobs of the APNEP Office staff has been forging the connection with the North Carolina Coastal Federation—this is the only key connection for how things can be implemented on the ground that is really visible to the APNEP Office staff.
- If more of the APNEP Office staff persons' understood day in and day out that their job should focus on this specific mission, then the partnership could make a lot more progress.
- The APNEP Office staff's roles would change if we were to narrow our focus.
- We have some great scientists, policy people, and communicators—they would be even stronger if we could narrow down our areas of focus.
- Don't have any idea if we need to increase the APNEP Office staff or if they are really focused on the right issues.
- If the APNEP Office staff made the workplan understandable, that would really help.
- There is not any accountability in the workplan.

- The partners can't tell if there have been any successes as there is no annual reporting on actual progress.
- The APNEP Office staff currently focuses on leveraging other programs as their measure of success.
- Don't think any changes are needed but have had only limited interactions with the current APNEP Office staff.
- The APNEP Office staff has the right positions and people, but they are beholden to the leadership in the state.
- Don't really need to change the APNEP Office staff persons themselves, but they need to focus down on a select set of goals and outcomes that they have decided upon together.
- APNEP has been fully staffed for 3 years now.
- Before then, the APNEP Office was severely limited (1.5 staff members) for several years.
- Believe that the existing APNEP Office staff capacity is adequate to implement the Program, but maybe not the CCMP.
- Roles and responsibilities of the APNEP Office staff members are not fully defined.
- There are opportunities now, with a full staff in place, to make some progress but more defined roles are needed.
- Have not been engaged long enough to have an opinion.
- Don't know.
- Increase the diversity of the APNEP Office staff to include younger females in leadership positions.
- Not fully aware of the details of each staff member's roles and areas of focus.
- Don't perceive that there is a need to change roles/areas of focus but would be open for discussion on those points.
- The biggest need is more staff and financial resources.
- Given more resources, then the workload could be spread out more and hopefully effectiveness would increase.
- Need to get a Virginia person, supported by the state of Virginia as previously.
- There is a lack of leadership internally.
- APNEP Office staff are flailing.
- There is no team spirit; a bunch of great individuals, but no communication from the top down or even between the APNEP Office staff members.
- There is no accountability or follow-through on decisions (priorities, etc.).
- Need to find a couple of areas to focus on with clear direction to all staff.
- SAV and WQ might be good to start with.

**What else is needed in order for the partners participating in the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership to ultimately be successful in achieving their agreed to restoration and protection goals?**

- Addressing the lack of focus.
- For some issues/focus areas, the partnership does have agreed to restoration and protection goals—SAV is a good example.
- But for other issues, APNEP doesn't have Partnership agreed to goals.
- The APNEP Office staff spends a lot of time working to sell the partners on working on implementation of the CCMP goals and outcomes.
- APNEP needs to change its approach to become advocates for getting work done through its partner organizations, not just its current focus on leveraging the work of others through the \$600,000 of funds every year.
- Being realistic about how many things the partnership has going on and what the partners are actually capable of doing.
- Going to need to change the resource allocations in order to be successful.
- Elevation of the partnership's importance politically.
- It currently sits in North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. Given it's an estuary of national importance, it should be located in place where its profile is raised to a higher level.
- Might be good for the APNEP Director and office staff to come into the EPA Region 4 office at least one a year to present what's happening within the partnership.
- Many partners do not see much of a reason to engage with APNEP as they see little opportunity for making any difference as a result of working with the partnership.
- The APNEP partners are only going to get involved if their involvement helps them further their own interests.
- To be successful, the partners need to see themselves as part of the partnership.
- They don't see themselves as partners.
- Not just viewing APNEP as a program, but as a partnership.
- There are many active citizens groups in North Carolina.
- APNEP could coordinate/convene these groups to find common interests and issues.
- Not clear that APNEP is pursuing all avenues for fundraising.
- Creative strategies, such as creating a Friends group, should be investigated.
- Focus and follow-through.
- Examine best practices from other National Estuary Programs.
- How should the management of Albemarle-Pamlico be optimized for the best environmental and economic outcomes?
- Need to raise a lot more funds and expand.
- APNEP cannot be content with what it is now.

- The Leadership Council, working with staff, needs to find some better way, some incentive, for partners to engage and experience some rewards for such engagement.
- That is a key need, along with securing additional funding, and a new host institution to remove the Partnership from undue political interference.
- It would be helpful if the partners worked with staff to cross-index CCMP Actions with each of the partners' existing mandates to help prioritize the actions.
- The CCMP is useless.
- Ecosystem-based management looks great on paper but is not realistic in implementation—it's a giant wish list with no priorities.
- Not sure that adaptive management is being implemented
- Frame the timeline for narrowing teams without disengaging partners who are involved.
- Need to step back and define what the goals are.
- How to engage Virginia is always an issue.