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# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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## GOAL

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*Implement the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan in a way that protects environmental quality while using the most cost-effective and equitable strategies.*

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**OBJECTIVE A: COORDINATE PUBLIC AGENCIES INVOLVED IN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CCMP.**

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**Strategy:** The APES Management Conference has for several years provided a unique forum for communication and cooperation among a broad range of agencies, organizations, and interests to protect the resources of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine region. Once the CCMP is approved, there will be an even greater need for coordination and cooperation during the implementation phase. A Coordinating Council would be created to promote cooperation and coordination among agencies, organizations, and individuals involved in implementing the plan. The Council, which would have no regulatory authority, would consult with five Regional Councils comprised of elected and/or appointed local government officials, citizens, and representatives from various economic sectors. Each county in the Albemarle-Pamlico region, including those in Virginia, would be represented. This would allow for the fullest exchange of information and for developing strategies that combine existing programs with new initiatives. The Coordinating Council also would pursue funding to support CCMP implementation and provide an annual assessment of its progress.

**Management Action 1: Create a Coordinating Council and five Regional Councils through executive order by the Governor of North Carolina upon approval of the CCMP.**

**Explanation:** The APES program has provided extensive opportunities for interaction between government agencies, private organizations, citizens and local governments. Continued coordination in implementing recommendations in the CCMP would be provided through a Coordinating Council and five Regional Councils. The Regional Councils would include representatives from each county in the region, including elected and/or appointed local government officials, interest groups, and members of the general public in each river basin. The Coordinating Council would include fifteen representatives from the Regional Councils (ten of whom will be local elected and/or appointed officials), seven representatives of citizen commissions and councils, four representatives of federal resource agencies and three representatives of state government. This structure would provide continued opportunity for interagency coordination and citizen and local government input.

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**Critical Steps**

1. The Governor of North Carolina would create a Coordinating Council and five Regional Councils by executive order. The appropriate federal agencies would develop Memoranda of Agreement to continue coordination efforts.

2. A Regional Council corresponding to each of the following major river basins of the APES region will be formed:

Neuse (including Bogue and Core Sounds)  
 Pasquotank/Albemarle/Currituck  
 Roanoke (below Roanoke Rapids Dam)  
 Tar-Pamlico/Pamlico Sound  
 Chowan

Each Regional Council would include at least three representatives from each county in the river basin and would represent a variety of local interests. Membership from each county would include: one elected or appointed county official selected by the county commission; one elected or appointed municipal official selected by the county commission in consultation with municipalities in the county (counties without municipalities would appoint a second county official); and one person appointed by the Secretary of DEHNR. In making his appointments to each Council, the Secretary shall, to the greatest extent possible, seek to ensure demographic and social balance, as well as balance among the following interests:

agriculture	conservation
silviculture	environmental science
commercial fishing	business/industry
recreational fishing	tourism
Soil and Water Conservation Districts	at large

Each Regional Council can expand its membership as it deems necessary.

3. The Coordinating Council would include:
- a. Fifteen representatives from the five Regional Councils. (Each Regional Council will elect two elected and/or appointed government officials and one other representative from any background).
  - b. Seven representatives of citizen commissions and councils. The Chair of each of the following groups would select a representative.

Marine Fisheries Commission  
Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
Environmental Management Commission  
Coastal Resources Commission  
Wildlife Resources Commission  
Forestry Advisory Council  
Sedimentation Control Commission

- c. Four representatives of federal resource agencies would be selected by appropriate federal administrators.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- d. Three representatives of state government.  
The Secretary of the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, or his designee (Chair to the Council)  
The Secretary of the Department of Commerce, or his designee  
The Commissioner of Agriculture, or his designee
4. The Coordinating Council would serve to promote continued coordination and cooperation among agencies, local governments, and private and public interest groups for CCMP implementation. The Regional Councils provide a local forum for input into the implementation process by public and private interests.
5. The Coordinating Council would consult the Regional Councils for guidance on coordinating implementation strategies at a local level. The role of the Regional Councils would be to develop partnerships between the public and private sector, and between local, state, and federal governments, on a regional scale. They would inform the public and public officials about matters related to CCMP implementation and would convey to the Coordinating Council public and local government sentiment regarding CCMP implementation.
6. A minimal staff would serve the Coordinating Council and Regional Councils. This staff would be responsible for communications, organization, and progress reports.

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**Evaluation Method**

The structure of the Coordinating Councils and its effectiveness in facilitating the implementation process will be assessed in a program review, detailed in Objective B, Management Action 2 of this section.

**Costs and Economic Considerations**

The Coordinating Council would need approximately \$300,000 per year for meetings and support staff. The Council would serve as a focal point for attracting grant funds to support implementation projects in the region.

**Funding Strategy**

Implementation grant money would be sought from the EPA and matching funds would be needed from state appropriations.

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**Management Action 2: Coordinate implementation of the CCMP.**

**Explanation:** *The best way to ensure efficient operation of government is to increase the coordination and cooperation of existing agencies. Each agency should fulfill its responsibilities without duplicating the efforts of other agencies. The Coordinating Council would take advantage of existing resources and staff, establishing connections between public and private interests and all levels of government, rather than creating another layer of government. The Coordinating Council will guide the implementation process to ensure the highest level of cooperation and coordination among interested parties, as was demonstrated by the original APES Management Conference during the plan's development.*

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**Critical Steps**

1. The Coordinating Council would pursue adopting a Memorandum of Agreement between North Carolina and Virginia to ensure continued cooperation and coordination in implementing the CCMP. The agreement would detail Virginia's implementation strategy for pertinent CCMP recommendations (such as enhanced land use plans and nonpoint source reduction plans).
2. The Coordinating Council would assist in the pursuit of funding to implement CCMP recommendations.
3. Council members would promote CCMP implementation by informing their respective commissions, agencies, and organizations, and by pursuing actions on recommended strategies that relate to the mission of their commission, agency, or organization.
4. The Council would set annual priorities for implementing sections of the CCMP and make necessary strategy revisions based on progress and success.
5. The Council would develop a research agenda during the first year of implementation that addresses the outstanding information needs described in the CCMP and update it annually. The Council would seek researchers and funding. The research agenda would include investigations of the economic and sociological impacts of CCMP strategies.
6. The Council would identify experts who could serve, as needed, on special committees to address complex scientific or technical issues.
7. The Council would brief the Environmental Review Commission of the General Assembly semi-annually on CCMP implementation and highlight legislative concerns. The Council would also track legislative developments.
8. The Council would conduct consistency reviews of federal programs as required in Section 320 (b)(7) of the Clean Water Act.
9. Council members would develop Memoranda of Agreement as necessary to support implementation of management strategies according to the time lines listed within them.

10. The Council would sponsor public education, outreach, and involvement programs concerning the regions' estuarine resources.
11. The Councils would sponsor workshops for cross-training individuals involved in enforcement, permit review, and other activities. These workshops will promote inter-agency cooperation in resource management.

**Evaluation Method**

The following section recommends an annual program review which would provide a mechanism for evaluating the success of the Coordinating Council. Through this process, all interested parties (including the general public) would have the opportunity to assess the program's ability to coordinate the public agencies involved and the program's success of implementation overall.

**Economic Costs and Considerations**

Most costs of this Management Action are included in the more detailed break-downs of other Management Actions. Cross-training workshops and other special projects pursued by the Council (e.g., public education, support for research) would entail additional costs of approximately \$50,000 per year.

**Funding Strategy**

The additional cost relating to education efforts would be partially funded by the EPA through implementation funding and would need to be matched by state appropriations.



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**OBJECTIVE B: ASSESS THE PROGRESS AND SUCCESS OF IMPLEMENTING CCMP RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IN THE ALBEMARLE-PAMLICO REGION.**

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**Strategy:** The yardstick by which the CCMP must be measured is the quality of the environment in the Albemarle-Pamlico region. An annual progress review would be developed to allow for flexibility in the implementation process, to monitor the success of the CCMP, and to measure changes in the environment. In addition, the Coordinating Council may use the annual progress review to assess whether its objectives and recommended management actions are in concert with the changing environmental challenges. The progress review would allow any interested party to comment on the process and the success (or failure) of implementation strategies or structure. Reporting progress to the public and receiving comments from it is essential to the success of implementing the CCMP. The progress review would make the process dynamic and flexible, enabling changes to be made when and where necessary. Each Management Action within the plan includes an evaluation statement. These statements are designed to initiate a review of the environmental impacts of the Actions. The agencies and organizations responsible for each action would submit evaluation results to the Coordinating Council to determine whether the actions are having the intended effects on the environment. Much of the environmental review effort is dependent on the monitoring efforts of the appropriate agencies.

**Management Action 1: Develop an annual "progress review" of the implementation of CCMP recommendations.**

**Explanation:** *The most critical stage of the management program is its implementation. Without carefully thought-out and monitored implementation, the goals of the management plan may never be achieved. A progress review would allow the Coordinating Council, or any interested party to comment on the implementation process. It also allows corrections or changes to be made as necessary.*

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**Critical Steps**

1. Each participating agency, institution, and organization would submit annual reports evaluating the progress made in implementing CCMP recommendations and the success of implementation strategies. Council members would report to the Council on progress made by their agencies, institutions, and organizations. The Council would then assess the success of the implementation strategies within each section based on the recommendations of the implementing organizations.
2. An annual progress report would be developed by APES and would include the success of the implementing organizations and the effectiveness of the Coordinating Council. The report would be distributed to the public and any adjustments to the strategy or structure necessary to improve success would be made.

**Evaluation Method**

The "progress review" is in itself an evaluation. Once the progress of implementation of the CCMP is complete, changes to the process should be made.

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**Costs and Economic Considerations**

The costs to participating agencies of this Management Action are considered to be in-kind contributions from them and would not require additional budget authorizations.

**Funding Strategy**

Not applicable for this management action.

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***Management Action 2: Assess the health of the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuary and the success of CCMP recommendations in protecting the environment.***

***Explanation:*** Assessing the success of the implementation of the CCMP also requires monitoring of the environment and a thorough evaluation of the results. The CCMP must be flexible to adapt to natural conditions. Data gathered on the state of water quality, habitats, and fisheries may be used to adjust strategies as necessary.

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**Critical Steps**

1. The Council would report on monitoring efforts such as water quality monitoring from the Division of Environmental Management (DEM) and the U.S. Geological Survey, monitoring of fish stocks and habitats by the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), and vital habitat mapping by the Division of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and other appropriate agencies. Information gained from the appropriate agencies would be presented to the Council for review of broad scale and long term environmental trends. *(For monitoring requirements, refer to the following management actions: Water Quality, Objective D, MA 1 and Objective E, MA 1; Vital Habitats, Objective A, MA 2; and Fisheries Objective A, MA 1.)*

## IMPLEMENTATION

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2. Data obtained by monitoring reports would be used to assess the effectiveness of management actions and identify target areas requiring further action.
3. The Council would continue to support and enhance public outreach and education efforts as outlined in the stewardship plan.

### **Evaluation Method**

The annual progress review would help the Council assess the effectiveness of the CCMP. This review would determine if CCMP goals are being met in a manner that is proactive, cost-effective, and equitable. The Council also would review its membership at least annually to ensure that all parties involved in implementing the CCMP are represented.

### **Costs and Economic Considerations**

The costs of these actions are included in other Management Actions of the CCMP.

### **Funding Strategy**

Not applicable for this management action.