



**Policy Board Meeting  
Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership  
10:00 am – 3:00 pm  
February 24, 2017**

Greenville Centre  
Room 1511

2200 Charles Blvd  
Greenville, NC 27858

**DRAFT Meeting Notes**

**Policy Board Members Present:** Dr. Carl Hershner (VIMS, via telephone for a few minutes), Dr. Wilson Laney (USFWS), Todd Miller (NCCF), Dr. Kirk Havens (VIMS), Dr. Tom Allen (ODU), Dr. Susan White (NC Sea Grant), Mac Gibbs (retired, NC Cooperative Extensive), Joanne Benante (USEPA), and Mary Penny Kelly (NCDEQ).

**APNEP Staff Present:** Dr. Bill Crowell, Dr. Coley Cordeiro, Dr. Tim Ellis (starts in three weeks), Stacey Feken.

10:10 a.m.      **Call to Order**      Dr. Tom Allen, Policy Board Chair

Tom Allen called the meeting to order.

**Welcome & Introductions**

Tom asked that everyone do introductions. Everyone did so. Bill noted that Mary Penny Kelley is the new liaison from NCDEQ and has been with the state for a good while, but is in a new position. Mary Penny noted that she needs to leave the meeting early for a meeting with Dr. Braxton Davis at noon in Raleigh. Kirk noted that he was the Governor's appointee for the Chesapeake Bay Program. Mac is also a board member with the North Carolina Coastal Federation. Susan White announced that North Carolina Sea Grant / WRI had also picked up the NASA Space Grant program.

**Review/Approval of Agenda (*Action Item*)**

Tom asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

10:10 a.m.      **Public Comments**

Tom noted that there are no public comments, since there are no members of the public here.

10:15 a.m.      **Adoption of Policy Board April 29, 2016 Meeting Notes (*Action Item*)**

Kirk noted that Carl's name should begin with a "C" and not a "K". Susan asked that we make sure it is included in the notes that she and Kirk were on the phone for the last meeting. Stacey indicated that she will make those changes [changes made and posted to web].

10:17 a.m.      **Adoption of Bylaw Changes (*Action Item*)**

The Bylaws were approved, with one minor edit to add a "d" to the word "base" in "ecosystem-based management." [changes made and edited draft sent to Bill for review]

10:18a.m.           **Election of Vice Chair**

Dr. Tom Allen

Holly White was nominated as vice-chair. Bill explained that she had a scheduling conflict today but is aware, and has the Town of Nags Head support. Kirk made a motion to approve, Tom asked all in favor, motion passed unanimously, Holly White was elected as the Vice-Chair.

10:20 a.m.           **Change of Chairs**

Dr. Tom Allen /Dr. Kirk Havens

Tom passed the gavel to Kirk, who is the incoming chair. Bill noted that he had thought that Kirk would be the first chair of the Policy Board from Virginia, but since Tom moved to Old Dominion University from East Carolina University, he is the first Chair from Virginia. Wilson noted that was just a technicality. Kirk thanked Tom for his two years of service and noted that he was not off the hook, since he has two more years of service on the board. Kirk thanked everyone for their support and volunteerism and noted it should be an exciting two years. He looks forward to opportunities to work with Virginia state government, and noted that he and Mary should talk about that further.

11:21 a.m.           **Director's Report**

Dr. Bill Crowell, Director

Bill thanked Tom for his service as the Chair, thanked everyone for coming and for their years of service and participation. He noted that we were supposed to meet last fall, but Hurricane Matthew and other factors intervened. Bill noted that the staff would like to have another joint meeting with the STAC, this summer. We are planning to have a conference in the fall. He said we were reviving the program, and reminded everyone we had moved into the Division of Water Resources and had moved to a new building. He noted that Dr. Tim Ellis will begin his new position as Ecosystem Analyst in three weeks. Another position is close to being filled.

The program received their EPA 320 grant, and received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for conducting work on SAV and will subcontract with ECU. We had a busy summer of SAV monitoring, hired someone temporarily from ECU to help and hired back Mary Grace Rowe, a former REACH intern and program associate who led the National Coastal Condition Assessment two years ago. She is helping with some GIS, field work, and education and outreach. We are still waiting on the NCCA data from EPA. Joanne asked if that was Simona, she will follow up with her. Marygrace is helping clarify the previous SAV mapping done by DOT, errors were found so she is re-digitizing the layers.

Bill noted that he had reported leverage funding (more than 9 million dollars, a 1:15 dollar return) to EPA. He doesn't yet have the data on the habitat numbers, but hopes to have those soon. Headquarters is more interested in the primary leverage which is over 3 million.

The program and partners also hosted Ellen Gilinsky, the previous Deputy Administrator of EPA Headquarters Office of Water, along with Joanne and other EPA staff, during the fall. Bill feels that the visit was successful. Ellen is no longer with EPA, but two of the other HQ folks who came along now understand the program better. Bill noted that there is new leadership, both in EPA headquarters, and in NCDEQ, and we are figuring out what that will mean to the program. Tom Reeder has left NCDEQ, and Mary Penny Kelley will be our new Departmental liaison. Bill noted that we may want to consider adding representation from the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNR) to the board, and reminded everyone that when DENR split the museums, state parks, etc. were moved to NCDNR. Reid Wilson, who was a board member when he was with the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, is now Deputy Secretary of DCR.

Bill noted that this administration does not want to continue the 2012 Executive Order, so he will be working with Mary Penny Kelley and the new administration on a new Executive Order, which will include moving the program to a university host. We are trying to build in more flexibility and be less prescriptive than in past orders.

Bill noted that there was no national meeting last fall, but there is supposed to be one this spring. The national EPA office will not be participating, just NEP directors and regional office staff.

Bill noted that the host discussion is still ongoing. A draft MOU is almost ready for review. Larry Band is leaving University of North Carolina Institute for the Environment (UNC-IE) and Bill has been working with Tony Reevy. He would like for the board members to review the draft before we send back to UNC-IE.

Dr. Ellis has been hired as the program Ecosystem Analyst, the position the board approved several years ago. Bill noted that the program will be at full staff for the first time since 2013, once the remaining position is filled, and noted Tom had helped move the staffing forward. Staff have been getting the Action Teams back up and running and meeting with partners including SALCC, TNC, Sound Rivers and others to update them on where the program is and how to get involved.

Save the date—the fall conference will be November 14 or 15. The program is considering charging a minimal fee this year, at least enough to cover the cost of the food and would like direction from the board. They have budgeted enough to cover the conference. The meeting will be held at the New Bern Convention Center. There will probably be a \$15 registration cost.

We have the Annual Work Plan to review today. The funds were sent out early this year to the regional offices to operate under the continuing resolution. EPA wants us to submit the grant application for the full amount of funds. The EPA will award the first seven months of funding, then will award the rest when those are forthcoming. Next year EPA will do another program evaluation which will require another field visit. The last evaluation was in 2013.

Kirk asked if anyone had any questions for Bill.

Susan asked if the evaluation covers near or past year's performance. Bill indicated that it would and that the last page of the workplan includes the letter from the last review. There are usually some challenges from USEPA about program improvements. Though the program typically responds and notes how we will address the challenges, there was no official response back to the USEPA after the last evaluation from the state administration.

Todd asked, given the current administration and where things appear to be headed at a national level if there is anything the board and partners could be doing to show support. Bill said we could only speculate at the moment. Bill noted that in the past, the program has enjoyed bipartisan support, and that Section 320 of the Clean Water Act which authorizes the program was reauthorized last year which indicates that Congress values the program. However, we have a new President, are waiting on the new priorities and budget to come out. Bill noted there is a report from the Heritage Foundation that may serve as a guiding document for the new administration. That report calls for elimination of the NEP. In talking with the National Director of the Association of National Estuary Programs, it is possible, but generally believes that since the program was reauthorized, and since local governments and state governments will push back, elimination is not likely. Bill noted that the funds are likely to decrease, under the Continuing resolution there is \$400,000. We do have some funds we could run on for awhile but would have to figure something out. Bill reminded everyone that all the funding for the program is from a federal grant from EPA, using match from the CWMTF and water infrastructure programs to improve water quality in North Carolina. He has requested that APNEP be considered for a direct cash match in the Governor's budget but is not sure of the status.

Tom noted that at a recent coastal conference he had attended that there had been good discussions with program management from USEPA about writing notes from field, testimonials which show how the products were being used. He agreed to write how his program and students and municipalities were using NEP products.

Bill noted we haven't had strong support from our Congressional delegation in recent years. On paper, given the number of Congressional Districts we have in NC and VA, we theoretically have strong support...there are 6 members from North Carolina and 5 from Virginia. We have had support from some of the representatives in the

past, however Jones for instance, is supportive of the program but is not supportive of spending any funds. Price's office is generally supportive, and Miller was when he was there.

Joanne asked if there was a strong push or focused effort to get additional federal funding after Hurricane Matthew. Bill advised that there wasn't any such push at the federal level. Susan said no other than the normal support from FEMA.

Kirk said one action that is important is educating policy makers.

Mary excused herself due to the aforementioned meeting back in Raleigh and shared her personal cell number: 919-539-0707. She noted that she is willing to receive text messages from fellow board members. Mary noted that the new Secretary is from Goldsboro in eastern NC and she would love to hear follow up ideas about how the Secretary's office can help. She would like to set up a meeting between Secretary Ward from VA and Secretary Regan.

Susan asked about the conference fee. Bill said they had an overwhelming response after the last conference that participants were willing to pay.

Todd asked what we envision the focus or structure of the conference to be. Bill said in the past we had highlight projects we had sponsored, talked about where we were headed. He had discussions with people that attend and thinks will we highlight our partners and projects, talk about the EBM approach and setting targets, let people know what we are thinking and receive feedback. He noted that they hope to have local seafood again.

Tom noted there was quite a large attendance with over 200 people last time. He asked if they had done an evaluation or survey and Bill said yes. Bill noted that they learned from the last one not to have the plenary speaker after the break and not to hold a reception at the end as most did not stay. New Bern is convenient to many as a day trip.

Kirk asked if they will try to get Secretary Regan there, Bill indicated that they would.

Kirk asked for board consensus on charging a registration fee.

Todd asked who the target audience would be. Bill indicated that most of the audience will be people who have worked with the program, we start and focus there then extend invitations to a broader audience. IN the past we have pulled in a few new people, but generally only get around 10-15 out of 100 that were not already familiar with the program.

Todd suggested that we try to highlight some issues that we anticipate to be front and center for the next few years, and encourage forward movement on those as opposed to reflection. Bill said we would do that and noted there are ways to discuss the CCMP implementation, but also stress the positive impacts that the program can have on the economy. We can highlight major changes and the vision of positive impacts to the economy including oyster restoration.

Todd noted that the shrimp petition and fisheries reform and management was a hot issue, and that APNEP could offer good science to the discussion. One thing that has come to light, the process has stalled, people are very polarized, perhaps there is a void there that can be filled.

Bill noted that last year APNEP funded an economic study of oyster restoration in the state, and funded the economic valuation study of the resources of the region. Based on feedback received to date, both studies have been viewed positively and been useful to multiple partners. We would like to do more but haven't figured it out yet.

Bill said he could see APNEP being involved in understanding the economics of the industry, bycatch, we could do an RFP and frame out a study. Bill noted that there seems to be desire to have some economic evaluation of some of the science, and that the NCMFC had accepted a petition for rulemaking, which will require an economic evaluation as part of rulemaking, but it could be met with skepticism if done by NCDMF. As with the shellfish restoration study, if APNEP were to conduct as a science based, non-biased partner to all involved it could help.

Bill asked if folks were familiar with the shrimp trawling/bycatch issue. Wilson briefed the Policy Board on the background behind the NFWF petition, explaining that a debate has gone on for years in North Carolina about bycatch. There is a perception by the commercial sector that it is a power play by coastal conservation and recreational fishing groups to put them out of business by ending inshore trawling, as NC is one of the few states which still allows trawling in estuaries. If you look at the existing protections, ~45 percent of the sounds are already closed. The bycatch is substantial, 4.5 pounds to every 1 pound shrimp, including 3 species important to both commercial and recreational fisherman: spot, croaker, and weakfish. The shrimp Fishery Management Plan was recently revisited and modification were made. The NFWF and recreational groups felt the plan does not go far enough to minimize bycatch in Pamlico Sound. A petition has been written to designate the rest of the sounds as secondary nursery areas, specify when shrimp fishing can occur—day vs. night, days of the week, etc. establish size limits for bycatch. It is a hugely controversial issue, at a recent public hearing over 1000 attended. The MFC voted 5 – 3 in support of the petition.

Todd noted that the scientific input was all over the place, there is no uniformity and a huge debate on the science behind the petition. Wilson believes some of the data is good, Rick Sasser is looking at weakfish data, Pamlico Sound is an important nursery area. DMF is considering this further. At its spring meeting the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will be talking about designating the area as a habitat of concern. This would not have the same legal ramifications as the NMFS designations, however, it still highlights that the area is deserving of special recognition not just from North Carolina, but is an important nursery area to the region as well.

Wilson noted that it has just passed and no immediate action will take place, there will be a lengthy process before any rule changes occur.

Bill noted that his hope is that APNEP could be engaged in the production of a study which would objectively look at the economics of the proposed changes. He has asked Jimmy Johnson to gather information regarding the questions that need to be answered. They can bring a proposal back to the board and executive committee of the STAC.

Wilson noted that in the interest of full disclosure, he has talked to Dr. Doug Wakeman, a retired economist who serves on the APNEP STAC, about the possibility of his involvement in such an economic study. Wilson noted the commercial fisherman say it will put them out of business, but per the petition the value will go up even if the level of effort goes down. By avoiding bycatch, more juveniles will survive into recruitment age in those fisheries. However, in general he understands that economic studies are rarely complete. If we include these other dimensions, perhaps we can determine whether there is a net positive or net negative effect. Todd noted that you also must consider imports which can drive prices down.

Mac noted that he has concerns about the impact on the economy of the changes proposed in the petition, locally in Hyde County. He noted that the Coastal Conservation Association and others made great changes in FL, eliminating gill nets, and affecting the market for Spot, Atlantic Croaker and other species. He knows what could happen to the local economy in Engelhard, where people make a living by heading shrimp, there are small fishing villages like that around the region that struggle to keep their stores open, it is a big issue from his perspective. He also knows commercial fisherman that think you need to get the trawlers out of the sound. He is not sure that an economic analysis would hold any water with these issues.

Wilson thinks the STAC could easily engage in evaluating the issue, they have the expertise. There are big trawlers and little trawlers, some day boats, you should look at the sector as a whole. Not all shrimpers apply equal effort, fishing power, cost, and they differ in their ability to get fresh product to the market. There are other issues such

as processing ability, it is cheaper to do overseas. Susan said they are evaluating examples of the automated processors used overseas.

Susan noted the issue is complex, terribly challenge for any side, and a personal issue for many individuals. It can be hard to separate the personal opinions from the science.

Bill said we will investigate further and bring a proposal back to the board.

Todd noted this is why there is a process, the fisheries reform act was designed to bring people together to work out these types of issues, anything to light a fire under the issue would be good. He noted there is also some disagreement about how significant the discards are relative to the population-level impacts.

Wilson noted there is some new stock assessment analysis going on at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, with the Spot and Croaker, which he believes does incorporate the shrimp fishery discard information. He thinks we have better numbers than we may have had in the past, jury still out on the impact that bycatch has on recruitment to fisheries and the older age classes, especially for weakfish.

Bill reminded everyone that we were recording the meeting and would also have notes in compliance with the open meetings law. He noted there is a bill in the legislature that would require it to be a criminal offense for the public to not have access to notes from meetings.

11:05 p.m.      **Review of Draft 2016-17 Workplan and Budget**

Bill explained that the workplan was put together quickly due to a new EPA deadline, he usually starts drafting it in January. The format is consistent with previous years. He referred everyone to Pages 42 and 43 for the actual budget numbers. He noted that the indirect costs have been up and down, and the higher it is, the more that takes out of the budget. The administrative budget has gone up a bit, due to state budgeted employee raises, and increased IT costs. Todd asked why the rent payment for the Washington office was not covered under indirect costs. Bill explained we do not pay for Jimmy's actual office space, the payment is for a storage space and is due to the way the rental agreement was written. When Joan was with the program, there was one office, then Jimmy came in, and we created two offices, and storage. Much of the storage has been reduced, since all reports are available electronically. He noted it is not a big cost, but he hopes to be able to get out of it.

Joanne asked if Board and Committees is the same as Management Conference Support. Yes.

Bill noted that the rent was about \$2,000 per year.

Bill explained that the travel is primarily staff travel, as we get more staff we will have more travel costs. Also, we have supported partners that give presentations at meetings or participate in workgroup activities. These get mixed in with implementation funds, facility rentals, lunches, etc.

The Teacher Institute and Shad in the classroom budgets have been reduced a bit. Bill noted that the SAV mapping costs may go up somewhat this year. The cost varies due to the flight lines NCDOT has to fly.

Bill noted that is the short introduction to the budget part. We get individual grants from USEPA, and some of those funds carry over, so we have implementation funds. Once all the staff are on board, we should have approximately \$300,000 to carry forward into implementation projects.

Joanne encouraged the program to expend those funds as soon as possible. Bill noted that several years ago, there was a rescission, and we were told we had to send back any unspent fund regardless of whether they had been encumbered, around \$50K in contracts almost had to be cancelled but the decision was reversed at the last minute.

Todd asked if it would make more sense to pay for some of these projects in the proposed budget, instead of using carry-over funds, it seems preferable to obligate the old funds. Bill indicated it is all out of the same pot of funds. They can do it either way.

Todd noted to him it seemed better to have things a bit less defined in the new year, and asked why there were line item projects vs. being included in the group of implementation projects. Bill explained that in the past it was preferable to keep those as line items.

Bill noted that it is contractually easier to keep them as line items. The last administration had many questions about our authority to spend the funds and he spent a lot of time with the attorneys. At one point, they wanted to call the EPA Finance Office to better understand.

Kirk asked Bill if there was anything else he wanted to cover.

Bill said Stacey had asked whether the format of the workplan could be changed, and noted that it was somewhat driven by EPA. He noted that Coley has also contributed a lot to the report, in that the leveraged dollars are also reported now and we have a new contracts table.

11:45 p.m.      **Discussion of Draft Workplan and Budget (*Action Item*)**      Dr. Kirk Havens

Kirk said if we do adjust the format, he would like to see from the policy board point of view, some way of assessing whether we did what we said we were going to do, and whether it was effective or not. This will also be important with the upcoming program review. He would like to be able to have the discussion about whether something actually took place, and what the impact was. If not, can we bring our expertise to bear to explain why, and use our contacts to try and address this issue. Also, in future versions of the workplan the action should be explicitly stated in the workplan rather than just include the letter/number.

Bill stated that the point was right on target, given that we are trying to conduct an EBM approach. He and Coley have discussed how to track these things and are making changes to the database to incorporate. For example, with the Teacher Institute, we are working with UNC-IE on the metrics they use to track the success of their programs and report back whether we are meeting our goals, or not. We ultimately plan to do this for all the projects.

Bill noted that some things are less tangible, for instance, sponsorships for partners and their conferences. He explained that we are also developing internal policy regarding whether we should even be doing sponsorships and participating in festivals and related requests for APNEP staff to participate in various events such as Roanoke River Days. We are trying to tie it back to CCMP implementation and assess whether there is value in APNEP having a booth at these events.

Kirk thinks we need to look at it two ways.... we need to consider the APNEP at large, the watershed, versus the APNEP program itself. There are some things on which partners will take the lead, versus the Partnership itself. We need to distinguish between the partnership and the program. As a program APNEP needs to be held accountable and transparent, what can the program do to move things forward.

Bill agreed. He noted that we constantly must do this and consider the leverage and how best to expend funds. We can't buy an acre of waterfront property for our entire budget of \$600,000, but using those funds with the NCCF would leverage far more of an impact. We can assist by expending some funds to help move things along.

Kirk noted that the Partnership may be able to take credit for things the program may not. We should look at the actions taken to get us there, how we partner with them, track these things and look at the partnership as a whole.

Bill noted that some aspects and benefits of the program may be challenging to track, such as engaging other partners, convening and facilitating discussions amongst different groups.

Tom Allen mentioned that last year at the oyster conference there was discussion of a database of oyster restoration efforts, and last summer at the living shorelines summit, but there is no template or central repository for this information, perhaps this is an area that APNEP can assist with.

Kirk noted that we do need to be able to evaluate what we can do, as a program, and as a partnership. We need to look at the actions and establish metrics as a partnership, but also need to distinguish between the program and partnership.

Bill noted that with respect to oysters, he felt that the line is strong. For instance, the partners are working on facilitating the oyster restoration team. As a program, we worked with partners to do the RTI study, which led to additional funding. Overall, the combined actions should lead to increases in oyster habitat, and ultimately improve the fishery.

Coley noted that staff had planned to have some of this discussion today, but the new deadline for the workplan it had to be moved to the next board meeting. Coley noted that these things are being tracked currently. She noted that all the action items are being tracked, from year to year, but the PB hasn't seen any of that information yet. Bill noted that Coley will be reporting this afternoon on some of the needs assessment.

Coley noted that APNEP is required to do the GPRA reporting, and they hope to contact all the partners to see how much is going on and determine what the program's niche is and how we can help fill the gaps.

Kirk said that is helpful, the hard part would be the next step, evaluating whether we had the effect we thought we would have. Coley agreed that is the hardest thing to determine.

Joanne pointed out that the CCMP does list outputs and outcomes for each action.

Mac said he had to do this for 25 years and there is no good way to do it, but you must have it. He noted he would like to have a good way to do what Kirk is asking. He felt that it is a hard thing to put your hands on.

Kirk noted that the whole concept is adaptive management. We know that we aren't going to do it perfectly.

Susan noted that you must consider things longitudinally as well. You can't just stop a program. You must invest resources in spaces where you might not have immediate return and encourage it to continue but that it was hard to measure.

Bill noted that the staff has discussed this issue a great deal, how best to track what we are doing, and how to be responsive to requests to demonstrate what was accomplished, what are we getting out of it.

Kirk noted this was a role of this board to assist and stressed that there needs to be a direct link between the implementation projects and the CCMP goals which should be included in how we track things.

Bill noted that the staff is being much more critical of some of the proposals they are receiving than in the past. They are asking for measures and for partners to address how proposals will address CCMP actions, and what steps will be taken to include outreach and engagement in the project.

Kirk noted a step beyond that is to ask the recipients what they expect the actions to accomplish. We want to try to move into that arena, of what do you expect this action to accomplish, relative to the APNEP goals, why should we fund the project. This could be tough for some engagement actions and activities that may result in impacts years down the road or indirectly.



Coley noted that information-sharing is another role that the APNEP staff can play. We don't want to have reports just sit on our desks for ten years, rather we want the information to be used and shared with the community, perhaps this is a niche or roll we can fill.

Kirk noted that we need to apply adaptive management, if we do these things and nothing happens, we don't want to keep doing them again.

Susan noted that the communication strategy caught her eye in the workplan. It is a place where you can show impact through engagement, it should be embedded in your communications, you should include as a cost in the budget. She pointed out that dealing with communication goals, and returns on communication, is challenging and they talk about it a great deal in her office. There are reasons to do things, which may not have a measurable outcome. Knowing where the linkages are, is important, and all of this is important to include in your communications strategy.

Bill noted that the self-evaluation policy he discussed earlier, about engagement in conferences is part of that process.

Coley noted that there may be some issues which APNEP is not addressing, or no one else is addressing.

Stacey added that APNEP is trying to be more intentional with their communication efforts, and tie Facebook, Twitter LinkedIn, etc. back to CCMP actions. They are expanding the former communications plan into an Engagement Strategy which incorporates communications, the outreach and education policy Bill discussed, and partner engagement strategies. She explained that the Outreach and Education Policy for example, will look at whether we are getting the best return on investment. Also, there may be other areas we may not have traditionally explored, for example, engagement of graduate students through events such as SciREN and the WRII conference, engaging the next generation of scientists that will become part of APNEP's Management Conference. These actions will hopefully benefit the partnership as a whole.

Bill.....

Coley noted that we should consider the desired effect.

Mac noted that in his role they evaluated the change in a person's knowledge. They used pre- and post-windshield surveys, but to document real change, it could take many years. But, six months to a year down the road, it is hard to measure what changed. It also costs money to have someone go out and do these surveys. There is a matrix system the university uses, which includes how to write your thesis and plan, who will do it, what the needed supplies are, what is the intended outcome, what was the effect. Educational things are hard to have a metric for.

Kirk agreed and noted that any of the educational things are hard to have a metric for, unless you are going to spend a lot of money. One desired outcome is to have an increased awareness of the importance of the APNEP region and APNEP issues. That could be the metric. You could do public surveys and determine if people's awareness of the region begins to rise.

Bill noted that when Ellen came to visit and we were driving around the region, she asked if the people in the houses along the road know who APNEP is. Bill told her he suspected that most probably did not, but he was not sure it is necessary. Is it more important to have the general public aware of the region, or our partners who can make changes in the landscape? Perhaps they are the ones we need to reach and focus on given the size of the program.

Joanne noted that Chesapeake Bay has many of the same issues.

Bill explained that staff have been discussing their multiple audiences. For example, the website users, include EPA, the press, professionals, etc. all different audiences are using the web site. Bill joked that our MySpace page is not doing too well now. Susan noted that it is a constant evolution to keep up with changing modes of communications.

Todd noted there are 12 goals with identified outcomes, but we how much progress are we making to get to those outcomes. Todd noted that \$600,000 is not much funding to do the breadth of things that are here, we should have some priorities, not everything can be done at once, we should focus around topics that everyone can get excited about.

Mac asked who the general audience of APNEP is. Is it partners or the general public? Who is the intended audience of the web page? He doesn't think they probably know. If the general public google website facts, call, or google us or about a problem in the sounds, we can help direct them to partners, help them make those connections.

Bill noted that the contacts they receive are usually teachers, or interested public. They often contact about aquatic weed problems, or some other issue. Staff can put them in contact with experts.

Kirk noted that in Chesapeake Bay, a lot of the issues were in the watersheds, and they needed to make the system in the "back yards" of folks living in the watershed. It is all local. People might not care about what happens in Albemarle Sound, but they do care about what happens in their backyard and we need to reach those people.

Bill agreed. He noted that one of the favorite projects they did, was a schoolyard project, located near Petersburg, Virginia in Disputanta. They had gone to Chesapeake Bay program requesting assistance, and discovered that they were in the Chowan River Basin, and were told about APNEP. They were awarded \$12,000 and spent about \$6,000 on an outdoor classroom. They partnered with the NPS and get an advertising firm to help with trail signage, also two Eagle Scout projects, donations from Vulcan Materials (thanks to a sixth-grader asking for the pea gravel). Bill noted that the project not only came in under budget, but they engaged the community and held volunteer days to help build the trail. The art class at the school also worked with Vulcan Materials to incorporate a pier into a pond they owned nearby. It fulfilled the RFP but increased the awareness of the whole community regarding the fact that they didn't even live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Kirk said it was good to get them thinking about what happens downstream in Albemarle Sound even if they do not see it. He noted that we also should ensure that the program gets put in their curriculum after that class is done so the knowledge can continue to be transferred to other generations. We need to incorporate a long-term feature. Bill noted that a similar project in Manteo has done this.

Kirk noted that these are difficult problems, but if we learn from experience and start thinking about how we set things up and track and thinking about the outcomes, we are headed in the right direction.

Kirk said the board needed to take an action on the workplan. Susan made a motion to approve, Wilson, seconded. Kirk asked for any further discussion.

Todd suggested that in the future we should encumber any carry-over funds as quickly as possible. Bill noted that one reason we had the carry-over, was the lack of staff and inability to set up action teams. Todd reiterated his comment about having less definition and including everything with implementation projects, which is ok because you have the year to figure out how to use it.

Kirk called for a vote. The motion to approve the work plan passed unanimously.

Kirk noted that Secretary Ward, the Secretary of Natural Resources in VA, wants to meet with Secretary Regan and develop a shared understanding regarding the Chowan, Roanoke, and other shared watersheds between the states. Kirk would like to set up a meeting sometime in the spring, and would work with Bill on some concrete

policies that will last beyond the current administration into the future. He wants to get the board's blessing to move forward.

Susan asked if APNEP moves to an academic institution, how would that affect things? Kirk didn't believe it would affect things. There are issues in common between the two states, the need for monitoring, fish passage, toxic contaminants, etc. Ultimately it could lead to a state of southern rivers type report.

Bill noted that there is currently an MOU between VA and NC agencies that was signed before he came on board. The departments have changed so the agreement needs revision. We had hoped to have an agreement between the two governors, they were approached before the SALCC was formed, but then but the politics got out of synch.

11:51 p.m.      **Join STAC for Joint Meeting & Lunch**

Bill said we would move next door and have lunch with the STAC. Some of the afternoon meeting may be repetitive for those who have been engaged with the program longer.

Bill noted that the Action Teams are now being posted on the web site.

Kirk stated again that we need to view from the 30,000-foot level, and make sure things are going okay.

11:52 a.m.      The PB meeting adjourned.

**Action Items:**

- **Bill will send the draft MOU regarding the change to a university host to the board before sending to UNC-IE for review.**
- **Joanne to follow up with Simona about the NCCA data.**
- **APNEP staff will work on tracking progress towards CCMP implementation, from both partnership and program perspectives.**
- **APNEP staff to explicitly state the relevant actions in future versions of the workplan.**
- **Bill and Jimmy will run any proposals regarding an evaluation of economic issues surrounding the shrimp trawling and bycatch issues by the board before proceeding.**
- **Kirk to follow up with Mary and work on setting up a meeting between Secretary Regan and Secretary Ward.**
  - **Explore options to revise the MOU between North Carolina and Virginia.**
- **Board members to explore options to show support for APNEP in the wake of the new administration.**