



*Welcome to the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program **E-Update** – a monthly summary of selected activities of the APNEP staff, committees and our partners...*

This last 2007 E-Update shares our accomplishments for the year:

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Image Acquisition: The NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR) entered into agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center, to collect aerial imagery for the North Carolina coastal area and the southeastern Virginia Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program (APNEP) region. A large-format, mapping quality digital camera was used to collect imagery at a ground resolution of .5 meters for use in detecting submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) habitats. The project is part of an overall and ongoing APNEP (and partners') effort to establish long-term monitoring of SAV which can be an important indicator of estuarine ecosystem health because of its sensitivity to degraded water quality. APNEP provided project base funding of \$160K with an additional \$90K coming from its partners. Information derived from the project is important for the provision of SAV data to various users, as well as assisting in the implementation of the NC Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP).

Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP) Revision: The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program (APNEP) Policy Board has approved plans for the update of the program's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The CCMP is an integral part of National Estuary Program (NEP) work, the development of which is mandated by the EPA for all 28 NEPs situated along the United States' three coastlines. APNEP's CCMP was accepted on behalf of the people of N.C. by the governor and on behalf of the citizens of the U.S. by the administrator of the EPA as "an estuary of national significance", in November 1994. Based on the best scientific research and information available, as well as unprecedented citizen involvement, the CCMP took seven years to develop. It is a blueprint for the identification, preservation, and protection, of the significant natural resources in northeastern N.C. and southeastern VA. The revision process is expected to take up to 18 months to accomplish.

Newspaper In Education Tabloid Supplement: The News and Observer, the Triangle, NC major-circulation newspaper, printed a 12-page Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program (APNEP) educational insert in its daily circulation of approximately 170,000 papers, and in newspapers ordered by Newspapers in Education participants, on November 13th, 2007. The insert highlighted the value of estuaries and increased awareness about the APNEP's work to protect North Carolina's coastal resources. APNEP is also distributing 10,000 overrun copies of the insert, at presentations, exhibits and festivals, and to additional schools in coastal counties.

The Albemarle-Pamlico: Our Coastal Treasure Booklet: First published in 2004, this glossy 58-pg. booklet has been updated and is in its second printing. It's jam-packed with facts and information on the Albemarle-Pamlico region, its history, attractions and the challenges it faces. Distribution is widespread with popularity among tourists notable.

The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program (APNEP) Website: The website has been reformatted and totally updated with more information, links, and ease of manipulation. To view the new and improved version, go to: www.apnep.org.

The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program (APNEP) E-Update Newsletter: A monthly electronically distributed newsletter that summarizes the activities of the APNEP and its partners. Copies are archived on the new APNEP website.

The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program Citizens' Monitoring Network: In 2007, APNEP's Citizens' Monitoring Network operated 23 monitoring sites through the effort and involvement of 51 volunteers, which is an increase from 2006. Monitoring sites are evenly distributed within the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine region. Also, the CMN participated in several educational outreach programs with local science museums and middle schools. About 200 students were introduced to the importance of water quality and keeping our environment healthy. Students also had opportunities to conduct on-site water quality testing with equipment provided by the program.

The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program Indicator Development Progress: APNEP's progress in indicator development during 2007 has been one of refinement. The Indicator Steering Committee (with representatives from APNEP's Policy Board, Citizens, Management, Science & Technical Advisory Committees) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the 2006 proposed indicator set. They also proposed additional indicators to fill programmatic objectives that had not been addressed in previous proposals. To help make the indicators easier to evaluate, the indicator list was converted from a "spreadsheet" format to a "question and indicator" format that retains a four-level hierarchical framework (modules-categories-dimensions-indicators) linked to a

conceptual ecosystem model. This format, in turn, has been converted to an internet "blog" format for solicitation of written stakeholder comment scheduled for early 2008. As APNEP begins the process of revising the program's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan in 2008, and incorporates stronger principles of adaptive management, indicators will play a crucial role in providing stakeholders with feedback on whether their collective efforts are sustaining (via restoration and protection) ecosystem health.

Protected Acreage: In 2007 the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program (APNEP) and its partners have protected over 670 acres of tidal wetlands, 1,800 acres of forested wetlands, 4,700 acres of riparian areas, 9,700 acres of agricultural land, 5,800 acres of forest and woodland, and over 28,000 acres in other types of wildlife habitat. APNEP reported these successes as part of the Government Performance Results Act reporting process.

APNEP's 20th Anniversary and Annual Meeting: The APNEP held its annual meeting on Nov. 20, 2007 at the EPA facility located in Research Triangle Park, Durham, North Carolina. In addition to the APNEP's 20th anniversary, the gathering also marked the 20th anniversary of the National Estuary Program as a whole. The APNEP was the first of the 28 National Estuary Programs to be designated as "an estuary of national significance" (Nov. 14, 1987).

Originally known as the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine Study (APES), the program underwent an extensive restructuring in 2005 and, through Governor Easley's Executive Order # 74, resulted in the establishment of a policy board and three advisory committees: the citizens', science and technical, and management committees.

The day-long meeting featured presentations highlighting APNEP program updates; the N.C. statewide conservation planning tool; and the coastal Carolinas research initiative for assessing ecosystem services. The luncheon speaker was Paul Cough, Director of EPA's Oceans and Coastal Protection Division who spoke about the National Estuary Program's accomplishments over 20 years.

On behalf of the APNEP, have a very Happy Holiday Season!



Until next year...

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