

APNEP Citizens Advisory Committee
NCDENR Boardroom 5001, Raleigh, North Carolina
June 26, 2012 1:00-3:00pm

DRAFT

APNEP Staff Present: Jim Hawhee, Erin Thompson, Leigh Habegger

CAC Members Present: Karen Amspacher, Marjorie Rayburn, David Halley, Dennis Borton, Michael Johnson, Charles Bass, Harrel Johnson, Brian Roth

Guests and Speakers Present: Chris Goforth (NC MNS), Paul Clark (NC DWQ), Misty Buchanan (NC NHP)

Call to Order and Introduction [Charles Bass]:

- Charles called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM, welcomed and introduced all present.
- No public comments made.
- No additions or deletions were made to today's agenda.
- Meeting notes from October were approved by consensus with no changes. Motion to approve offered by David, seconded by Marjorie.

Overview and Introduction [Jim Hawhee]:

- Jim Hawhee briefly reviewed objectives of the CCMP and how APNEP has been working to ensure it is a flexible policy. He commented that it was adopted at the March Policy Board meeting and directed board members to the website for viewing of the document. He also commented that grant funding is based around conforming to CCMP goals.
- Jim Hawhee discussed the approval of the Ecosystem Assessment and the future publishing of the document. The document consists of assessing indicators in order to gauge the overall health of the ecosystem.
- Marjorie Rayburn asked if there is a time table for when the sections will be updated since certain aspects change more quickly than others. Jim replied that this is on a case by case basis, and that he hopes we will be able to update the document more frequently than before (the 21 years it took to update the previous EA).
- Jim Hawhee discussed the 2012-2013 Work Plan. It was adopted by the Policy Board and is pending review by the EPA. Contains the plans for the next fiscal year and outlines the budgeting. Projects include wetland mapping, restoration, reforestation, benchmarks for indicators, and continuation of previous projects. Jim noted that this is a good place to learn about what APNEP is doing.
- Jim Hawhee noted the departure of Scott Gentry for a new position in the private sector.
- Jim discussed the future changes with Citizens Monitoring Network. He noted that the program would like to improve the utility and visibility of information gained through the network. He noted that Erin Thompson is working on a project to integrate mapping with the data. Chad Smith will help us make the transition. Jim noted that he would like to add more indicators to the citizens monitoring network.

- Jim noted that he signed everyone on the CAC up for the APNEP mailing list. He invited people to write articles for the monthly Soundings newsletter. Jim noted that it is a good way to reach DENR management since it is being read by a lot of DENR employees. Jim also noted the “Echoes” section of the website and explained how APNEP clips articles pertaining issues involving the APNEP region. Jim noted all social media options as well (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) and welcomed everyone to ask him if they need any help setting that up.
- Jim welcomed people to ask questions if they wanted.
- Marjorie asked how many friends APNEP has on Facebook. APNEP has 169 friends. Jim showed the Facebook.com/APNEP page and explained a post on the site about “Crab Pots to Oyster Reefs” that APNEP was involved with.
- David Halley asked what the project was, and Jim showed on the apnep.org website the Enhancing Oyster Reef Ecosystems in Coastal Tidal Creeks Project page and explained how APNEP funded a project by UNC to conduct experiments using discarded crab pots as substrate for oyster reefs. David Halley asked how they were retrieved and Jim answered that we leave it to the DMF. Jim commented that these are traditionally a big problem because they get left behind and ghost fish for many years, but now they have a beneficial use.
- Charles asked if there were any more questions. Charles asked where the reefs were set up. Jim answer that they were on Rachel Carson Estuarine Reserve waters. Harrel said that they would have to be approved to be put on certain waters.
- Jim noted that we’ve been fortunate to have a lot of projects lately and we would like to keep the momentum going.
- Marjorie noted that she likes the website and frequently refers people to it.

Citizen Science at the N.C. Museum of Natural Science [Dr. Chris Goforth]:

- Chris provided a PowerPoint presentation titled “Citizen Science at the Museum of Natural Science.” She stated that the overall idea of this project was that citizen science is popular; it helps to connect people who are not scientists to science and allows us to collect lots of data over large geographic areas. The museum wants to develop a program that will allow them to do this.
- Overall goals of the citizen science program are to increase visibility of the Ecostation and Museum through citizen science opportunities, increase participation by citizen scientists, increase range of data collection/possible participation. She wants to expand the program outside the Triangle area, and notes that online offerings will help.
- The citizen science program works to maintain high standards for data collection efforts (good training, good materials so that information will be useful) and provide a full experience for citizen science participants. They will encourage the opening of the “big black box” so that people will understand the overarching goals of the project and see the results of their efforts. This will encourage people to keep participating. She commented on the CMN feedback. Marjorie noted that with CMN they did not show any feedback on the work she was doing as a volunteer.
- In the long term Chris hopes to develop good online tools so that monitors can participate remotely. Further goals include developing a citizen scientist blog, a comprehensive citizen science website, training programs, and improving the Citizen Science Center at the Museum. She also hopes to develop educational curricula to incorporate citizen science projects, create a

feedback system (share results with participants), advertise the program (increase participation, social media), and host a Citizen Science Day.

- Wrapping it up: scientists benefit greatly from citizen scientists and citizen science projects can help to expand knowledge to non-scientists
- Marjorie asked if they anticipate interfacing with other programs like the Cornell Ornithology Lab? She answered yes, but that she hopes that they will still be able give feedback to citizen scientists. Marjorie noted the Master Gardener Program might want to work with them on projects. Marjorie noted that standard Course of Study is important with aligning the projects to that. Chris noted that she is working hard to do just that. Marjorie complimented her on the work she has done.
- Jim mentioned that she should contact Marty Wiggins with the Office of Environmental Education.
- Dennis asked what age would be useful for children. Chris replied that it depends. Jim commented that there are new developments that we can take advantage of and that we want to ensure that the information is available to review later.
- Marjorie noted that this would be good for rural areas since these types of projects tend to focus around urban centers.
- Charles thanked Chris for speaking.

Brownwater Floodplain Surveys [Misty Buchanan NCNHP]

- Misty asked if anyone was familiar with the program and their reports. Some people were, and stated that she would go over the objective of the program.
- Misty presented a PowerPoint presentation. She outlined the main objective of the NCNHP and how it attains its goals. NHP tracks rare plants, animals, and communities and shares these data with organizations and individuals for planning purposes. NHP works to preserving the biodiversity of the state as a whole.
- NHP also delineates conservation sites and assigns significance to them (Significant Natural Heritage Areas). SNHAs are important to biodiversity and they work toward preserving these areas while meeting goals and needs of land owners.
- Marjorie asked if they do ground surveys, if they do only on public lands. Misty answered that they have field representatives that spend two years on each area visiting sites, doing surveys, and then finally writing reports. Marjorie asked if there are ever negative reactions to people going on their land? Misty answered that it varies and that only 8% said no. They access private sites only after securing permission from willing landowners.
- Misty commented that the NHP was switching to new system of regional inventory strategy. Jim noted that many of the projects were done during Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine Study, and Misty commented that they would like to update some of these because they were done so long ago (1990s)
- Misty showed how to access the data—County Inventory Reports, Natural Heritage Program Website, GIS data.
- David Halley asked what the data looks like. Misty replied that it is in polygon and point format and that you can contact NHP to find out what actual rare species are found in the

area. Misty noted that they are working on a map so that you can plug in your location and it will show you a list of any nearby rare species or protected areas.

- Misty detailed the funding and start of the Brownwater River Floodplains project began 2011, funded half by APNEP and half by Natural Heritage Trust Fund.
- Misty outlined the preliminary results of the project.
- Misty went over the future plans for the project.
- Misty asked for any more questions.
- Jim noted that there was a Soundings post about the project recently. Noted that when conservation easements are secured to protect rare species, these sites often also provide water quality benefits downstream.
- David asked what “brownwater” streams were. Misty answered that they are drained from the piedmont region.
- Charles thanked Misty for the update.

Watershed Restoration and Improvement Team (WRIT) [Paul Clark, NCDWQ]

- Paul outlined the history of the WRIT project with a PowerPoint presentation. A number of DENR programs came together to brainstorm about watershed issues in October 2008 and because of that they created a program to build on the meeting. The program began in 2010.
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- WRIT’s mission is to enhance each agency’s ability to carry out its own water-related goals and activities to improve watershed functions.
- The WRIT team is working to overcome some challenges, including integrating division/program data information, coordinating funding, and engaging in geographically focusing monitoring.
- Paul noted that Jim is one of the members of the team. Jim noted that APNEP tries to get various organizations to work together, just like WRIT does, WRIT might help us to find ways to improve water quality. He noted that there are two projects underway that were borne out of the WRIT program.
- Paul noted that having local support helps WRIT to have the connections and relationships needed to help coordinate at the local level and to move efforts forward.
- Jim noted that starting up monitoring requires that you do initial measurements first before working in a watershed. Paul said that the initial monitoring may not be a whole lot. Jim asked if DWQ has any resources for monitoring water quality. Paul says on a limited basis.
- Charles asked if the areas WRIT was going to attack first were the blue areas, and Paul answered yes. Jim noted that they may reassess to meet differing program goals to find overlaps.
- Paul noted that Jim made a good point that there may not be a WRIT project in APNEP area, but that there may be other watershed projects underway.
- David noted that NCFCS has approached him about monitoring before and after harvesting timber.

Climate Risk Analysis for Water Infrastructure [Jim Hawhee]:

- Jim stated that APNEP has taken an interest in assisting local governments with climate adaptation and that they are working to bringing funds to the APNEP region for climate projects.
- Jim outlined his project through a PowerPoint presentation, which covered water utility readiness and sea level rise readiness.
- The project utilizes CREAT (Climate Resilience Evaluation and Awareness Tool)
- David asked if these were “What if” questions. Jim replied yes, so they can see what kind of pressures the towns are experiencing and to see how climate change will affect these issues. David asked what the worst thing that could happen? Jim answered that there could be saltwater intrusion, storm surge, extensive flooding.
- Karen asked if the N.C. legislature’s stance on SLR could repel federal investment due to the controversy that has been created? Jim says it is hard to say whether or not this will attract or repel funding
- Charles said that in CA they are moving from the coast. Jim says that local governments will have to make decisions about how to best adapt their assets to climate pressures. APNEP’s current approach is to provide information to support local government decisions.
- Jim stated that the project scoping is complete and the contract has been signed. Areas of focus for the project include generating and compiling information about wastewater infrastructure and generating consensus on climate risks and parameters. The project is scheduled to end in Winter 2012.
- David asked how they come up with recommendations. Jim answered that they match up assets and threats and they choose from a menu of adaptation options.
- Charles asked about how farmland might be affected. Marjorie noted that there were already saltwater intrusion problems. Jim noted that the issue is so complex that it is hard to wrap your mind around it. Working with utilities helps to break it into smaller pieces to deal with.
- Marjorie noted that hurricanes further complicate the wastewater issues.
- Brian Roth says that the communities often want to do something about sea level rise but that they cannot afford to do so and that it will take federal and state support to adapt.
- Jim noted that they would be summarizing the project, taking stock of its value, and seeing if there is a demand for the project from other local governments in the region.

APNEP advisory structure update and discussion [Jim Hawhee]:

- Jim congratulated the town of Plymouth on their recent stewardship award.
- Jim noted that a new executive order is being considered by the Governor that will merge the CAC and MAC into an implementation team. In addition to providing advisement, APNEP wants to work towards having committee members help implement projects as well.
- Jim noted that he doesn’t know much more and he hopes that current committee members will be able to continue to serve.
- Marjorie asked if their roles will be different, Jim replied that he is unsure about the details at this time.

Round-table discussion: Current Issues [Charles Bass]:

- Charles participated in Shad in the Classroom and enjoyed the program. He thought it was cool and he participated in releasing them at the Falls Dam. Jim noted that they hope to continue the project in the coming years.

Adjourn [Charles Bass]:

- The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 3:15. The motion was offered by Harrel and seconded by Brian.