



Leadership Council Meeting
Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership
20 May 2020
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Webex Meeting

Action Items:

- By end of 2020 / Leadership Council: Kirk Havens and Holly White will remain as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively until the end of 2020. The Council shall elect a new Leadership Council Chair and Vice Chair who will start in January 2021.
- By July 1 / APNEP staff and Leadership Council: Develop a matrix of project types that APNEP can utilize to assist local governments, prioritizing spatial areas/actions that will also work towards other APNEP focus areas (see conversation below for details).
- By May 22 / APNEP Director: Send out Doodle poll for upcoming Leadership Council meetings for the remainder of the year.

Attendees:

Leadership Council: Kirk Havens (Chair, VIMS), Holly White (Vice-chair, Town of Nags Head), Tom Allen (ODU), Susan White (NC Sea Grant), Paul Cough (NC at-large), Carl Hershner (VA DEQ), John Nicholson (NC DEQ), Walter Clark (NC DPCR), Wilson Laney (NCSU), Tony Able (EPA);

Guests: Jeffrey Horton (NC DEQ), Connie Brower (NC DEQ), Todd Janeski (VCU), Forrest Shepard (NC DEQ), Tom McGill (EPA Region IV), Rachel Hart (EPA Region IV), Megan Mackey (EPA Region III), Vince Bacalan (EPA-HQ)

Staff: Bill Crowell, Dean Carpenter, Kelsey Ellis, Stacey Feken, Heather Jennings, Jimmy Johnson, Trish Murphey, Tim Ellis

Call to Order | Dr. Kirk Havens, Chair

Welcome /Agenda Review and Meeting Objectives

- Bill Crowell – provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

Chair/ Vice-Chair 2021 Discussion | Dr. Bill Crowell / Dr. Kirk Havens

- Bill Crowell - Chair and vice chair – Holly White is unable to assume the role of chair in 2020, so Kirk Havens agreed to will remain chair throughout 2020 with Holly continuing as vice-chair
- Kirk Havens - **motion to approve Holly White as vice chair and Kirk Havens as chair through end of 2020? Wilson Laney makes motion, Paul Cough seconds. Leadership Council unanimously approve.**

Partnership Briefing

Partnership Priority Areas | Dr. Bill Crowell

- Bill Crowell – APNEP sent focus areas document to the Leadership Council on 25 March 2020, which lists priority focus areas based on discussion from January meeting. (see focus areas document for detailed list of current projects).
- Todd Miller – Regarding water quality, it might be good to reference oyster/bacteria control in the water column efforts. There are a number of initiatives there as part of the Oyster Blueprint.
- Paul Cough – Given that wetlands are listed under the CHPP, has there been any discussion of whether wetlands will be a bigger part of the APNEP agenda? Bill Crowell – there hasn't been further discussion, will focus on it as opportunities arise but right now are more focused on SAV, living shorelines, other aspects of the CHPP. Bill Crowell – showed and highlighted the 2020 LC Strategic Planning Meeting Action Items document (in meeting materials on website). Overall we're making progress on all categories and moving forward on priority areas.

- Todd Miller – Is there any intersection between APNEP and the WOTUS lawsuit? Bill Crowell – We offered comments to NC DEQ but currently are not taking any particular action associated with that at the moment. Todd Miller – it would be helpful to know if having the Leadership Council engaged would be useful to NC DEQ. John Nicholson – Right now, NC DEQ is working through counsel at the Attorney General’s office on this. If there’s anything that the APNEP group wants to inject that’s fine but counsel at the Attorney General’s office is lead.
- Paul Cough – building on what Todd Miller said, he sent an email earlier in 2020 about working with governments on watershed plans, hydrologic matching, etc. Is that something we’ll be working on at some point? Bill Crowell – that is up to the Leadership Council. Wilson Laney – the NC Coastal Federation has worked closely with Hyde County relative to development of Mattamuskeet watershed plan, is that the kind of thing you had in mind? Todd Miller – there is a lot of interest at the local government level to do these watershed plans. Wilson Laney – Is there utility to putting together a possible priority list of collaborations? Scoping out funding needs, partners, etc. Todd Miller – You could make an overlay between interior waters and communities that don’t have plans yet in the APNEP region. Wilson Laney – I think it would be a great way to proceed, it’s practical and pragmatic and foundational. Water quality resonates with everybody, it’s in APNEP’s ballpark for sure and I think there would be a lot of support for such an effort. Walter Clark – Any kind of funding application sent to the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund that’s backed up by a plan would be more highly rated, so makes sense. Paul Cough – Those plans are a key connection between SAV and water quality. Part of the local dimension of water quality.
- Stacey Feken – Staff are involved with a number of initiatives with a local government component. The Scuppernong Project is on hold due to state budget issues but there are a number of other initiatives, such as NC Governor’s Executive Order 80/Community Resilience of Practice activities. Worthwhile to take these suggestions today and see how they overlay with current staff activities.
- Carl Hershner – We’re trying to understand where APNEP staff are making progress in this aspect. It would be helpful to have a list of local governments APNEP staff think are appropriate in the APNEP region and types of projects that are or should be considered for each local government. A kind of matrix. You can then see where there are gaps/where we are making progress. Would give this oversight committee an understanding of where/how we are making substantive progress in that area.
- Bill Crowell – We’ll follow up with Paul, Todd, and Carl, and Wilson to figure out an approach for this. Holly White – As you all think about a strategy/approach, sometimes as a local government there are people who are interested, so even if local community hasn’t approached you, it doesn’t mean they don’t care. Need to prioritize inclusivity of all communities. Todd Miller – Definitely agree, the NC Coastal Federation is pretty maxed out on what they can do in this arena. We need to institutionalize this approach and that’s what APNEP could do.
- Wilson Laney – Is there some other factor besides cross indexing with impaired streams list that could go into the matrix and prioritize local government workload?
- General consensus that this analysis is important and APNEP could take this and run with it. Carl Hershner – To avoid mission creep/overreaching resources, need to start with list of local governments and list of issues, then make decisions about what APNEP can bring to the table on each one of those. Then the Leadership Council can evaluate the progress being made and determine if these activities are consistent with our strategic plan. Wilson Laney – I agree, this is exactly what needs to be done. Another potential topic – open space acquisition? Todd Miller – That’s a strategy you have to consider as a part of a watershed plan.
- Kirk Havens – I want us to be careful, we spent a lot of time trying to focus APNEP resources so I want us to avoid overextending resources. Matrix approach makes sense.
- Overall consensus that matrix is needed to prioritize/focus and that focus on local governments is important for APNEP.
- Paul Cough – This discussion of mission creep connects back to if APNEP is a program or a partnership. Does APNEP have to do everything itself or connect partners with projects?
- Bill Crowell – APNEP staff will develop matrix and get it to the Leadership Council by July 1 with focus on communities that touch the sounds? Todd Miller – Or potentially overlay other program priorities. Wilson Laney agrees.

Monitoring Plan Development | Dr. Dean Carpenter

- Dean Carpenter presented details and timeline about upcoming Monitoring Plan. See Monitoring Plan presentation document for details.
- Todd Miller – Have staff anticipated what the budget would be to maintain level/frequency of monitoring for aerial extent? Dean Carpenter – In the Monitoring Plan, we will document monitoring that APNEP and partners are doing and then will provide recommendations on where to target further monitoring.
- Carl Hershner – To the extent the Plan will meet EPA needs, although the plan is focused on SAV and a limited set of data collection efforts, will the plan include a complete list of suggested metrics/indicators? Need to have something to show – here are all the things we think are critical, but here is our implementable plan and then we have aspirational elements that we'd like to include going forward.
- Dean Carpenter – Definitely agree, all this will be part of the Monitoring Framework document. The intention is to get started and see what is realistic, then add onto that and build onto water quality, adding other aspects and considerations.
- Carl Hershner – You need to be selective/strategic in data collection/reporting efforts. Pick what is high priority and then look for opportunities to leverage other data collection opportunities to expand to a larger network.
- Tony Able – Want to narrow it down to types of monitoring that decision makers can use on the ground for water quality improvements. Are we focusing on that?
- Dean Carpenter – I don't see this as an academic exercise. Initial plan/scoping focused on estuarine water quality and parameters that affect SAV.
- Tim Ellis - The State of NC is currently developing new management goals and actions for both SAV and water quality in the Albemarle-Pamlico system, so our monitoring focus is directly in line with providing information that decision makers need.
- Todd Miller – I would like to see a budget in the final plan and a timeline of frequency of measurements. Tony Able – EPA will also be looking for a timeline for implementation.
- Bill Crowell – I want to reinforce that APNEP is dependent on its partners, particularly NC and VA DEQ, because we don't have the budget to run our own long-term monitoring program.
- Tim Ellis- EPA guidance for NEP monitoring plans requires that there are details specifying various parties' roles and responsibilities, as well as funding needs and commitments.
- Paul Cough – I want to support Tony Able's point to really be explicit about the user groups that the monitoring plan is aimed at.

NC- VA MOU | Ms. Stacey Feken

- Stacey Feken – A lot of this information is in the work plan if Leadership Council members want more detail. APNEP staff are trying to build/sustain relationships across state lines that are sustainable through administrations. Bill Crowell and Kirk Havens drafted an updated memorandum of understanding (MOU) or potential governor's agreement, this has been submitted to deputy secretary on Virginia side. The Virginia government is working on this as well. Still need to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Stacey Feken – At staff level, are developing/sustaining relationships. Wanted to briefly introduce Todd Janeski who has been involved in these discussions at Virginia Secretary's Office Level. Currently there is an MOU in place with the resource agencies from NC and VA. Working towards progress on implementation of existing MOU is another ongoing action. Forrest Shepard with DEQ is also attending today's meeting and is a new basin planner for watersheds that go into Virginia.
- Other projects/initiatives that staff are involved with are in the work plan. Lynnhaven River NOW and Southern Watersheds Teacher Workshop last summer, and they've introduced a resolution on the Virginia side looking to fund a study of the Southern Watersheds. This is an opportunity to work across state lines. We are collaborating with VIMS on NOAA Coastal Resilience grant, local government audience and tool development. Also, a tribal resilience project that has an interstate component.
- Kirk Havens – From a broad, upper level view, Virginia is still looking toward going forward with MOU to enhance past one and then to set up a governor's agreement at a later date. Revised MOU should be coming out of Virginia soon.

- Wilson Laney – With respect to the Chowan Basin Plan coming out, many Leadership Council members are interested in river herring. New river herring lawsuit. There is a draft report in preparation that reports the results of the American shad acoustic telemetry. Chowan – important for both shad and river herring. Kirk Havens – these projects highlight the importance of cross-state initiatives.

2020-21 Proposed Workplan and Budget | Ms. Kelsey Ellis / Dr. Bill Crowell

- Kelsey Ellis presented high-level past and upcoming work plan items. Presentation slides are available in the meeting materials.
- Bill Crowell provided an overview of the budget. See budget page of the work plan for details.
- Stacey Feken addressed questions related to Ecological Flows project

Workplan Discussion | Dr. Kirk Havens

- Todd Miller – Ecological flows project details? Stacey Feken – We funded a Phase I study in 2018. The team will be building off of that for Phase II project that will be more focused on ecology-flow relationships. Ultimate goal is to make recommendation to DWR for ecological flows in the coastal plain.
- Paul Cough – How does ecological flows support SAV, WQ, and living shorelines? Stacey Feken – if the Leadership Council signs off on these focus areas, we would want to talk to the team about how we can better focus efforts to implement focus area goals.
- Kirk Havens – I’m assuming travel budget is still up in the air? Bill Crowell – we’re supposed to budget a minimum of \$10,000 for travel and we budgeted \$12,000 like last year. I’m guessing we’ll use less than that this year.
- Kirk Havens – Motion to approve work plan? **Susan White motions to approve. Tom Allen seconds it. Motion to approve work plan and budget as proposed approved. Leadership Council unanimously approves.**

Other Business / Issues

Restore America’s Estuary RFP | Ms. Heather Jennings

- Bill Crowell – We’re starting to have a few partners approach staff to talk about RAE-NEP Coastal Watersheds Grant Program.
- Heather Jennings gave brief overview. See meeting materials documents for details.

Meetings July & October | Dr. Bill Crowell

- Bill Crowell - Doodle poll will be coming out this week to schedule upcoming July and October meetings.

Public Comment | Dr Tim Ellis

- No public comments. Stacey Feken introduced Todd Janeski and Forrest Shepard who are working with APNEP on issues related to NC-VA coordination.

Adjourn 12:00pm | Dr. Kirk Havens