

Fall 2026 Newsletter

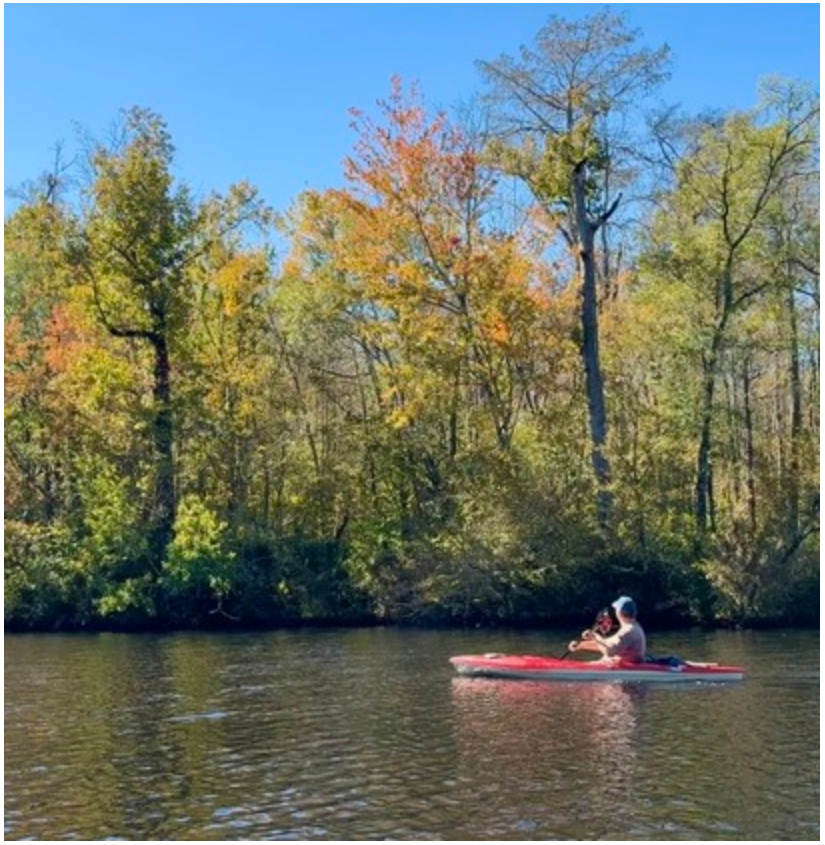
Autumn in the Albemarle-Pamlico estuary is a great time to explore. Extensive paddling trails offer an incredible display of waterfront foliage. Fishers and birders alike can enjoy major species migrations along the coast. Cooler temperatures allow for more outdoor relaxation, minus the mosquitos. So, get outside, soak it in, and enjoy a few updates and announcements from APNEP below!

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- APNEP-Sea Grant Fellowship

- Dr. Jud Kenworthy receives Old North State Award

- Updated NC Wetlands Program Plan



Fall foliage on the Roanoke River.

Now Open! APNEP & Sea Grant Joint Graduate Fellowship in Estuarine Research

APNEP is partnering with North Carolina Sea Grant and Virginia Sea Grant to accept applications for the 2026 Graduate Fellowship in Estuarine Research. The fellowship provides funding for graduate students based in North Carolina and Virginia to conduct hypothesis-based research within the APNEP boundary. The application window is currently open, and proposals are due by November 23, 2026, at 5 p.m. ET.

- Updated VA Marine Debris Reduction Plan

-APNEP Welcomes STEM Policy Fellow

- APNEP RFP Notice

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- Grants & Funding Opportunities



Current APNEP-NC Sea Grant fellow, Mary Kate Rinderele, conducting field work at Lake Mattamuskeet.

Dr. W. Judson Kenworthy honored with the prestigious Old North State Award

Governor Josh Stein has awarded the Old North State Award to Dr. W. Judson Kenworthy in recognition of his decades of exemplary service, scientific contributions and unwavering dedication to the conservation of North Carolina's coastal and marine ecosystems. As one of the highest honors granted by the Governor of North Carolina, the award celebrates individuals who have made a significant, lasting impact on the state.

Read the full press release here.



Dr. Kenworthy received his award in Beaufort, NC in the company of family.

Updated North Carolina Wetlands Program Plan

This update of the NC Wetlands Program Plan provides direction and focus for proposed wetland work, allows planning of work directed towards achieving program goals, and serves as a communication tool with the public and other interested agencies to garner support for and encourage partnerships to accomplish NC wetland goals. This plan is not a regulatory document and does not impose any regulations.

View the full plan here.

Updated Plan to Reduce Debris in Virginia Waterways

The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM) at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Clean Virginia Waterways (CVW) have released an updated Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan. The 2026-2030 plan is both a statewide commitment and road map for strategic action to reduce marine debris common in Virginia's rivers, Chesapeake Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean.

Read more here.

APNEP Welcomes New STEM Policy Fellow

In August, APNEP welcomed its second STEM Policy Fellow, Nate Marsh. Marsh attended UNC-Chapel Hill and received both a Masters and B.A. in Public Policy. Prior to joining APNEP, he conducted wetlands research and advocacy for the North Carolina Coastal Federation and Coastal Carolina Riverwatch. As a fellow, his work is focused on compiling and analyzing policy and regulations surrounding wetlands and supporting the CCMP to refine and implement a regional wetland protection and restoration strategy.



APNEP Water Quality, Habitat Restoration & Protection RFP Notice

APNEP anticipates announcing a Water Quality, Habitat Restoration and Protection Request for Proposals (RFP) by the end of the year. Around $300,000 in funds may be awarded, subject to continued funding availability. Focus areas may include Water Quality,

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (low salinity), Wetlands, Oyster Habitats, and Community Resilience.

The announcement will be made via this listserv, the DEQ press release list, our website and our social media.

Out and About

- In September, staff participated the Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP) Workshop in New Bern. The RCCP is currently accepting applications for Phase 3: Engineering and Design and Phase 4: Construction and Implementation. A total of $2.5 million is available to eligible local governments or Tribes.
- APNEP Staff Giancarlo Richardson and Stacey Feken attended the September 4th Quarterly NC Commission of Indian Affairs meeting, where partner Virginia Natural Heritage Tribal Liaison Casey Thornbrugh briefed the commission on the Joint APNEP-VADCR South Quay East Project.
- In September and October, APNEP's Tim Ellis attended both the Gulf and South Atlantic Regional panel on Aquatic Invasive Species and the Mid-Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species. The Albemarle-Pamlico watershed falls in a transition zone between the two regions, so it faces unique challenges from both.
- In October, APNEP's Stacey Feken and Natalie Ivey attended the Southern Rivers Roundtable meeting in Waverly, VA, including a site visit to TNC's Piney Grove Preserve. Following the meeting, a partnership spotlight on the Roundtable was published on social media.
- This October, Natalie Ivey attended the National Estuary Partnership (NEP) Tech Transfer meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas. The meeting invited staff, partners, and technical experts from across the country for a collaborative and engaging exchange of ideas.

- Natalie Ivey attended the Northeast Trails Alliance (NETA) Annual Meeting promoting trails in northeastern North Carolina. NETA is a regional trails initiative in North Carolina supported by Roanoke River Partners, Inc. and the NC State Trails program.



APNEP staff also had a grea time attending NC Sea Grant's North Carolina Coastal Conference Nov. 17th & 18th!

Grants & Funding Opportunities

Funding Highlights

- APNEP Water Quality and Habitat Protectinon/Restoration RFP – Anticipated Dec 2026
- RCCP Phase 3 and Phase 4 Funding Opportunities
- Sea Grant-APNEP Graduate Fellowship in Estuarine Research

For more NC DEQ and external funding opportunities, please visit: https://apnep.nc.gov/resources/grant-opportunities

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