



NORTH CAROLINA  
Environmental Quality

ROY COOPER  
Governor

MICHAEL S. REGAN  
Secretary

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Marine Fisheries Commission  
Coastal Resources Commission  
Environmental Management Commission

**FROM:** Jimmy Johnson, Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership  
Anne Deaton, Division of Marine Fisheries

**DATE:** October 21, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Update on the 2021 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan Amendment

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### Issue

Update the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC), Coastal Resources Commission (CRC), and Environmental Management Commission (EMC) on the status of the ongoing amendment to the 2021 North Carolina Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP).

### Overview

At the MFC's August 2020 business meeting, and CRC and EMC's September 2020 business meeting, staff provided an update on the 2021 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan Amendment. A timeline for completing the amendment and the five selected priority issues were reviewed. Staff received constructive comments and questions. Since the presentations to the commissions, discussions among agencies have increased. The issue papers focus on complex issues that require coordination with and information from multiple agencies. The CHPP Team re-examined the amendment timeline in late September and decided that additional time was needed to adequately incorporate all the information needed and get sufficient review by other agencies and the public. The timeline was discussed with the division directors, and there was consensus that extending the deadline would be beneficial. The plan review and amendment will still be completed within the statutorily required five-year timeframe (Table 1).

Since the last commission meeting, work on the remaining issue papers continues. Additionally, three online Wetland Technical Workshops were held in August. The purpose of the meetings was to receive input from a broad group of scientists and managers on the current state of our knowledge regarding wetland extent, condition, and threats, and have discussion on needs to advance wetland conservation and restoration. Seventy participants from state and federal agencies, non-government organizations, and academia attended.



A CHPP Steering Committee meeting was held on October 16<sup>th</sup>. Three presentations were given by habitat and water quality experts to provide a foundation for future discussions regarding management of submerged aquatic vegetation, wetlands, and water quality. Updates on progress of the five issue papers were also provided.

Table 1. Timeline of CHPP milestones relevant to DEQ commission meetings.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Quarter</b>	<b>MFC</b>	<b>CRC</b>	<b>EMC</b>
Provide CHPP background, implementation progress, and process for 2021 amendment	Fall 2019	Nov 15	Nov 20	Nov 14
Provide background on SAV, Compliance, and I&I issue papers	Summer 2020	Aug 20-21	Sep 9	Sep 10
Provide update on timeline	Fall 2020	Nov 19-20	Nov 18-19	Nov 18-19
Present background on Wetlands and Habitat Monitoring issue papers	Winter 2021	Feb 17-19	Feb 17-18	Mar 10-11
Provide update on revision status	Spring 2021	May 19-21	Jun 9-10	May 12-13
Present entire draft amendment; ask to take out for public comment ( <b>action item</b> )	Summer 2021	Aug 25-27	Sep 15-16	Sep 8-9
Review public comments received; ask for final plan approval ( <b>action item</b> )	Fall 2021	Nov 17-19	Nov 9-10	Nov 17-18
Present public friendly short plan for outreach purposes	Spring 2022	TBD	TBD	TBD

### Action Needed

For informational purposes only, **no action is needed at this time.**

