

COASTAL HABITAT PROTECTION PLAN PROCESS FRAMEWORK

March 2022

PURPOSE

This Process Framework provides internal guidelines for staff from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) divisions who comprise the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP) Team who participate in the development and implementation of the CHPP.

BACKGROUND

The NC Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuarine Partnership (APNEP) co-lead CHPP efforts including coordination of the CHPP Team which also includes staff from other DEQ divisions and other agencies. To implement recommendations of the CHPP, the CHPP Team develops specific implementation actions and recommendations for the CHPP Steering Committee (CSC).

GUIDELINES

Coastal Habitat Protection Plan Team

The purpose of the CHPP Team is to provide staff representation and input from DEQ divisions to develop and update the CHPP. Representation by all participating agencies is essential for fully understanding complex and often inter-jurisdictional issues that contribute to habitat and water quality degradation and identifying viable solutions to further protect and restore coastal fish habitats. There are two distinct roles for the CHPP Team 1) plan development and updates, and 2) facilitate implementation of recommended actions following plan approval.

Formation and Structure

The CHPP Team includes two or more members from each of the core DEQ agencies:

- Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuarine Partnership (APNEP)
- Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF)
- Division of Coastal Management (DCM)
- Division of Water Resources (DWR)
- Division of Energy, Minerals, and Land Resources (DEMLR)
- Division of Mitigation Services (DMS)

Additionally, it has been beneficial for other agencies, some of which were formerly located under DEQ, to voluntarily participate, including Division of Soil and Water Conservation (DSWC) and Forest Service (FS), within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACCS), and the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC).

The APNEP and DMF co-lead CHPP efforts. The APNEP Habitat Coordinator and the DMF CHPP Program Lead serve as the CHPP Team co-chairs who are responsible for planning meetings, preparing agendas, coordinating with the CSC, and seek team membership from all relevant agencies. Also, the co-chairs actively engage in building partnerships and support at local, state, and private levels for actions that benefit coastal habitat and water quality, and consequently CHPP goals and recommended actions. They initiate and facilitate implementation actions. The APNEP co-chair communicates with members of the CSC between meetings to foster support for CHPP initiatives and cooperation across commissions. Other responsibilities include drafting

minutes of CSC meetings. The DMF co-chair drafts minutes of CHPP Team meetings and takes the lead for tracking implementation actions over time.

Roles and Responsibilities

During CHPP revisions, the CHPP Team members assist with planning and drafting sections of the CHPP. Following approval of CHPP revisions, CHPP Team members focus shifts to facilitating and communicating implementation progress. Responsibilities include:

- Attending CHPP Teams and CSC meetings and actively participate in discussions on habitat and water quality issues and plan revisions
- Providing agency specific information needed for plan updates on habitat and water quality issues, which may require reaching out to others in their division
- Assisting with drafting, reviewing, and editing sections of the plan and other documents
- Communicating progress on CHPP plan updates and implementation to their respective agency staff and commissioners
- Following up on CHPP recommended actions related to their agency to determine status and ensure continuing progress

CHPP Steering Committee

The CSC was initially called the Intercommission Review Committee (IRC). From 2002- 2005, the purpose of the IRC was to review drafts of the first CHPP and approve the plan and recommendations. After the first CHPP was approved in 2005, the name was changed to the CSC to reflect their additional and continuing role in providing input and oversight on implementation of CHPP recommendations, as well as continuing to improve communication across commissions on cross-cutting issues and potential strategic actions.

Formation and Structure

The CSC selects a chair by consensus and includes two members of three environmental commissions: Marine Fisheries Commission, Environmental Management Commission, Coastal Resources Commission

Roles and Responsibilities

The CSC maintain and strengthen communication among the commissions, establish priorities for implementation, and discuss difficult issues so that they don't just get dropped when controversies arise. The CSC serve as liaisons back to their respective regulatory commissions on habitat and water quality concerns and actions of the CSC. Other responsibilities include review of CHPP five- year update material, receive updates on CHPP implementation progress, discuss cross-cutting habitat and water quality issues and solutions, discuss habitat and water quality recommendations in DMF Fishery Management Plans and incorporation of those into CHPP implementation by other commissions, and facilitate communication, prioritization, and cooperation of efforts among agencies and commissions responsible for CHPP implementation.