



November 20, 2015

*Department of Environmental Quality*



# *2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP)*



Marine Fisheries Commission

November 20, 2015

*Department of Environmental Quality*



# *2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan – Origin and Purpose*

## G.S. 143B-279.8

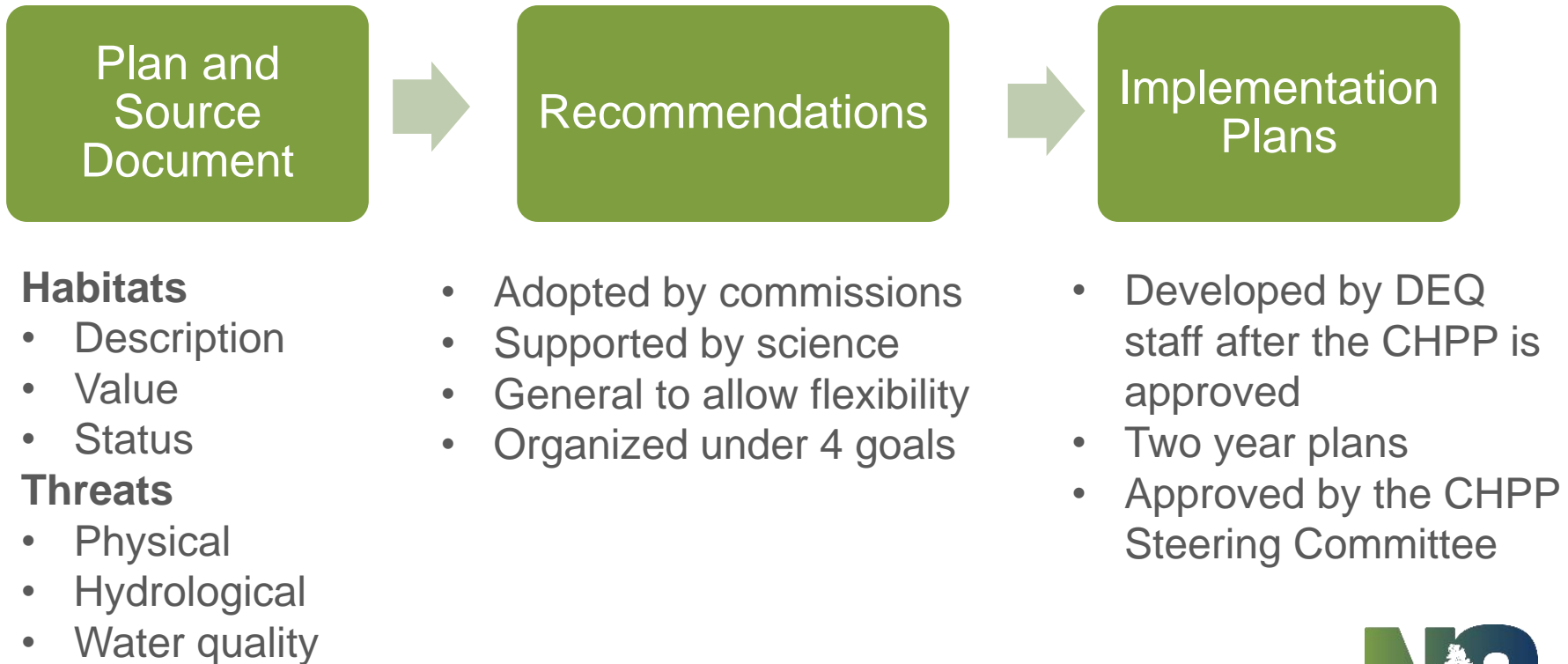
- Required Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ, formerly DENR) to draft the plan
  - Division of Marine Fisheries
  - Division of Coastal Management
  - Division of Water Resources
  - Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources
- Specified information to be included
- Required the Environmental Management, Coastal Resources, and Marine Fisheries commissions approve and implement recommendations
- Must be reviewed on five year cycles

## Purpose

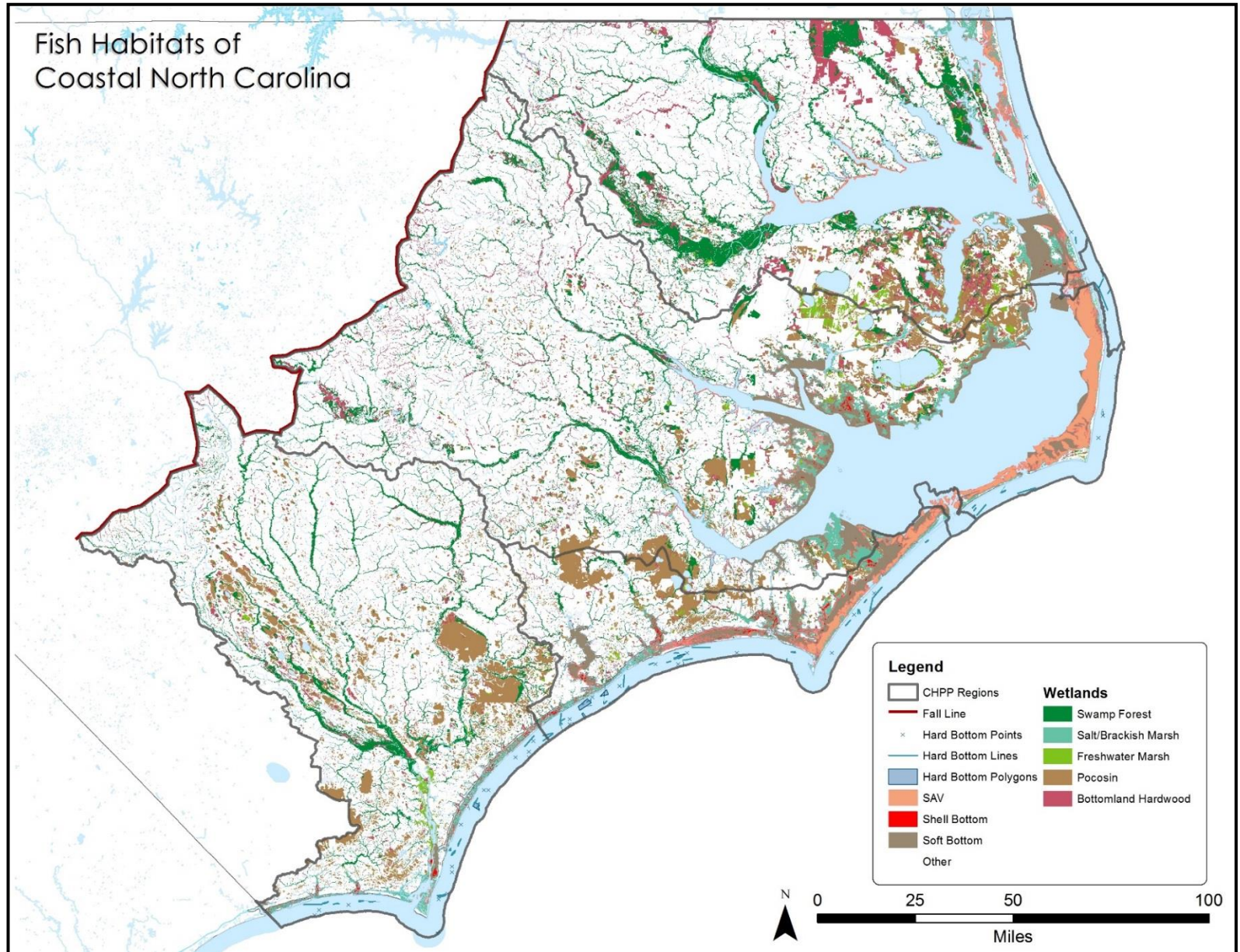
- Long-term enhancement of coastal fisheries by addressing habitat and water quality needs of fishery species.
- Recommend actions to protect and restore fish habitats

# 2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan- What is it?

**A resource and guidance document** to aid DEQ divisions and commissions in management of fish habitat and water quality.



# Fish Habitats of Coastal North Carolina



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# 2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan



**1) WETLANDS:** border vital nursery areas, export food, remove pollutants and are a buffer between water and land-based impacts.



**2) SOFT BOTTOM:** stores and regulates nutrients, and chemicals, and provides crucial foraging areas for fish.



**3) SHELL BOTTOM:** fish spawning and nursery area, improve water quality, and protect nearby shorelines from erosion.



**4) SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION:** provides refuge and food for small fish and invertebrates, improves water quality.



**5) HARD BOTTOM:** complex structure, often covered by living organisms, supports a temperate-subtropical reef fish community and snapper–grouper fishery.



**6) WATER COLUMN:** the basic habitat and the medium through which all other fish habitats are connected.

# *2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan- What is new since 2010?*



- Plan reorganized
- Shorter
- Separate Source Document
- Emphasis on economic value of habitat protection
- No rule-making recommendations
- Additional habitat mapped and assessed
- Updated status of habitats
- Updated literature on the effects of activities on habitat function

# *2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan-* *Why should maintaining healthy habitats matter?*

## **Healthy habitats - critical for a strong coastal economy**

Commercial Fisheries - 8,212 licenses to sell; **\$305 million** value (2013)

Recreational Fisheries - 480,000 licenses; **\$1.7 billion** value (2013)

Tourism/travel - \$3 billion/yr in taxes generated by tourist dollars; 80,000 jobs

Development - permanent population in coastal counties – 1,056,963 (2015)





# *2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan-* *Why should maintaining healthy habitats matter?*

**Habitat services have economic value** (in addition to fish production)

**Oyster Reefs** - water quality enhancement and erosion control - valued up to \$40,200/acre/year

**Wetlands** - storm protection valued at \$25.6 billion/year

**Submerged Aquatic Vegetation** - water quality enhancement and erosion control - valued at \$7,700/acre/year

**Soft Bottom** - bury pollutants, recreation – economic value of just beach use valued at \$14 to \$104/person/day



# *2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan-*

## *Past accomplishments*

### Oyster Restoration

- Oyster sanctuaries expanded since 2005
- 13 sanctuaries in Pamlico Sound area (159 acres)

### Mapping and assessing habitat

- Since 2005, partners have pooled resources to map submerged aquatic vegetation coastwide
- Wetland shoreline was mapped by Division of Coastal Management
- Division of Marine Fisheries has mapped 95% of shallow shell bottom

### Managing Shorelines

- Division of Coastal Management assessment and outreach on living shorelines

### Restoring fish passage

- Cape Fear River – rock ramp around Lock and Dam #1 - successfully passing anadromous fish

### Reducing nonpoint runoff

- Coastal stormwater rules
- New Best Management Practices; technologies

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# *2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan - Recommendations*

**Goal 1. Improve effectiveness of existing rules and programs protecting coastal fish habitats.**

- 5 recommendations - compliance, monitoring, outreach, coordination

**Goal 2. Identify and delineate strategic coastal habitats.**

- 2 recommendations – mapping, monitoring, and assessing fish habitat, and identifying priority areas for fish species

**Goal 3. Enhance and protect habitats from adverse physical impacts.**

- 8 recommendations - habitat restoration, managing ocean and estuarine shorelines, protecting habitat from fishing gear and dredging and filling impacts

**Goal 4. Enhance and protect water quality.**

- 8 recommendations - reduce point and non-point sources of pollution through Best Management Practices, assistance, outreach, and coordination. Applies to not only DEQ activities, but all land use activities, including forestry, agriculture and road construction.

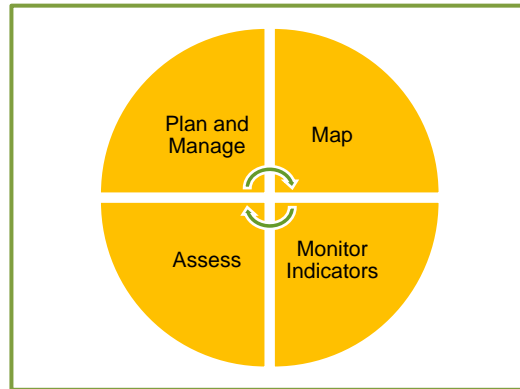
# 2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan- Priorities for CHPP Implementation



Oyster Restoration



Living Shorelines



Developing Metrics



Sedimentation

# *2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan - Public Meeting Dates*

**Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, Central District Office, Morehead City**

- Shellfish/Crustacean Advisory Committee – 5:30pm

**Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, Wilmington Regional Office**

- Southern Advisory Committee – 5:30pm

**Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, Washington Regional Office**

- Northern Advisory Committee – 5:30pm

**Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, Washington Regional Office**

- Habitat and Water Quality Advisory Committee – 1:30pm



# *2015 Coastal Habitat Protection Plan – Public Input*

## Request Approval to Proceed to Public Comment



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