

Soundings

Newsletter of the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program (APNEP)

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Director's Note

Happy Holidays!

As the year draws to a close, our program has a great deal to celebrate. As highlighted in this newsletter, we have seen the completion of many successful demonstration projects in 2010. Each of them promises to provide educational opportunities, promote environmental awareness and ensure healthier ecosystems for years to come. Our four-year partnership with the Environmental Defense Fund culminated in a report entitled "River Herring Habitats: Searching the Chowan River Basin," which details priorities for the protection and restoration of habitat necessary to rebuild river herring stocks. We also hosted two multi-day workshops that helped K-12 teachers better teach environmental issues. We continue to support groundbreaking research through grants and collaboration facilitated by our Science and Technical Advisory Committee. Finally, our program has welcomed two new staff members and several new advisory committee members, all of whom bring fresh perspectives to the program.

Still, much of the buzz within the program has been forward-looking. Next year promises the delivery of the new Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, which will establish the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program as a national leader in the adoption of ecosystem-based management principles. We will also unveil our "State of the Sounds" report, a comprehensive assessment of our region's ecosystem in conjunction with a conference in New Bern.

Warmest regards,

Bill Crowell
APNEP Director



Upcoming Events

December

17- Citizens' Advisory Committee meeting, N.C. DENR's Washington Regional Office

24, 27, 31- N.C. state holidays (offices closed)

31 – Estuary Awareness Requests for Proposals closes (see apnep.org)

January

17- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, N.C. state holiday (offices closed)

27- Science and Technical Advisory Committee meeting, N.C. DENR's Washington Regional Office

February

3- Policy Board meeting, Greenville, N.C.

Visit the calendar at www.apnep.org for more detailed event information.

Are you looking for a fast, free way to find up-to-date information about grant opportunities, workshops and relevant news in the APNEP region? Find us on Facebook and become a fan of the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program to stay up-to-date about events and resources. Becoming a fan is easy. Just visit www.apnep.org, click on the Facebook icon and log in.



2010 CAC Projects Highlighted

In February, APNEP's Citizens' Advisory Committee awarded grant funding for several environmental enhancement and demonstration projects throughout the region. Many of these projects have been completed with impressive results. These efforts have resulted in effective community engagement, improved water quality, meaningful on-site educational opportunities and increased awareness of APNEP and its mission.

Carrot Island Carteret County, NC

The North Carolina Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve completed its habitat improvement project in November. The project improved and stabilized dredge spoil habitat on Carrot Island by planting native plants and fencing out feral horses to protect the new vegetation. Fencing and planting were done by volunteers representing reserve staff, Girl Scouts, Newport Middle School students and staff from the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores. In all, 268 hours of time were donated for the project. The reserve highlighted this project in its 2010 Public Field Trip Series, where field leaders integrated project information into interpretive programs held at the boardwalk adjacent to the project. The reserve will continue to monitor the project area by conducting scientific assessments of vegetation and fauna in the years to come. Lucky visitors have already caught glimpses of the rare Crystal Skipper butterfly, which makes its home in estuarine habitats, including this one.



Uriah Branch Trail Greensville County, VA

Construction of phase I of the Uriah Branch Trail has been completed in Greensville County, Va. The trail includes an observation deck overlooking Uriah Branch stream and its associated wetlands. Many organizations contributed to this effort, including an Eagle Scout who constructed two walking bridges required for the trail. The site will soon be incorporated into 4-H summer camp activities, ensuring that young students are provided educational opportunities related to environmental science and conservation.



Landscaping with Nature in Currituck County, NC

North Carolina Sea Grant took the lead in the planning, design, and construction of landscape features intended to filter stormwater and highlight native plants at the Currituck County Cooperative Extension Building. Existing stormwater ponds were reengineered as living wetland environments, which provide both aesthetic beauty and improved filtration of runoff from nearby buildings, streets, and other hard surfaces. Surrounding the ponds are riparian buffers and native plant gardens that highlight local plant species like the fragrant water lily, the lizard tail, and the duck potato. The area has already been used for several educational opportunities, including a volunteer planting day and tours for local officials and environmental professionals. Monitoring equipment is also being maintained on site to quantify the environmental benefits of the project.



The APNEP Citizens' Advisory Committee occasionally offers grant funding for projects similar to these. For more information or to be added to our distribution list, please visit our website at www.apnep.org or contact APNEP community specialist Jim Hawhee at jim.hawhee@ncdenr.gov.

Citizens Monitoring Network Update

Since 1991, volunteers from APNEP's Citizens' Monitoring Network, or CMN, have monitored water quality in the region. This year, 27 volunteers of all ages monitored 16 different locations across four river basins. In addition to providing data for the program, the CMN has given students hands-on opportunities to learn about water quality monitoring, the estuarine ecosystem and the ways in which humans can affect aquatic environments. Students ranging from the elementary to undergraduate levels have been engaged in these programs. For more details about the Citizens' Monitoring Network, search for the CMN online or contact Chad Smith, CMN coordinator, at smithmich@ecu.edu.



APNEP News in Brief:

Request for Estuary Education and Awareness Proposals

APNEP recently issued a request for proposals for estuary education and awareness campaigns or programs. Proposals may include media campaigns, ecotourism programs, social marketing, event planning, educational support programs and organization of stewardship opportunities. Grant funding of up to \$50,000 may be awarded for selected proposals. Proposals are due Dec. 31. For more information, visit www.apnep.org or contact Jim Hawhee, APNEP's community specialist, at (919) 733-0121 or jim.hawhee@ncdenr.gov.

Preview of New Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan Coming Soon

APNEP staff members, in consultation with program partners and advisory members, are developing the new Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, or CCMP, for the Albemarle-Pamlico region. In 2010, the plan approach has been updated to more effectively incorporate ecosystem-based management principles. Further, by designing the plan around six practical questions, the plan is accessible to all stakeholders. Previews of the plan will be made available in the next few months to the policy board, advisory committees and program partners.

New Staff

Jim Hawhee joined the staff in November and will serve as APNEP's community specialist. Jim is a North Carolina native and is pleased to be returning after seven years out of the state. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a master's degree in zoology from the University of Hawaii, and a law degree from the University of Georgia. His areas of professional and academic interest include ecosystem-based management and environmental law and policy.

APNEP's Program Scientist Presents Vision of Ecosystem-based Management at National Meeting

Dr. Dean Carpenter presented on APNEP's forthcoming ecosystem-based management approach during a November conference hosted by the Association of National Estuary Programs. His talk primarily focused on the scientific and policy considerations inherent in the shift to an ecosystem-based approach. He also addressed challenges of adopting adaptive management principles, which ensure that environmental decisions are based on current, relevant data. Carpenter's presentation was well received by the conference's attendees, which included representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency and most of the 28 national estuary programs.

Save the Date

APNEP will host its first "State of the Sounds" Conference to coincide with the release of its "State of the Sounds" assessment report. The conference will be held Nov. 17, 2011 at the New Bern Convention Center.

New Website Online

In early November, APNEP unveiled its newly designed website. The updated interface provides many benefits, including a cleaner look and easier access to historical program information. Website updates will occur frequently, so please let us know how we're doing! Our address is the same, www.apnep.org. Check it out!

Thanks for Reading!

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. Have a question or comment? E-mail jim.hawhee@ncdenr.gov.

