

Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program

Science and Technical Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
February 1, 2006
Greenville Centre, East Carolina University
Greenville, North Carolina

MINUTES

Michael Rikard, APNEP STAC Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:15am. He asked for self-introductions of those present. Following that, Dean Carpenter, APNEP Science Coordinator introduced two new STAC members, Jud Kenworthy and Michael Piehler, representing NOAA's Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Institute of Marine Sciences, respectively.

Dr. Rikard entertained a motion for approval of the previous meeting's minutes (October 31, 2005). Dennis Borton moved the minutes be accepted as submitted, and Ross Lunetta seconded the motion. The motion carried with no exceptions.

Dr. Carpenter gave an update on APNEP activities since the last STAC meeting:

- Presentations at past STAC meetings have been posted on the APNEP website (<http://www.apnep.org/pages/stac.html>)
- The STAC Executive Board met via conference call on January 11, 2006 and their next meeting will occur in March.
- STAC membership vacancies are being addressed
- The APNEP Citizens' Advisory Committee has been developed and their first meeting was held on January 20, 2006

The STAC meeting agenda departed from past agendas in that it consisted of a series of NC and VA speakers who addressed the topic of monitoring. Dr. Rikard introduced the following speakers in turn:

Jill Paxson from the North Carolina Division of Water Quality's Pamlico River Rapid Response Team gave an overview of the ambient monitoring of water quality and habitat studies within the APNEP region that are done by the Division, mentioning that the data gathered are instrumental in writing the Division's Basinwide Water Quality Plans. These plans, prepared for all 17 river basins in North Carolina (five

of which are in the APNEP region) are updated on a five-year cycle. A question and answer period followed with inquiries being made about the monitoring data gathered relative to the National Coastal Condition Report; major storm events; whether benthic indicators for macroinvertebrates have been developed.

Mark Alling from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality presented on water quality and habitat monitoring in the Virginia portion of the APNEP region (upper Chowan and Pasquotank basins). Mr. Alling mentioned that TMDL monitoring consumes 50% of his staff's time, and that the Nottaway, Meherrin and Blackwater rivers have low pH levels. While fecal coliform is by far the largest water quality problem in the Virginia portion of the APNEP region, in freshwater the monitoring of fecal coliform is being phased out and replaced with *E. coli*. Two other monitoring programs mentioned were ProbMon and Tidal ProbMon. ProbMon is a freshwater monitoring network of 19 stations randomly selected by EPA: monitoring began in 2001 and occurs both in spring and autumn. Tidal ProbMon is a monitoring network of 12 stations randomly selected in Back Bay, and part of the National Coastal Assessment: monitoring also began in 2001 and the occurs between July 1 and September 15.

Allen Clark, APNEP's Citizens' Monitoring Network (CMN) coordinator, gave an historical overview of the CMN which dates to 1987, and mentioned that education and public involvement were hallmarks of the program. He outlined:

- locations where CMN volunteers sample
- parameters they sample for (temperature (air & water), salinity, dissolved oxygen, water clarity, pH) as well as general observations of rainfall, wind, weather conditions, and surface water conditions.
- equipment used by the volunteers (La Motte test kits)
- data collection techniques
- storage of data

Dr. Marvin Moss of UNC-Wilmington's Department of Physics and Physical Oceanography presented on a variety of observing assets in North Carolina and the national/regional coastal ocean observing initiative. Dr. Moss reported that North Carolina's coast is the most damaged of coastal states' coastlines due to hurricane events. He referenced:

- Coastal Ocean Research and Monitoring Program (CORMP)
- Ocean.US, created by the National Oceanographic Partnership Program to coordinate the development of an operational and integrated and

sustained ocean observing system (IOOS). Information from the IOOS is used for:

- detecting and forecasting oceanic components of climate variability
- facilitating safe and efficient marine operations
- ensuring national security
- managing resources for sustainable use
- preserving and restoring healthy marine ecosystems
- mitigating natural hazards
- ensuring public health

Eric Brittle and Mitchell Norman from the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries briefed the STAC on fisheries monitoring in the Virginia portion of the APNEP Region. Mr. Brittle and Mr. Norman described the species of fish for which they monitor and the methods employed. Dr. Havens inquired about the exchange of information between Virginia and North Carolina, relative to the monitoring, and Mr. Norman said it was not all he'd like it to be because of frequent changes in biology personnel. It was decided that the exchange of information might be an issue the STAC could address.

Bennett Wynne from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission presented on inland fisheries survey activities in the North Carolina portion of the APNEP region (eastern White Oak, Neuse, Tar-Pamlico, lower Roanoke, lower Chowan, and lower Pasquotank basins). He reported on the species monitored and the methodology for doing the monitoring. He reiterated that due to the established Striped Bass Management Plan, stocks have been deemed recovered; American shad were of good numbers in the Tar-Pamlico, and Hickory shad were very robust in the Roanoke. However, Mr. Wynne also reported that river herring catches were down by 10 million pounds, a sufficient depletion to warrant a proposed moratorium until spring 2007. He added that there was widespread mortality among Largemouth bass. Questions and answers followed with inquiry about the electro shock methods employed, and how warmer ocean temperatures might influence an earlier than usual spawning.

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. following an announcement that the next meeting would be on May 3, 2006 in Morehead City.