

Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership (APNEP)  
Fall 2020

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# Albemarle - Pamlico

## National Estuary Partnership



# Sound Stories

### Fall 2020



As 2020 starts to draw to a close and we reflect on the past year, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the hardworking and dedicated staff at APNEP. Throughout this year, staff have time and time again risen to the occasion during cancellations, rescheduling, and adaptations to continue our work of protecting and restoring our estuary's natural resources. From our recently-announced [Tribal Resilience Project](#) to a reaffirmed [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between North Carolina and Virginia state agencies, we are pushing forward with new initiatives to meet the needs of the Albemarle-Pamlico region. If you haven't already, I encourage you to check out the [Tribal Coastal Resilience Connections Facebook page](#) or follow #WaterStory to learn more about our Tribal Resilience initiative in partnership with the [NC Commission of Indian Affairs](#), [NC State University](#), and the Virginia Coastal Policy Center.

We are also pleased to announce that the APNEP Leadership Council has approved a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement designed by APNEP staff in recognition of the need for an increased focus on the inequalities that impact the communities and in turn

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to working towards the commitments we set out within, noted in the newsletter below, is going forward.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Bill Crowell  
APNEP Director

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# APNEP News



## Joint Fellowship in Estuarine Research

### APNEP and NC Sea Grant Announce 2021 Fellow

We are excited to announce that the 2021 [APNEP-NC Sea Grant Graduate Fellow](#) is Stacy Trackenberg of East Carolina University! Stacy's research will further our understanding of seagrass restoration in the Albemarle-Pamlico region through analysis of the fish species that utilize newly restored seagrass beds.

[Learn more about the 2021 Fellow](#)



## APNEP Announces Tribal Coastal Resilience Project

APNEP is excited to announce a partnership with the [NC Commission of Indian Affairs](#), NC State University professor [Dr. Ryan Emanuel](#), and the [Virginia Coastal Policy Center](#) on a project to support Tribal communities in the Albemarle-Pamlico watershed with incorporating climate resilience into community planning. The project team, led by Beth Roach, Tribal Councilwoman with the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia, started off by creating the [Tribal Coastal Resilience Connections Facebook page](#). This page is meant as a forum for Tribal community partners to share their present-day and ancestral connections to Albemarle-Pamlico watershed and coastal plain of Virginia and North Carolina. Throughout Native American Heritage Month in November, follow #WaterStory and the [Tribal Coastal Resilience Connections Facebook page](#) to hear more about this project.

Stay tuned in 2020 and 2021 as the team announces a series of virtual workshops involving Tribal communities, government organizations, and academic groups with the overarching goal of promoting information sharing between Tribal communities and resilience practitioners to protect the environmental health of the Albemarle-Pamlico region's waterways.

[Learn more about the project](#)

## APNEP Leadership Council Approves Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

This September, the [APNEP Leadership Council](#) approved APNEP's new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Statement. APNEP staff created this statement in recognition of the longstanding inequities, including but not limited to systemic racism, that impact communities throughout the Albemarle-Pamlico region. This



1. Engage communities and stakeholders that are representative of the broader populations within our programmatic boundaries to implement the 2012-2022 Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) and the Partnership's Mission.
2. Incorporate diversity, equity, and broad community inclusion as an ecosystem outcome(s) with associated objectives and actions into the 2022-2032 revision of the CCMP.
3. Work to engage diverse communities and populations in the organization's decisions and diversify the perspectives represented within all of Partnership's management and citizen advisory groups.
4. Conduct an internal organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion self-assessment and provide externally facilitated trainings for management and citizen advisory groups and staff as warranted.
5. Report annually on actions taken to enact these commitments in our Annual Work Plan.

The full DEI Statement will be on the APNEP website shortly.

## **New MOU Reaffirms VA and NC State Agency Commitments to the Albemarle-Pamlico Watershed**

In September, Virginia and North Carolina state environmental and natural resource agencies signed a new [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) that reaffirms their commitment to interstate collaboration

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identifying designees from the signatory agencies and working towards setting targeted actions for collaborative actions between Virginia and North Carolina.

[Learn more about the MOU](#)



## SAV Spotlight

APNEP staff and the [APNEP Submerged Aquatic Vegetation \(SAV\) Team](#) have been hard at work over the last few months on a number of fronts. In October, APNEP contracted with the NC Department of Transportation (DOT) once more to conduct [aerial mapping](#) of portions of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuary. This mapping is meant to help APNEP and our partners better understand how growth of the estuary's SAV species changes from spring to fall.

Additionally, volunteers from the SAV Team have formed High and Low Salinity Monitoring Subgroups to continue work on APNEP's SAV-Water Quality Monitoring Plan. These subgroups have each had four meetings this fall, and the outputs from these meetings will be incorporated into the development of the SAV-Water Quality Monitoring Plan. APNEP staff is continuing to move towards the goal of developing the plan by the end of 2020.

[Sciences](#) to analyze available Albemarle-Pamlico estuary water clarity data in order to better understand how water clarity varies throughout the estuary and whether current water clarity levels are supportive of SAV growth. This project, which Dr. Hall will be presenting to the APNEP Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) in November, will increase the Partnership's understanding of where water clarity challenges for SAV growth exist within the estuary and, in areas with ample data, trends in water clarity over time.

Learn more about APNEP's SAV Projects

# Meeting Summaries

- **Coastal Habitat Protection Plan Technical Workshops (August)** - A series of wetland technical workshops was held virtually in August. Three workshops, hosted by the DEQ CHPP Planning Team were convened to solicit input from coastal and palustrine wetland experts. Subjects discussed were Coastal Wetland Mapping and Monitoring (Workshop 1), Coastal Wetland Threats and Conservation (Workshop 2) and Coastal Wetland Restoration and Living Shorelines (Workshop 3). Information and input gathered from these workshops will be incorporated into the CHPP 2021 Amendment issue paper, "Wetland Protection and Enhancement with Focus on Nature-Based Methods". A summary of the workshops will be available soon.
- **Low & High Salinity SAV Subgroup Meetings (September-October)** - Throughout September and October, APNEP staff have facilitated a total of nine meetings with the [Low Salinity SAV and High Salinity SAV Monitoring Subgroups](#). During these meetings, APNEP staff obtained feedback from the group members that will be incorporated into the forthcoming SAV-Water Quality Monitoring Plan.
- **APNEP Science and Technical Advisory Committee Executive Board (October 7th)** - The [STAC Executive Board](#) discussed future governance and meeting schedule for the STAC, adapting to continued virtual meetings, and how to tie in APNEP Monitoring and Assessment Team activities into future STAC meetings.
- **Coastal Habitat Protection Plan Steering Committee Meetings (October 16th)** - The [CHPP](#) Steering Committee met virtually October 16th and was provided updates on the CHPP timeline, progress on issue papers and about a series of wetland workshops to help inform the CHPP amendment. They also heard

- **APNEP Leadership Council Meeting (November 5th)** - The [APNEP Leadership Council](#) met on November 5th to discuss the status of the SAV-Water Quality Monitoring Plan, updates for long-term projects such as Shad in the Classroom and the Teacher Institute, and plans for updating the current 2012-2022 APNEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP).



## Upcoming Events & Meetings

All meetings associated with APNEP's committees, Action Teams, and Monitoring & Assessment Teams are free and open to the public. For more information, please contact [apnep@ncdenr.gov](mailto:apnep@ncdenr.gov).

- **December 1st, 2:00pm - 4:30pm (Webex)** | APNEP Science and Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (contact [apnep@ncdenr.gov](mailto:apnep@ncdenr.gov) for details)
- **December 7th, 1:00pm - 3:00pm (Webex)** | N.C. Coastal Resilience Community of Practice Meeting (contact [apnep@ncdenr.gov](mailto:apnep@ncdenr.gov) for details)

*Due to COVID-19, many of APNEP's scheduled meetings have been rescheduled or moved online. [Visit our website](#) for up-to-date information.*

## Current Grant Opportunities



- Ongoing: [NC Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund](#)
- Ongoing: [NC Sea Grant Minigrants Program](#)
- Recently announced: [NC Resilient Communities Program](#)

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# Partner Spotlight



## Applications Open for 2021 NC Sea Grant-NC Coastal Reserve Fellowship

The application period for the 2021 Coastal Research Fellowship is now open. The Fellowship provides North Carolina-based graduate students with an opportunity to conduct research within one or more of the 10 sites that constitute the North Carolina Coastal Reserve. Using the reserve sites as a research platform, next year's fellow will conduct hypothesis-based research that addresses coastal management issues in one or more specified topic areas. Applications are due by 5pm on December 7th.

[Learn more and apply for the Fellowship](#)

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## What We're Reading

- [N.C. Coastal Rivers Flood Mitigation](#) (NC Sea Grant)
- [Coastal Wetlands Emerge as a Critical Ecosystem for a Healthy Climate](#) (Pew)
- [North Carolina Blue Crab Video](#) (YouTube)
- [Boosting Local Efforts Key in Resilience Plan](#) (Coastal Review Online)

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