



**Communications and Education Committee (CEC)**

**Charter and Operating Guidelines**

**FINAL**

**Revisions approved by the CEC on July 16, 2014  
and approved by the Advisory Committee on September 16, 2014**

## **I. NAME AND AUTHORITY**

The Barnegat Bay Partnership (BBP) Communications and Education Committee (CEC) shall operate under the authority of the BBP Advisory Committee (AC). All BBP Committees, sub-committees and work groups are established under and governed in accordance with BBP's Memorandum of Understanding.

The Study Area for the CEC is the study area identified in the Barnegat Bay Partnership's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), a guiding document for this National Estuary Program (NEP) and the subsequent Strategic Plans. As appropriate, the Study Area may be expanded by the Policy Committee (upon the recommendation of the Advisory Committee).

## **II. LOCATION**

The principal mailing address of the CEC is the Barnegat Bay Partnership (BBP), Ocean County College, College Drive, Toms River, New Jersey 08754-2001; Attention: CEC. Phone: 732-914-8110.

## **III. PURPOSE**

The principal purpose of the CEC, where authorized by all applicable laws, regulations, and other pertinent authorities, is to provide the BBP and collaborating entities with objective, expert advice, and peer review for overall communication, education and outreach matters related to NEP activities and goals, such as those specified in the CCMP, BBP's Strategic Plan and BBP's Communication Plan. The CEC works with the Advisory Committee to identify and prioritize communication, education and outreach needs within the Barnegat Bay-Little Egg Harbor Estuary and its watersheds, and assists with the BBP's efforts to raise awareness and resources for addressing these needs. The CEC also facilitates public participation and diverse stakeholder involvement in BBP related activities and assists with the selection of the Citizen Representative to the BBP Policy Committee.

Specific roles and functions are described in more detail in Section IV and VI.

## **IV. ROLES AND FUNCTIONS**

To fulfill its purpose as stated in Section III, the CEC undertakes initiatives based upon broad direction from the AC, and regularly reports on progress to the AC. More specifically, the CEC:

- Oversees the implementation of BBP's Communication Plan;
- Assists the Program Office in the periodic updating of the Communications Plan in concert with the updating of BBP's Strategic Plan;
- Provides priority Communication Plan funding recommendations to the Program Office for inclusion in annual 320 work plans;
- Assists the Program Office is looking for additional sources of funding for Communication Plan implementation activities;
- Serves as the planning committee for an annual Education and Outreach Retreat;

- Provides input for the Barnegat Bay Festival;
- Oversees the nomination process of the BBP Citizen Representative and Alternate Citizen Representatives (See VI Below) ;

## **V. MEMBERSHIP**

### ***A. Composition and Membership Criteria***

The CEC is comprised of a body of experienced communications, outreach and education professionals, who represent the diverse interests' estuaries stakeholders. Membership in the CEC is open to public and private entities who have an interest in Barnegat Bay estuary related issues as delineated in the BBP's CCMP and Strategic Plan. The CEC will also seek participation by members of the general public who are not affiliated with current BBP partners. Participants are expected to have general knowledge and interest in aspects of coastal, estuarine and freshwater eco-systems, water quantity and quality, and resource management issues as they relate to coastal New Jersey and specifically the Barnegat Bay-Little Egg Harbor estuary.

### ***B. Chairperson, Co-Chairperson and BBP Staff Support***

The CEC is led by a Chairperson and Co-Chairperson. The Chairperson and Co-Chairperson of the CEC are nominated and voted on by the CEC from the broader CEC membership at the annual meeting (see Section V.D. for recommendation for approval by the AC). The BBP staff support to the CEC will be provided by the Public Outreach Coordinator or a designee selected by the BBP Director. BBP's Special Event Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator will serve as ex-officio members and provide technical support to the CEVC.

### ***C. Terms and Appointment Procedures***

1. Term of Service. The term of service for CEC members is two years and runs concurrently with the state fiscal year. Reappointment is permissible as approved by the Advisory Committee for members who have demonstrated a firm commitment to performing the functions and roles (as stated in Section IV) during their previous term.

2. Membership. The CEC membership will include no less than 6 and no more than 15 members excluding BBP Staff. CEC membership is open to all who fulfill the criteria listed in Section V.A. Nominations may be submitted by any interested party, including current CEC members, staff, partners of the BBP and collaborating entities, and from the public. Self-nominations are also welcome.

Nomination letters should be submitted with a resume and/or a short description of interests to either the Chair or Public Outreach Coordinator of the CEC. Nominations can be submitted throughout the year. Current CEC members whose terms are ending and who wish to be considered for re-appointment must submit a self-nomination letter of intent and their updated resume to either the Chairperson or Public Outreach Coordinator before May 1<sup>st</sup> of the year their term expires. All nominations and names of nominating individuals are reviewed by the CEC Chair, BBP Public Outreach Coordinator, and BBP Director to ensure that they satisfy criteria for membership in the CEC.

3. Chairperson and Co-Chairperson. The term of the CEC Chairperson and Co-Chairperson is on a biennial basis and is set up to provide continuity in the functioning of the CEC. The CEC Chairperson and Co-Chairperson will each serve a two-year term. The CEC Co-Chairperson will normally succeed the Chairperson, at which time a new Co-Chairperson will be nominated and approved by the CEC.

## **VI. SELECTION OF THE CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVE TO THE POLICY COMMITTEE**

Purpose: As a National Estuary Program, BBP is continues to promote participation by the broad spectrum of interested stakeholder groups in the region on matters related to the estuary and its watersheds. To promote greater citizen involvement in the BBP, the Citizen Representative to the Policy Committee has been established to gain further public perspective on issues of importance to the Barnegat Bay watershed. The Citizen Representative and one or more Alternate Citizen Representatives will work together to represent the public on issues which impact, or are impacted by, the condition of the bay and its resources;

The CEC will oversee the process of selecting a Citizen Representative to the Policy Committee and Alternate Citizen Representatives. The selection process is delineated as follows:

- A call for nominations for the Citizen Member and Alternates will be collected in the fall of an elective year by the CEC.
- Nominated individuals must submit an application as developed by the CEC and approved by the Advisory Committee.
- Nominations will be reviewed by the CEC, which will forward top candidates to the Advisory Committee, which in turn will review and recommend the top candidates to the Policy Committee for their approval.

### **Citizen Representative Position on the Policy Committee:**

- The Citizen Representative will be installed on the Policy Committee for inclusion at an end of year annual meeting.
- The Citizen Representative will represent non-partner entities (partners are members of existing BBP standing committees or organizations that have taken on direct responsibilities for Strategic Plan implementation).
- In the event of the absence of the Citizen Representative at a Policy Committee meeting, an Alternate Citizen Representative will fulfill his or her duties at the meeting.
- The Citizen Representative and Alternate positions will have a specified term of three years; and can be held for consecutive terms if re-appointed.

Duties of the Citizen Member Representative and Alternate Citizen Representatives will include:

- Participating in Policy Committee meetings;
- Participating in the Communications and Education Committee meetings and activities, including the annual Education and Outreach Retreat;
- Facilitating a “target audience” focus group each year, with the CEC;
- Assisting the Barnegat Bay Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides fundraising for the Barnegat Bay Partnership; and
- Advocating for BBP on matters related to CCMP/Strategic Plan Implementation.

## VII. MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION

### A. Meetings

A schedule of regular meetings of the CEC will be established at the end of each calendar year, for the next year. This calendar will be posted on the BBP’s website along with a membership list for the CEC.

Regular meetings of the CEC are open to the public, and agendas for regular meetings will be posted on the BBP’s website in advance of regular meetings. Visitors are welcome to attend, and are invited to participate in discussions at the discretion of the Chairperson or Program Director.

1. Frequency. Meetings of the CEC are held at least once per quarter. Additional meetings may be called as needed.
2. Location. Generally, meetings are held at the BBP office in Toms River, New Jersey. CEC meetings can be rotated to member locations and other topically related locations at the discretion of the Chairperson and Program Director.
3. Governance. The Chairperson (or in his/her absence, the Co-Chairperson) of the CEC presides over each meeting, calls the meeting to order, reviews the agenda, reviews the previous meeting’s minutes, leads the meeting to ensure progress towards completion of the agenda, and adjourns the meeting at an appointed time.

The Public Outreach Coordinator, in consultation with the Chairperson and Co-Chairperson, prepares an agenda in advance of each meeting, makes necessary meeting arrangements, facilitates during each meeting, records minutes, and disseminates minutes following each meeting. If the Public Outreach Coordinator is unable to attend a CEC meeting, the BBP Director will designate a staff alternate.

4. Parliamentary Procedures. To ensure democratic process and efficiency, meetings of the CEC may be operated under standard parliamentary procedures by the presiding person (*e.g.*, the Chairperson); however, at his/her discretion, parliamentary procedures may be waived. Should disputes arise; the presiding person will implement Robert’s Rules of Order.

## ***B. Agenda Items***

Agenda items generally consist of topics germane to the roles and functions that the CEC is expected to provide. Agenda items can also include topics related to CEC business and operation. Emerging issues and opportunities are to be regularly considered as well.

Anyone is welcome to submit agenda items to any CEC member for consideration. However, matters may only be placed on the agenda for consideration at meetings of the CEC by any member of the CEC, any member of the Policy or Advisory Committee, or the BBP staff.

The CEC Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, and Public Outreach Coordinator are responsible for reviewing and prioritizing agenda topics, and for distributing the agenda (preferably at least 7 days) before a CEC meeting.

## ***C. Responsibilities of the Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, and Public Outreach Coordinator***

The Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, and Public Outreach Coordinator are responsible for:

- Communicating recommendations, concerns, and peer review outcomes on behalf of the CEC to the BBP's Advisory Committee and Policy Committee. (The Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, and Public Outreach Coordinator are expected to attend each meeting.);
- Serving as spokespersons for the CEC to collaborating entities, the media, and the public, both locally and nationally; and
- Directing production and editing content of CEC documents.

## ***D. Responsibilities of All Members***

All CEC members are responsible for:

- Attending and actively participating in as many meetings as possible; and
- Working to fulfill all roles and functions of the CEC, as listed in Section IV.

## ***E. Attendance, Alternates and Voting***

Attendance and Alternates: BBP will make every effort to schedule CEC meetings when 100 % of members' attendance is possible. In the event that a CEC member is unable to make a meeting, it is the member's responsibility to notify the CEC Chair as to his/her absence. CEC members are permitted to designate an alternate to serve in their place at meetings and to vote on their behalf. Alternates are counted as voting members in determining a quorum. When any member of the CEC or his/her designated alternate fails to attend more than one regular meeting for any year without sufficient explanation, the Chairperson or Program Director may introduce a motion to remove and replace that member.

Voting: The CEC will strive to reach consensus in matters before the committee. When necessary, voting will take place with a simple majority of quorum for final decisions. Each

CEC member has one vote. A simple majority of members constitutes a quorum. Votes can be held whenever a quorum is present. Deciding votes are determined as the majority of votes cast by a quorum.

#### ***F. Subcommittees and Technical Workgroups***

The CEC may form sub-committees and/or workgroups to focus on specific issues or needs. Subcommittees and technical workgroups can consist of both CEC members and additional experts from the region who are not CEC members.

Any CEC member or the BBP Director may propose formation of subcommittees/workgroups. Subcommittees and technical workgroups shall be formed for a specific purpose. Proposals for new standing or *ad hoc* subcommittees and workgroups must provide a summary of the needs and values that would be provided, and describe the tasks, expectations, potential staffing, and duration of the group. Group formation must be carefully considered by the CEC, balancing needs and projected positive outcomes with feasibility, access to interested and capable expertise, and availability of support services and resources.

Following discussion, proposals for the formation of a subcommittee or technical workgroup will be decided by majority vote of the CEC members present during the vote. The CEC should provide a specific charge to any new subcommittee. CEC subcommittees/workgroups should be chaired by a current CEC member and held to the same professional standards as the CEC. Workgroup members who are not CEC members must abide by CEC rules. Once established, CEC subcommittees and technical workgroups must report to the CEC about current activities on a regular basis. If a CEC subcommittee or technical workgroup fails to report or show progress, the CEC may disband the group by majority vote at any regular meeting as delineated in BBP's Memorandum of Understanding.

#### ***G. BBP-Funded Implementation***

Depending upon funding levels and budget priorities for the BBP, the BBP may periodically administer a BBP subaward competition by issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to address critical needs identified in the Communications Plan. The role of the Partnership office will be to develop the RFP, including the funding amount, and to conduct an external review of all proposals which are received by the BBP via an unbiased and uniform competitive process. The CEC provides a forum for the presentation and discussion of all proposed studies; CEC members will make use of the presentations, discussion, external reviews, the CCMP and/or Strategic Plan and/or Communications Plan, and their own expertise to reach consensus regarding a recommendation for funding projects to the Advisory Committee. CEC member participation in this process will be established taking into account actual or potential conflict of interest as described in Section K, below.

## ***H. Media and Public Representation***

The BBP depends upon public support and enthusiasm generated by the BBP for implementation of the CCMP and support of other BBP activities that benefit the Barnegat Bay estuary. To this end, active media participation is invited and encouraged by CEC members.

However, only the CEC Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, BBP Public Outreach Coordinator, and BBP Director (or designee) will speak on behalf of the CEC, including interactions with the media or at public meetings. Individual members of the CEC are free to speak to any group and identify themselves as members of the CEC as long as any CEC reference is made with a linked disclaimer that their opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the entire CEC, the BBP, or affiliated entities that work with the BBP.

## ***I. Liability Disclaimer***

To the extent permitted by the law of the State of New Jersey and federal regulations, neither the CEC nor any of its members individually, shall be liable for negligent acts or omissions of an employee, agent or representative selected with reasonable care, nor for anything the CEC may do or refrain from doing in good faith, including the following: errors in judgment, acts done or committed on advice of counsel, or mistakes of fact or law.

All documents produced with the assistance of the CEC, including potential issues papers, are to be considered as associated products of the BBP and are not to be construed as reflecting the views or support by any particular CEC member or affiliated entity.

## ***J. Conflicts of Interest***

No member of the CEC (or staff representative or alternate) shall participate in any discussion, decision, or vote that would constitute a conflict of interest under federal or state law or policies or procedures of Ocean County College. Any potential conflicts of interest shall be clearly stated by the member (or staff representative or alternate) prior to any discussion on the agenda item with which the member (or staff representative or alternate) may be in conflict. Following full disclosure of real or potential conflicts, the BBP office will decide whether the CEC member should recuse him/herself from discussion or vote regarding the agenda item in question.

Reviewers may be disqualified from reviewing proposals with respect to which they have any actual or potential conflicts of interest. An individual may not serve on a review panel if he/she has any direct personal, familial, or financial relationship or connection with any of the proposals to be reviewed or with any of the applicants. In addition, individuals who have other types of relationships with the proposals being reviewed or any of the applicants cannot serve on a review panel if that relationship would impair or influence their objectivity or impartiality in reviewing proposals and the conflict of interest cannot otherwise be mitigated or avoided. Some situations that may constitute a conflict of interest include:

- Principal investigators, consultants, or any other participants in proposals cannot serve on review panels to review proposals submitted in response to a BBP solicitation and/or announcement;



- The application or proposal being considered is from the reviewer's parent institution, one legally a part of that institution, or is from an organization that the reviewer is a member of. (This condition applies to subcontractors or sub-recipients);
- The reviewer and the applicant are related through family or have been related as a student or thesis/post doctoral advisor;
- The reviewer and the applicant have collaborated within the last five years on a related project, article or paper; and
- The reviewer will benefit directly from the project, *e.g.*, as a consultant or paid collaborator.

### ***K. Staff Support***

In addition to services provided by the Public Outreach Coordinator, staff support for the operation of the CEC may be provided through the BBP, contingent on the availability of funds and approval of the BBP's Director. Staff support may consist of part-time assistance from regular BBP staff, part-time staff of the BBP, part-time staff contributed by collaborating entities, or students.

Opportunities should be sought to support one-year fellowships for graduate students or undergraduate interns who will complete independent studies as part of their degree or cooperative learning programs at affiliated universities.

Duties of staff include assisting with meeting arrangements, agenda dissemination, recording and dissemination of minutes, preparation of CEC products, and website updates related to CEC functions and products.

## **VIII. AUTHORIZATION AND AMENDMENTS**

This CEC Charter and Operating Guidelines (CEC Charter) is effective with the approval of the AC. Future amendments to this CEC Charter must be proposed to CEC members and the BBP's Director at least 30 days prior to the meeting at which they will be acted upon. Proposed amendments to the CEC Charter will be treated as an agenda item for a CEC meeting. Any amendments to this CEC Charter must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of a quorum of the CEC members. The AC will have final authority over the recommended amendments.

**CEC Charter Revisions Approved by Advisory Committee on: September 16, 2014**