



CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM
326 West Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda, Florida 33950
941/575-5090, Fax 941/575-3365, www.chnep.org

October 27, 2014

Re: RESTORE Project "Restoration of Water Quality in the Impaired Waters of Charlotte Harbor"

Dear Governor Scott:

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) supports Charlotte County, request for \$5,610,000 from the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council toward Phase I of the County's multi-phased Restoration of Water Quality in the Impaired Waters of Charlotte Harbor project. This large scale project, estimated to cost in excess of \$320 million by completion, provides a comprehensive approach to address the causes of water quality impairments through the elimination of On Site Treatment and Disposal Systems (OSTDS, aka Septic Tanks), completion of stormwater Best Management Practice (BMP) restoration and improvements and providing public education on Florida Friendly landscaping and fertilizing in densely populated coastal areas. By eliminating sources of pollutants entering the waterways, Charlotte County's project lays the foundation under which marine habitat restoration and rehabilitation can become effective.

The CHNEP asks you to consider these KEY points when choosing a project from Florida to present to the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council.

- In 1995, the Charlotte Harbor Estuary was designated as an "estuary of national significance" through the Clean Water Act and accepted into the National Estuary Program.
- Charlotte Harbor is the 2nd largest estuary in the State of Florida whose receiving waters are the Gulf of Mexico.
- This project was selected as a near-term priority in the *Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan*, adopted by the three Florida Gulf Coast National Estuary Programs.
- There are six (6) designated Aquatic Preserves within Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program which are crucial for the sustainability of marine life.
- FDEP provided grant funds through the Section 319 and TMDL programs to assist in funding two (2) pilot sites for the overall Restoration of Water Quality in the Impaired Waters of Charlotte Harbor project.
- Reduction and elimination of nutrients and other pollutants identified in water bodies listed under the 303d verified impaired waters.
- The Charlotte Harbor estuary is one of two areas designated by NOAA-NMFS as critical habitat for the smalltooth sawfish, a critically endangered species that uses this estuary system as a nursery ground
- Over 450 species of fish, 500 species of invertebrates, 379 bird species, 81 amphibian and reptile species, and 27 mammalian species have been documented within the Charlotte Harbor estuary.

The CHNEP is a partnership program, created by Section 320 of the Clean Water Act, to protect and preserve the Charlotte Harbor estuary. Long term management, preservation and restoration activities within the CHNEP are guided by our *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP)*

2013, developed and implemented by our partners. This project implements the CHNEP's CCMP; specifically the project will implement the following Priority Actions:

WQ-1: Maintain or improve water quality from year 2000 levels

WQ-D: Reduce nonpoint-source pollutants associated with stormwater runoff.

WQ-J: Provide central sanitary sewers to developed areas within 900 feet of waters such as estuarine shorelines, rivers, creeks, canals, and lakes.

WQ-L: Increase the use of personal and home best management practices by consumers throughout the watershed to reduce nonpoint-source pollution.

WQ-M: Support public involvement programs addressing water quality issues.

SG-D: Produce watershed and estuary communication tools.

SG-K: Present scientific information in a form readily understood by the majority of people.

This project supports the work being completed by Charlotte County and would further efforts to improve the water quality in Charlotte Harbor and the greater watershed. On behalf of the CHNEP, we are requesting your support of Charlotte County's Restoration of Water Quality in the Impaired Waters of Charlotte Harbor project. Please feel free to contact me at lbeever@chnep.org if I can be of further assistance regarding this submittal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Beever". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" and last name "Beever" clearly distinguishable.

Lisa Beever, AICP, PhD
Director