



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

July 16, 2019 – Director’s Summary

The OLWMC paid its contribution (i.e., \$10,000) for the cost of services rendered by the Consensus Building Institute for mediation services at Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations stakeholder and public meetings.

For those of you who are not aware, OLWMC partner representative, Jo-Anne Humphreys, no longer works with the Nature Conservancy. Her diligent work towards land acquisition and coordinating stream inventories within the Owasco Lake Watershed is appreciated, and she will be missed. Best of luck to Jo-Anne in her future endeavors.

As a reminder the Advanced HABs Monitoring Buoy data for Seneca, Skaneateles & Owasco Lakes can be found on, and downloaded from, the US Geological Service website. (<https://ny.water.usgs.gov/maps/habs/>)

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Finger Lakes Hub and the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) are coordinating HAB surveillance for Owasco Lake in 2019. As a reminder, an online fillable form that tracks the exact location of the HABs can be found at: on.ny.gov/nyhabs.

The OLWMC website has had some updates. The donations tab within the council’s website is now active, allowing for donors to make donations to the council directly through the website. There is a new section that shares the names of those individuals who have ‘taken the vow’ to cease the use of lawn care fertilizers on their properties within the Owasco Lake Watershed. These individuals are being considered leaders in watershed stewardship and are given the opportunity to make comment on the website. OWLA supports the take the vow initiative as part of the group’s “Be Watershed Aware” campaign and agreed to link the opportunity to ‘take the vow’ within their website.

OWLA and the OLWMC are working collaboratively to build a relationship with Xylem, a stream monitoring equipment manufacturer with a local office, for support to purchase a data sonde to be used by the OLWIPD and watershed partners for enhanced stream monitoring. Partnering

members discussed preliminary results of OWLA's 2019 watershed tributary monitoring efforts to help direct the continuation of those efforts for the remainder of the field season.

The advancement of program development for the OLWIPD is ongoing. Members of the Watershed Inspection Committee have completed drafting the position description for recruitment of a forthcoming deputy inspector to the division. The available position will be listed in the near term. Further, OLWIPD policies and procedures are being formally outlined in a comprehensive document with daily inspection protocols, notice/violation/daily log forms, an emergency action plan, and drone procedures embedded. Watershed Inspector, Andrew Snell, is completing his training requirements to become a certified drone operator and licensed pilot.

In support of our pursuit for phosphorus (P) uptake alternatives, we continue to explore the possibility of using refinery waste product, slag, from local steel mill, Nucor, for P removal from agricultural runoff. Several research projects have indicated the success of using slag for P absorption and removal. Representatives from NYSDEC are looking into the beneficial use determination (BUD) for slag, regulated by the NYSDEC, and whether there is a possibility for approval for a pilot project using slag for P remediation.

We await financial audit results to fulfill the requirements of NYS Grants Gateway in order to position ourselves for nonprofit eligible state grant funding. Unfortunately, this process will not be completed by the deadline for the NYS consolidated funding application for grants due end of this month, yet we continue to keep informed of future grant opportunities.

Representatives from Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD), Cayuga County Highway Department, and the OLWMC plan to meet at Oakhill County Road in the Village of Moravia July 18th at 10am to discuss moving forward with a project to improve road conditions to help mitigate flooding there.

The Town of Owasco in collaboration with the Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI) is providing its water intake sizing and flow records to assist with UFI's water quality modeling efforts.

We are petitioning for state-level tributary watershed-wide regulatory protections, leveraging Article 15 of the Clean Water Act to require permits for streamside construction activities for tributaries with certain classifications. Currently, many of our tributaries fall below the classification level that requires a state permit for construction, and many of these watercourses are being clear cut. It is important to protect and restore nutrient 'sinks' within the watershed in the form of vegetation, rather than within the lake in the form of algae. A draft watershed-wide stream reclassification petition was reviewed by personnel from NYSDEC. OLWMC partners attended a meeting hosted by Region 7 NYSDEC on June 19th, discussed the petition, and allowed the department to provide feedback before its submission to the Albany office. We learned that tributary reclassification is a lengthy process, but we are making great progress.