



## Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

January 21, 2020, 10:00am – Director’s Summary

### Directors Summary

- Upon review of the OLWMC’s organizational resolution, by-laws, and procurement policies, and based on discussions with our partners, the OLWMC is well-suited to hold lands from land acquisition activities. The Council will continue to work with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to evaluate this future role and potential next steps for collaboration with TNC on forthcoming land acquisition initiatives.
- The Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division’s (OLWIPD’s) new water quality monitoring sonde, funded by the Emerson Foundation, is now assembled. We continue to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), associated training for calibrations, monitoring, and logging data, and interpretive scales for disseminated information to partners and to the greater public. The sonde is equipped to measure levels of turbidity, dissolved oxygen, pH, and conductivity in lake tributaries and near shore. Exceedances above New York State (NYS) standards for some of these parameters will assist the OLWIPD with gaining State level regulatory support. There are State water quality standards that must be met, and the OLWIPD continues to help state regulators identify problem areas where standards are exceeded. I plan to submit a Great Lakes Research Consortium Grant to support a small monitoring project using the new sonde.
- The City submitted a grant application for their Zebra Mussel Control Project to upgrade their zebra mussel control system at their intake in Owasco Lake with 100% approved design documents for the project. The City currently uses preliminary disinfection as the water comes in from the lake to keep the zebra mussels from building up in the intake. The \$541, 200 grant was awarded to the City through the State Environmental Facilities Corporation and will be matched with City funding for a \$902,000 mussels control project at the intake.

- A partnership with the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) on their proposed 2020 watershed pollutant source monitoring projects has been established. Proposed monitoring projects, submitted to foundations French and Metcalf, were awarded funding. OWLA's collaboration with the OLWIPD, using the Division's WQ sonde, will offer important monitoring data for identifying watershed pollutant sources in 2020. OWLA is making great strides in building community relationships, identifying sampling locations, and developing sampling protocols for their 2020 sampling season.
- In partnership with OWLA the OLWMC will use marketing strategies to improve public understanding of watershed science, the impact of land use activities, and land use modifications to better protect water quality. As the Council's Education Coordinator, Watershed Inspector, Kaitlyn Shanahan, will meet with various stakeholders to help build the outreach campaign. OWLA and the OLWMC want to recognize good watershed behavior and increase an awareness of the many things that people are already doing to protect water quality. The OLWMC and OWLA will work collaboratively to develop a proposal for the 'Be Watershed Aware' Campaign.
- Acknowledging the established dependency between the occurrences of HABs for receiving water bodies and watersheds with relatively low forested land areas, we continue to target a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant to support habitat and forestry initiatives in the Town of Owasco, partnering with Urban Forester Dr. Walt Aikman. The grant is called the Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program. We are looking to collect hyperspectral imagery as a part of a greater assessment of a connective corridor that can support an inventory of features and areas that may need improvement in the greater watershed. Dr. Aikman has made great headway gaining credentials for the Town that will make it increasingly eligible for new funding sources within the urban forestry category. Further, we identified and worked collaboratively on an Arbor Day Foundation grant to support tree planting at the Town of Owasco Elementary School. Dr. Walt Aikman received partnership letters from the Principal, Superintendent, and Town Supervisor and submitted the application for funding. The application included a community education component and a tree planting event at the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant playground. I encourage our other watershed municipality representatives to work through the 'Tree City USA' credential to prepare them for future funding initiatives where that credential is important.
- I had a productive introductory meeting with Joe Nehme, Central New York Regional Director or Senator Schumer's Office. The Senator will continue to advocate for more HABs mitigation related funding opportunities, and Joe offered his support for our initiatives. Letters of support for forthcoming projects from the Senator's Office may increase the Council and Council partners' standing on watershed restoration and HABs mitigation relates projects.
- Partners for Healthy Watersheds, a Farmers-based water quality protection advocacy group, was welcomed for an introduction and presentation with the OLWMC at an upcoming meeting. Developing a partnership and relationship with 'Partners' is an

important step towards a collaborative approach where sharing ideas on pollutant controls and land use management practices can support the preservation of lake water quality.

- The consultant group, ESSRE, is working through the project scoping logistics for presenting a pilot demonstration proposal for the Nano-enhanced P-removal system at Moravia waste water treatment plant (WWTP). They have the sizing and the proposal assumptions drafted. The Village and WWTP engineers are comfortable with a plug-in pilot that would generate P-removal data in 2020.
- Supervisor of the Town of Fleming and Director of the OLWMC, Don Oltz, communicated the Lincoln Dairy Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO), located in part on Dugall Road in Fleming, but mostly in the Cayuga Lake Watershed, is planning on doubling the size of its herd from ~4000 to ~8000 cattle. On average, a dairy cow produces 82 pounds of manure per day per 1000 pounds live weight. Thus a Holstein (~1400 pounds) cow produces 115 pounds of manure per day or approximately 21 tons per year. Based on these estimates, a dairy farm that increases its head of cattle from ~4000 to ~8000, stands to double its manure production from ~460,000 lbs/day to nearly 900,000 lbs/day, generating ~168,000 tons manure/year. As a local advocate for water quality and an active Director for the Council, Mr. Oltz shared his concerns about where all the manure can go without polluting the land and discharging into the lake. From making contact with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), we were informed Lincoln Dairy has a CAFO Permit, and for expansions of 20% or more per year, the farm would have to update their Certified Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) and notify NYSDEC. The farm will be required to have the land base to support the additional animals from a feed/crop and a manure application standpoint. Based on estimates for manure production from increasing the operations head of cattle by two-fold, Mr. Oltz is concerned whether state permitting guidelines are enough to protect Owasco's at risk watershed/lake. Watershed steward and coordinator for the Cayuga Lake Watershed, Hilary Lambert, recruited a small group of local residents concerned about water quality issues to start sampling along Yawger and other creeks on Cayuga Lake's east shoreline that flow adjacent to the Lincoln Dairy Farm. This team was trained to professional standards at the Community Science Institute (CSI), Ithaca NY. Hilary copied CSI's outreach coordinator, Nathaniel Launer, on this topic, and she was informed the group will continue monitoring at this site and downstream to Cayuga Lake during 2020. These data can be used to express concerns to NYSDEC and other agencies. Data for that location show high levels of total phosphorus, E.Coli, and nitrate+nitrite nitrogen, similar to other tributaries located in agricultural areas. Graphical water quality information can be viewed on the location page for each monitoring location. Here is the link to the Yawger Creek Large Ridge location page: <http://database.communityscience.org/monitoringlocations/482>.
- Tompkins and Cayuga Counties' Soil and Water Conservation Districts plan to present to the OLWMC in February and March, respectively, on 2019 project outcomes and project outlooks for 2020.

- The OLWMC continues to look forward to buy-in from the remaining towns within the watershed that have yet to join to help direct project initiatives. They include the Towns of Sempronius, Groton, Venice, Genoa, and Sennett, and I continue to encourage the Board of Directors to reach out to representatives from these towns to elicit their buy-in. The new Town Supervisor for the Town of Sennett, Tom Gray, has agreed to join us for the March meeting. I have shared with him a template resolution document for Sennett to resolve to offer a representative on the OLWMC, and I hope for the Council to be positioned to resolve for Sennett to join at the March meeting.