



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

May 21, 2019 – Director's Summary

Good morning and thank you for being here. As a reminder, the Management Council's inspection body, previously known as the (Owasco Lake) Watershed Inspection Program, is now called the (Owasco Lake) Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD). The watershed inspection body is a division of the council, and this change in naming convention was based on unanimous approval during our last watershed management council meeting. Revisions to the new Watershed Rules and Regulations will include the name change. New logos were created for the division and we are updating related digital and physical documents.

Public meetings on the Watershed Rules and Regulations updates occurred on the 15th and 16th at Cayuga Onondaga BOCES and Moravia High school, respectively. The public provided important feedback that will support revisions as the steering committee works towards a final document to be submitted to NYS for review and adoption into public health law. The input received from the public will be collected, assessed and summarized in a companion document, including responses where appropriate. This summary would be submitted to the Town and City leaders along with the current draft regulations. This strategy will provide the Town Board and City Council with the draft that generated public input and an organized summary of that input and feedback for review and consideration.

There was a question about whether Town of Owasco and City of Auburn water consumers know their water bill fees are providing support to the OLWMC. I request a **motion** for the council to request water purveyors indicate on water bills that fees fund the OLWMC. Further, can the bills provide a platform for those water consumers who would prefer to provide donations to support the council and watershed protection and restoration efforts?

FLOPPA funds and the Cayuga County Planning Department may support meaningful and important equipment purchases for the OLWIPD. The OLWIPD will submit a proposal to Cayuga County Planning for water monitoring equipment, attempting to leverage the planning department's FLOPPA funds to enhance the division's capabilities to monitor water quality changes/trends in the field. Scott Cook of the NYSDEC who oversees this state funding source, supports its use for water quality monitoring equipment.

Cayuga Community College has graciously supported Watershed Inspector, Drew Snell's, training using drone surveillance equipment. The college provided drone classes and access to their equipment for his test runs. The OLWIPD, with permission, purchased a drone using previous equipment funding granted by the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) for supportive technologies. This new technology will become an integral advancement for more comprehensive inspections. Drew will share footage from a site flyover towards the end of his monthly inspection presentation during today's meeting.

I presented on watershed science at Peachtown Elementary school on the morning of May 8th and was informed about the opportunity by County Legislator and OLWMC member Aileen McNabb-Coleman. These sorts of educational opportunities are going to be critical to preparing future generations for the water quality challenges they are likely to face.

We will have a summer intern this year. Ally Berry will be paid through an alternate funding source through SUNY-ESF. She will assist the council's OLWIPD as well as partnering groups. Considering she will provide free labor and much needed help for advancing OLWMC goals, I request a **motion** the council resolves to cover the administrative added costs (i.e., insurance premiums and bookkeeping estimated at a couple hundred dollars) of her employment through the council's fund

Thanks to the City of Auburn for its resolution to increase the contribution of annual fees to better fund the OLWMC. The relative rate cost (per volume) of water drawn from the lake for purveying water as a funding contribution to OLWMC is now equitable between the City of Auburn and the Town of Owasco. Both water purveyors acknowledge:

1. The sense of urgency in the community for a clean and safe lake water resource.
2. Support the OLWMC's need to enhance ongoing and future watershed protection and restoration measures.

Summary of calculations:

Town of Owasco/Fleming Contribution = \$26,195

Owasco Water Sold = 153,943,327 gallons or 153,940 – 1000 gallon units

\$/1000 gallon = \$ **0.1701/1000 gallon**

Current City of Auburn Contribution - \$150,000

Auburn Water Sold = 1,213,023,050 gallon or 1,213,023 – 1000 gallon units

\$/1000 gallon = \$ **0.1237/1000 gallon** (about 4 cents less per 1000 than Owasco currently contributes)

Future: \$200,000 results in \$ **0.1649/1000 gallon.**

I suggest, when these funds are made available, this yearly funding increase goes directly to the creation of a deputy inspector position to support the council's goals to strengthen its position for providing more thorough and robust watershed inspections. I request a **motion** to support this initiative. Unfortunately, this may have to be a long(er)-range goal as we need to have the necessary infrastructure in place (extra vehicle, adequate office space) before moving ahead with additional staff. It would also be good (for purposes of recruitment) to have state/county "authority" recognition in place.

Further, I advocate staffing recruitment to the OLWIPD focuses on individuals with experience and diverse skills in nutrient management/agricultural environmental management and outreach. The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD), our leading project implementation group, typically does not advertise its services, but rather administers work through word of mouth based on available funding and its integral trust relationship in the community. The Inspection Division can advance itself as an outreach entity, supporting the community with information about funding resources and programming available to pay for implementation work by the CCSWCD or other private contractors.

As we work to build capacity for the OLWIPD, we are striving towards a balanced approach to incentivize watershed improvements rather than expecting compliance with watershed rules and regulations without providing guidance and support for those improvements. Moreover, the division is expanding its role, providing instructive support for farmers seeking funding and guidance for associated applications. For instance, we are currently working on rolling out a program with Cornell's ProDairy Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP) with funding available to small dairy farmers. Karl Czymmek will present on this program next month. Watershed inspector, Drew Snell, has been working on distributing materials and funding brochures (provided by ProDairy's Ron Kuck) to watershed small dairy farmers and encouraged their attendance at that meeting. Mr. Czymmek's presentation is also advertised with the help of County Planning using the platform for Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA) events. We will learn more about the planning, setup, implementation, follow up on plans and best management practices (BMPs) that the DAP program provides. This sort of program can help expand the economy for farm planning by private planners and open the marketplace for their important work.

Mr. Snell and I continue to strive for buy-in from those municipalities within the watershed that have yet join the OLWMC. We prepared and delivered an informational package to the Village of Groton per the Village's request and look forward to their resolution to join. I encourage our current council members to advocate for buy-in from their neighboring communities.

Member Vacancies to be filled:

- Town of Groton
- Village of Groton
- Town of Summerhill
- Town of Sempronius
- Town of Venice
- Town of Genoa

- Town of Sennett

I am working through administrative needs for the OLWMC to be eligible to submit its first proposal for state level grant funding. I mailed the registration and tax forms required to gain a vendor ID with New York State. Once registered, we will upload required business and organization forms. If we can get these administrative needs in place expeditiously, I plan to propose for funding support under the NYS Environmental Justice (EJ) Grant for at risk communities (the proposal is due June 14th). Director of City of Auburn Municipal Utilities, Seth Jensen, and I met with Mayor and council board member, Gary Mulvaney, to identify an appropriate project within the EJ boundaries of Village of Moravia. If the proposal cannot be submitted by the due date, all supportive materials will be redirected to another funding source. Thankfully, once our administrative needs are in place with NYS, we will be in the required position for subsequent grant writing. State-level funded projects are also being coordinated with the City of Auburn and/or CCSWCD where municipalities and districts are solely eligible for the funding source. Furthermore, Owasco Town Supervisor and council member, Ed Wagner, and I are arranging the appropriate meetings with government officials to convey the urgency of non-competitive more direct funding streams for the council.

I am continuing to reach out to build the farmers sub-committee to have this committee in place to aid farmers for steps forward on certified nutrient management plans (CNMP) and implementation that will be required under the new watershed ruled and regulations.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is using the Bank Assessment for Non-point source Consequences of Sediment (BANCS) model to train partners and interns on the model's use for prioritizing stream banks for restoration and quantifying nutrient and sediment loads. TNC is moving forward, preparing for a source water grant by working towards finalizing a list of priority parcels, and progress will be discussed immediately following this meeting. TNC and OLWIPD are finalizing a survey for residents in Indian Cove as part of a Cayuga County Department of Health (CCDOH) funded septic upgrade project, following draft input from the CCDOH.

The NYSDEC Finger Lakes Hub, Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA), and OLWMC are coordinating HAB surveillance for 2019. Training for the surveillance program was offered through a NYSDEC prepared webinar given last Friday, May 17th. Julie Lockhart, new OWLA president come June, participated in the training. She is working towards preparing for and advancing the HAB surveillance program for Owasco Lake in 2019. The surveillance program uses an online platform that is interactive and updated daily with an online fillable form that tracks the exact location of the temporally and spatially discrete blooms. The NYS Department of Health (DOH) will inform local DOHs for help advancing the alert initiative. Perhaps the CCDOH can provide an explanation and hyperlink to the HAB surveillance system as part of their internal website and outreach initiatives:

on.ny.gov/nyhabs

Grants funded projects are typically difficult to administer due to match requirements, but OWLA has proven a tremendously useful partner for the CCSWCD and supports the goals of the council, providing match requirements through a corporate funding campaign on a CCSWCD state grant used to support a now fully-funded ditch stabilization and hydroseeding effort this year. Moreover, ditch stabilization and hydroseeding is now fully funded through CCSWCD and OWLA. OLWIPD visual observations have been helpful for communication gaps between highway departments and CCSWCD to better expedite ditch stabilization. Dave Gardener, Director of Public Works for the County, has agreed to use his funding resources to procure a proprietary hydro seeder for next year. This will allow the County to integrate ditch stabilization work directly into the scope of their yearly ditch scraping/clean out work and will reduce the lag time between scraping and stabilization measures.

OWLA presented at the New York Federation of Lakes Association and we will revisit that presentation on our agenda for today's meeting.

On Thursday, May 9th, Mr. Snell and I attended a superintendents meeting in the Village of Moravia to elicit buy-in on our programs for future water quality protections and improvements. We reviewed the draft language in the watershed rules and regulations that pertains to roadside ditch maintenance, work typically under the purview of the town and county highway departments. Further, we echoed with CCSWCD Director, Doug Keirst, the 2019 hydroseeding program is fully funded and active communication between groups is important. Aside from weather related delays from heavy rains, stabilizing sediments can happen expeditiously following ditch clean outs. The CCSWCD offers a free sediment and erosion control course used for training highway employees on the most current and effective practices. This training is greatly encouraged because draft provisions in the new watershed rules and regulations will require such training in the future. The superintendent's meeting members were also encouraged to attend the public meetings on the 15th and 16th.

I was requested to present at this Thursday's, May 23rd, City Council meeting on behalf of the council. I will share a 20-minute presentation that will cover introducing myself to the council, a discussion of OLWMC goals for 2019, our vision for council and how we intend on leverage private, state, and local dollars to build the council, and the 2018 water quality report.

Thank you.

Adam Effler