



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

January 20, 2026, 10:00-11:30 AM

Meeting of the Directors

Owasco – Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb -Coleman, **City of Auburn** – Ginny Kent, **Niles** – Joan Jayne, **Locke** – Thane Benson, **Scipio** – Nancy Hart, **Fleming** – Karen VanLiew, **Town of Moravia** – Terry Palmer, **Village of Moravia** –Chris Fulton,
Village of Groton – Theodore Skibinski, **Summerhill** – Charlie Ripley, **Sennett** – Tom Blair,
Dryden – Anne Clark, **Lansing** – Joseph Wetmore
Executive Director- Adam Effler

Dr. Adam Effler, Presiding

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: Owasco-Ed Wagner, City of Auburn-Ginny Kent, Cayuga County-Aileen McNabb-Coleman, Niles-Joan Jayne, Scipio-Nancy Hart, Town of Moravia-Terry Palmer, Lansing-Joseph Wetmore, Dryden-Anne Clark. Ex Officio members present: John West, Matthew McKenna, Gabriel Yerdon, Carol Sutkus, Frank Clarke/Daniel Welch, Jesse Lloyd, Michelle Wunderlich
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda as distributed via email made by Ed Wagner, seconded by Nancy Hart. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from December 16, 2025, Board Meeting. Motion to approve the December 16, 2025, Board minutes as distributed via email made by Ed Wagner, seconded by Nancy Hart. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- D. Public to be Heard: none heard.
- A. Director’s Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting) an audio/visual of Dr. Effler’s report can be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

Watershed Rules and Regulations

No new updates

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects Updates

- The OLWMC’s January 9, 2026, feature article in the Citizen newspaper, spotlighted its leading role in leveraging the Nine Element Plan for coordinating actions to protect Owasco Lake.
- The OLWMC will participate in Finger Lakes Advocacy Day in Albany on Wednesday, February 11, 2026. Representation from regional lake association partners is intended to help educate NYS legislators and raise awareness about water-quality and watershed priorities.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Review:

- The 9E Coordination Committee finalized its 2022-2025 progress report. The progress report is posting on the OLWMC website: <https://www.olwmc.org/>

Project Update:

The next 9E Committee meeting will be held on January 28, 2026.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Projects Update:

The Cayuga County Planning Department developed its 2026 lake and watershed monitoring and implementation priorities in the context of annual Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA) funding. FOLLOWPA is a line item in the NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) providing funding year after year. As in 2025, they've included monitoring, data management, and implementation projects for Owasco Lake and its watershed. The following is the 2026 FOLLOWPA Work Plan, recently provided by the CC Planning Department:

- The installation and implementation of BMPs by CCSWCD
- O&M for the USGS Owasco Inlet Gage
- The USGS gauge station at the Owasco Inlet was maintained and retrofitted with a camera. The data and imagery can be found here:
[https://apps.usgs.gov/hivis/camera/NY Owasco Inlet below Aurora Street at Moravia Downstream](https://apps.usgs.gov/hivis/camera/NY_Owasco_Inlet_below_Aurora_Street_at_Moravia_Downstream)
- OWLA Tributary Sampling Program
- The Cayuga County Planning Department prepared a draft Data Usability Assessment Report (DUAR) and Final Report for the 2025 Owasco Lake Tributary Monitoring Program. The DUAR is approved by the NYSDEC, and the project data and report can be shared among project partners for data analysis and interpretation.
- Owasco Watershed Data Portal
- Public outreach and education on invasive species and water quality
- Stormwater Education Program
- Aquatic vegetation harvesting
- Supplies to make AIS boxes for Little Sodus Bay
- O&M of the boat cleaning station at Emerson Park
- Support for the septic system inspection program

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

No new updates

Municipal Codes and Ordinances

No new updates

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Programming:

No new updates

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Review:

Over the Fall of 2025, stewardship activities continued at the Fillmore Nature Preserve, whereby new stewards have continued to maintain and clear trails under contract. Hunting permissions, stewardship and indemnification contracts were prepared and signed by three individuals for the 2025 hunting season.

Venice Property Acquisition

Venice Property Acquisition Update:

Venice Nature Preserve closing documents (e.g., title, deed recording, etc.) were finalized and filed at the OLWIPD office.

Potential OLWMC Acquisitions Review:

TNC has expressed interest in having the OLWMC own an additional property poised for long term stewardship and preservation within the Owasco Lake watershed, a 100-acre mixed farmland parcel in the Town of Groton. TNC will present the remaining acquisition opportunity to the OLWMC Board of Directors.

Partner Land Acquisitions/Targets Review:

No new updates

Grant Opportunities, Projects, and Funding

NYS Grant Programming Opportunity (in their words):

DEC and New York Sea Grant Announce \$200,000 Funding Now Available for Projects to Implement Great Lakes Action Agenda Priorities

Projects to Restore and Protect Great Lakes Lands and Waters Locally Interested Applicants

Encouraged to Join Webinar on January 27, 2026

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and New York Sea Grant today announced that \$200,000 in funding is available for projects benefitting New York's Great Lakes basin by demonstrating the application of ecosystem-based management approaches to local watershed challenges.

Projects selected will implement the goals of New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda and address actions specifically identified in locally supported water quality, natural resources, or sustainable land use plans.

Those eligible to apply include municipalities, Indian Nations, not-for-profit organizations, regional planning councils, soil and water conservation districts, and educational institutions. Please review the Request for Proposal for additional details on eligibility.

The New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program supports stakeholder-driven efforts to restore and revitalize the State's Great Lakes region using ecosystem-based management and is funded through the New York State Environmental Protection Fund, under the authority of the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Act. New York Sea Grant administers the New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program in partnership with DEC's Great Lakes Program.

*Interested applicants are encouraged to join New York Sea Grant's **informational webinar on January 27, 2026, at 12 p.m.** to learn more about the project requirements and application process. Register with New York Sea Grant at [NY Sea Grant Small Grants Program website](#). **Applications are due by March 27, 2026, at 4:30 p.m.**; instructions and application materials are available at [NY Sea Grant Small Grants Program website](#). For more information on [New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda](#), visit DEC's website. More information on [New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants projects](#) and other [New York Great Lakes-related information](#) is available at New York Sea Grant's website.*

Ongoing Grants and Proposals

SLA Grant Proposal Update:

The OLWMC offered an endorsement letter for the Skaneateles Lake Association's proposal to the Park Foundation, "*Connecting Shared Private Road Communities to Watershed Protection in the Finger Lakes and Beyond.*" Shared private road communities exist around nearly every lake in our region, yet they often lack accessible guidance, technical models, and outreach strategies to help residents reduce runoff, improve road and ditch management, and strengthen local stewardship. The SLA proposed the development of an open-source toolkit that captures best practices in shared private road improvement projects, along with effective approaches for cultivating program adoption that

would be of value to their organization and communities served. The proposal's emphasis on supporting collective Lake Friendly Finger Lakes efforts—including shared educational and engagement materials—would strengthen stewardship efforts across the region.

ESF Grant Proposal

Proposal Review:

The OLWMC collaborated among partners to develop a grant proposal under Cornell's Water Resources Institute's recent RFP with SUNY ESF spearheading the proposal submission. We proposed integration of real-time sensor arrays with the Owasco Watershed Lake Association's volunteer monitoring program. By pairing continuous sensor data with the existing monitoring program, the project would allow for better response to storm events while strengthening the scientific foundation for watershed management. Pairing discharge and constituent concentration data would allow project partners to calculate both nutrient and solids loads to Owasco Lake from prominent tributaries. Constituent loading information will be useful for updating the Soil and Water Assessment Tool that is used for spatially prioritizing recommendations within the Owasco Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan for Phosphorus Reduction. Recommendations within this clean water plan inform watershed management decisions and implementation projects.

Proposal Update:

Collaborators were not encouraged to submit a full proposal through Cornell's Water Resource Institute. Reviews were generally positive and will be used in refining future proposals. The group will likely resubmit the proposal through an alternate grant opportunity provided through the National Science Foundation.

NFWF SOGL Project

No new updates

Relevant NYS Programming Review:

Proposed Ambient Water Quality Guidance Values for Phosphorus Review:

The OLWMC was a signatory on a joint response to the public comment period for the NYSDEC's proposed ambient water quality guidance values for phosphorus. The response requested that NYS take a more aggressive approach towards reducing guidance values for NYS lakes by creating a framework for developing phosphorus standards.

and accountability.

NYS Relevant Bills Update:

The Open Water Data Act (A5254/1211), was vetoed by the Governor on December 19th. The veto simply stated fiscal considerations. Given the environmental importance of this bill, which was passed with a unanimous bipartisan vote in both houses, Assemblymember Anna Kelles and Senator Rachel May, will be prioritizing re-passage of the bill in the 2026 session.

Currently, NYS inter-agency data is scattered or inaccessible, which weakens our ability to make sound decisions that protect public health, environmental integrity, and economic resilience. This legislation directs key state agencies, including the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Department of Health, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Canal Corporation, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, and the Public Service Commission, to collaborate to align New York's water data systems. The bill establishes shared standards, creates a single publicly accessible data platform, incorporates citizen science, coordinates with broader data efforts, and requires a needs assessment to identify critical data and funding gaps for effective long-term water management.

F. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report

- i. December 2025 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported as of December 31, 2025 Total Current Assets \$449,993.60; and Total Liabilities and Equity \$483,426.61. Motion to approve financial report made by Joseph Wetmore. Motion seconded by Terry Palmer. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.
- ii. Bookkeeper has prepared the budget proforma and it is posted on NYS comptroller website.

G. Lake Level Report – John West-Owasco Lake elevation at 710.79 ft., Has been dealing with a frazil ice problem. He has had to reduce lake outflow 10% to reduce frazil ice downstream due to low temperatures. Frazil ice can block water intakes and negatively impact water supply facilities. Due to forecast for low temperatures expect to impact lake levels over the next 10 days.

B. Village of Moravia Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Designs – Matthew McKenna an audio/visual of Matthew McKenna's report can be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

C. NYSDEC Finger Lakes Watershed Program– Gabriel Yerdon- unavailable

H. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Nancy Hart reported the 2nd phase of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid program beginning. The first phase was very effective. Regional Rotary clubs as well as other organizations and individuals have pledged to fund the second phase. The Bob Brower Science Symposium is planned for March 14, 2025, 9am-12 noon at Auburn Public Theater and online. Registration is free and now open on the OWLA website.

I. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update –Frank Clarke reported on January 22, 2026, an annual cover crop meeting will be held, a Nutrient CAFO permitting meeting on 1/22/26, 2/3/26 a program in Venice concerning herbicides and a youth tractor safety certification program will be held February 26, 2026.

D. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Jesse Lloyd- and audio/visual of Jesse's report can be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

J. Communications: Adam reported with a heavy heart that Rocky Mulvaney former director from the Village of Moravia has passed away.

Anne Clark reported that in Freeville a 200-acre parcel of land has recently been purchased by a NY land and lakes development corporation. This corporation has a tentative plan to break up the parcel into lots for individual development. This parcel has a steep watershed run into Owasco headwaters. On 1/22/26 at 6:30 pm during a Village of Freeville planning board meeting there is an opportunity to share concern about this plan and educate the public about rules and regulations for the watershed.

Many directors shared they will be away for February.

K. Issues of Concern: None heard

L. Next Meeting to be determined. February meeting may be cancelled due to many of the directors having planned absences.

M. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Joan Jayne and seconded by Nancy Hart. Motion carried with a unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vivian Cunningham