



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

May 21, 2024- Director's Summary

Watershed Rules and Regulations

Project Review:

The Watershed Rules and Regulations (WRR) Workgroup was a state-local partnership consisting of representatives from five New York State agencies, as well as members of a technical local workgroup representing the Owasco Lake Watershed, including members from: Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC); Town of Owasco; City of Auburn; and Cayuga County. The Workgroup was formed in response to the submission of proposed revisions to the 1984 Watershed Rules and Regulations (Part 104.1- City of Auburn and Town of Owasco) to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) in December 2020. NYSDOH project updates are posted on the OLWMC's website (<https://www.olwmc.org/projects>).

The NYSDOH has indicated that it does not have the authority from the legislature to create nutrient management regulations for the Owasco Lake watershed. Specifically, the NYSDOH indicated that when the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program was established, nutrient management on farms became the sole responsibility of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM).

The City of Auburn, Town of Owasco, and Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) filed an Article 78 with NYS, seeking to clarify whether the NYSDOH has the right to regulate nutrient management practices under updated Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations. Article 78 is a petition that challenges the actions of administrative agencies and other government bodies. The lawsuit contends that the laws cited do not firmly establish that the NYSDAM's authority concerning nutrient management supersedes the NYSDOH's responsibility to promulgate regulations for the protection of public health.

The NYSDOH has discontinued providing monthly project updates for the OLWMC and the greater public. On advice of NYSDOH counsel, NYSDOH is re-evaluating the accuracy of guidance provided to the field regarding the development of Watershed Rules and Regulations. The NYSDOH will provide notification in the event that a decision is made to re-establish a schedule for amending 10 NYCRR 104.1.

NYS Tributary Legislation Project Review

Project Review:

An OLWMC endorsed, NYS environmental conservation bill ([A6652/S4162](#)) would protect up to 41,000 miles of New York Class "C" waterways, which are regularly used by people for boating, fishing, and other activities. The proposed law would offer permit-based protections that are currently provided to waterways with higher classifications. The new law would require the need for permit for certain stream access and project(s) scenarios. On May 24, 2022 the bill passed the Senate and was returned to the Assembly. The bill passed both NYS houses. On December 2, 2022, bill A6652 was delivered to Governor Kathy Hochul and was subsequently vetoed, with a veto memo arguing the bill belonged in the budget with monetary resources for implementation. S4162 was reintroduced in the 2023 legislative session under a new print number: S1725. The NYS Senate, at the insistence of Environment Chairman Pete Harckham, has included protections for Class C streams in their budget. The version included in the Senate's "one-house" budget modifies the bill to exempt Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) from permitting requirements, if they have an MOU with the NYSDEC outlining appropriate stream protection measures; the ultimate goal of the stream protection bill is to protect stream corridors from disturbance, not to complicate the work of SWCDs. Furthermore, a reduction in permitting requirements for SWCDs that have MOUs could help alleviate some of the NYSDEC budgetary/staffing concerns that the Governor indicated as part of her opposition to the bill. Importantly, the bill included \$1 million in implementation funds to cover NYSDEC staff hires to support staffing for compliance. On April 25, 2023 S1725A passed the NYS Senate. The bill was then referred to the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee. On June 6, 2023 the Assembly passed the bill and returned it to the Senate. On November 17, 2023, the NYS Senate Bill (S1725A), which would have added Class C streams to the list of protected streams, was vetoed by Governor Hochul.

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects Updates

- Sponsored by Senator May and Assemblymember Kelles, the NYS Senate and Assembly are poised to renew the annual NYS commemorative resolution, celebrating May Lake Friendly Living (LFL) Awareness Month. Assemblymember Kelles plans to present the resolution to the LFL Coalition at the June 14th Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance forum.
- The OLWMC's staff feature article published with the Citizen on May 4, 2024, contributed by former Lead Watershed Inspector, Abigail Hai, provided encouragement for the continued advancement of Owasco Lake watershed protection programs and projects. OLWMC staff will continue publishing feature articles that spotlight watershed protection efforts, including residents and programs making positive strides in watershed protection.
- OLWMC staff have finalized the 2023 annual report, which highlights both statistics and outcomes concerning watershed inspections, as well as OLWMC driven projects. The report was printed and distributed to all watershed and key partner offices and was given in the form of a presentation to City of Auburn City Council on May 9, 2024. The presentation aligned with the City's annual mayoral proclamation in support of Lake Friendly Living.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Review:

- Cayuga County received a New York State Department of State grant to implement a high priority recommendation from the 2016 Owasco Lake Watershed Management and Waterfront Revitalization Plan, which was to incorporate the EPA Nine Key Elements. This project was led by the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development and the consultant on the project was Ecologic, LLC. The Owasco Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan for Phosphorus Reduction (9EP) was approved by the New York State Department of State and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/owasco9e.pdf). This Clean Water Plan advances efforts to restore and protect the water quality of Owasco Lake and its watershed. This collaborative effort identified focused strategies to ensure the lake water supply, aquatic habitat, and recreational uses are protected. The development of the plan focused on understanding and managing phosphorus and sediment inputs from the Owasco Lake watershed to provide for recommendations that will drive watershed protection and remediation projects. The OLWMC is providing a coordination role for future projects and programming according to the recommendations of the 9EP.
- The OLWMC's 9E Project Coordination Committee (via Resolution 03-2022 at its November 15, 2022 public board meeting) prioritizes, coordinates, and facilitates project and programming implementation based on the recommendations of the 9EP. Partnering agencies and organizations convene on a semi-monthly basis to advance 9EP goals. As part of the group's 2023 work plan, the Committee discussed next steps and a phased approach towards preparing project proposals and fundraising for watershed streams inventorying and engineering planning in 2024 to direct stream restoration projects between 2024-2025, for funding tributary monitoring between 2024-2025, and for developing an Owasco Lake Watershed Agriculture Program (OLWAP) similar to what was created for the Skaneateles Lake watershed.
- The following grant proposals were submitted in response to NYS grant program solicitations in the summer of 2023, and target the highest phosphorus contributing landscape/acre within the Owasco Lake Watershed, as documented in the 9EP:
 1. The City of Auburn submitted a NYS non-point non-agricultural planning grant proposal to assess stream corridors including for Sucker and Veness Brooks, as well as other small tributaries within the prioritized Owasco Lake HUC 12 subwatershed at the northern end of the lake.
 - a. The City of Auburn's NYS non-point non-agricultural planning grant proposal was awarded \$75,000.
 2. The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) submitted two proposals in response to the first round of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Finger Lakes Watershed Grants Program. Their proposals targeted advancing stream corridor assessments of Dutch Hollow and Sucker Brooks.
 - a. CCSWCD was not awarded NYS funding for these proposed projects.
 3. In further response to the Watershed Grants Program solicitation, the OLWMC submitted a funding request to place 2024-2025 watershed tributary sampling, analysis, and results display under management of Community Science Institute (CSI) located in Ithaca.

- a. The OLWMC was not awarded NYS funding for this proposed project.
- The 9E Coordination Committee is focused on capacity building for local organizations to provide the programming necessary for the watershed agricultural industry to advance best management practice (BMP) implementation at the rate recommended by the NYS approved 9EP. The Committee finalized its proposal for NYS to fund the development of a focused OLWAP that would leverage the existing tiered AEM program. Committee members met with NYS Officials on January 25, 2024 to discuss official sponsorship of the proposed program under the NYS 2024 budget. The 9E Coordination Committee plans to continue holding monthly meetings in 2024 to drive implementation of the 9EP with the next meeting scheduled for February 28, 2024.
 - \$500,000 was included within the Senate one house budget for the 9E Coordination Committee’s proposed OLWAP.
 - Ultimately, the OLWAP was not funding within the greater NYS budget.
- The Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) was invited to participate as a member of the 9E Coordination Committee. The group plans to leverage synergies between FLLT’s recently NYS-awarded \$1,240,000 for Land Acquisition to Protect Owasco Lake, which targets protections of the Sucker Brook wetland, and the City of Auburn’s NYS-awarded \$75,000 for stream corridor assessments in the Owasco Lake HUC12 subwatershed, which includes Sucker Brook. Restored streambanks and wetland corridors are ranking criteria for FLLT while targeting land acquisitions to create protected preserves and easements.
- The Committee is updating the 9E Plan’s implementation checklist to track the status of associated programming and projects implementation.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

2024 Projects Review:

The Cayuga County Planning Department developed 2024 lake and watershed monitoring and implementation priorities in the context of annual Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLLOWPA) funding. Their overall 2024 workplan, approved by the NYSDEC, included monitoring the tributaries in the Owasco Lake Watershed to collect data that can be used for updating the 9EP SWAT for Owasco Lake. Cornell University ran SWAT scenarios for a 20% reduction in phosphorus loading to the lake to simulate the effects of expanded nutrient management Planning Tier 3 or equivalent, restricted applications of fertilizer and manure in areas that abut streams, and the implementation of cover crops. A MEANSS approach was used to estimate relocating septic systems within 100 feet of surface waters.

Two of the tributary sampling sites are also being used to collect baseline data for the OLWMC’s “Owasco Lake Watershed Critical Streams Restoration Project” funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) program.

The following additional details were provided by the Department, concerning their support for 2024 monitoring initiatives:

- *FOLLOWPA funds in 2024 will be used for the installation and implementation of BMPs by SWCD, the O&M for the USGS Owasco Inlet Gage, CSLAP for OWLA, Duck Lake Association and Lake Como Association, OWLA Tributary Sampling Program, Owasco Watershed Data Portal, public outreach and education on invasive species and water quality, aquatic vegetation harvesting, O&M of the boat cleaning station at Emerson Park, support for the septic system inspection program and updating and utilizing the SWAT model.*
- *The Quality Assurance Project Plan for the OWLA Tributary Monitoring Program funded by the FOLLOWPA and Cayuga County has been approved by the NYSDEC. Training for the samplers occurred on April 10th.*
- *FOLLOWPA funds will also be used for Nick Colas to update and utilize the SWAT Model. The final report from last year's work is available on the 9E Plan website.*
- *Cayuga County will fund the buoy in Owasco Lake. FOLLOWPA funds were used last year to create a data portal that contains the buoy data and historical data from John Halfman. FOLLOWPA funds will be used this year to add more data to that portal.*
- *The County is funding the CSI Tributary Monitoring Program and the CSI HABs Monitoring Program, and contracts are in process.*

The Department has made the Owasco Lake Watershed SWAT Model Report available on their website. Here's a summary of report features:

- *A recommended practice in the Owasco Lake Watershed 9E Plan was to update watershed SWAT Model with new data and information including hydrologic data files. Cayuga County utilized Finger Lake-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA) funds to enhance and update the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) nutrient loading model that provides a quantitative framework for the Owasco Lake Watershed planning process and guides the prioritization of projects for implementation. The model was used to analyze three scenarios. These three scenarios were grassed waterways, grade stabilization structures and streambank stabilization. This work was performed in accordance with an approved NYSDEC QAPP.*

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

Project Review:

- Consultants for the City of Auburn's NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) worked with City of Auburn water resource managers and partners to identify potential sources of Owasco Lake water quality contamination and provide recommendations for resource protection. The DWSP2 committee reviewed and edited the draft plan. A refined draft of the City of Auburn's DWSP2 was delivered from the contracted consultant to the City of Auburn and circulated among the project committee. The City of Auburn approved of the plan. The local group awaits final plan approval from NYSDEC and NYSDOH to move forward on plan implementation and associated project(s) proposal(s) development.
- The Town of Owasco received consultant support through NYS to develop its DWSP2. The sixth Town of Owasco DWSP2 group meeting held on October 12, 2023 hosted a final review and discussion among local partners involved in development of the proposed plan. The

consultants involved in the project have finalized and delivered the plan to NYS agencies for their review and approval. The local group awaits final plan approval from NYSDEC and NYSDOH to move forward on plan implementation and associated project(s) proposal(s) development.

Municipal Codes and Ordinances

Project Review:

- Proposed erosion and sediment control ordinances concerning new construction activities were prepared for OLWMC directing municipalities for their independent board review and consideration for adoption.
 - The Village of Moravia adopted the Sediment and Erosion Control Plan, and associated Appendix E, prepared and proposed by the OLWMC for advancing municipal control requirements for new construction activities.
 - The Town of Fleming reviewed the proposed ordinances and concluded that they already have adequate protections in place concerning new construction activities as part of an existing overlay district.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and

Programming Review:

- A summary of HABs reported during 2023 is available in the archive section of the Harmful Algal Blooms webpage. Historical HABs data through 2022 is provided on Open NY, which gives public access to digital data (Search the "Data NY" portal for "Harmful Algal Blooms"). One can view historical water quality monitoring data, including HABs information, at the DOW Monitoring Portal. Both Open NY and the Monitoring Portal will be updated with 2023 HABs data over the coming months.

Programming Updates:

- The NYS Finger Lakes Hub has scheduled the virtual training this year for Finger Lakes HABs Shoreline Surveillance volunteers on Monday, June 10, 2024. The training will be recorded for those who can't attend the live session. NYSDEC will require new volunteers attend either the live training or watch the recorded version and recommend returning volunteers participate if they feel like they want a refresher. Surveillance coordinators for each lake should plan to attend and discuss any specific questions about a particular lake program. There are no substantial changes to the program this year. The training will consist of HABs identification, NYHABS online program review and how to submit a report.
- Funding for HABs monitoring, to provide for strategic science and data collection, was included within the 2024 NYS one-house budget. Bill S8356 "Enacting the HAB Monitoring and Prevention Act," championed by Senator May, passed the Senate and was delivered to the assembly and referred to the Environmental Conservation Committee on May 8, 2024.

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Review:

- Fillmore Nature Preserve is a 161-acre property that is critical for protecting water quality in

Owasco Lake, which provides drinking water to more than 70% of Cayuga County. A study by The Nature Conservancy ranked the property within the top 10 parcels in the Owasco Lake watershed with the greatest impact on water quality. The land includes diverse forests and approximately 40 acres of freshwater wetlands. It is located near the birthplace of President Millard Fillmore and Fillmore Glen State Park.

- The OLWMC closed on the property transfer from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on January 10, 2023, and established the Fillmore Nature Preserve. Fillmore Nature Preserve property boundary signage was installed by OLWMC staff with the help of TNC on March 8, 2023. The associated field trip accommodated the first annual property inspection to meet the OLWMC's annual property inspection commitment.
- On May 22, 2023, student conservation work at the Fillmore Nature Preserve was one of the activities included as part of Moravia High School 'Moravia Gives Back Day.' Students collected litter along the roadway adjacent to the preserve, pulled invasive species, and identified species to inform a conservation database. Moravia High School students were the first to assess biodiversity at the preserve.
- The Town of Owasco is providing trail maintenance support at the Fillmore Nature Preserve.
- \$9,117 was approved by the Fred L. Emerson Foundation for the OLWMC, specifically towards implementing the *Fillmore Nature Preserve- Conservation Education Kiosk, Access Lot, and Trail Network* project, as detailed in the OLWMC's project proposal dated September 14, 2023. The grant proposal was funded to create a public access lot and educational kiosk at the nature preserve.
 - The gravel lot will allow members of the public to access the land preserve for respectful use of its trails for hiking. The kiosk will provide educational information about the land preserve concerning its purpose. The Town of Owasco agreed to provide labor in-kind for creating the public access lot. The Cayuga County Planning Department agreed to provide support through the development of parcel maps to be included within the kiosk. The Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) committed to support the effort with \$500 of compost and wildflower seed for the creation of a perennial pollinator wildflower garden adjacent to the lot. Information about the value of native plants, and the ecosystem services they provide, will also be included within the kiosk. The Towns of Moravia and Summerhill committed to hauling gravel to build the public access lot.
 - The OLWMC applied for program support for the creation and posting of trails within the Fillmore Nature Preserve; a Cornell University program called Design Connect accepted a request for mapping and identifying trails. They offered two project managers who acted as primary project managers along with a team of 5-10 students.
 - Cornell's Design Connect program team held a field trip at the Fillmore Nature Preserve on February 28 and again on March 16, 2024 to assess the conditions and locations of the existing trail network and gather information for mapping and marking trails. Their team conducted draft mock-ups of color schemes and themes of potential trail signage, and designed panels for the educational kiosk.
 - In the fall of 2023, the Town of Owasco, in-kind, created an onsite access from Fillmore Road to the Fillmore Nature Preserve. This represented the first step in the creation of the planned public access lot.
 - The OLWMC responded to an offer for project support by the Partners for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) and proposed for a plant inventory, including for both terrestrial invasive and sensitive native species, at the Fillmore Nature Preserve. The

proposal included a request for plant pictures and blurbs for inclusion on the educational kiosk that will be constructed there.

Project Updates:

- Highway Departments for the Towns of Moravia and Summerhill trucked gravel to create the public access lot. The Town of Owasco cut a 10' wide perimeter around the gravel lot that OWLA will use for the creation of an adjacent perennial pollinator wildflower garden. The implementation of the wildflower garden will act as an OLWMC/OWLA collaborative Lake Friendly Living public event to be held May 25, 2024.
- Cornell's Design Connect has been actively working with the OLWMC on trail map and educational kiosk panel revisions. The map and panels are nearly final and ready to print.
- The Finger Lakes PRISM Crew Assistance Program (CAP) accepted the OLWMC proposal to work on a Fillmore Nature Preserve project this summer. The proposal requested PRISM's support to conduct a 'species of interest' inventory at the preserve and the preparation of associated pictures and blurbs concerning both invasive species and sensitive native species present there. The content will be included on signage for attachment to the educational kiosk. PRISM plans to do their survey work on July 8-July 10, 2024.
- With the help of CC Planning for the submission of an additional application through PRISM, the OLWMC applied for a 'boot brush station' to be installed with the educational kiosk to support visitor education and efforts to reduce the spread of invasive species.

Other Potential OLWMC Acquisitions Review:

- TNC has expressed interest in having the OLWMC own and steward two additional properties poised for acquisition and preservation within the Owasco Lake watershed. These include:
 1. 72-acre parcel in Venice, dense wetland
 2. 100-acre parcel in Groton, mixed farmland
 - On October 4, 2023, OLWMC staff and Board Chair, Ed Wagner, visited the Groton parcel to evaluate the property and prompt discussions about the OLWMC taking ownership of the property at some point in the future.TNC will present these acquisitions to the OLWMC Board for ownership and stewardship consideration.

Additional Partner Land Acquisitions/Targets Review:

- Under 2023 Round 19 of the Water Quality Improvement Projects (WQIP) Grant, the Fingers Lakes Land Trust, Inc. (FLLT) received \$1,240,000 for Land Acquisition to Protect Owasco Lake. FLLT will work with landowners and partners in the Owasco Lake watershed to permanently protect approximately 500 acres through direct acquisition and the use of perpetual conservation easements. The program will focus on conservation and stewardship efforts to protect Owasco Lake. The proposed program grant will provide FLLT an opportunity to create a new nature preserve on the Sucker Brook wetland, one the largest remaining natural wetlands in the region and conserve additional lands throughout the Owasco Lake Watershed.

- The FLLT, in its recent testimony to the Joint Legislative Committee on Environmental Conservation, explained that New York land trusts are currently holding over 100,000 acres of land that was acquired upon the request of the state, with a market value of over \$150 million. This backlog is largely due to two issues:
 1. The lack of adequate staffing at the Real Property Bureau and the Office of General Counsel at DEC and within the Real Property Bureau at the Office of the Attorney General;
 2. NYS's current approach to property title review that involves a higher standard than is typical in the private sector and does not include the acceptance of title insurance to resolve title issues.

Current Projects and Funding

SOGL Project Review:

- A National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) funding proposal was developed in partnership with CCSWCD and EA Engineering, targeting stream restoration along the Owasco Inlet. Proposed project partners also include the Cayuga County Planning Department, OWLA, and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Based on a successful pre-proposal the OLWMC submitted a full project proposal for Owasco Inlet streambank restoration project sites between Booth Hill Road and Cat Path Road in the Town of Locke. Landowners who reside along the targeted reaches have expressed concern about severe streambank erosion in those areas.
 - Total Amount Requested: \$299,640.00
 - Matching Contributions Proposed: \$100,360.00
- The OLWMC was awarded \$457,839.92 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) program for the *Owasco Lake Watershed Critical Streams Restoration Project*.
- The Board of Directors of NFWF, having reviewed the OLWMC's 2022 financial audit, approved of the \$457,839.92 grant award to the OLWMC through the SOGL program. Subsequently, the OLWMC has signed the grant agreement. Project consultant, EA Engineering, is navigating the environmental permitting process and design, in preparation for project implementation during the 2024 and 2025 field seasons.
- In February, 2024 CCSWCD delivered mailers to the landowners who have adjacent properties along our targeted reach of the Owasco Inlet, and CCSWCD gained early approvals for four out of five sites. If possible, CCSWCD plans to have site seven surveyed, permitted and designed by August 1, 2024 with the goal of having construction underway in 2023.
- EA Engineering has completed drafts of the NEPA, ESA, and NHPA compliance forms and has submitted them to the NFWF. EA Engineering and CCSWCD conducted a March 25, 2024 field trip to record baseline conditions, channel types, and to evaluate parcel access. CCSWCD and EA staff spoke with adjacent landowners and discussed survey needs for project modeling and design.

- Conditions of Site 7 have changed since the initial project proposal last spring. The alignment of the channel and banks in the vicinity of Site 7 appears to have been altered and bank erosion at Site 7 is no longer as significant as previously observed. The property owner apparently self-implemented these changes. From the perspective of prioritizing funding sources and adaptive management, the project team plans to remove Site 7 from the planned scope under grant.
- EA Engineering held a field visit on April 9th (Task 2) when they collected site data, conducted a drone flyover, and identified plant/aquatic species as observed. The project team is attempting to identify a laboratory to run streambank soil samples.

SOGL Project Updates:

EA Engineering completed revisions to the permit documents, including adjusting the site locations and figures presented in the application packages. They started pulling together LiDAR data for the areas surrounding project sites and setting up the CAD model. Additionally, they started setting up the hydrologic model to estimate flow conditions that will inform designing. They have two of seven sites surveyed so far, and are awaiting the additional site survey data from CCSWCD. The next project team meeting will be held on June 11, 2024.

Invasive Species Job Opportunities:

The Finger Lakes Partners for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) and Finger Lakes Institute (FLI) announced the 2024 recruitment process for regional watercraft inspection stewards and aquatic invasive species technicians. There will be employment opportunities for both aquatic and terrestrial stewards. Please find PRISM watercraft steward job opportunities here: <https://www.hws.edu/offices/hr/employment/summer.aspx>

From the NYSDEC:

1. *The deadline for the Water Infrastructure Improvement (WIIA) and Intermunicipal Water Infrastructure Grant (IMG) programs is just one month away! Grant applications and required supporting documentation must be submitted by 5 p.m. on June 14.*
2. *Reminder: Applications Now Open for DEC's Municipal Zero-Emission Vehicle Rebate Program. On Thursday, April 25, DEC announced the next round of its Municipal Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Rebate Program with \$750,000 available for municipalities to purchase or lease all electric, plug-in hybrid, and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles for their municipal fleets. Municipalities can apply for funding, which is available on a first-come, first-served basis through Sept. 27, 2024. Rebates are available to municipalities across the State that purchase or lease for a minimum of 36 months an eligible vehicle placed into municipal service at a dealership in New York State between Sept. 30, 2022, and Sept. 27, 2024. More details can be found in the Request for Applications (RFA) posted on the DEC website. Applications are available through the New York State Statewide Financial System Grants Management System. Of the funding awarded to date, \$1.2 million went to municipalities that contain disadvantaged communities, as identified by the Climate Justice Working Group's final criteria. Under the Climate Act, New York is required to direct at least 35 percent with a goal of 40 percent of the*

benefits of investments on clean energy and energy efficiency programs toward disadvantaged communities. Since its inception in 2016, the ZEV Rebate Program has awarded a total of more than \$1.5 million toward the purchase or lease of 114 plug-in hybrid vehicles and 182 all-electric vehicles. More information about DEC's Municipal ZEV Rebate Program, as well as Municipal ZEV Infrastructure Grants, is available on DEC's website. For questions regarding the program, email ZEVrebate@dec.ny.gov or call DEC's Office of Climate Change at 518-402-8448.

Municipality Buy-In

Project Review: The OLWMC continues to encourage participation and directorship from the remaining towns within the watershed that have yet to join to help direct project initiatives. They include the Towns of Venice, Sempronius, Groton, Genoa, Skaneateles, and Lansing.

Prepared by Adam Effler, May 16, 2024