



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

November 18, 2025, 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

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: Owasco-Ed Wagner, City of Auburn-Ginny Kent, Niles-Joan Jayne, Scipio-Nancy Hart, Fleming-Karen VanLiew, Town of Moravia-Terry Palmer, Lansing-Joseph Wetmore, Dryden-Anne Clarke (online). Ex officio: John West (online), Jesse Lloyd, Carol Sutkus, Gabriel Yerdon (online), Sean Cochran, Michelle Wunderlich (online).
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve the November agenda made by Joan Jayne, seconded by Karen VanLiew. Vote was unanimous. Motion approved.
- C. Approval of Minutes from October 21, 2025, Board Meeting: Motion to approve the October 21, 2025 minutes made by Terry Palmer, seconded by Nancy Hart. Vote was unanimous. Motion approved.
- D. Public to be Heard: None Heard

A. Director's Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting) for an audio/visual of Dr. Effler's presentation please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
Watershed Rules and Regulations

- Over the summer of 2025, OLWMC staff worked with the NYS Legislative Bill Drafting Commission to amend NYS Public Health Law, in relation to enacting the 'Drinking Water Protection Act' and improving the process of updating WRR with NYS agency requirements and time limits.

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects Updates

- The OLWMC November staff article published in Auburnpub on November 14, 2025 features the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations, both efforts to advance updates and prominent features of the existing 1984 regulations.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Update:

- The 9E Coordination Committee finalized its 2022-2025 progress report. The progress report

is posting on the OLWMC website: <https://www.olwmc.org/>

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Project Update:

The Cayuga County Planning Department prepared a draft Data Usability Assessment Report (DUAR) and Final Report for the 2025 Owasco Lake Tributary Monitoring Program. Once the DUAR is approved by the NYSDEC, the project data and report can be shared among project partners for data analysis and interpretation.

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:

Project Update:

The 2025 HABs reporting and notification season has ended. The New York Harmful Algal Bloom System (NYHABS) link will be unavailable until the 2026 season begins in May.

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Update:

Stewardship activities have 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 Update:

Boundary posting and stewardship training with TNC took place on November 13, 2025. The boundaries are nearly fully posted. OLWMC staff will conduct a follow-up trip to finish the posting effort.

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.

Organizational Bylaws Update:

The OLWMC Members reviewed the final draft of proposed updated OLWMC Bylaws. The OLWMC has commissioned legal counsel to review the final draft of the updated bylaws. A board resolution for bylaws adoption will be crafted when the final draft is in order.

Grant Projects and Funding

No new updates.

ESF will develop a plan to monitor tributary nutrient flow in conjunction with Cornell University. OLWMC has endorsed this plan and will work in partnership with ESF on this project.

- E. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: None heard
- F. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
 - i. October 2025 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne presented the financials as of October 31, 2025: Total Current Assets \$493,608.72, Total Liabilities and Equity \$528,373.81. Motion to approve financial report made by Joseph Wetmore, seconded by Terry Palmer. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
 - ii. 2026 Budget Approval – Ed Wagner presented and discussed the 2026 proposed budget. Motion to approve the proposed budget made by Ed Wagner, seconded by Nancy Hart. Vote was unanimous. Motion approved.
- G. Lake Level Report – John West. Current lake elevation is 711.69 ft. Continuing to monitor rainfall and make lake level adjustments accordingly. Plan to lower lake level to 710 ft by the end of December.
- H. Upgrades at the Village of Moravia Wastewater Treatment Facility – Sean Cochran: for an audio/visual presentation please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- I. NYSDEC Finger Lakes Watershed Program– Gabriel Yerdon-for an update on the Finger Lakes Watershed activities please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- J. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Carol Sutkus reported the new president of OWLA will be Dr Phillip Gioia; OWLA will be hosting a booth with OLWMC at Community Craft Fair on 12/6-7 at CCC, planning for Bob Bower Scientific Symposium on March 14, 2026, OWLA is participating in the Christmas tree event in Auburn, NY and appreciates everyone's support.
- K. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update – Daniel Welch-unavailable
- L. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Jesse Lloyd- for an audio/visual of Jesse Lloyd's presentation please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- M. Communications-Adam asked members to review management council objectives for updates or changes. DEC 21st Annual Middle School Student Poster Contest theme is “Water connects us all”. Poster submissions accepted through 1/2/26.
- N. Issues of Concern: None heard
- O. Next Meeting scheduled for Tuesday December 16, 2025 at 10:00 AM.
- P. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Ginny Hart. Vote was unanimous. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 11:13 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Vivian Cunningham

2025 OLWMC Goals

1. Increase participation of municipalities that have yet to join the Council.
 - a. Formal directorship request letters will be delivered to the remaining watershed municipalities and their responses (if any) will be documented. OLWMC staff will make a concerted effort to visit municipal offices to directly communicate organizational objectives and elicit interest and buy-in.
2. Community Outreach
 - a. Increase awareness of the Lake Friendly Living Pledge Program, boundaries, and tributaries of the watershed through signage
 - b. Advocate for NYS approval of community consensus Updated Watershed Rules and Regulations
 - i. Mobilize an outreach campaign for eventual rollout of Updated Watershed Rules and Regulations
 1. Plan distribution methods for supportive materials providing guidance on watershed programs and lines of supportive funding
 - c. Continue to advance engagement with watershed farmers
 - d. Coordinate watershed science programming and education in schools
 - e. Extend outreach opportunities throughout the Finger Lakes Region, where applicable
3. Continue to look for funding opportunities.
 - a. Advance funding support for project initiatives through collaboration for funding and partnership among agencies
 - b. Use adaptive strategies for project priorities list based on watershed planning and funding availability
 - c. Seek watershed support as a line item on the NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)
4. Provide new and relevant programmatic opportunities to watershed municipal leaders
 - a. Offer support and guidance to assist watershed municipalities with advancing resource protection and climate smart initiatives that protect water quality and benefit municipalities
5. Work with the Towns' and Villages' elected officials, highway superintendents, and county soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) to maintain BMPs (e.g., ditch stabilization practices)
 - a. Support communication between highway departments and SWCDs
6. Support the coordination and implementation of the NYS Nine Element (9E) Watershed Plan
 - a. Facilitate response to needs and communication for the 9E Project Coordination Committee that will:
 - i. Interpret 9E Plan information to target watershed project implementation based on recommended projects/practices and prioritized 'hot spots'
 - ii. Present relevant information for managers, municipalities, and implementers to support priority projects
 - iii. Utilize NYS approved (9E) Plan to advocate for external project funding through grants
7. Participate in the on-going NYSDEC harmful algal bloom monitoring and surveillance program, the purpose of which is to identify priority areas for health and safety and ultimately develop mitigation strategies for HABs
 - a. OLWMC/NYSDEC/OWLA (Owasco Watershed Lake Association) collaboration is essential
8. Develop Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD) program requirements according to the rollout of Updated Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations
 - a. Advance programmatic needs and SOPs for updated watershed rules and regulations, including for the proposed variance process
9. Support oversight, growth, and guidance for the OLWIPD
 - a. Foster outreach and guidance for stakeholders through the OLWIPD
10. Continue supporting monitoring the lake and watershed to assess water quality
 - a. Ensure transferrable and accessible datasets between multiple groups, including scientists, planners, and managers
 - b. Work with the DEC Finger Lakes Hub and other partners to reduce watershed-sourced nutrient loading to Owasco Lake
11. Preserve natural ecosystem functions that protect watershed water quality through stewarding land preserves and seek new opportunities to preserve land within the watershed