



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

January 17, 2023, 10:00-11:30 AM – Meeting

(Zoom connection was unavailable which may have limited some participants)

Meeting of the Directors

Owasco – Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb -Coleman, **City of Auburn** – Ginny Kent

Niles – Joan Jayne, **Locke** – Thane Benson, **Scipio** – Melinda Pitman, **Fleming** – Karen VanLiew, **Moravia** – Terry Baxter, **Village of Moravia** – Gary Mulvaney, **Village of Groton** – Nancy Niswender, **Summerhill** – Charlie Ripley, **Sennett** – Tom Blair, **Dryden** – Anne Clark
Executive Director- Adam Effler

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: **Owasco** – Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb - Coleman, **City of Auburn** – Ginny Kent, **Niles** – Joan Jayne, **Scipio** – Melinda Pitman, **Fleming** – Karen VanLiew, **Moravia** – Terry Baxter
Ex Officio attendees: Ally Berry, Jillian Aluisio, Dr. John Halfman, Michelle Wunderlich, John West, Marissa Jordan, Cortney Alexander-Skaneateles, Eileen O’Conner
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve made by Terry Baxter and seconded by Ginny Kent. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from the December 20, 2022 meeting. Motion to approve made Joan Jayne by seconded by Karen VanLiew. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- D. Public to be Heard: None Heard.
- E. Director’s Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting)
Watershed Rules and Regulations

Project Review:

NYSDOH project updates are posted on the OLWMC’s website (<https://www.olwmc.org/projects>)

Project Update:

The following details were provided within NYSDOH’s project update report (1.17.2023 Monthly Owasco WRR Update for OLWMC final) delivered to the OLWMC Board of Directors, Ex Officio Partners, and engaged members of the public prior to the December 20, 2022 OLWMC public board meeting:

General Update:

The State-Local workgroup has not met since the Nov 4, 2022 meeting to allow inter-departmental reviews and legal team consultations to occur at the state level. These reviews are informed by the very helpful input from the State-Local Technical Workgroup meetings that occurred in 2022. NYS DOH is planning to convene a discussion amongst State and local legal teams and then reconvene the Technical Workgroup upon completing these various reviews. A tentative timeline is provided below.

Revised Meeting Schedule:

State Agency Legal Meetings	February/March 2023 (if necessary)
Follow up with State-Local Workgroup	March 2023

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 streams. Class "C" waterways, which are regularly used by people for boating, fishing, and other activities. The new 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.

This bill has been reintroduced and Adam will reach out to insure it does not cause restrictions on soil and water activities.

Municipal Codes and Ordinances

Project Review:

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.

Nine Element (9E) Watershed Plan

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 into the Plan. 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 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 will provide a coordination role for future projects and programming according to the recommendations of the 9E Watershed Plan.

Project Update:

The OLWMC's 9E Plan Project Coordination Committee (via Resolution 03-2022 at its November 15, 2022 public board meeting) will prioritize, coordinate, and facilitate project and programming implementation based on the recommendations of the 9E Plan. Subsequently, request letters for Committee participation by the OLWMC's Ex Officio partners were delivered. The first Committee meeting, among those who agree to participate, is scheduled for January 24, 2023.

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) have convened 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. Project consultants provided recommendations to Auburn City Council on July 14, 2022. At recent meetings, the DWSP2 committee reviewed and edited the draft plan. The NYSDEC and NYS Department of Health (DOH) are also reviewing the plan and will provide comments. Barring any changes based on agency feedback, the plan can be finalized. At that point, Auburn City Council will be asked to endorse the plan and name the implementation team. During the last meeting, the committee discussed implementation steps and expressed support desired from consultants and NYSDEC/NYSDOH to help maintain momentum.
- The Town of Owasco's application for the DWSP2 was received and reviewed by NYS agencies. A program award to the Town of Owasco from NYS would piggyback on the City of Auburn's plan and extend resources to target continued and more detailed planning, facilitated by the NYS-funded consultants, to coordinate and propose specific projects. The proposed projects and programming would represent the broad recommendations of the overall watershed-based plan.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Reporting

Project Review:

- Regarding HABs, the NYSDEC (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation) encourages the community to "know it, report it, and avoid it."
- Consistent with previous year, in 2022, The Owasco Watershed Lake Association

(OWLA) led the volunteer HABs surveillance program for Owasco Lake.

- Generally, year over year, observations of HABs are increasing throughout the eastern Finger Lakes Region. Importantly, associated cyanotoxin levels in Owasco Lake's raw water have been elevated this year from previous years.
- HABs season has ended for 2022, and the NYSDEC's NYHABs notification page is no longer available for reference. The NYSDEC's HABs Archive Page is available for reference. During 2022, 198 waterbodies statewide were listed with "Confirmed HABs" NYHABS. Over 1,600 HAB reports were collected by NYSDEC and its partners, and of these, over 1,000 met DEC criteria for a Confirmed HAB. The reports ranged from a single observation to widespread blooms that were persistent throughout the season. HABs may occur on waterbodies throughout the year, although fewer blooms occur as water and air temperatures decrease.

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects Update

Project Review:

- Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) awareness (and mitigation) project partners decide to provide for new visibility of the OLWMC's 'Clean, Drain, Dry' portable billboard currently positioned at the Emerson Park boat launch. In 2023, staff are planning to target improved visibility at the south end of the watershed by positioning the billboard on a Cayuga County owned pull-off along Route 38. The billboard was relocated from the Emerson Park Boat launch back to its winter location adjacent to the Cayuga County Parks and Trails building.
- The Town of Dryden Conservation Board is considering its recommendation to the Dryden Town Board for the Town to resolve to take the Lake Friendly Living (LFL) Pledge.

Project Update:

- The OLWMC's January staff feature article with the Citizen newspaper spotlights the efforts and accomplishments of the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA).
 - OLWMC staff have committed to monthly feature articles with the Citizen in 2023. Consistent with previous years, articles will target recognition of watershed residents making strides in watershed protection.
- According to the OLWMC's new role stewarding the Fillmore Nature Preserve, there are three Land Trust Alliance webinars available in the near term. The webinars are titled:
 - Due diligence (1/17)
 - Managing the transition from acquisition to stewardship (1/24)
 - Drafting and managing baseline documentation reports (2/16)

Registration is available here: <https://landtrustalliance.org/resources/learn/ways-to-learn/webinars?hierarchicalMenu%5Btype.lv10%5D%5B0%5D=webinar>

- The OWLA will provide watershed education in the classroom at Auburn Junior high at the end of January.

Land Holdings

OLWMC Land Preserve Project Update:

- The OLWMC closed on the property transfer of the Fillmore Nature Preserve from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on January 10, 2023.
- Property signage will be installed with the help of TNC. The associated field trip, scheduled for January 28th, will also accommodate TNC's insights and recommendations on effective property inspection protocols to meet the OLWMC's annual property inspection commitment.

Partner Projects Update:

- At year-end, The Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) accepted the donation of a conservation easement on 160 acres of farmland from the Post family in the Owasco Lake watershed. The easement provides for the expansion of existing stream buffers. FLLT staff and volunteers will plant native trees and shrubs in these areas later this year.
- FLLT partnered with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to restore several acres of wetlands on a parcel they currently own that will be transferred to NYSDEC for inclusion in the state's Owasco Flats Wildlife Management Area.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Project Review:

- The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will be paring down its funding of the Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) in the Finger Lakes Region by nearly half. They will cover the costs of between four and eight samples this year and expect to cover four samples in future program years. Local lake stewards will be responsible for covering the costs and sampling for any additional samples.
- Lake and watershed monitoring partners prepared a comprehensive budget for review by the Cayuga County Planning Department that includes costs for 1) a new Owasco Lake monitoring role by the Finger Lakes Institute, Hobart William Smith Colleges, and 2) laboratory analysis for watershed tributary samples collected by OWLA.

Hyfi Watercourse Level Sensors

- The two-year pilot project grant period is complete. Project Update:
- The NYSDEC does not endorse the future use of the level sensors and the development of rating curves to generate tributary flow estimates to be used for future SWAT model calibration. A funding request was made to maintain level sensors within the Owasco Flats, and the remaining sensors are likely to be decommissioned.

Programs, Funding, and Related Opportunities

1. The Sustain Our Great Lakes Program announced the 2023 Request for Proposals Their solicitation (in their words) is italicized below:

The Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) program is soliciting proposals to benefit fish, wildlife, habitat and water quality in the Great Lakes basin. The program will award up to \$18.7 million in grants in 2023 to improve and enhance: 1) stream, riparian and coastal habitats to benefit species; 2) water quality in the Great Lakes and its tributaries. Details about this

funding opportunity are provided in the Request for Proposals. The submission deadline for pre-proposals is February 25, 2022. Additional application information is available at www.nfwf.org/greatlakes.

In 2023, grant funding will be awarded in six categories:

- Habitat Restoration to Conserve Species and Improve Water Quality*
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Great Lakes Communities*
- Expand Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Great Lakes Communities*
- Invasive Species Control to Protect and Enhance Restored Habitat*
- Conservation Practices and Regenerative Agriculture on Working Lands*

To be eligible for funding, projects must occur within the Great Lakes basin. Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and state, tribal and local governments.

2023 Funding Opportunity Webinar – Guidance for Applicants

January 19, 2023, from 2:00-3:30PM Eastern Time

*This webinar will provide additional information on the 2023 funding opportunity including specific guidance related to funding categories offered, navigating the application process, and answering participant questions. Participants can **register here**:*

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3510914777961673558>

*A **recording** of the webinar will be available for viewing at www.nfwf.org/greatlakes following conclusion of the live program.*

NY Sea Grant AND DEC Announce \$460,000 in Grants Available to Support Projects that implement Great Lakes Action Agenda Priorities. Their solicitation (in their words) is italicized below:

Funding to Support Local Priorities to Restore and Protect Great Lakes Lands and Waters

2023 Applications for Funding Due March 1, 2023

New York Sea Grant, in partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), today announced funding is now available for projects that apply an ecosystem-based management approach to address local watershed challenges. Projects will

implement the goals of New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda and address actions specifically identified in locally supported plans pertaining to water quality, natural resources, or sustainable land uses. A total of \$460,000, with up to \$50,000 per project, in New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants will be awarded.

*"Enhancing the lakes' ecosystem through ecosystem restoration bolsters the resiliency of this important natural resource and at the same time provide enhanced recreational and economic opportunities," said **DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos**. "Partnering with New York Sea Grant through this essential grant program helps both sustain and build upon the substantial environmental progress we've made across New York's Great Lakes region and protects these vital waters for future generations."*

*"New York Sea Grant is excited to partner with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to provide communities with resources needed to implement locally identified and prioritized projects that increase resilience, improve the environment, and provide economic benefits," said **New York Sea Grant Associate Director and Cornell University Cooperative Extension Assistant Director Katherine Bunting-Howarth, PhD, JD, Ithaca, N.Y.***

County and local government or public agencies, municipalities, and regional planning and environmental commissions, not-for-profit organizations, and educational institutions including, but not limited to, public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities, are eligible to apply.

Applications are due by 4:30 p.m. EST on March 1, 2023; instructions are online at <https://www.nyseagrant.org/qsmallgrants>. For more information, contact New York Sea Grant at 716-645-3611.

New York Sea Grant administers the New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program in partnership with DEC's Great Lakes Program. This small grant program is funded by the New York State Environmental Protection Fund. Among the many [environmental victories in the 2022-23 State Budget](#), Governor Hochul succeeded in enacting an increase in the EPF from

\$300 million to \$400 million, the highest-ever level of funding in the program's history. The EPF supports climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, improves agricultural resources to promote sustainable agriculture, protects our water sources, advances conservation efforts, and provides recreational opportunities for New Yorkers.

For more information on New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda, go to <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/91881.html>. More information on New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants projects is available at <https://www.nyseagrant.org/qsmallgrants> and other New York Great Lakes-related information is available at <http://www.nyseagrant.org/nygreatlakes>.

2. Distribution of NYS 2022 Environmental Bond Act funding is still being developed. Most likely, the details will be hashed out, refined, and ultimately implemented through the NYS budget. General project goals can be found here: https://cleanwaterandjobs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Bond-Act-funding-by-program_final.pdf

Municipal Funding Opportunities Review

- The NYSDEC Municipal Zero-emission Vehicle (ZEV) Rebate Program has awarded \$567,500 from the Environmental Protection Fund to municipalities for the purchase or lease of electric light- and medium-duty fleet vehicles. The Municipal ZEV Rebate Program continues to support municipal efforts to mitigate further climate change. Since it began in 2016, the ZEV Rebate Program has awarded over \$1.5 million (including this round) towards the purchase or lease of 114 plug-in hybrid vehicles and 182 all-electric vehicles.
- Governor Hochul recently announced the new Green Purchasing Communities Program that helps local governments to ensure that the products they are purchasing have a lower environmental impact. Local governments that participate will receive recognition for their commitment to purchasing green products and services through the Climate Smart Communities program. Learn more here: <https://ogs.ny.gov/green-purchasing-communities>

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.

Project Update: OLWMC Director, the Village of Groton, is considering appointing a new representative on the Board to support better involvement with our initiatives.

- F. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Ginny Kent had questions regarding administration of the Land Trust. Adam suggested Directors attend the Webinars on Land Trust. Adam thanked Ginny Kent and Ed Wagner who agreed to serve on the 9E steering committee. Terry Baxter suggested it might be nice to coordinate the Fillmore Land Trust with the Millard Filmore Historical Site in the Town of Summerhill which is close to the Land Trust.
- G. Treasurer’s Audit and Finance Report
December 2022 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported on the financial report as of December 31,2022: Total Current Assets \$ 283,794.46, Total Liabilities and Equity \$ 358,784.16. Motion to approve made by Terry Baxter seconded by Ed Wagner. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- i. Annual audit is scheduled. Fillmore property is included as a fixed asset.
- H. Lake Level Report – John West, unavailable.
- I. 2022 Owasco Lake Monitoring Report Presentation– Dr. Effler discussed Dr. Halfman’s 20 plus years of contribution to water quality to Owasco Lake and presented him with a plaque in recognition of decades of service to Owasco Lake. Dr. John Halfman presented the 2022 Water Quality Monitoring Report, Owasco Lake. He discussed Lake monitoring, stream monitoring, buoy and dockside sensor arrays, variability of rainfall and associated localized moisture events. He discussed the inputs of phosphorus into the lake which are mostly from agricultural land and associated large rain events. Now that we know agricultural runoff are the phosphorus sources, we need to work hard to minimize this impact. Dr. Halfman suggested focusing on the 9E plan. It is a good plan, and we should move forward with implementation. He also discussed the impact of road ditches and drainage tiles. This needs further research for funding to ameliorate the problem.
- There has been no improvement in water quality in the past 5 years.
- Dr. Halfman recommended continuing utilizing the weed harvester throughout the season, and implementing recommended remediation as per the 9 Element program.
- To view his presentation, go to:
<http://people.hws.edu/halfman/Data/Halfman%20OwascoLakeWatershedManagementCouncil%201-17-23.pdf>
- J. ‘Our Owasco’ Behavioral Change Project Update –Marissa Breault not available
- K. The Nature Conservancy Update – Olivia Green- not available
- L. NYSDEC Hub Update – Tony Prestigiacommo not available- no major updates
- M. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Ann Robson-OWLA meeting tomorrow, Dana Hall will be representative on 9E committee, and registration for 2023 Bob Brower Symposium is available on OLWA website.
- N. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update –Frank Clarke discussed a 2023 Winter Cover Crop Meeting and reported on various shop committees and the upcoming various educational farm programs.
- O. Partners for Healthy Watersheds Update – Greg Rejman unavailable
- P. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Ally Berry discussed the Inspection Division’s inspections for the month of December.

Q. Communications: None Heard

R. Issues of Concern: None Heard

S. Next Meeting Scheduled for Tuesday of February 21, 2023.

T. Motion to adjourn made by Terry Baxter seconded by Karen VanLiew. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Vivian Cunningham