



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

May 18th, 2021, 10:00am – Director’s Summary

- We continue to work with NYS politicians with watershed jurisdiction to gain their public endorsement of the community consensus Owasco Lake watershed rules and regulations update that is currently under review by the NYS Department of Health Bureau of Water Protection.
 - In tandem, the NYS Assembly 125th District spearheaded and passed of a supportive resolution for recognition of the Lake Friendly Living (LFL) Coalition of the Finger Lakes’ Awareness Week. The NYS 125th Assembly District office submitted the resolution asking Governor Cuomo to proclaim May 2-8 Finger Lakes’ Lake Friendly Living Week, and the resolution passed the NYS Assembly on April, 28th.
 - The OLWMC is a founding member of the LFL Coalition of the Finger Lakes that now represents seven Finger Lakes organizations.
 - The LFL awareness week, held May 2nd through May 7th, was an expert-led webinar series that highlighted ongoing Finger Lakes regional watershed concerns, projects, and recommendations for the adoption of conservation practices.
 - The OLWMC’s May recognition article featured the LFL Awareness week. The OLWMC’s June recognition article will feature and coincide with the inception of a Wegmans Food Markets’ sponsorship program promoting the sale of LED flares (rather than incendiary flares) throughout the Finger Lakes, benefiting watershed and lake protection and generating funding for the OLWMC.
 - For those Owasco Lake watershed municipalities that have taken the Lake Friendly Living pledge and are supportive of the installation of pledge program signage, we continue to collaborate with municipal highway departments’ staff to target suitable installation locations. Signage installations are also occurring along watershed fire lanes. Watershed residents will see the new program signage installed over the course of this field season.
 - According to LFL program discussions with the Martin Point Homeowners Association, the association decided to review their certified applicator’s material safety data sheets and reduce their rate of chemical applications in common areas by 50%.

- Information about the LFL pledge program can be found on the OLWMC website.
- On April 16th the Emerson Foundation announced a funding award in the amount of \$16,000.00, approved for Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, specifically toward the purchase of a hybrid-electric vehicle to support watershed protection efforts of the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD) as detailed in the associated project proposal dated March 23, 2021. Those funds will tie in with additional funds granted by the French and Metcalf Foundations to cover the entire cost of an AWD Hybrid Electric SUV suitable for the OLWIPD to navigate dynamic terrain throughout the watershed.
- On April 30th, the OLWMC submitted a project proposal through the NYS Sea Grant in partnership with the Cayuga County Planning Department, the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA), and other Finger Lakes regional partners. The proposal seeks to develop a youth-driven ‘Check-In Check-Out’ digitized platform for advancing the aquatic invasive species (AIS) Watercraft Inspection Steward Program for increased efficiency in the modern age, as well as, greater lake-access coverage.
- On May 10th, we offered a ‘State of the Lake’ report and recommendations for watershed conservation as part of the Auburn Wednesday Morning Roundtable. YMCA director, Chris Nucерino, and Owasco Paddles owner, Audrey Iwanicki, were also involved in the discussion. They offered their pledge support and assistance with promoting LFL conservation at the south and norths ends of the lake, respectively. In partnership, we are pursuing an educational workshop designed for YMCA youth to focus on watershed science and lake/ Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) safety.
- In partnership with the City of Auburn, the OLWMC plans to leverage the Great Lakes Commission’s (GLC) Conservation Kick program that would offer a small pool of funding for producer-led watershed conservation projects. The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) has expressed interest in working with a selected producer to access these funds for project(s) implementation.
- The OLWMC and its partner, the CCSWCD, were not awarded funding for advancing farm conservation planning according to a proposal submission through the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program (NRCS RCPP) Classic grant. We will revise and resubmit the proposal through the NRCS RCPP funding program later this summer.
- On April 29th, the OLWMC gave its annual watershed inspection report presentation to the City of Auburn City Council. The presentation highlighted the various projects and related grant funding from 2020 through the first half of 2021. This presentation will also be given at today’s May 18th OLWMC public board meeting to review the OLWMC’s recent and ongoing projects and accomplishments.
- The OLWMC will be partnering with the Cayuga County Drug Free Community Coalition to help educate the watershed community on the proper disposal of unused prescription drugs. The OLWMC will work with the coalition to help secure an additional five years of program funding to support their educational campaign.
- The OLWMC will act as a key future partner, according to the selection of the City of Auburn as a municipal applicant to be awarded technical support via the 18-month long Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2).

- The Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA)/OLWMC collaborative willow planting project, held Saturday April 17th, presented an opportunity for public engagement and to spotlight a large watershed farm's volunteerism. An ~1500' long watercourse riparian buffer, composed of ~2500 willow canes, was installed along Veness Brook and down-gradient from a large farm field.
- In a press release on May 5th, the Cayuga County Health Department announced "the New York State's Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) has opened Round 2 of the State Septic System Replacement Fund Program, which provides funds to replace old or substandard septic systems located on or near lakefront properties. Cayuga County is participating in this program, and eligible properties include those located within 250 feet of Owasco Lake, Lake Como, Cayuga Lake and Skaneateles Lake. This funding provides reimbursement of 50% of costs, up to \$10,000, for design and installation of a new septic system. All designs must be approved by the County Health Department prior to construction. Funding will be available for three years, or until exhausted. The OLWMC offers assistance with the promotion of the program.
- According to approved New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) permits for the installation of Hyfi tributary level sensors along NYS roads, additional sensors installations are planned along Rt. 38A, at Sucker and Dutch Hollow Brooks. To date, there are between 11 sensors installed. These include inlet and outlet sensors in Owasco Flats retention basins, one on Sucker Brook, one on Dutch Hollow Brook, two on Veness Brook, and two in Groton. A link to the landing page for data and time series tributary level graphs can be accessed on the OLWMC website.
- The OLWMC prepared and submitted all required information for its financial audit for the 2020 calendar year and awaits audit results.
- The OLWMC continues to look forward to buy-in 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, Dryden, Skaneateles, and Lansing; we continue to encourage the Board of Directors to reach out to representatives from these towns to elicit municipality buy-in.

Summary Prepared by Adam Effler, May 13th, 2021