



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

October 17, 2023, 10:00-11:30 AM Directors's Meeting

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** – TBD, **Village of Groton** – Theodore
Skibinski, **Summerhill** – Charlie Ripley, **Sennett** – Tom Blair, **Dryden** – Anne Clark
Executive Director- Adam Effler

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler: Dr. Effler discussed a clarification of the bylaws that a quorum to conduct business is three directors.

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call- Owasco-Ed Wagner, Cayuga Co.-Aileen McNabb-Coleman, City of Auburn-Ginny Kent, Niles-Joan Jayne, Fleming-Karen VanLiew, Moravia-Terry Baxter, Village of Moravia-Anthony Peppie, Dryden-Anne Clark (excused)
 - i. Ex-officio members attending: John West, Ann Robson, Lisa Cleckner, Frank Clarke, Abigail Hai, Dereth Glance, Daniel Welch, Dana Hall, Jason Cuddleback, Michelle Wunderlich, Lou McCaffery
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve made by Terry Baxter seconded by Joan Jayne. Motion was unanimously carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from the August 15, 2023 Board Meeting: Motion to approve made by Ginny Kent seconded by Joan Jayne. motion was unanimously carried.
- D. Approval of Minutes from the September 19, 2023, Board Meeting: Motion to approve made by Karen VanLiew seconded by Joan Jayne. Motion was unanimously carried.
- E. Public to be Heard: None heard.
- F. Director's Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting) For visuals associated with Dr. Effler's report please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

Staff Recruitment

The OLWMC has filled its vacant Watershed Inspector position. Joseph Decker, currently a Research Technician and Professional Tutor at SUNY Cobleskill, will start his employment with the OLWMC in early November 2023. Mr. Decker's background includes environmental management and technology.

Watershed Rules and Regulations

General Update:

DOH started the State Administration Procedure Act process and began to prepare the documents listed below. DOH will continue the regulation development efforts.

Tentative Schedule:

Regulation Development ** July 2023 to July 2024

Publication in NYS Register- Notice of

Rulemaking

August 2024

End of 60-day public comment period October 2024

DOH submits response to comments December 2024

DOH publishes revised rulemaking March 2025

Notice of adoption July 2025

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects Updates

- OLWMC staff offered a Nine Element Plan implementation project update to the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) at their public forum on October 4, 2023.
- Published feature articles with the Citizen newspaper continue to spotlight watershed protection efforts and residents and programs making strides in watershed protection. The most recent article submission will feature progress made by the 9E Coordination Committee towards implementation of the Owasco Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan for Phosphorus Reduction.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Update:

The OLWMC's 9E Coordination Committee is advancing watershed inventorying and monitoring initiatives to drive implementation projects in accordance with the recommendations of the Owasco Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan for Phosphorus Reduction (9EP). The following grant proposals were submitted in response to NYS grant program solicitations earlier this summer, and target the highest phosphorus contributing landscape/acre within the Owasco Lake Watershed, as documented in the 9EP.

1. Grant proposals were submitted in response to NYS grant program solicitations earlier this summer:

- a. 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.
- b. The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District 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.
- c. 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.

2. The Committee now plans to focus 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 next Committee meeting is scheduled for October 26, 2023.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

The Cayuga County Planning Department and water quality monitoring project partners are adhering to a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) that reflects monitoring logistics for the 2023 field season.

- OWLA is underway with its 2023 watershed tributaries monitoring program designed to include both baseline monitoring and storm event-based sampling. Sampling locations aligned with those used for developing the 9EP's Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT), and project data will be used for calibrating that model.

- Owasco Lake water quality monitoring (buoy) data is available online here:

<https://www.olwmc.org/news>

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

Town of Owasco Project Update:

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 will finalize and deliver the plan to NYS agencies for their review and approval.

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.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Reporting

Project Update:

- According to the NYHABs website, as of October 13, 2023, there were 36 reported and archived HABs more than two weeks old, a ten-fold increase from last month, and 10 current HABs reported within the last two weeks, an ~70% decrease from last month. Therefore, consistent with the seasonality of the production of cyanobacteria, the rate of observed HABs in Owasco Lake for 2023 is decreasing.

Land Holdings

Project Update:

- 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:

- o 100-acre parcel in Groton, mixed farmland

- o 72-acre parcel in Venice, dense wetland

TNC will present these acquisitions to the OLWMC Board once they are complete.

- 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.

Programs, Funding, and Related Opportunities

SOGL Project Review:

A National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) funding proposal was developed in partnership with Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) and EA Consulting, 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 streambank restoration project sites between Booth Hill Road and Cat Path Road in the Town of Locke. Landowners who reside along the targeted Owasco Inlet reaches have expressed concern about severe streambank erosion in those areas.

- o Total Amount Requested: \$299,640.00

- o Matching Contributions Proposed: \$100,360.00

SOGL Project Update:

- 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 targeting stream restoration projects along the Owasco Inlet.

Members of the project team convened October 10, 2023 to acknowledge the award and review the proposed project. Once the project team gains engagement from the NFWF liaison and understands next steps and contracting, it will convene for a project kickoff meeting.

Tributary Assessment and Identification Project (TAIP)

Project Update:

The OLWMC is underway with expanding the Tributary Adoption and Identification Project (TAIP) through the installation of new tributary signage near the south end of Owasco Lake. The purpose of this collaborative project is to increase public awareness of watershed watercourses and provide easily accessible contact information for members of the public to engage with the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division to communicate watershed concerns. TAIP signage was designed and produced, and project materials were purchased and delivered. The Cayuga County Highway Department has all of the project materials in-hand and will proceed with installing the signage according to their schedule.

NYS Finger Lakes Watersheds Grant Program -Round 1

Project Review:

The OLWMC is the lead applicant for the submission of a grant proposal targeting NYS funding for watershed tributary monitoring in 2024 that would accommodate the presentation of collected data in a public facing database. The collaborative proposal seeks to fund continued monitoring

of 9EP Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) sites, which would support continued model calibration, and additional sites that align with upstream stream restoration planning proposals underway by the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District. The OLWMC's collaborative NYS Finger Lakes Watershed Grant Proposal was successfully submitted, meeting the July 21, 2023 program deadline.

Fillmore Nature Preserve Access and Education

Project Update:

- \$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.
- Prior to the hauling of gravel and creation of the proposed public access lot, project partners are first planning construction of an onsite access from the road and the preparation of the ground surface.
- Designing of the proposed education kiosk signage is planned for the winter of 2024 in preparation for the construction of the kiosk in the spring-summer of that year.

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.

- G. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Ed Wagner, Owasco, reported that in collaboration with Auburn Mayor Quill a letter has been sent to NYS Governor Hochul requesting a meeting to discuss their concerns regarding the lack of movement of the part of the DOH on the Updated Watershed Rules and Regulations for the Owasco Watershed.
- H. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report: September 2023 Financials – Joan Jayne reported that as of September 30, 2023 the Total Current assets were \$ 373,142.27 and Total Liabilities and Equity were \$441,896.22. Motion to approve made by Aileen McNabb-Coleman seconded by Terry Baxter. Motion was unanimously carried.
 - i. The proposed 2024 budget is being prepared and discussed and will be presented in November Directors meeting.
- I. Lake Level Report – John West – current lake elevation is 712.41 ft. Next week will begin a gradual drawdown on lake level for winter levels.
- J. Introduction to the NYSDEC Region 7 Director – Dereth Glance was introduced and shared interests and how we can collaborate. For this very informative presentation on NYS DEC programs and please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- K. In-Lake Water Quality Monitoring – Lisa Cleckner, Director Finger Lakes Institute. Bouy is still in the water and readings are being validated. It will be removed on 11/01/2023. The Institute is involved in recruitment of a Cayuga Lake Watershed Manager and expects to have this person on staff soon, Save the date-January 31, 2024-Finger Lakes research workshop.
- L. The Nature Conservancy Update – Olivia Green update-will close on 72-acre property in Town of Venice soon that includes wetlands and hopes to transfer the eventual transfer to the management council.
- M. NYSDEC Hub Update -Lou McCaffery-updates: Finger Lakes grants program routed through DEC anticipates approved before Christmas, \$3 million invasive species program due by 11/1/23, NYS water resources institute grant program for research and outreach about \$50,000. Developing water quality report using CSLAP data and data DEC has collected due out in new year.
- N. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Ann Robson-working on strategic planning-hoping to hire technical support individual, working to raise public awareness of concern about water quality, membership is increasing, continuing education on water quality in school, working with native gardens to work with water quality and water gardens, working on signage in watershed, continuing with media education, Scientific symposium 3/9/2024-Our Lake Our Legacy, Hemlock wooly adelgid program continues, second

year with beetle release for containment of wooly adelgid, Rain garden work continues in various locations.

- O. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update – Frank Clarke 11/16/23 community composting event with several collaborating community agencies. To register go to cooperative extension website \$10. The goal is to teach the science of composting and go home with wire composter you can build.
- P. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Abigail Hai: for Ms. Hai’s report please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- Q. Communications: Dr. Effler acknowledges and thanks Mayor Quill for his attendance.
- R. Issues of Concern. None heard.
- S. Next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 10 AM in Auburn City Hall Auditorium.
- T. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Aileen McNabb-Coleman seconded by Joan Jayne. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:19 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Vivian Cunningham

