



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

November 21, 2023, 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** – 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: Welcome Joseph Decker, our new watershed inspector.
Village of Moravia has a new supervisor, Ed Shea, who will attend the December meeting.

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: Owasco -Ed Wagner, City of Auburn-Ginny Kent, Niles-Joan Jayne, Moravia-Terry Baxter, Scipio-Melinda Pittman (online). Ex Officio Attendees: John West, Ann Robson, Frank Clarke, Abigail Hai, Lisa Cleckner, Michelle Wunderlich, Ani Fish, Janice Degni
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve by Ginny Kent, seconded by Ed Wagner. Motion carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from the October 17, 2023, Board Meeting. Motion to approve Joan Jayne seconded by Ed Wagner. Motion unanimously approved.
- D. Public to be Heard: None heard.
- E. Director’s Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting)

Watershed Rules and Regulations

Project Update:

The following details were provided within NYSDOH’s project update report (11.21.23 Monthly Owasco WRR Update for OLWMC) delivered to the OLWMC Board of Directors, Ex Officio Partners, and engaged members of the public prior to the October 17, 2023 OLWMC public board meeting:

General Update:

DOH continued to prepare the necessary documents (below) for the rulemaking process.

Tentative Schedule:

<i>Regulation Development **</i>	<i>July 2023 to July 2024</i>
<i>Publication in NYS Register- Notice of Rulemaking</i>	<i>August 2024</i>
<i>End of 60-day public comment period</i>	<i>October 2024</i>
<i>DOH submits response to comments</i>	<i>December 2024</i>
<i>DOH publishes revised rulemaking</i>	<i>March 2025</i>
<i>Notice of adoption</i>	<i>July 2025</i>

*****This includes putting the regulations into express terms and developing supporting documentation in accordance with State Administration Procedure Act (SAPA):***

- ***Concept paper (DOH only)***
- ***Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS)***
- ***Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (RFA) or statement in lieu of RFA***
- ***Rural Area Flexibility Analysis (RAFA) or Statement in lieu of RAFA***
- ***Job Impact Statement (JIS) or Statement in lieu of JIS***
- ***Executive Order 17 Assessment***
- ***Executive Review Documentation (Proposed Rule Transmittal)***
- ***State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)***

NYS Tributary Legislation Project Review

Project Review:

The bill now includes \$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. Bill passed both houses. The Governor will sign or veto the bill.

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects Updates

- OLWMC staff offered a Nine Element Plan implementation project update to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization at their public forum on October 25, 2023.
- Published feature articles with the Citizen newspaper continue to spotlight watershed protection efforts, including residents and programs making strides in watershed protection. The November, 2023 OLWMC staff article submission features pre-winter construction site, and agricultural field, soil stabilization recommendations.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Update:

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 next Committee meeting, scheduled for November 30, 2023, will focus on discussions involving the development of and Owasco Lake watershed agricultural program.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Project Update:

- OWLA has completed the 2023 Owasco Lake tributaries monitoring program. 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.
- The Cayuga County Planning Department drafted Data Usability and Final Reports for the 2023 project.
- Owasco Lake *in situ* water quality monitoring (buoy) data is available online here: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

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 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 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 November 15, 2023, there were 49 reported and archived HABs more than two weeks old, an ~27% increase from last month, and zero current HABs reported within the previous two weeks. Therefore, consistent with the seasonality of the production of cyanobacteria, HAB season has come to a close.

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Review:

- The Town of Owasco is providing trail maintenance support at the Fillmore Nature Preserve.
- An OLWMC grant proposal was developed, submitted, and funded to create a public access lot and educational kiosk at the nature preserve.

Other Potential Acquisitions:

○ 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:

- 100-acre parcel in Groton, mixed farmland
- 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.

- Total Amount Requested: \$299,640.00
- 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 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. The Cayuga County Highway Department spearheaded the installation of the tributary identification signage during the month of November, 2023. Signage is now

complete.

NYS Finger Lakes Watersheds Grant Program -Round 1

Project Review:

The OLWMC acted as 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 sought 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.

Project Update:

According to NYSDEC award announcements, the OLWMC was not funded through the NYS Finger Lakes Watersheds Grant Program, in response to its request for funding 2024-2025 watershed tributary monitoring.

Fillmore Nature Preserve Access and Education Project Review:

- \$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.

Project Update:

- Prior to the hauling of gravel and creation of the proposed public access lot, the Town of Owasco is first planning construction of an onsite access from the road and the preparation of the ground surface.
- The design 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.

- F. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Watershed staff attended the Climate Smart Community workshop and are happy to share information with other towns. In a discussion of flood prone towns Terry Baxter asked if something could be done to slow down the water prior to entering Owasco Flats. This seems to be an area of flooding for the Village of Moravia.
- G. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
 - i. October 2023 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne presented financials as of October 31, 2023, total checking \$ 363,816.06, current assets \$365,516.06; total liabilities and equity \$ 433,603.82. Motion to approve made by Terry Baxter and seconded by Ed Wagner. Motion was unanimously approved.

- ii. 2024 Budget Approval – Adam Effler discussed the proposed budget for fiscal year 2024 which has been developed and approved by the OLWMC members. Motion to approve made by Ed Wagner motion. Unanimous vote. Motion carried.
- H. Lake Level Report – John West unavailable, but reports are moving to an Owasco Lake elevation of approximately 710 ft during December and throughout the winter.
- I. In-Lake Water Quality Monitoring – Lisa Cleckner, Director Finger Lakes Institute: Buoy removed from lake in November and the field work concluded for the season. We are now working on data analysis. Plan to report on analysis in February.
- J. The Nature Conservancy Update – Olivia Green, unavailable however work continues on valuable land acquisition.
- K. NYSDEC Hub Update – Tony Prestigiacoamo unavailable, Update recently hired Lexi Davis as research scientist for the Hub. Other updates and funding opportunities are available, see: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- L. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Ann Robson, newsletter recently completed, Bob Bower symposium continuing to evolve for March 2024. Education in schools is ongoing. OWLA is receiving a nice donation from Rotary for the Woolly Adelgid program.
- M. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update –Frank Clarke-Last week’s composting event at Wells College was well attended. Planning upcoming shop meetings for local farms during the winter months.
- N. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Abigail Hai presented the November watershed report to view this report please see: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
Abby introduced Joe Decker to the Directors and Joe and shared his background in soil science and passion for the outdoors and The Finger Lakes.
Abigail shared she is updating the watershed social media website.
- O. Communications: Tony Prestigiacoamo will present on CSLAP program for December meeting,
- P. Issues of Concern: None heard.
- Q. Next meeting will be Tuesday, December 19, 2023.
- R. Motion to adjourn made by Terry Baxter seconded by Ed Wagner. Motion was unanimously approved. meeting adjourned at 10:46.

Respectfully submitted,
Vivian Cunningham

