



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

June 16, 2026, 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 – TBD, **Lansing** – Joseph Wetmore
Executive Director- Adam Effler

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler: Meeting called to order at 10:00 AM. Adam noted Cornell Cooperative Extension reports have been temporarily removed from agenda due to lack of personnel in the agency.

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: Owasco- Ed Wagner, City of Auburn-Ginny Kent, Town of Moravia-Terry Palmer, Lansing-Joseph Wetmore, Summerhill-Charlie Ripley. Ex-Officio: John West, Gabriel Yerdon, Jesse Lloyd, Abby Hai, Michele Wunderlich
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda made by Terry Palmer. Motion seconded by Ginny Kent. Vote unanimously approved motion.
- C. Approval of Minutes from May 19, 2026, Board Meeting as electronically distributed: Motion to approve the minutes made by Ginny Kent. Motion seconded by Terry Palmer Vote unanimously approved motion
- D. Public to be Heard: None heard.
- E. Director's Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting) An audio/visual of Dr. Effler's presentation may be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>.

Watershed Rules and Regulations

No new updates

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects

Project Update:

The May 29, 2026, OLWMC staff feature article in the Citizen newspaper featured cover crops and the use of chemical herbicides in managing cover crops in Upstate NY.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Update:

The Owasco 9E (Plan) Coordination Committee is focused on developing stream corridor projects based on recommendations from a recent assessment project for Sucker and Veness Brooks. The next committee meeting is planned for June 24, 2026.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Projects Update:

The biweekly Owasco Lake tributary monitoring program was last conducted on June 8, 2026, with collaboration between Cayuga County Planning, OWLA, OLWMC, and SUNY ESF. The next biweekly tributary monitoring run is scheduled for June 22, 2026.

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

Project Update:

Drinking Water Source Protection Plan consultants for the City of Auburn and Town of Owasco are awaiting NYS funding to support drinking water purveyors' protection initiatives based on the recommendations of their respective clean water plans. The 9E Coordination Committee is considering integrating their involvement with its efforts, and several projects have been suggested by DWSP2 consultants.

Municipal Codes, Ordinances, and Projects

Project Update:

DWSP2 consultants have recommended advancing water purveyor's source water protection efforts with the development of a model ordinance for adoption by municipalities.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Programming:

Project Review:

The following New York Harmful Algal Bloom System (NYHABS) link is available to support NYS HABs monitoring efforts, and archived data is also available: on.ny.gov/nyhabs

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve: Have been in touch with stewards and they are aware of the trail needs.

Venice Preserve: No new updates

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.

Partner Land Acquisitions/Targets: No new updates

Grant Opportunities, Projects, Programs, and Funding

Grants and Programs Review:

New York State announced more than \$25.5 million in grants to support 29 water quality and climate resiliency projects in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC's) Region 7. The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded the following:

\$448,000 through WQIP to work with local municipal partners to complete hydroseeding to stabilize road ditches. The program will reduce erosion and improve water quality throughout Cayuga County.

\$285,200 through WQIP to purchase live edge plow blades, weather sensors, and truck-mounted brine spreaders to reduce excess road salt application county-wide, protecting the water quality of drinking water supplies including Owasco Lake.

NYS Round 30 Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program Project grants were awarded. Associated projects are intended to support the New York State Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program by funding the implementation of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect natural resources while maintaining the economic viability of New York State's diverse agricultural community. \$720,898 was awarded to the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with 11 farms in the Cayuga Lake Watershed (EPF). This project will:

Plant 6,385 acres of cover crops and implement 25 acres of wood mulching over 5 years to increase soil water retention through an increase of organic matter and carbon supply and slow the potential for soil erosion and surface runoff into waterways.

Prevent an estimated 28,000 tons of soil from entering Owasco Lake, Cayuga Lake, and Seneca River Watersheds.

\$812,520 was awarded to the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with two farms in the Owasco Lake Watershed (EPF). This project will:

Capture and contain nutrient-rich silage leachate flows from bunk silos

Implement practices to effectively manage silage leachate and reduce nutrient loading

Reuse collected silage leachate for irrigation on pasture fields and establish riparian forest buffers

OLWMC staff are participating on the Forest Expansion Network Steering Committee, supporting TNC's efforts towards advancing a state-wide reforestation initiative to plant 25 million trees by 2033. The Forest Expansion Network Steering Committee envisions a strategic and effective forest establishment movement in New York state that helps to maximize social and environmental benefits by meeting a range of goals. To help build this movement, the committee will further envision a well-coordinated, adequately supported, and inclusive alliance of partners and leaders that work together to address regional and statewide forest establishment needs at every stage, from funding identification to maintenance. The committee believes that collaboration and coordination will accelerate forest establishment in NYS, elevate a collective voice, and enable more people, communities, and organizations to benefit from nature-based solutions. 2026 goals include developing a broad and inclusive suite of forest establishment leaders to share views and design collaboration-based strategies in NYS that:

Strengthen practitioner capacities to implement forest establishment projects, programs, and initiatives

Identify and address barriers to accelerating forest establishment, in all phases, from funding identification to sourcing trees, to ongoing maintenance and monitoring, to landowner outreach.

Outline a path for connecting on-the-ground efforts to statewide policies and plans.

The OLWMC has made required 2026 updates to maintain pre-qualification status within the NYS Statewide Financial System vendor portal in preparedness for future grant proposal(s) submissions.

Grants and Programs Update (NYSDEC solicitation in their words):

[2026 Consolidated Funding Application is Open](#)

Governor Kathy Hochul has [announced that the Consolidated Funding Application \(CFA\)](#) announced that the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) is open and will remain open until 4:00 p.m. on Friday, July 31, 2026.

*DEC's Division of Water has two grant programs available in the CFA:
Water Quality Improvement Projects (WQIP): WQIP funds implementation projects to improve water quality or habitat, promote flood risk reduction, restoration, and enhanced flood and climate resiliency, or protect a drinking water source. Eligible project types: wastewater treatment improvement;*

- o non-agricultural nonpoint source abatement and control;*
- o vacuum trucks in municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) areas;*
- o land acquisition for source water protection;*
- o salt storage and road salt reduction;*
- o dam safety repair/rehabilitation and dam removal;*
- o aquatic connectivity;*
- o marine habitat restoration;*
- o fish and wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement; and*
- o landfill leachate treatment.*

For full program details and requirements, including maximum award amounts, required match, and project type descriptions, view [DEC's WQIP webpage](#).

- Non-Agriculture Nonpoint Source and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Planning Grant (NPG): NPG funds production of planning reports for nonpoint source water quality improvement projects, State permit-required stormwater system mapping, and stormwater management program planning in urban areas.*

For full program details and requirements, including maximum award amounts, required match, and eligible grant categories, view [DEC's NPG webpage](#).

NFWF SOGL Project Update:

- Project partners for the Owasco Inlet streambank stabilization project are finalized final permitting requirements with NYSDEC and US Army Corps of Engineers. The project is listed under the NYSDEC webpage here:
<https://dec.ny.gov/news/environmental-notice-bulletin/2026-05-27/completed-application/town-of-locke-owasco-lake-watershed-critical-streams-restoration-project>
- Under permit requirements, the OLWMC published the project in the local newspaper for public response. No responses thus far.

Newly Proposed Projects Update:

OLWMC staff will be:

1. Hosting a meeting among local partners to discuss a proposed streambank stabilization project in the Town of Owasco, along Gaywiler Road.
2. Visiting a watershed resident to review the possible use of shrub willow, sourced from the OLWMC's willow nursery, to plant a riparian buffer on their property located adjacent to Ensenore Creek.
3. Seeking funding to replace the OLWMC Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (aka, drone), which is used for monitoring watershed conditions and projects.

Relevant NYS Programming Review:

Proposed Ambient Water Quality Guidance Values for Phosphorus Review:

The OLWMC was a signatory on a joint response to the public comment period for the NYSDEC's proposed ambient water quality guidance values for phosphorus. The response requested that NYS take a more aggressive approach towards reducing guidance values for NYS lakes by creating a framework for developing phosphorus standards.

NYS Relevant Bills Review:

Harmful algal bloom monitoring and prevention act (S8356/A8867): Reintroduced under the 2025 legislative session, under new print, NYS Senate bill S1833 Enacts the ‘Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring and Prevention Act.’ On June 10, 2025 Senate Bill S1833, which enacts the "harmful algal bloom monitoring and prevention act," was passed by the New York State Senate, delivered to the NYS Assembly, and referred to the Environmental Conservation Committee. A hearing was held on May 21, 2025, Chaired by Peter Harckham Chair Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, Co-sponsor Senator Rachel May.

Drinking Water Protection Act (A9069): Enacts the drinking water protection act, relating to the adoption and enforcement of watershed rules and regulations for the purpose of protecting water quality. The purpose of the bill is to strengthen protections for public drinking water supplies by modernizing the framework for watershed rules and regulations, ensuring timely updates, and equipping the NYS Department of Health and water suppliers with clearer tools for prevention, enforcement, and accountability.

The Open Water Data Act (A5254/1211), was vetoed by the Governor on December 19th. The veto simply stated fiscal considerations. Given the environmental importance of this bill, which was passed with a unanimous bipartisan vote in both houses, Assemblymember Anna Kelles and Senator Rachel May, will be prioritizing re-passage of the bill in the 2026 session.

- Currently, NYS inter-agency data is scattered or inaccessible, which weakens the ability to make sound decisions that protect public health, environmental integrity, and economic resilience. This legislation directs key state agencies, including the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Department of Health, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Canal Corporation, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, and the Public Service Commission, to collaborate to align New York’s water data systems. The bill establishes shared standards, creates a single publicly accessible data platform, incorporates citizen science, coordinates with broader data efforts, and requires a needs assessment to identify critical data and funding gaps for effective long-term water management.

A revised version of the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (A.1749A/S.1464A) is underway, and lawmakers are working to get it passed before the end of session. This legislation develops a packaging reduction and recycling infrastructure program and shifts the financial burden of managing packaging waste from taxpayers to the producers of packaging, while reducing the amount of packaging and plastic waste produced in New York State by 30%.

Relevant Bill Update:

On June 4, 2026, the NY legislature passed the one-year data center moratorium in NY.

- F. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Ginny Kent asked if municipalities are aware of the willow nursery riparian buffer availability. Adam shared that CC Soil and Water Conservation District shares information regarding stream bank stabilization with municipalities.
- G. Treasurer’s Audit and Finance Report

- i. May 2026 Financials Approval – Ed Wagner reported the financials as of May 30, 2026, as Total current assets \$364,292.41; Total checking and savings \$360,142.16; Total Liabilities and Equity \$394,394.47. Motion to approve financial report made by Ed Wagner. Seconded by Terry Palmer. Vote unanimously approved motion.
 - ii. Adam shared that the Council has requested the municipalities to consider a 10% increase in their annual donation. A thank you to the Town of Moravia who responded by increasing their donation.
 - iii. Annual report is complete and has been posted on the website.
- H. Lake Level Report – John West- current lake elevation is 712.83 and he will be drawing down to summer levels in the next few days.
- I. NYSDEC Finger Lakes Watershed Program– Gabriel Yerdon-an audio of this report may be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>.
- J. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Phil Gioia-unavailable
- K. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Jesse Lloyd- an audio and visual of this report may be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>.
- L. Communications: Jesse and Adam will present the Council’s Annual Report to the City of Auburn 7/16/2026.
- M. Issues of Concern: None Heard.
- N. Schedule Next Meeting: The Directors agreed to suspend the July meeting, scheduling the next meeting for Tuesday, August 18, 2026.
- O. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Joseph Wetmore; seconded by Ginny Kent. Vote was unanimous, the meeting adjourned at 10:39 AM

Respectfully submitted,
Vivian Cunningham, Recording Secretary