



## Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

October 19, 2021, 10:00am – Director’s Summary

### Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

- Please visit NYHABS, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s (NYSDEC’s) online tracking and notification website, for mapping and information related to HABs conditions for Owasco Lake. The NYSDEC encourages those recreating on NYS lakes to ‘Know it, Avoid it, Report it.’
  - The OLWMC’s September recognition article in the Citizen, led by Ms. Ally Berry, featured information about HABs drivers, related protective efforts, and reporting. If there are any questions about reporting, please reach out to Ally Berry.
- OLWMC staff are finalizing their move to a unified commercial office space located at 6073 West Lake Road (Fleming), Auburn, NY 13021. The City of Auburn and Town of Owasco have generously provided the use of some of their office furniture and equipment at the new location.
  - According to the original Three Party Agreement between the City of Auburn, Town of Owasco, and Cayuga County pertaining to the development of the OLWMC, Cayuga County committed to providing office space to program staff. Accordingly, a letter prepared September 29, 2021 requests that Cayuga County consider the provision of OLWMC staff office space as part of their 2022 budget year. The letter will be shared with the Cayuga County Planning Oversight Committee in October.
- Watershed Inspector, Dillon Shults, has taken a new job with the Tompkins County Health Department and is no longer working for the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division of the OLWMC. We are in the process of recruiting a new Watershed Inspector. Please direct candidate recommendations to, or request a position job description from, OLWMC Executive Director, Adam Effler.

### Projects, Planning, and Programming

- The OLWMC is finalizing plans for a collaborative rain garden installation project at Emerson Park to be held October 23, 2021 at 9AM. The planting event is poised to attract community involvement and volunteerism for beautifying Emerson Park and will demonstrate a recommended practice for capturing runoff and settling sediments. All are welcome.
- This fall, OLWMC staff will assist the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District with sediment sock installations along exposed ditches in Tompkins County.

Sediment socks are considered temporary measures for reducing erosion and stabilizing sediments.

- On September 27, 2021 a public meeting was held to provide an update on the process to incorporate the EPA Nine Key Elements into the Owasco Lake Watershed Management and Waterfront Revitalization Plan. The public was able to review and comment on the Watershed Management Recommendations.
  - The OLWMC is on the watershed advisory committee for the Nine Element Watershed Plan, and is positioned to play a lead role for facilitating recommended projects according to an approved plan.
- The OLWMC offers partnership and support for the City of Auburn's NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2). The working group is identifying objectives and considering calculating 9 Element Watershed Plan project cost estimates to prepare for associated grant proposals.
- OLWMC staff and project partners finalized project-specific signage that was installed, with the assistance of the Scipio Highway Department, along a roadside ditch on Hicks Road, Scipio on the morning of October 12, 2021. The sign spotlights the installation of concrete sediment traps installed by the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) and funded by NYS and the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA). Sediment traps are used to minimize erosion and nutrient transport, ultimately improving Owasco Lake water quality.
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) have announced the acquisition of 161 acres in the town of Sempronius in the Owasco Lake watershed. The acquisition of the property will help protect public water supplies and safeguard riparian buffers and wetlands. TNC continues to evaluate additional properties as candidates for preservation through acquisition, with the intent of transferring properties to the OLMWC as the long-term owner and steward.

### Grants and Programs

- The OLWMC partnered with Wegmans Food Stores on a LED Flares Promotional program underway throughout the Finger Lakes Region. A portion of the sales of LED flares at Wegmans stores through the duration of the project period was donated to the identified watershed steward organization with jurisdiction. Wegmans decided to include an additional donation of \$1000 to each organization to support efforts for Finger Lakes watershed protection. Thus, Wegmans will be donating \$1095 to the OLWMC this fall.
- In partnership, the CCSWCD is assisting a watershed farmer in finalizing their application for the installation of a conservation practice according to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Conservation Kick Program. OLWMC staff have helped guide progress for this project, and the City of Auburn has invested the required cost share for the grant award. Project funding will meet the implementation costs of installing a water and sediment control basin (WASCOB) on a selected watershed producer's property.
- The OLWMC will resubmit a project proposal through the Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS's) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to drive federal funding towards our efforts to advance watershed farm planning for improved soil health and conservation. Representatives from the American Water Works Association (AWWA) will offer proposal preparation support again.

### Watershed Rules and Regulations Update Project

- New York State (NYS) has not provided any specific time line for the ad hoc agencies to convene and complete their review. The official response from the NYS Department of Health (DOH), prepared in response to repeated inquiries about process/timing, did indicate that the agencies would consider the content and recommendations from the ongoing 9E Watershed Plan and City of Auburn DWSP2, upon the completion of those planning exercises. In recent months, a variety of local and greater NYS resolutions and advocacy letters have been delivered to the DOH and other state officials.

### Buy-In

- 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, October 15, 2021**