



## Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council March 15, 2022

### Meeting of the Members

**Owasco** - Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County**- Aileen McNabb -Coleman, **City of Auburn** – Ginny Kent

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler: Dr. Effler welcomed Courtney Alexander Deputy Town Supervisor of Skaneateles who would like to observe our proceedings.

- A. Members- Roll call: **Owasco**-Ed Wagner, **City of Auburn**-Ginny Kent
- B. Approval of Role Appointments: Ed Wagner Chair of Council, Aileen Mc Nabb-Coleman, Vice Chair of Council; Ginny Kent Secretary of Council. Motion to approve made by Ed Wagner. Vote was unanimously approved. Motion carried.
- C. Approval of Resolution 01-22. The Motion is to increase Directorship of the OLWMC with the inclusion of Town of Dryden on the Board of Directors. Motion to approve Resolution 01-22 made by Terry Baxter seconded by Gary Mulvaney. Vote was unanimously approved. Motion carried. Dr. Effler introduced Dr. Anne Clarke of the Town of Dryden who will represent Dryden. Dr. Clarke has a background in Biology/Ecology.

### 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** - Don Oltz,  
**Moravia** – Terry Baxter, **Village of Moravia** – Gary Mulvaney, **Village of Groton** – Nancy Niswender,  
**Summerhill** – Charlie Ripley, **Sennett** – Tom Blair  
**Executive Director**- Adam Effler

**Ex Officio Members attending:** Dr John Halfman, Tony Prestigiacomo, Steve Lynch, Dana Hall, Michele Wunderlich, Camille Bonvet-Boiseclair, Seth Jensen, Ally Berry, John West, Jillian Aluisio, Ron Kluck,

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler:

- A. Board of Directors- Roll call: **Owasco**- Ed Wagner, - **City of Auburn**-Ginny Kent, **Fleming**-Don Oltz, **Moravia**-Terry Baxter, **Village of Moravia**-Gary Mulvaney, **Dryden**-Anne Clarke (remote)
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve made by Terry Baxter seconded by Don Oltz vote was unanimously approved.
- C. Approval of Minutes from the January 18, 2022, meeting made by Terry Baxter seconded Gary Mulvaney. Vote was unanimously approved.
- D. Approval of Minutes from the February 15, 2022, meeting made by Don Oltz and seconded by Terry Baxter. Vote was unanimously approved.

- E. Public to be Heard: Dr Clarke, new member of Board of Directors from Dryden, introduced herself.
- F. Director's Summary- Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting)  
Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD) Updates

- The OLWIPD of the OLWMC remains active in the field as the spring season draws near and the potential for stormwater runoff increases.

#### Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach

- OLWIPD staff completed and updated the following educational documents for
- The OLWMC's staff March recognition article with the Citizen newspaper spotlighted the conservation agriculture, the involvement of local farmers in the advancement of conservation practices, and Spruce Haven Farm for their willingness to trial new technologies for conserving phosphorus on their farm.
- Staff are preparing the OLWIPD/OLWMC combined 2021 annual report.

#### **Project Updates**

1. The LFL Coalition of the Finger Lakes is underway with planning and preparation for its spring 2022 awareness webinar series on water quality protection and climate smart programming. Information about the 2022 LFL webinar series will be forthcoming. This year, the group has facilitated onboarding Conesus and Keuka Lake watershed organizations.
2. OLWMC is spearheading coordinating commemorative resolutions among the NYS Assembly and Senate to promote a combined legislative resolution for celebrating Lake Friendly Living Awareness in the Finger Lakes Region. Jordan Lesser, Assemblymember Anna Kelles' Legislative Counsel, has prepared a commemorating resolution for approval among the NYS Assembly. Jessie Brill, Community Affairs Coordinator for Senator Mannion's Office, will be working with the Senator to introduce resolution among the NYS Senate.

#### Hyfi Watercourse Level Sensors

1. With project support from OLWMC staff, OWLA's 2022 sediment and nutrient sampling program will align with sensor locations. A project is to provide invaluable constituent loading information for continued calibration of the SWAT model using level (and thereby estimated discharge) information, as well as suspended solids and nutrient concentration data.
2. Many of the sensor's casements have cracked during winter freezes, and Hyfi has shipped replacement sensors that have been engineered to be resistant to cracking. OLWIPD staff will be installing those replacement sensors this spring.
3. OLWMC acted as a reference for Hyfi's eligibility for the Verizon Climate Prize. Hyfi won the Prize at the 'GreenBiz' conference in Arizona.

#### Watershed Partner Collaboration- Projects Updates

- The OLWMC awaits guidance and project funding opportunities from NYS based on the completion and approval of Cayuga County's Nine Element (9E) Watershed Plan for Owasco Lake. CC Planning is nearing the end of the 9E Watershed Plan process. There will be a third public meeting for the public to review project updates.
- The OLWMC offers partnership and support for the City of Auburn's NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2). The working group has identified high risk areas and is developing recommendations. An update on the project was given to the Cayuga County Board of Health on March 8, 2022. The next group meeting for this planning project is

scheduled for March 24, 2022.

- The Steering Committee for the updated community consensus watershed rules and regulations awaits a meeting schedule from the NYSDOH to discuss next steps.
- The OLWMC continues to work towards a transfer of ownership of a ~160-acre priority parcel in Sempronius from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to the OLWMC that will advance the council's position as a land conservation steward within the watershed. We await liability insurance details and premium estimates from our insurance provider. TNC will offer upfront land stewardship dollars to help the OLWMC get started with funding (e.g., insurances) needs to own and maintain land preserves. The OLWMC will develop a land stewardship/maintenance plan for land holdings to ensure project responsibilities are met.
- OLWMC staff are coordinating with the State University of New York Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) for a 2022 spring collaborative willow planting project at the OLWMC's nursery in the Town of Owasco with the intent that the nursery will act as a long-term source of willow canes for the installation of future riparian buffers within the watershed. This project may also host an opportunity for a student undergraduate internship and/or capstone project in 2023.
- On March 9, 2022, an OLWMC status update was provided in the form of a presentation to, and discussion with, the Emerson Foundation. In recent years, the Emerson Foundation has been a strong partner with the OLWMC and has helped fund several important projects.
- Keynote Presenters for Next Month's April OLWMC public board meeting will be Director Doug Kierst and Manager Jon Negley, of the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Tompkins County SWCD, respectively. They will offer a summary of 2021 conservation implementation within the Owasco Lake watershed as well as outlooks for 2022 and beyond.
- On March 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM, the CCSWCD will host an 'Our Owasco' Soil Health Seminar to engage local farmers on recommended soil health practices.
- The OWLA-coordinated, and OLWMC-sponsored, annual Bob Brower Scientific Symposium will be held remotely via Zoom Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> 2022. The symposium will spotlight the following presenters and topics:
  1. John Halfman, PhD – Status of Owasco Lake
  2. Dan Kelting, PhD – Salinization of Adirondack Waters by Road Salt: A Statewide Issue
  3. Toneya McIntosh and Dr. John Pickering – Our Owasco: Using Behavioral Science to Protect Owasco Lake
  4. Seth Jensen – Lake Water Level Management – Owasco Lake
  5. Carri Marschner – Hemlock Management in the Owasco Lake Watershed: Short- and Long-Term Solutions

### Grants Projects and Programs

- GLRI Conservation Kick Project

Project Update: Project partners finalized contract details. Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District Engineer and Auburn Director of Municipal Utilities are reviewing the final WASCOB design for approval.

- Partnership with Crystal Creek Organics

Project Review: On February 4<sup>th</sup>, the OLWMC offered its endorsement of a small grant proposal composed by Crystal Creek Organics to continue testing efficiencies, nutrient removals, and byproducts from its manure phosphorus removal technology. Crystal Creek Organics' operation, positioned at Spruce Haven Farms within the Owasco Lake watershed, has processed nearly 500,000 gallons of manure over the last several years.

- NRCS RCPP

Project Review: The OLWMC will plan to submit a revised project proposal through the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program (NRCS RCPP). We are retooling last year's NRCS RCPP proposal, according to review comments, to request federal funding intended to help build upon the CCSWCDs' exemplary work towards conservation farm planning and BMP implementation within the Owasco Lake watershed. The proposed project would help build local capacity for certified farm planning within the watershed, a prospect intended to increase efficiencies for local agriculture to benefit both farmers and watershed conservation.

- DEC Buffer in a Bag Program Update

The Buffer in a Bag program provides organizations and private landowners with free tree and shrub seedlings to help establish or improve a stream buffer on their property. The 2022 application period is open from February 10th until 3:00 p.m. on April 11th. For more information and to apply, visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/77710.html#Bag>

### 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; we continue to encourage the Board of Directors to reach out to representatives from these towns to elicit municipality interest. Over the course of the last two months, all remaining municipalities were prompted with a request call, and directorship request letters, template resolutions, presentations, and relevant maps were subsequently delivered.

Project Update: The Town of Genoa tabled the topic discussion at their February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. At that meeting they resolved to offer an annual financial commitment to our efforts and will revisit a resolution offer directorship in the future. We remain hopeful that the Town of Skaneateles will resolve among their board to join us as a director, and we welcome their commitment to attendance at monthly OLWMC board meetings.

### HABs

The NYHABS link will be unavailable until the 2022 monitoring season begins in May 2022. We look forward to an update on HABs report training by the NYSDEC to ensure partners and volunteers properly identify and report HABs occurrences in 2022.

- G. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Terry Baxter suggested that fishing access not be impeded with the introduction of willow riparian buffers. Please inform inspectors of construction site activities so stabilization can be assured.
- H. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
  - i. February 2022 Financials Approval – Ed reported that as of February 28, 2022, the Cash on hand was \$292,365.99 Total Assets were \$ 351,670.39 \$351,670.39. Motion to approve the financial report made by Terry Baxter vote was unanimously approved.
  - ii. Adam discussed our NRCS RCPP proposal to request federal funding. Our proposal will be greatly enhanced by committing \$5000/year of OLWMC monies for 5 years during grant funding to the project. Terry Baxter moved to commit \$5000/year x 5 years to NRCS RCPP project should we receive the grant. Don Oltz seconded the motion. Vote was carried unanimously.
- I. Lake Monitoring Report- John Halfman: preparing for the symposium on the weekend. Will begin monitoring in April.

- J. The Nature Conservancy Update - Olivia Green not available
- K. NYSDEC Hub Updates- Tony Prestigiaco: will begin April water sampling, prepping for draft of 9 Element Plan.
- L. Watershed Rules and Regulations Revisions Updates – Steve Lynch: Kathleen Cuddy has contacted appropriate people to be ready to review recommendations for the Updated WRR. We are currently expecting feedback in April.
- M. Nine Element Watershed Plan Updates– Michele Wunderlich. Currently reviewing the final draft of the 9 Element Plan and plans to release it to the public next month. A public meeting is planned after release.
- N. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Updates - Dana Hall is not available this month.
- O. Cornell Cooperative Extension Updates- Daniel Welch: The Cooperative Extension hired a statewide nutrient management/cover crop specialist. April 9, 2022 is spring electronic collection event and registration is open online.
- P. ‘Our Owasco’ Behavioral Change Project Update- Camille Bouvet-Boisclair (Evidn): Behavioral workshops are almost complete; this month’s meeting will be at Summerhill brewery.
- Q. Partners for Healthy Watersheds Updates – Greg Rejman: not available
- R. Emerson Park Sluiceway Cleanout and Retrofit Updates- Doug Kirst-a design was provided and they have gone ahead and put in the sluice.
- S. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report–Ally Berry
  - i. 4-5 inches precipitation over the past month .5-2 inches above normal
  - ii. Ally Berry’s report is available at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- T. Lake Level Report – John West: lake elevation 711.25. Plan for mid to late April 712 elevation based on conditions.
- U. Communications: Doug Kirst of CC Soil and Water, TC Soil and Water and Upper Susquehanna next month.
- V. Issues of Concern: None heard.
- W. The next meeting is April 19, 2022. Motion to Adjourn made by Don Oltz. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted.

Vivian Cunningham

#### 2022 OLWMC Goals

1. Increase participation of municipalities that have yet to join the Council.
  - a. Formal directorship request letters will be delivered to the remaining watershed municipalities and their responses (if any) will be documented. OLWMC staff will make a concerted effort to visit municipal offices to directly communicate organizational objectives and elicit interest and buy-in.
2. Community Outreach
  - a. Increase awareness of the Lake Friendly Living Pledge Program and boundaries of the watershed through signage
  - b. Mobilize an outreach campaign for eventual rollout of Updated Watershed Rules and Regulations
    - i. Plan distribution methods for supportive materials for guidance for watershed programs and

- lines of supportive funding
- c. Continue to advance engagement with watershed farmers' advisory group through the Our Owasco project
  - i. Plan meetings and educational events
  - d. Coordinate watershed science programming and education in schools
- 3. Continue to look for funding opportunities.
  - a. Advance funding support for project initiatives through collaboration for funding and partnership among agencies
  - b. Use adaptive strategies for project priorities list based on watershed planning and funding availability
  - c. Seek watershed support as a line item on the NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)
- 4. Provide new and relevant programmatic opportunities to watershed municipal leaders
  - a. Offer support and guidance to assist municipalities with advancing resource protection and climate smart initiatives
- 5. Work with the Towns' elected officials, highway superintendents, and county soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) to improve ditching practices
  - a. Support communication between highway departments and SWCDs
- 6. Support the completion and implementation of the NYS Nine Element (9E) Watershed Plan
  - a. Interpretation of 9E plan information to target watershed project implementation based on recommended projects/practices and prioritized 'hot spots'
  - b. Presentation of relevant information for managers, municipalities, and implementers to support priority projects
    - b. Utilize NYS approved (9E) Plan to advocate for external project funding through grants
- 7. Participate in the on-going NYSDEC harmful algal bloom monitoring and surveillance program, the purpose of which is to identify priority areas for health and safety and ultimately develop mitigation strategies for HABs
  - a. OLWMC/NYSDEC/Owasco Watershed Lake Association collaboration is essential
- 8. Develop Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD) program requirements according to the rollout of Updated Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations
  - a. Advance programmatic needs and SOPs for updated watershed rules and regulations, including for the proposed variance process
- 9. Support oversight, growth, and guidance for the OLWIPD
  - a. Foster outreach and guidance for stakeholders through the OLWIPD
- 10. Continue monitoring the lake to assess water quality
  - a. Ensure transferrable and accessible datasets between multiple groups, including scientists, planners, and managers
  - b. Work with the DEC Finger Lakes Hub and other partners to reduce watershed-sourced nutrient loading to Owasco Lake