Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council
September 15, 2026, 10:00-11:30 AM

Meeting of the Directors
**Owasco** – TBD, **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 called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. It was noted that only four of the required five Directors were present for a quorum. The meeting will be held for informational purposes and no official business will be conducted.

A. Board of Directors – Roll call: City of Auburn-Ginny Kent, Scipio-Nancy Hart, Fleming-Karen VanLiew, Town of Moravia-Terry Palmer. Ex officio attendees: John West (online), Garbiel Yerdon (online), Phil Gioia, Jesse Lloyd, Brad Ellis (Cayuga County Cooperative Extension). A quorum of voting Directors was not achieved.

B. Approval of the Agenda: No questions heard concerning agenda.

C. Approval of Minutes from the August 18, 2026 Board Meeting: No questions regarding minutes. Minutes not voted on due to lack of a quorum. Approval of August and September minutes will be voted on in October.

D. Public to be Heard: New resources educator, Brad Ellis, from Cayuga County Cooperative Extension introduced himself.

E. Director's Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting) to access an audio/visual of the Director's summary please go to the minutes at https://olwmc.org/news.

**Watershed Rules and Regulations**

Project Update:

An updated regulatory map concerning rules and regulations for the Owasco Lake watershed is complete. A version of the map is available on the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division website here: https://www.owascoinspection.org/watershed-maps.

The protected watercourse information is also available as a GIS layer through the Cayuga County Planning Department's Environmental Cartography Online (ECO) mapping application at:
https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a17b3d2deae448759ca018103668eb8b.

**Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects**

Project Updates:

- The August 21, 2026 OLWMC staff article in the Citizen newspaper, featured 'The effects of residential herbicide, pesticide use.' The upcoming feature article spotlights the updated watershed protected streams map.
- Partnering organizations are planning trails enhancement and reconstruction of a dismantled educational kiosk at a West Lake Road pull-off near the southwest end of Owasco Lake. Project funders are supportive of the project, and project partners plan to meet onsite in the near future to develop a scope of work.
- The Cayuga County Planning Department will be giving a 'Stormwater Smart' Workshop on October 10, 2026 from 10 AM to 11:30 AM in the Island Shelter on Deauville Island at Emerson Park, 6914 E Lake Rd, Auburn, NY 13021.

**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. A subgroup recently convened with a local farmer to discuss associated project recommendations for a targeted reach along their property. The next 9E committee meeting is planned for September 23, 2026.

**Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring**

Project Update:

- The biweekly Owasco Lake tributary monitoring program was conducted on August 24, 2026, with collaboration between Cayuga County Planning, OWLA, OLWMC, and SUNY ESF.
  - SUNY ESF students have been assisting partnering professors with the development of infographics to depict water quality trends for parameters measured under the tributary monitoring program.
- SUNY ESF will be getting underway with their Sampling for Healthy Aquatic Resources with Community Support (SHARCS) program that supports student training for analyzing water quality parameters and community engagement on water quality research.

**NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)**

No new updates

**Municipal Codes, Ordinances and Projects**

No new updates

**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**

Venice Preserve Update:

Venice Preserve contracted stewards are planning to build and install approximately 3–4 wood duck boxes in and around the pond area. They have observed several mating pairs of wood ducks that they believe may be resident birds, along with larger numbers of wood

ducks moving in and out of the property during migration.

**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.

Grant Projects, Programs, Funding and Opportunities

Grants and Programs Review:

- 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.

**NFWF SOGL Project Update**:

The Owasco Inlet streambank stabilization project is underway with implementation by the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District. The district is currently stabilizing one bank for the first construction site, Site 5B.

**OWLA Grant Update:**

The Owasco Watershed Lake Association funded the OLWMC's new Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (aka, drone), which is used for monitoring watershed conditions and other prospective projects.

**Proposed Projects Review:**

- The OLWMC provided a 2026 support letter for a proposal being submitted to NFWF Conservation Partners Program by Pollinator Partnership (P2), titled *"Expanding Soil Health*

*and Pollinator Conservation Technical Assistance in the Great Lakes Basin of New York State".*

o This proposal seeks to increase landowner and producer outreach, engagement, and implementation of Farm Bill programs to help accelerate adoption of conservation practices that promote soil health and support the habitat needs of pollinators and other wildlife in New Yorks's Great Lakes Basin. The proposal envisions that Pollinator Partnership (P2) will provide support to staff for workshops, talks, outreach events, or field days located within the Owasco Lake Watershed where producers could learn more about pollinators and soil health principles. The plan includes informational media about various pollinator-beneficial agricultural practices and potentially other resources to use at such events (e.g., handouts, pamphlets, presentations, etc.), and OLWMC staff would provide feedback in reviewing the resources to ensure they meet the needs of a diverse partner network. Generally, the aim is to provide staff time, resources, and expertise to assist with achieving education and outreach goals, which in turn advances engagement with producers

**Proposed Projects Update:**

The OLWMC wrote a letter of support for the proposed project submitted by Dr. Richard W. Smith at SUNY Brockport, "The role of P and N containing organic matter in fueling Microcystis blooms in the Finger Lakes." The project proposal is in response to the NYSDEC HABs Research Grant Program. The OLWMC would play an active role in conducting this project, having agreed to use the $5,000 budgeted for the OLWMC as a contractual service for 125 hours of salaried staff time to support this project. Furthermore, the OLWMC would provide an additional amount of staff hours (125 hours) at no additional cost to the project for a match in the amount of $5,000. Staff time would be used to coordinate and train volunteers to sample tributaries in 2027 and 2028. The OLWMC has previously trained volunteers to collect samples for NYS certified water quality analysis of nutrients and solids, as part of an annual Owasco Lake tributaries monitoring program. That program has included monitoring of Dutch Hollow Brook, which will be a target of further investigation under this HABs research project. Additionally, OLWMC staff and volunteers would play a critical role in monitoring and servicing autonomous data collection equipment such as thermistors and data loggers.

**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.

believes the improvements will reduce nutrient loading to the Owasco Inlet, which contributes approximately 50% of all the water that discharges into the lake.

**NYS Relevant Bills Review**:

**NYS Leachate Rulemaking Update:**

The OLWMC, as a letter signatory, joined New York River Watch and Riverkeeper, along with organizations and community groups from across New York State, in calling on the

NYSDEC to strengthen its proposed regulations and adopt comprehensive, enforceable protections for human health and the environment. For decades, hundreds of millions of gallons of toxic landfill leachate have been sent to sewage treatment plants across NYS—most without pretreatment—before being discharged into NYS waterways. NYSDEC's proposed regulations are an important first step, yet they are limited in scope. The letter urges NYSDEC to strengthen the proposed regulations by: requiring pretreatment for all landfills collecting leachate, including inactive facilities; requiring treatment of PFAS and other contaminants to the most protective applicable standards; ensuring treatment technologies keep pace with the best available science; preventing toxic contaminants from being transferred from leachate into other waste streams; establishing strong financial, reporting, monitoring, and permit requirements; and ensuring that polluters—not local communities and taxpayers—bear the cost of managing toxic leachate.

**Sign-on Letter Update:**
The OLWMC signed a public comment letter to the EPA regarding their failure to include microplastics monitoring requirements under the proposed Sixth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 6 or the Proposed Rule).

F. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: The Directors discussed the ESF data and when it might be presented to the public.

G. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report

   i. August 2026 Financials Approval – Ginny Kent reported as of August 31, 2026 the financials were as follows: Total Current Assets $556,410.30; Total Checking and Savings $552,260.05; Total Liabilities and Equity $584,613.79. Will approve August financials next month.

H. Lake Level Report – John West reported the lake elevation at 712.67 ft. In mid to late October, he will probably initiate a drawdown of the Lake level. John discussed process for evaluating raw water quality of the lake.

I. NYSDEC Finger Lakes Watershed Program– Gabriel Yerdon-to hear the DEC update please access the minutes at https://olwmc.org/news.

J. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Phil Gioia reported that OWLA will hold a directors and strategic planning meeting on Saturday, September 19, 2026. He also noted that OWLA is working with ESF on a grant focused on chemicals in Owasco Lake, continuing treatment of hemlock woolly adelgid–infested trees in high-risk areas, and beginning planning for the Bob Brower Scientific Symposium, scheduled for March 13, 2027.

K. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Jesse Lloyd to access an audio/visual of the inspection report please go to the monthly minutes at https://olwmc.org/news.

L. Communications: Dr. Effler reported on a Cayuga County Stormwater Smart Workshop 10/10/26 at 10 AM in the Island shelter on Deauville Island at Emerson Park, register on Cayuga Co website. Dr. Effler also reported on willow plantings donated by ESF.

M. Issues of Concern: Dr. Effler noted issues with maintaining a quorum due to lack of representatives from participating municipalities. He will contact representatives concerning attendance.

N. Next Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, 2026 at 10:00 AM.

O. Motion to adjourn made by Ginny Kent and seconded by Terry Palmer. Motion unanimously

approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:49 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vivian Cunningham