



# Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

September 19, 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**- Dr. Adam Effler

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler.

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: **Owasco** – Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb - Coleman (excused), **City of Auburn** –Ginny Kent, **Niles** – Joan Jayne, **Village of Moravia** – Fred Pasho, **Dryden** – Anne Clark (online), **Fleming** -Karen VanLiew (excused). Ex Officio: Lisa Cleckner, Frank Clarke, Abigail Hai, Kirsten Workman (online), Marissa Jordan (online), Olivia Green (online), Ann Robson (online)
- B. Approval of the Agenda as previously emailed: Motion to approve made by Ed Wagner seconded by Joan Jayne. Motion unanimously approved.
- C. Approval of Minutes from the July 18, 2023, meeting as previously emailed: Questions for discussion. None heard.
- D. Discussion of the Minutes from the August 15,2023 Board of Directors meeting. Any discussion from Minutes: None heard.
- E. Public to be Heard. None heard.
- F. Director’s Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting). For visuals of this presentation and audio please visit: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

Recruitment is underway to fill the open watershed inspector position.

### Watershed Rules and Regulations

#### Project Review:

The Watershed Rules and Regulations (WRR) Workgroup is a state-local

partnership consisting of representatives from five New York State agencies, as well as members of a technical local workgroup representing the Owasco Lake Watershed, including members from: Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC); Town of Owasco; City of Auburn; and Cayuga County. The Workgroup was formed in response to the submission of proposed revisions to the 1984 Watershed Rules and Regulations (Part 104.1- City of Auburn and Town of Owasco) to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) in December 2020. NYSDOH project updates are posted on the OLWMC's website (<https://www.olwmc.org/projects>)

**General Update:**

The State-Local Technical Committee met on July 31st to review the state-recommended revisions to the proposed regulations. DEC, AGM and DOH have a follow-up meeting scheduled to clarify several items that came up during the review. DOH will send a revised version of the regulations out to the technical workgroup by the end of August. DOH will start the State Administration Procedure Act process and prepare the documents listed below the timeline.

Tentative Schedule:

- Interagency Internal Review \*\* -July 2023 to July 2024
- Publication in NYS Register- Notice of Rulemaking August 2024
- End of 60-day public comment period- October 2024
- DOH submits response to comments -December 2024
- DOH publishes revised rulemaking- March 2025
- Notice of adoption- July 2025

\*\*This includes putting the regulations into express terms and developing supporting documentation in accordance with 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)
- SEQR

NYS Tributary Legislation Project Review

### Project Review:

The bill now includes \$1 million in implementation funds to cover NYSDEC staff hires to implement. 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. It will be sent to the Governor for signature (approval) or veto (rejection).

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

OLWMC staff and Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) volunteers have coordinated watershed science educational events using the WLWMC's grant procured physical watershed model. OWLA recently used the model for youth education at a local library, at the Tomato Fest on 9/9,2023 and at Conservation Field Days youth education at Emerson Park 9/20/2023.

OLWMC staff will offer a Nine Element Plan project update to OWLMC at their public forum on 10/4/2023.

Published articles in the Citizen newspaper continue to spotlight watershed protection efforts.

### **Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)**

#### Project Update:

1. The OLWMC's 9E Coordination Committee is advancing watershed inventorying and monitoring initiatives to drive implementation projects in accordance with the recommendations of the Owasco Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan for Phosphorus Reduction (9EP). The following grant proposals were submitted in response to NYS grant program solicitations earlier this summer, and target the highest phosphorus contributing landscape/acre within the Owasco Lake Watershed, as documented in the 9EP.
  - a. 2023 non-point ag planning grants
    - i. The City of Auburn submitted a proposal through the NYS CFA to assess stream corridors within the Owasco Lake HUC 12 subwatershed. The City of Auburn applied for a \$75,000 grant to complete a comprehensive stream corridor assessment of the Owasco Lake HUC-12 which includes Sucker and Veness Brook, as well as multiple small tributaries along Owasco Lake.
  - b. Finger Lakes Watershed Grants Program- award notifications expected by September 28, 2023.
    - i. The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District submitted two proposals in response to the DEC

Finger Lakes Watershed Grants Program. The proposals targeted advancing stream corridor assessments of Dutch Hollow Brook and Sucker Brook.

- ii. OLWMC submitted a funding request to place 2024-2025 tributary sampling, analysis, and results display under management of Community Science Institute (CSI) located in Ithaca.
2. The Committee now plans to focus on capacity building for local organizations to provide the programming necessary for the watershed agricultural industry to advance BMP implementation at the rate suggested by the NYS approved 9EP. The next Committee meeting will be held September 28, 2023.

### **Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring**

#### **Project Review:**

- Cayuga County’s comprehensive monitoring budget for 2023 includes costs for 1) a new Owasco Lake monitoring role by the Finger Lakes Institute, Hobart William Smith Colleges, 2) Laboratory analysis for watershed tributary samples collected by the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA), 3) continued funding for the USGS gauge station along the Inlet, 4) continuation of the Citizen’s Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) and 5) the continuation of Hyfi level sensor use for monitoring water levels within the Owasco Flats constructed retention basins. The Cayuga County Planning Department submitted elements of the program budget to the NYSDEC as part of their 2023 Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA) budget.
- The Cayuga County Planning Department and Owasco Lake and watershed water quality monitoring partners are adhering to a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) that reflects monitoring logistics for the 2023 field season.
- OWLA is underway with its 2023 watershed tributaries monitoring program designed to include both baseline monitoring and storm event-based sampling.

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

#### **City of Auburn 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. Project consultants provided recommendations to Auburn City Council on July 14, 2022. The DWSP2 committee reviewed and edited the draft plan. A refined draft of the City of Auburn’s DWSP2 was delivered from the contracted consultant to the City of Auburn and circulated among the project committee. The local group awaits final plan approval from NYSDEC and NYSDOH to move forward on plan implementation and associated project(s) proposal(s) development. Barring

any changes based on agency feedback, the plan can be finalized. At that point, Auburn City Council will be asked to endorse the plan.

Town of Owasco Project Update:

The fifth Town of Owasco DWSP2 group meeting held on September 14, 2023 hosted a discussion on identifying protections and management methods.

**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 Review:

- Generally, year over year, observations of HABs are increasing throughout the eastern Finger Lakes Region.
- Consistent with previous years OWLA is leading the volunteer HABs surveillance program for Owasco Lake.

Project Update:

- As of September 15, 2023, there were six reported and archived HABs more than two weeks old and 35 current HAB reported within the last two weeks reported through the NYHABs website.

**Land Holdings**

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Review:

- The OLWMC closed on the property transfer of the Fillmore Nature Preserve from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on January 10, 2023.
- 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 Locke, mixed farmland
  - 72-acre parcel in Venice, dense wetland
- The Town of Owasco is providing trail maintenance support at the Fillmore Nature Preserve.
- A grant proposal is being developed to create a public access lot and educational kiosk at the nature preserve.

**Programs, Funding, and Related Opportunities**

## SOGL

### Project Review:

A full Sustain Our Great Lakes 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

### Tributary Assessment and Identification Project (TAIP) Project Review:

The Tributary Adoption and Identification Pilot Project (TAIPP) “pilot” project, which led to the installation of tributary signage in the northern portion of the watershed, provided a starting point to engage the public for tributary protection and education. The OLWMC will expand this initiative with additional tributary signage placed within the Town of Moravia, Village of Moravia, and Town of Locke. Consistent with existing signage, new signage will include the name of the sub watershed/tributary flowing at a specific road crossing, as well as “quick response” (QR) scan codes that will link smartphone users to the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division’s project webpage. Emergency contact information will also be included for the public to report observed water quality issues at the location. The Cayuga County Planning Department has committed to the design of the accompanying watershed map, in-kind. Furthermore, the Cayuga County Highway Department has committed to the installation of the signage, in-kind. The grant funding requested is intended to cover the material costs of the project.

### Project Update:

The OLWMC is underway with expanding the 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 member of the public to engage with Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division to communicate watershed concerns. Sign designing is now complete. Once signs are produced and project materials are purchased and delivered the Cayuga County Highway Department will install the signage.

### NYS Finger Lakes Watersheds Grant Program -Round 1 Project Review:

The OLWMC is 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 seeks to fund continued monitoring of 9E Plan 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.

Project Update:

The OLWMC's collaborative NYS Finger Lakes Watershed Grant Proposal was successfully submitted, meeting the July 21, 2023 program deadline.

NYS Non-Agriculture Nonpoint Source Planning Grant

Members of the 9E Coordination Committee, the City of Auburn and Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, plan to submit grant proposals for Comprehensive Stream Corridor

Assessments and Stream Restoration Planning concerning a prioritized subwatershed. Priority watercourses for restoration planning include Veness, Sucker, and Dutch Hollow Brooks.

Fillmore Nature Preserve  
Access and Education Project

Review:

The OLWMC is developing a grant proposal to fund and create a small access lot and educational kiosk at the trailhead of the Fillmore Nature Preserve. The gravel lot will allow members of the public to access the land preserve for respectful use of its trails for hiking. The kiosk will provide educational information about the land preserve concerning its purpose. The Town of Owasco has agreed to provide labor in-kind for creating the public access lot. The Cayuga County Planning Department has agreed to provide support through the development of parcel maps to be included within the kiosk. The Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) will support the effort with \$500 of plant material for a rain garden they will install at the site. Information about the value of native plants, and the ecosystem services they provide, will also be included within the kiosk.

Project Update:

On September 14, 2023, the OLWMC submitted its proposal to the Emerson Foundation for the creation of a public access lot and educational kiosk at the OLWMC's new Fillmore Nature Preserve. The proposed project includes agency and cost share from a variety of project partners, including the Towns of Moravia and Owasco (and their respective highway/service departments), OWLA, the Cayuga County Planning Department, and a Cornell University Student group that will assist with creating and posting public access trails at the preserve.

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.

- G. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Adam asked if localities interested in responding to an environmental needs survey. Adam asked about changing bylaws to allow Directors to vote by proxy due to difficulties with obtaining/maintaining a quorum. The directors discussed difficulties regarding maintaining a quorum. Adam will research a bylaw change and bring it to next meeting.
- H. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
  - i. August 2023 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported that as of August 31, 2023, Total checking and savings \$392,237.70; Total Fixed Assets \$69420.74; Total Current Assets \$393,939.30 and Total Liabilities and Equity \$463,359.84.
  - ii. Ed Wagner suggested putting more cash in CDs. Adam reported on current CDs and increased revenue. Adam also reported that a change in phone system has resulted in savings.
- I. Lake Level Report – John West -unavailable. Ed Wagner reported the City is maintaining summer lake level. Currently lake level is 712.78 feet. Lake level draw down will begin in November.
- J. In-Lake Water Quality Monitoring – Lisa Cleckner, Director Finger Lakes Institute is continuing as planned and lake monitoring continuing. Woolly Aldegid treatment program at Filmore Glen is planned in the fall. She reported on a climate change institute for youth at the college.

The Nature Conservancy Update – Olivia Green reported TNC working with 2 properties the Conservancy will be interested in the Council taking stewardship. Negotiations on the purchase of the land is underway. Septic work has transitioned to a groundwater study with Stony Brook University and a current private property. Reforestation property in October- more details coming with volunteer opportunities.

- K. NYSDEC Hub Update – Tony Prestigiaco: \$3 million invasives species program available, DEC HUB putting together an action agenda for Finger Lakes, Online survey from the federal government for the public conservation needs is available.
- L. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Ann Robson-OWLA is working with HABs monitoring, water sampling and testing is ongoing, received \$25,000 from the Emerson Foundation for ditch remediation within the watershed, continues with atmospheric ammonia project, educational projects -tomato fest, conservation field days, newsletters, public forums, membership campaign for everyone who drinks water!
- M. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update –Frank Clarke reported on the NYS Agricultural Business Association nutrient education program and fertilizer education (right place, right time, right source), Fall Collection events-First week in October electronics recycling, household hazardous waste 10/21/23.
- N. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Abigail Hai- To access Abigail's report please go to the video of the meeting at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- O. Communications: Dr. Effler reported that NYS DEC Region 7 Representative Dereth Glance will speak at the October 2023 meeting.



- P. Issues of Concern: none heard.
- Q. Next Meeting is Tuesday, September 17, 2023.
- R. Adjourn. Motion to adjourn made by Ed Wagner at 11:01 AM seconded by Joan Jayne.  
Vote unanimously approved.
- S. Respectfully Submitted,  
Vivian Cunningham