



**Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council
December 21, 2021, 10:00am**

Meeting of the Directors

Owasco - Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County**- Aileen McNabb -Coleman, **City of Auburn** - Debby McCormick
Niles – Joan Jayne, **Locke** – Thane Benson, **Scipio** – Vivian Cunningham,
Fleming - Don Oltz, **Moravia** – Terry Baxter, **Village of Moravia** – Gary Mulvaney, **Village of Groton** – Nancy Niswender, **Summerhill** – Charlie Ripley,
Sennett – Tom Gray
Executive Director- Adam Effler

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler

Board of Directors- Roll call

Owasco - Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County**- Aileen McNabb-Coleman, **City of Auburn** - Debby McCormick, **Niles**-Joan Jayne, **Scipio** – Vivian Cunningham,
Fleming - Don Oltz (remote), **Moravia** – Terry Baxter, **Village of Moravia** – Gary Mulvaney,

Ex Officio: Dana Hall, Brandon Wong, Michele Wunderlich, John West, Jessie Brill, Rick Nelson, Greg Hutnik, Steve Lynch, Ron Kutch, Seth Jensen, Amanda Mazzoni, Tricia Kerr

Awards Ceremony: Adam Effler presented an award and framed map of Owasco Lake to Debbie McCormick for her significant and multiple contributions to the Watershed Council and water quality Owasco Lake and in recognition of her leadership in the County for improvement of water quality and her major contribution to Auburn’s role in the Council’s leadership.

- A. Approval of the Agenda with a change to move John West’s report up to accommodate his schedule. Motion made by Joan Jayne seconded by Terry Baxter. Unanimous vote. Motion carried.
- B. Approval of Minutes from the November 16, 2021, meeting as previously emailed. Motion made by Terry Baxter. Motioned seconded by Gary Mulvaney.

Unanimous vote. Motion carried.

- C. Public to be heard: Dana reminded us of the Winter Solstice. Ms. Trish Kerr thanked Debbie Mc Cormick for her work on behalf of the city of Auburn.
- D. Director's Summary- Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting).
Highlights include:

HABS

1. The 2021 HABS reporting, and notification season has ended. The NYHABS link will be unavailable until the 2022 monitoring season begins in May 2022.

Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD)

2. The OLWIPD of the watershed management council remains active in the field, keeping a keen eye on pre-winter and construction site stabilization needs.
3. Recruitment for a second Watershed Inspector remains underway. Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach
4. Thankyou letters were prepared for the Emerson, French, and Metcalf Foundations for their funding support for the purchase of the secondary watershed inspection vehicle earlier this year. An additional letter was also prepared for Wegmans Food Markets thanking them for organizational funding according to contract outcomes from the Finger Lakes
5. OLWMC staff hosted a Wells College limnology class field trip the afternoon of December 2, 2021, whereby students reviewed staff roles for watershed surveillance and watershed protection projects. The group visited a Hyfi watercourse level sensor location on Dutch Hollow Brook and discussed the value of the sensor technology for hydrologic, and therefore, pollution loading monitoring for Owasco Lake.
6. The OLWMC's staff December recognition article with the Citizen spotlighted watershed community reactions to a wet 2021 and recommended supporting initiatives towards enhanced storm resiliency. OLWMC staff have elected to continue composing recognition articles in 2022 and have established submission dates with the Citizen throughout the new year.
7. Behavioral change tools training for progressing the adoption of watershed best practices was presented by Evidn on Nov 30 and December 14th, 2021. Many local leaders attended the session. The workshop spoke to the importance of advancing a sense of community inclusion towards mutual goals, as well as continued recognition of those making strides in conservation.
 - o OLWMC staff will begin 2021 annual report preparation at the beginning of the new year for distribution via municipal office counters and presentation to the City of Auburn City Council.

Lake Friendly Living

1. OLWMC staff, municipal highway department staff, and volunteers from OWLA continue to make progress installing lake friendly signage throughout the watershed. The signage project drives consistent messaging towards watershed conservation and is associated with the OLWMC's online pledge campaign.
2. The Lake Friendly Living Coalition (LFLC) of the Finger Lakes is collaborating on planning the LFL awareness week in the spring of 2022.

- a. The Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance (FLRWA) honored volunteer Maura Toole of the Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association with its 2021 Citizens Award. This award is given to an individual who contributes significantly to the alliance's cause of protecting the water quality of the Finger Lakes. Maura's leadership helped guide the first Lake Friendly Living Awareness Week, May 2-7, 2021.
- b. In 2021, the OLWMC spearheaded a successful NYS Assembly resolution to recognize LFL Awareness week (May 2-8, 2021) throughout the Finger Lakes. Assemblymember Anna Kelles will be asked to carry this banner again for the LFLC in 2022.

Hyfi Watercourse Level Sensors

1. **Project Recap:** OLWMC staff have installed 15 watercourse level sensors throughout the watershed, targeting locations that align with modeling sites for the Nine Key Element (9E) watershed plan's Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) model. With project support from OLWMC staff, the Owasco Watershed Lakes Association's (OWLA's) 2021 sediment and nutrient sampling program also aligned with sensor locations. A project goal is to provide invaluable constituent loading information for continued calibration of the SWAT model using level (and thereby estimated discharge) information and suspended solids and nutrient concentration information. OWLA completed the fall sampling program and associated project data was shared with the Cayuga County Planning Department for continued calibration of the SWAT model.
2. **Project Update:** Hyfi has completed their development of correlation and regression analysis for the relationships between the watercourse level sensors and conventional USGS stream gauging. A highly significant relationship between long-term data sets helps make the case for continued use and funding of the more spatially robust watershed watercourse level sensors.
3. **Sensor Location Updates:** The battery on the sensor on Owasco Inlet @ Spring St in Groton is low. Hyfi delivered a replacement sensor that is planned for replacement. The sensor on Dutch Hollow Brook @ East Lake Rd is detecting an obstacle that is interfering with the data. It was determined that the bridge deck may be intermittently reflecting the sensor signal rather than the water surface. Along with a replacement sensor, Hyfi delivered to the OLWIPD a horizontal channel extension to install the sensor farther away from the bridge and attempt to limit bridge deck interference.

Watershed Partner Project Updates

1. CC Parks and Trails are planning to finalize installing the Emerson Park boat wash station that is poised to be up and running for the 2022 prime boating season. The funding for the boat wash station was provided through a successful grant application by the Cayuga County Planning Department.
2. The Cayuga County Planning Department, with assistance by OLWMC and Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) staff, removed stop logs from the Owasco Flats wetland retention basins and stored them for the winter.
3. According to the Round 27 Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program,
 - a. \$568,005 was awarded to the CCSWCD to work with five farms in the Owasco and Cayuga Lake Watersheds. These projects will improve soil health by

implementing 5,100 acres of cover crops and 133 acres of permanent pasture and reduce sediment and nutrient loading to nearby waterways, to help minimize the extent of harmful algal blooms in the Finger Lakes region.

4. 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. We look forward to relevant data outcomes that will support forthcoming grants and projects implementation.
5. The OLWMC awaits guidance and project funding opportunities from NYS based on the completion and approval of Cayuga County's 9E Watershed Plan for Owasco Lake.
6. The OLWMC awaits guidance and approval from NYS agencies pertaining to the proposed community consensus updated watershed rules and regulations.
7. The primary January OLWMC board meeting presentation will be given by Dr. Halfman in the form of an Owasco Lake water quality monitoring report for 2021.

Grants and Programs

1. In partnership, the CCSWCD assisted a watershed farmland owner to finalize their application for the installation of a water and sediment control basin (WASCOB). The project will be funded, in part, by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Conservation Kick Program. The City of Auburn invested the required cost share for the grant award to be administered through the OLWMC, demonstrating the city's
 - a. commitment towards supporting conservation advancements for local agriculture. 17,258 'water quality credits' will be generated by the practice installation. This reflects 17,721 pounds of nitrogen and 1,262.5 pounds of total phosphorus reductions over the course of the project period. Based on the Great Lakes Commission's upfront analysis, and relative to all other Conservation Kick projects planned across the Great Lakes Basin, the CCSWCD/OLWMC project will result in the greatest nutrient reduction outcomes. Project partners are finalizing the project contract and MOU for a 2022 conservation practice installation.

Buy-In

1. 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.

E. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback

- i. 2022 OLWMC Goals Approval. Motion to approve with Ed Wagner's suggested change, made by Terry Baxter. Seconded by Vivian Cunningham vote was unanimous. Motion carried. Ed Wagner suggested that there be a delineation of watershed municipalities not participating in the watershed council.

- F. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
 - i November 2021 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported the financials as of November 30, 2021 total liabilities and equity as \$368,827.66:
Motion to accept the report made by Ed Wagner. Seconded by Gary Mulvaney, vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- G. 'Climate Smart Communities' Presentation – Amanda Mazzoni, Central NY Regional Planning Board. Discussed the two programs and the benefits of the programs: NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Program, and Climate Smart Communities Program-preparing for climate change. Amanda is available to municipalities for assistance.
Presentation can be viewed at www.olwmc.org/news
- H. The Nature Conservancy Update - Olivia Green: no report.
- I. Owasco Lake Research Updates- Dr. John Halfman, not available. Dr. Halfman will report on Owasco lake research at the 1/18/2022 meeting.
- J. NYSDEC Hub Updates- Tony Prestigiaco: no report
- K. Watershed Rules and Regulations Revisions Updates – Steve Lynch: not available, no updates.
- L. Nine Element Watershed Plan Updates– Michele Wunderlich, continuing to work on updates for the 9 Element Plan.
- M. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Updates - Dana Hall, OWLA. For the Wooly Aldelgid infestation project 2022 will be the most important year. If people have infested trees on their property, they should contact OWLA/Cornell Cooperative Extension. This is the number one environmental issue this year. OWLA is creating a Middle School water quality curriculum for local schools.
- N. Cornell Cooperative Extension: Ron Kutch: The was budget approval for an increase for agricultural extension for farmers and an applied research and environmental educator.
- O. 'Our Owasco' Behavioral Change Project Update- Bryson Cochran: Unavailable today.
- P. Partners for Healthy Watersheds Updates – Greg Rejman, unavailable today.
- Q. Emerson Park Sluiceway Cleanout and Retrofit Updates- Seth Jensen. The Engineering department is finalizing a design for and is in permitting process.
- R. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report–Ally Berry: Rainfall was normal for the reporting time period, please see Ally's report at www.olwc.org/news
- S. Lake Level Report – John West Lake level down to 710 ft this morning. Plans to keep level at this elevation until Spring.
- T. Communications: Vivian Cunningham thanked the Council for their significant

contributions to the watershed and water quality of Owasco Lake. This is her last meeting as a director from the Town of Scipio.

U. Issues of Concern: None Heard

V. Schedule Next Meeting (3rd Tuesday of January 2022 is the 18th), Motion to Adjourn made by Terry Baxter and seconded by JoanJayne. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vivian Cunningham,
Acting Secretary

2022 OLWMC Goals (approved)

1. Increase participation of municipalities that have yet to join the Council. Suggest listing communities yet to join Council.
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