



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

May 19, 2026, 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** – 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

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: Owasco-Ed Wagner, City of Auburn-Ginny Kent, Scipio-Nancy Hart, Fleming-Karen VanLiew, Lansing-Joseph Wetmore. Ex Officio: John West (online), Doug Dello Stritto, Carol Sutkus, Jesse Lloyd, Michele Wunderlich (online).
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda made by Ginny Hart; seconded by Nancy Hart. Motion unanimously approved.
- C. Approval of Minutes from April 21, 2026, Board Meeting as distributed via email: Motion to approve made by Karen VanLiew; seconded by Nancy Hart. Motion unanimously approved.
- D. Public to be Heard: None heard.
- A. Director's Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting) For an audio/visual of Dr. Effler's report please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>.
Watershed Rules and Regulations: no update available

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects

Project Updates:

- Hard copies of the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection Division's 2025 Annual Report have been delivered to municipalities throughout the watershed.
- The Owasco Lake Friendly Living public event, held Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 9AM-noon, involved litter pickup from roadside ditches and the lakeshore at the northern end of the lake. A promotional flyer was developed for distribution. As in previous years, the OLWMC coordinated with NYS officials for NYS's annual proclamation of support for the lake Friendly Living Coalition's programmatic efforts. The OLWMC's May 1, 2026, staff feature article in the Citizen newspaper highlighted the adverse environmental impacts of litter accumulation and promoted the public event.
- On May 18th, Moravia High School's 'Moravia Gives Back Day' will accommodate student engagement and stewardship activities at the OLWMC's Fillmore Nature Preserve. Students will hike with OLWMC and Cayuga County Planning Department staff, learn about invasive species, and help clear trails.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Update:

The next 9E Committee meeting will be held on May 27, 2026. The committee will focus on developing stream corridor projects based on recommendations from a recent assessment project for Sucker and Veness Brooks.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Projects Update:

The biweekly Owasco Lake tributary monitoring program was conducted on May 11, 2026, with collaboration between OWLA, OLWMC, and SUNY ESF.

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

Municipal Codes, Ordinances, and Projects

No updates available.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Programming:

- The New York Harmful Algal Bloom System (NYHABS) link will be available when the 2026 monitoring season begins in May.

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Review:

Over the Fall of 2025, stewardship activities continued at the Fillmore Nature Preserve, whereby new stewards have continued to maintain and clear trails under contract. Hunting permissions, stewardship and indemnification contracts were prepared and signed by three individuals for the 2025 hunting season.

Venice Preserve Review:

- Two stewardship hunting agreement contracts have been signed by neighboring landowners, both college students focused on environmental studies.

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.

Partner Land Acquisitions/Targets Review:

- Camp Casowasco has officially announced its closure. The FLLT is interested in exploring ways to conserve the landmark property and buildings.

Grant Opportunities, Projects, Programs, and Funding

Grants and Programs Review:

- New York State announced more than \$25.5 million in grants to support 29 water quality and climate resiliency projects in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC's) Region 7. The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded the following:

- \$448,000 through WQIP to work with local municipal partners to complete hydroseeding to stabilize road ditches. The program will reduce erosion and improve water quality throughout Cayuga County.

- \$285,200 through WQIP to purchase live edge plow blades, weather sensors, and truck-mounted brine spreaders to reduce excess road salt application county-wide, protecting the water quality of drinking water supplies including Owasco Lake.

- NYS Round 30 Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program Project grants were awarded. Associated projects are intended to support the New York State Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program by funding the implementation of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect natural resources while maintaining the economic viability of New York State's diverse agricultural community.

- \$720,898 was awarded to the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with 11 farms in the Cayuga Lake Watershed (EPF). This project will:

- Plant 6,385 acres of cover crops and implement 25 acres of wood mulching over 5 years to increase soil water retention through an increase of organic matter and carbon supply and slow the potential for soil erosion and surface runoff into waterways.

- Prevent an estimated 28,000 tons of soil from entering Owasco Lake, Cayuga Lake, and Seneca River Watersheds.

- \$812,520 was awarded to the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with two farms in the Owasco Lake Watershed (EPF). This project will:

- Capture and contain nutrient-rich silage leachate flows from bunk silos

- Implement practices to effectively manage silage leachate and reduce nutrient loading

- Reuse collected silage leachate for irrigation on pasture fields and establish riparian forest buffers

- 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:

Project partners for the Owasco Inlet streambank stabilization project are finalized final permitting requirements with NYSDEC and US Army Corps of Engineers. Under permit requirements, the OLWMC will be publishing the project in the local newspaper.

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.

Municipal Projects and Funding Opportunities Review:

The Village of Moravia has bonded over \$15.5 million for the renovation of its wastewater treatment plant, and the cost of the project is now approximately double previous estimates. The Village has a 20-year 0% loan from the state Environmental Facilities Corporation.

Approximately

\$14.2 million will be paid by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision; most of the water treated by the plant comes from Cayuga Correctional Facility. The project is poised to receive another \$5.3 million in grants through the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Development Innovation Lab and the NYSDEC's Water Quality Improvement Project Program. The project's deadline is November 2026. The NYSDEC 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:

The Open Water Data Act (A5254/1211), was vetoed by the Governor on December 19th. The veto simply stated fiscal considerations. Given the environmental importance of this bill, which was passed with a unanimous bipartisan vote in both houses, Assemblymember Anna Kelles and Senator Rachel May, will be prioritizing re-passage of the bill in the 2026 session.

- Currently, NYS inter-agency data is scattered or inaccessible, which weakens the ability to make sound decisions that protect public health, environmental integrity, and economic resilience. This legislation directs key state agencies, including the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Department of Health, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Canal Corporation, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, and the Public Service Commission, to collaborate to align New York's water data systems. The bill establishes shared standards, creates a single publicly accessible data platform, incorporates citizen science, coordinates with broader data efforts, and requires a needs assessment to identify critical data and funding gaps for effective long-term water management.

Relevant Bill Update:

A revised version of the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (A.1749A/S.1464A) is underway, and lawmakers are working to get it passed before the end of session. This legislation develops a packaging reduction and recycling infrastructure program and shifts the financial burden of managing packaging waste from taxpayers to the producers of packaging, while reducing the amount of packaging and plastic waste produced in New York State by 30%.

Municipality Buy-In 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, and Skaneateles.

- E. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: None heard.
- F. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
 - i. 2025 Financial Audit Approval – Adam Effler explained need for yearly financial audit. Motion to sponsor 2025 Financial Audit made by Nancy Hart. Motion unanimously approved.
 - ii. April 2026 Financials Approval – Ginny Hart reported on balance sheets as of April 30, 2026: Total Checking & Saving \$405,001.22; Total Current Assets \$409,151.47; Total Liabilities and Equity \$439,919.72. Motion to approve financial report made by Karen VanLiew. Motion unanimously approved.
- G. Lake Level Report – John West reported the Owasco Lake elevation at 712.79 ft. things relatively quiet. Managing level daily summer target of 712.80 ft.
- H. Cayuga County Parks and Trails Conservation Projects Update – Doug Dello Stritto. For an audio/visual of the presentation, please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>.
- I. NYSDEC Finger Lakes Watershed Program– Gabriel Yerdon. Unavailable.
- J. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update –Carol Sutkus reported Dr. Gioia will take over as President of OWLA next month. Thanks to Adam Effler and Phil Gioia for support at the Lake Country Living event. June 3, 2026, is the annual membership meeting. New board members will be inducted. June 24, 2026, a “Business after 5” event sponsored by OLWA at the Owasco Yacht Club-all invited.
- K. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Jesse Lloyd. For an audio/visual of the presentation, please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>.
- L. Communications: Adam shared visuals from OLWMC Watershed Cleanup Events and Moravia Gives Back Day. Adam thanked Michele Wunderlich for her participation the in Moravia Gives Back Day at the Millard Fillmore preserve. For visuals of the events please visit: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>.

Directors discussed the possibility of not meeting the month of July.
- M. Issues of Concern: None heard.
- N. Next Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday of June16, 2026 at 10 am.
- O. Adjourn Motion to adjourn made by at Nancy Hart. Vote was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Vivian Cunningham