



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council
 February 15, 2022, 10:00am
 Memorial City Hall, Auburn, NY

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

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler, Executive Director

A. Board of Directors- Roll call:

Owasco - Ed Wagner, **City of Auburn** – Ginny Kent
Niles – Joan Jayne, **Locke** – Thane Benson, **Fleming** - Don Oltz,
Moravia – Terry Baxter, **Village of Moravia** – Gary Mulvaney, **Town of Scipio**-Melinda Pitman (remote),
Locke-Thane Benson (remote), **Sennett** Tom Blair (remote)

Ex Officio attending: Dr John Halfman, Olivia Green, Tony Prestigiaco, Steve Lynch, Dana Hall, Michele Wunderlich, Darby Kiley, Daniel Welch, Camille Bonvet-Boiseclair, Seth Jensen, Ally Berry, John West, Greg Rejman, Jillian Aluisio, Greg Rejman, Ron Kluck, Eileen O’Conner. Greg Hutnik, Brian Hall

- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion made by Terry Baxter. Motion seconded Joan Jayne. Vote unanimous. Motion carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from the January 18, 2022, meeting previously distributed via email. Motion to accept the minutes made by Terry Baxter seconded by Joan Jayne. Unanimous vote and motion carried.
- D. Public to be Heard: None Heard
- E. Director’s Summary- Adam Effler (distributed for via email prior to the meeting) A review:

Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD) Updates

- The OLWIPD of the OLWMC remains active in the field, keeping a keen eye on winter construction site stabilization needs and providing support to watershed residents, as requested.
- We are thrilled to welcome Jillian Aluisio, our new Watershed Inspector for the OLWIPD.

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach

- The OLWMC’s staff February recognition article with the Citizen newspaper spotlighted strategies for road salt conservation and truck calibration by municipal

highway departments.

- Staff are preparing the OLWIPD/OLWMC combined 2021 annual report, the annual report will be prepared in the form of an informational brochure to be shared for physical distribution by watershed municipal offices.

Lake Friendly Living

Project Updates:

1. The LFL Coalition of the Finger Lakes is underway with planning and preparation for its spring 2022 awareness webinar series that will focus on the intersection of water quality protection and climate smart programming. Information about the 2022 LFL webinar series will be forthcoming.
2. This year, the group has facilitated onboarding Conesus and Keuka Lake watershed organizations, as new members to help advance the common Finger Lakes Region messaging campaign.
3. The OLWMC and Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) are working towards finalizing the installation of LFL signage on existing Tributary Adoption and Identification Pilot Program (TAIPP) signposts throughout the watershed.

Hyfi Watercourse Level Sensors

Project Updates:

1. On February 2, 2022, OLWMC staff modified the Hyfi watercourse level sensor at Dutch Hollow Brook. The objective of that work was to prevent perceived bridge deck signal interference at that location.
2. We were informed that there may be an opportunity to install additional sensors at priority locations within the watershed.

Watershed Partner Collaboration- Project 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.

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 9E 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. The next group meeting for this planning project is scheduled for February 17, 2022.

The OLWMC continues to work towards a transfer of ownership of a ~160-acre priority parcel in Sempronius from The Nature Conservancy to the OLWMC that will advance the council's position as a land conservation steward within the watershed.

OLWMC staff are coordinating with the State University of New York Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) on a 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.

The OWLA-coordinated, and OLWMC-sponsored, annual Bob Brower Scientific Symposium will be held remotely via Zoom Saturday, March 19th, 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

NYS Regional Partnership, Related Projects Status, and Responses to Public Comment Periods

On January 31, 2022, local watershed partners convened with Region 7 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for our semi-annual meeting. Meeting topics included, but were not limited to, local and state regulatory synergies, progress on collaborative watershed and lake planning projects, flood management, and outlooks for watershed and lake monitoring for the 2022 field season.

We understand that the NYS committee charged with reviewing community consensus Owasco Lake watershed rules and regulations is nearly complete with their process, and the NYSDOH will transmit their response and recommendations in the near term.

The City of Auburn City Council and Cayuga Water Quality Management Agency resolved to request the NYSDEC position Owasco Lake on the 303(d) list as threatened. Separately, OWLA and the OLWMC prepared and submitted commensurate response letters during the comment period.

Grants and Programs

GLRI Conservation Kick Project

Project Update: Project partners continue to finalize contract details for the GLC Conservation Kick program.

Partnership with Crystal Creek Organics

Project Update: On February 4th, 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 Cayuga Lake watershed and having a small footprint within the Owasco Lake watershed, has processed nearly 500,000 gallons of manure over the last several years.

NRCS RCPP

Project Update: 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 Grant Solicitations for Review and Consideration Community Forest Conservation Grant Program

Municipality eligible: DEC announces a new Community Forest Conservation Grant Program. \$1 million in grant funds will be available to municipalities for forest land acquisition to establish

community forests. The grant program's goal is to assist communities in the conservation of local forests to create opportunities for public access, help protect natural areas from development, and encourage sustainable management of forested lands. Applicants will be able to request \$50,000 to \$300,000 and must provide a 10 percent cash match of the grant amount requested.

This is a reimbursement grant and costs eligible for reimbursement will include, but are not limited to, purchase price, appraisal, survey, title search, tax service, recording fees, and attorney fees. Properties to be acquired must be 10 or more contiguous acres in size, have forests on at least 75 percent of the acreage, be accessible to the public, and provide public benefits such as recreation opportunities, flood mitigation, wildlife habitat, clean water, and forest products. Applications are due **2 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13, 2022**. The application and additional information are available on the department's website at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/124345.html>

Soil and Water Conservation District Eligible: Two grant opportunities (Climate Resilient Farming and Agricultural Non-Point Source Pollution Abatement and Control Program) are now available to help farmers protect soil and water quality. The state's county soil and water conservation districts can apply on behalf of farmers for this competitive grant program.

\$21 million will be provided through Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Grant Program & Agricultural Non-Point Source Abatement and Control (Ag Nonpoint) Program. Applications due March 28 and May 2. Governor's State of the State proposes increases in funding for CRF & Ag Nonpoint programs in this year's executive budget.

Agricultural Non-Point Source Pollution Abatement and Control Program. In addition to the Climate Resilient Farming Grant Program funding, an additional \$13 million is available to support agricultural water quality conservation projects across the state through round 28 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program. The state's county soil and water conservation districts can apply on behalf of farmers for this competitive grant program, which is also funded through the New York State Environmental Protection Fund.

Project proposals are due at 4:30 p.m. May 2. The application and additional information are available on the department's website at: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/funding-opportunities>

Buy-In

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, Dryden, 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 month, all remaining municipalities were prompted with a request call, and directorship request letters, template resolutions, and relevant maps were subsequently delivered. The Town of Genoa tabled the topic discussion at their February 9th meeting. The Town of Dryden posed a resolution to join at their February 10, 2022, board meeting. Our request for directorship by the Town of Venice was made via a presentation and subsequent discussion at their February 10, 2022, board meeting.

- F. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Encourage the community planning boards to keep the inspection division of OLWMC informed of meetings regarding planned projects in the watershed. Adam requested if communities require assistance for climate smart communities' applications OLWMC is available.
- G. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
- i. January 2022 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported that as of January 31, 2022 the Total Assets are \$278,390.82 and the Total Liabilities and Equity are \$337,770.37. Motion to approve report made by Terry Baxter seconded by Don Oltz. Vote was unanimous and vote carried.
- H. Riparian Buffer Requirements through Zoning- Darby Kiley, Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability. Discussion stream and riparian buffers and their importance for stream, habitat and biodiversity, stream stability, water quality and financial savings. She included in her presentation references to other zoning resources from other municipalities and training resources.
- To access Ms. Kiley's presentation, visit the <https://www.olwmc.org/news> contained within the video of the Director's meeting on February 15, 2022.
- I. Lake Monitoring Report Follow up-Dr. John Halfman reported another group will eventually be taking over stream monitoring he has managed many years. The Finger Lakes Institute will eventually take over the stream monitoring. OWLA will take the lead for 2022 season and will coordinate the effort.
- J. The Nature Conservancy Update - Olivia Green, unavailable for the meeting however contracts are ongoing and outreach for high priority properties are being negotiated and partnering with DOH for septic systems upgrades in watershed continue to be funded.
- K. NYSDEC Hub Updates- Tony Prestigiacomio-CAFOs public comment period through 2/18/22.
- L. Watershed Rules and Regulations Revisions Updates – Steve Lynch-no new information on the updated WRR.
- M. Nine Element Watershed Plan Updates– Michele Wunderlich-working on the update and hope to have draft of 9Ewatershed project plan available next month and for public meeting at end of March.
- N. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Updates - Dana Hall: Planning for the 2022 tributary watershed sampling plan supporting Dr. Halfman's effort is underway. Major initiatives regarding the HWA are continuing. OWLA is trying to identify all infected trees in the watershed and getting priority trees treated coordinated with sap running. If trees are not treated immediately is the potential loss of all hemlock trees in the watershed.
- O. Cornell Cooperative Extension Updates- Daniel Welch Cooperative Extension is hiring an additional position focusing on watershed issues working with smaller farms on water quality. They are joining with a South-Central Team which gives Cooperative Extension access to three specialists in water quality and cover cropping. Cooperative extension hired a new specialist on nutrient management and water quality.
- P. 'Our Owasco' Behavioral Change Project Update- Camille Bouvet-Boisclair (Evidn). Evidn is focusing on three main projects. 1. Behavioral science tools to affect change in the agricultural sector, 2. A public communication piece to spot light farmers who are doing a good job with their BPM ,3 workshops for farmers on specific topic areas such Cover Crops.
- Q. Partners for Healthy Watersheds Updates– Greg Rejman. no longer available on call,

- R. Emerson Park Sluiceway Cleanout and Retrofit Updates- Seth Jensen working on obtaining a permit, expected this week so the work can be done prior to the need to bring the lake elevation up.
- S. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report–Ally Berry 2-3 inches of precipitation in past 30 days, .5-2 inches above normal.
 - i. For Inspection Summary visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
 - ii. Jillian Aluisio, new watershed inspector introduced herself. Her new contact number is: 315-209-9840
- T. Lake Level Report – John West -Lake elevation709.35 and watching for rain about one inch expected and keeping track of the snowpack and attempting to keep lake level low for the sluice way project completion.
- U. Communications:
- V. Issues of Concern: None Heard
- W. Schedule Next Meeting (3rd Tuesday of March 2022 is the 15th), Motion to Adjourn: Motion made to adjourn made by Gary Mulvaney. Motion seconded by Ed Wagner. Vote unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 11:21AM

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