



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

June 21, 2022, 10:00am – Director’s Summary

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach

- The OLWMC’s June feature article with the Citizen newspaper, led by Lead Watershed Inspector, Ally Berry, spotlighted the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division’s (OLWIPD’s) objectives, procedures, and staff contact information.
- On June 15, 2022 Watershed Inspectors gave a watershed physical model and watershed protection educational session to Herman Elementary school students at Emerson Park. Members of the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) assisted with the event.
- Bill Davis of the MRB Group will be a keynote presenter for the July 19, 2022 OLWMC public board meeting. He will present on the implementation of wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) upgrades in the Village of Moravia.

HABs Identification and Reporting

Project Update: The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s (NYSDEC’s) NYHABs notification page is now available for the 2022 monitoring season. On Tuesday, June 7, 2022 OLWIPD staff participated in a virtual training provided by the NYSDEC Finger Lakes Hub for Finger Lakes shoreline HABs surveillance volunteers. New volunteers were required to attend either the live training or watch the recorded version, and NYSDEC staff recommended returning volunteers participate for review.

Lake Friendly Living

Project Review: Lake Friendly Living (LFL) is a growing Finger Lakes regional initiative that encourages the adoption of recommended conservation and best management practices by residents; the initiative targets reducing nonpoint sources of lake pollution. The achieved goal of the LFL awareness series to educate and engage Finger Lakes watershed residents, local governments, and businesses to adopt lake friendly practices to help protect and preserve the Finger Lakes for sustainable water quality, recreational use, and tourism. The LFL Coalition of the Finger Lakes completed its May 2022 awareness webinar and live events series that focused on the intersection of water quality protection and climate resiliency. This year, the group facilitated onboarding Conesus, Honeoye, and Keuka Lake watershed organizations, as new members to help advance the common Finger Lakes Region messaging campaign. The Lake Friendly Living Coalition provided educational and hands on events during the May 2022 awareness series. The LFL May Series events

calendar was published via the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce, the Citizen Newspaper, and Life in the Finger Lakes magazine. Furthermore, LFL program promotion was included as part of the NYSDEC Region 7 News via 'DEC Delivers' with nearly ~45,000 subscribers. OLWMC staff coordinated webinar presentations on the NYS Climate Smart Communities program and the implementation of Emerson Park's new rain garden. Further, staff coordinated with the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) for the May 21, 2022 community shrub willow-planting project at the OLWMC's nursery in the Town of Owasco. All members of the public were encouraged to assist with the planting project. The nursery will act as a long-term source of shrub willow for the future installation of riparian buffers within the watershed. This project is also poised to offer an opportunity for a student undergraduate internship and/or capstone project in 2023. At their May 12, 2022 meeting, Auburn City Council heard a mayoral proclamation endorsing LFL awareness month and the expansion of the messaging program throughout the watershed and the greater Finger Lakes Region.

Project Updates:

- 17 Lake Friendly Living community events were held across the Finger Lakes Region during the month of May. The creation of the shrub willow nursery in the Town of Owasco, NY on May 21, 2022 represented one of three LFL events that the OLWMC helped lead. The nursery will act as a long-term source of willow to be used for the installation of riparian buffers throughout the Owasco Lake watershed. In total, 462 shrub willow canes were installed, which included 176 salix purpurea and 286 salix eriocephala. Lead Watershed Inspector, Ally Berry, helped spearhead discussions with SUNY-ESF staff, Tim Volk and Ann Moore, to garner their initial project support. The shrub willow material was sourced from ESF's Research Station in Tully, and Dr. Volk assisted with the nursery installation. We are grateful to SUNY-ESF for their project partnership towards improved watershed resiliency and to create opportunities for SUNY-ESF students. A thank you letter was delivered to Wegmans Food Markets for their sponsorship of lunch for participants at the event. Cayuga County Parks and Trails partnered on this project by offering mulch and the assistance of seasonal staff, Matt Reed and Nick Indelicato, for mulching the installation.
- The OLWMC has completed the installation of LFL signage to Tributary Adoption and Identification Pilot Program (TAIPP) signposts throughout the watershed.

Hyfi Watercourse Level Sensors

Project Review:

- OLWMC staff have installed, and maintain, 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. The sensors are used for guiding flood and asset management, as well as for level monitoring. 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 datasets supports the continued use and funding of the more spatially robust watershed sensors.

- The Owasco Watershed Lake Association OWLA's 2022 sediment and nutrient sampling program, which has elements of both routine and storm event sampling, aligns with watercourse level sensor locations. The project will provide invaluable lake loading information for continued calibration of the SWAT model. The OLWMC is supporting field sampling and sample delivery efforts for OWLA's monitoring program.
- The Owasco Lake watershed piloted Hyfi sensor platform recently won the Verizon Climate Resilience Prize for 2022.

Project Update:

- Staff will be installing an additional watercourse level sensor and assembly for a targeted stream monitoring location at Long Point Road that aligns with water quality monitoring efforts there.

Watershed Partner Collaboration

Planning and Regulatory Projects Review:

- The OLWMC awaits guidance and project funding opportunities from NYS based on the completion and approval of Cayuga County's Nine Element Watershed Plan (9E) for Owasco Lake. The Cayuga County Planning Department is nearing the end of the 9E process and has recently developed an appendix to report recent project and programming outcomes associated with 9E recommendations. There will be a third public meeting for the public to review project updates and recommendations.
- The OLWMC offers partnership and support for the City of Auburn's NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2).

Project Updates:

- The City of Auburn's NYS-awarded DWSP2 is finalizing its presentation of source water protection recommendations that will be given to City Council on July 14, 2022.
- On May 26, 2022 the Cayuga County Department of Health (DOH) received official correspondence from the NYS DOH regarding the proposed community consensus updated watershed rules and regulations; the NYS DOH scheduled an Owasco Watershed Rules & Regs Technical Workgroup meeting for June 23, 2022.
- OLWMC endorsed, NYS environmental conservation law ([A6652/S4162](#)) would protect up to 41,000 miles of New York streams. Class "C" waterways, which are regularly used by people for boating, fishing, and other activities, would be afforded the protection that is provided to waterways classified as streams. This will require the need for permit for certain access/project(s) scenarios. The bill passed both NYS houses and will need to be signed into law.

Land Holding

Project Review:

- The OLWMC continues to work towards a transfer of ownership of the ~160-acre priority 'Fillmore Road' parcel in Sempronius from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to the OLWMC that will advance the council's position as a land conservation steward within the watershed. As part of a successful transfer of ownership of the property, TNC will offer \$15,000 of upfront land stewardship dollars to help the OLWMC get started with funding needs (e.g., insurances) to own and maintain the land preserve.

Project Updates:

- The OLWMC developed a land protection and management policy, adopted from TNC's plan, to ensure the OLWMC meets project responsibilities. The OLWMC's Land Protection and Management Policy for the new property references the OLWMC's proposed 'Land Stewardship' standard policy adopted from the 'Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.'
- A property liability insurance policy has been selected to cover the OLWMC's new exposure.

Other Partner Projects

Project Updates:

- The OLWMC is collaborating with Wegmans Food Markets to promote LED flares as a safer and more environmentally friendly alternative to conventional incendiary flares. The OLWMC is underway, and under contract, with a profit-sharing initiative with Wegmans Food Markets. Similar to last year, starting May 22, 2022, Wegmans will be selling a 2pk and 6pk LED Flares at their Auburn, Geneva, Geneseo, Jamestown, Corning, Hornell, Canandaigua, Newark, and Webster locations. Wegmans has agreed to donate \$2.00 for each two pack and \$6.00 for each six pack LED flares sold at the Auburn store from May 22, 2022 to September 24, 2022 to be shared by the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, Skaneateles Lake Association and Otisco Lake Association.
- On June 8, 2022 OLWIPD staff enumerated shrub willow replacements required for a riparian buffer installation on a watershed farm along Veness Brook that took place in the spring of 2021. There was an apparent ~50% survival rate with ~700 shrub willow found growing vigorously. The same evening, SUNY-ESF partners assisted with the delivery and installation of replacements. Two Masters students from SUNY ESF planted 100 cuttings. They also further mulched the newly installed nursery in the Town of Owasco.
- OLWMC staff will be assisting water quality monitoring efforts for an advanced septic system installation at the Y Camp at the southern end of Owasco lake. The project, spearheaded by TNC, in partnership with the Cayuga County Department of Health, will evaluate the effectiveness of advanced phosphorus removal and will provide an educational opportunity for campers and staff.

Grant Projects and Programs Underway

- **GLRI Conservation Kick Project**

Project Review: In partnership, the Cayuga County SWCD assisted a watershed farmland owner to finalize their application for the installation of a water and sediment control basin (WASCOB). The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Conservation Kick Program will fund the project, in part. The City of Auburn invested the required cost share for the grant award administered through the OLWMC, demonstrating the City's commitment towards supporting conservation advancements for local agriculture. 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 finalized contract details. Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District Engineer and Auburn Director of Municipal Utilities have reviewed and approved the final WASCOB design.

- **NRCS RCPP**

Project Review: On April 13, 2022 the OLWMC submitted a project proposal through the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program (NRCS RCPP). The OLWMC retooled last year's NRCS RCPP proposal, according to review comments, and requested federal funding intended to help advance the Cayuga County SWCDs' conservation farm planning and BMP implementations within the Owasco Lake watershed. The proposed project will help build local capacity for certified farm planning within the watershed and provide support for targeted conservation projects, a prospect intended to increase efficiencies for local agriculture that will benefit both farmers and watershed conservation.

Project Update: The deadline for NYS NRCS staff to provide proposal feedback prior to NRCS federal level review and approval was May 27, 2022.

Relevant Available Grant Programs Review

NYSDEC:

- **Water Quality Improvement Projects (WQIP):** funds are available for the implementation of projects to improve water quality or aquatic habitat, or protect a drinking water source. Eligible project types include wastewater treatment improvement, non-agricultural nonpoint source abatement and control, land acquisition for source water protection, salt storage, aquatic connectivity restoration, and marine habitat restoration.
- **Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Mapping Grant (NPG):** funds production of planning reports for nonpoint source water quality improvement projects and mapping of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems.
- **New York Sea Grant,** in partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), announced \$400,000 in grant funding is now available for Great Lakes ecosystem-based management projects in support of New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda. Awards of up to \$50,000 per project. Applications are due

July 1, 2022. Proposed projects must address key water quality, natural resource, and resiliency priorities in New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda and should advance local priorities identified in existing community plans. Eligible projects may include planning, design, implementation, information management tool development, demonstration projects, and targeted educational outreach.

Other:

- Community Resiliency, Economic Sustainability, and Technology Program (CREST), capital grant program via NYS District 50.

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; we continue to encourage the Board of Directors to reach out to representatives from these towns to elicit municipality interest.

Summary Prepared by Adam Effler, June 17, 2022