



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

August 15, 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. Dr Effler announced that since there is not a quorum of Directors there will be notes of the meeting and discussion of agenda and previous minutes. It was subsequently identified that a quorum was present for this meeting (constituted by three Directors rather than a majority).

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: **Owasco** – Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb - Coleman (excused), **City of Auburn** –Ginny Kent **Niles** – Joan Jayne (excused), **Moravia** – Terry Baxter (excused), **Village of Moravia** – TBD, **Dryden** – Anne Clark (online). Ex Officio: Lisa Cleckner, John West, Ann Robson, Daniel Welch, Frank Clarke, Abigail Hai, Michelle Wonderlich, Jason Cuddleback, Greg Hutnik
- B. Approval of the Agenda as previously emailed: No discussion
- C. Approval of Minutes from the July 18, 2023, meeting as previously emailed: No discussion
- D. Public to be Heard. None heard.
- E. 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>

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

- Published feature articles with the Citizen newspaper continue to target recognition of watershed residents and programs making strides in watershed protection. The July 26, 2023, article featured the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD) and new Watershed Inspector, Abigail Hai.
- Watershed Inspectors conducted educational outreach through 4-H camp conservation instruction and a drone demonstration.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Review:

Cayuga County received a New York State Department of State grant to implement a high priority *recommendation from the 2016 Owasco Lake Watershed Management and Waterfront Revitalization Plan*, which was to incorporate the EPA Nine Key Elements into the Plan. This project was led by the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development and the consultant on the project was Ecologic, LLC.

The Owasco Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan for Phosphorus Reduction (9EP) was approved by the New York State Department of State and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/owasco9e.pdf). This Clean Water Plan advances efforts to restore and protect the water quality of Owasco Lake and its watershed. This collaborative effort identified focused strategies to ensure the lake water supply, aquatic habitat, and recreational uses are protected.

During its June 22, 2023 meeting, as part of the group's 2023 work plan, the Owasco Lake 9E Coordination Committee discussed next steps towards preparing project proposals and fundraising for watershed streams inventorying and engineering planning in 2023 (Phase 1) to direct stream restoration projects between 2023-2024 (Phase 2), for funding tributary monitoring in 2024, and for developing an Owasco Lake Watershed Agriculture Program similar to what was done for the Skaneateles Lake watershed. The next Committee meeting will be held August 31, 2023.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Project Review:

- Owasco Lake and watershed monitoring partners prepared, and had approved, a

comprehensive monitoring budget for 2023 that 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 of 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 Town of Owasco is receiving consultant support through NYS to develop its DWSP2. The fourth Town of Owasco DWSP2 group meeting held on August 9, 2023 hosted a discussion on planning as well as preliminary discussion on inventorying potential sources of contamination.

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.
- The NYSDEC recently hosted Finger Lakes HABs Shoreline Surveillance Training.

Project Update:

- As of August 11, 2023, there was one archived reported HAB more than two weeks old and one current HAB report 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 be 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 SW Metcalf Foundation granted the OLWMC \$4,100 for the expansion of Tributary Adoption and Identification Project (TAIP) signage in the southern portion of the Owasco Lake watershed. Sign designing is now underway. Once signs are produced and project materials are purchased, project partners can move forward with signage installation.

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:

- The Town of Moravia has committed to hauling the public access lot gravel in-kind.
- The project team awaits a quote for the creation of the educational kiosk that will be included within the proposal budget.
- Design Connect Application:

Design Connect is a student run community design and planning organization at Cornell University, which is committed to partnering with communities to address significant planning and design issues through a participatory and multidisciplinary process. Design Connect requests applications for projects, partnering with municipal governments, neighborhood organizations, and schools. The OLWMC applied for program support for the creation and posting of trails within the Fillmore Nature Preserve. Design Connect accepted the project and will offer two project managers who will be primary partners along with a team of 5-10 students. The project manager and teams will be chosen in late November for spring 2024 implementation.

Lake Friendly Living Education Proposal

The Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association is applying for funding to support expansion efforts of their existing Watershed Education Program. The extension would include the development of a Lake Friendly Living instructional curriculum guide based on lessons their watershed educators have developed over the last 10+ years. If funded, they will offer the newly developed curriculum guide to interested members of the Lake Friendly Living Coalition. An OLWMC endorsement letter was prepared to support their proposal.

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.

- F. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Recruitment is underway to fill the open watershed inspector position.
- G. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
 - i. July 2023 Financials Approval – Ed Wagner reported that as of July 31, 2023, Total checking and savings \$415,333.83; Total Fixed Assets \$70,086.30; Total Current Assets \$417,033.83 and Total Liabilities and Equity \$487,120.16.
 - ii. Ed Wagner suggested putting more cash in CDs. Adam will discuss with the bookkeeper how much cash on hand we need to maintain.
- H. Lake Level Report – John West -This weekend some possible HABs were noted in the water intake, sampling will continue this week. The lake level is consistent with summer levels and fortunately we have missed out on large rainfall events in the region. The City of Auburn will do a walk-through water quality event which includes a boil water notification.
- I. In-Lake Water Quality Monitoring – Lisa Cleckner, Director Finger Lakes Institute
Dr. Cleckner discussed the updated mission and vision of the Institute. For an audio and visual of Ms. Cleckner's presentation visit: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

The Nature Conservancy Update – Olivia Green unavailable

- J. NYSDEC Hub Update – Tony Prestigiacomio unavailable-update is DEC is seeking water quality update assessments. Municipality forest grants are available and if interested see Dr. Effler.
- K. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Ann Robson roadside ditch efforts on Ensenore Road are highly effective, HAB monitoring-2 sightings reported so far. Received fundings for rain garden expansion, received funding from Emerson Foundation for ditch remediation efforts.
- L. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update –Frank Clarke August 3,4, & 5 had a successful 4 H Show/Fair & Life stock auction, Rain Barrel event next Thursday (Cayuga County Cooperative Extension FB page), August 23-nutrient management program field day, Shop meeting for corn silage for harvest prediction.
- M. 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>
- N. Communications: Marissa Jordan with Evidn discussed a Crops and Hops event 5-7 PM at Prison City August 16,2023.
- O. Issues of Concern: Ann Robson discussed the concern about the recent UWRR comments recently received from NYS and how the public can respond. Adam discussed the opportunity for public advocacy on this issue. Ed Wagner discussed a meeting with public outreach advocates and suggested there will be more to come on this issue.
- P. Next Meeting is Tuesday, September 19, 2023.
- Q. Adjourn adjourned at 11:11 AM
- R. Respectfully Submitted,
Vivian Cunningham