



## Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

June 15th, 2021, 10:00am – Director’s Summary

- The OLWMC awaits New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Bureau of Water Supply Protection responses to the community consensus update of the Owasco Lake WRR that are currently under their review. To date endorsement letters for the update have been delivered to that department by Senators Mannion, and Helming, and Assemblymembers Kelles and Lemondes. We understand the Senator Oberacker’s Office will be delivering their endorsement letter in the near term.
  - On Wednesday June 9<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM, a public webinar was given on the regulatory update process. The presenters were: Dan Shapley, Co-Director of Science and Patrol Program of Riverkeeper; Martin Daley, Director of Water Quality Programs of the Capital District Regional Planning Commission; and Steve Lynch, Director of Cayuga County Planning. There were 120 attendees, including from NYSDOH, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), municipal representatives, and non-governmental organizations.
- The Finger Lakes Lake Friendly Living (LFL) awareness week, a webinar series held the first week of May, had 438 registrants. The LFL Coalition of the Finger Lakes, of which the OLWMC is founding member, is looking to host this event on an annual basis. The event was endorsed via a resolution by the NYS Assembly, and that endorsement will be revisited annually. All webinar videos are now posted on the LFL Coalition website: <https://www.flrwa.org/lake-friendly-living>.
  - According to LFL program discussions with the Martin Point Homeowners Association (MPHOA), the association decided to review their certified applicator’s material safety data sheets and reduce their rate of chemical applications in common areas by 50 percent. Further, acting on behalf of the MPHOA, we communicated with the MPHOA certified chemical applicator, and gained a commitment they would no longer use chemical mixes containing phosphorus for use in common areas. The MPHOA is eligible for, and considering taking, the LFL pledge.
  - Information about the LFL pledge program can be found on the OLWMC website.
- The YMCA and Owasco Paddles offered their LFL pledge support and assistance with promoting LFL conservation at the south and norths ends of the lake, respectively. In partnership, Ally Berry, of the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD), is pursuing an educational workshop designed for YMCA youth to focus on watershed science and lake/Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) identification, reporting, and safety.
- The OLWMC’s June feature article with the Citizen newspaper coincided with the inception of a Wegmans Food Markets’ sponsorship program promoting the sale of LED

flares (rather than conventional incendiary flares) throughout the Finger Lakes Region. This program will benefit watershed and lake protection and generate revenue (via sales) to the OLWMC.

- In partnership with the City of Auburn, and CCSWCD, the OLWMC plans to leverage the Great Lakes Commission's (GLC) Conservation Kick program that would offer a small pool of funding for a targeted producer-led watershed conservation project.
- The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District annual report from 2020 is now available for review on-line at: [http://www.cayugaswcd.org/uploads/1/1/4/3/11439932/2020\\_annual\\_report\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.cayugaswcd.org/uploads/1/1/4/3/11439932/2020_annual_report_-_final.pdf)
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation - Office of Climate Change (OCC) is seeking proposals from qualified organizations to serve as climate leadership coordinators, to provide support services to communities as part of the Climate Smart Communities Program. We are planning to utilize this programming to engage communities in participatory climate future scenario planning, develop climate change adaptation and resilience plans, and convene climate and transportation listening sessions to inform sustainable and low-carbon transportation policies. These actions will help New York State meet its targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent of their 1990 levels by 2030 and increasing community resilience and adaptation to unavoidable current and future climate change impacts.
  - We will be working closely with Amanda Mazzoni, Principle Planner at the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board on grant funding and advancing an internship program to build capacity for the Town of Owasco's Climate Smart Community Certification as well as other watershed municipalities' registrations.
- From their public release, on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2021, "the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) announced it has permanently protected 93 acres in the town of Groton, Tompkins County with a conservation easement. Wholly located in the Owasco Lake watershed, the land was originally donated to the FLLT in 2019 with the understanding that it would be sold subject to an easement. The property features wetlands, agricultural fields, mature woodlands, and 4,710 feet of frontage on the Owasco Inlet and an unnamed tributary... In addition to ensuring habitat, protecting land in this area safeguards the water quality of Owasco Lake by filtering runoff to the inlet."
- On June 10, 2021, Silver Flies were released at Fillmore Glen State Park as an approach for top-down predatory mitigation of the Hemlock Wholly Adelgid that has infested trees throughout the park.
- The OLWMC is partnering with the Cayuga County Drug Free Community Coalition to help educate the watershed community on the proper disposal of unused prescription drugs. The OLWMC will work with the coalition to help secure an additional five years of program funding to support their educational campaign.
- The OLWMC will act as a key future partner, according to the selection of the City of Auburn as a municipal applicant to be awarded technical support via the 18-month long Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2).
- In a press release on May 5<sup>th</sup>, the Cayuga County Health Department announced "the New York State's Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) has opened Round 2 of the State Septic System Replacement Fund Program, which provides funds to replace old or

substandard septic systems located on or near lakefront properties. The OLWMC offers assistance with the promotion of that program.

- Hyfi tributary level sensors have been installed at various locations throughout the watershed. Recent installations, in partnership with Cayuga County Planning, include inlet and outlet sensors in all three basins of the Owasco Flats retention basins. The project team is attempting to link data outputs with SWAT modeling associated with the Nine Element (9E) Watershed Plan. Forthcoming installations include replacement in the Owasco Flats retention basins for improved service, and State Route 38 bridge (West Cayuga Street, just east of the Warner Road intersection and adjacent to the Owasco Inlet USGS gage station). A link to the landing page for data and time series tributary level graphs can be accessed on the OLWMC website.
- 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.

**Director's Summary Prepared by Adam Effler, June 11, 2021**