



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

July 15, 2025, 10:00-11:30 AM – 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** – 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** – Anne Clark, **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, Fleming-Karen VanLiew, Town of Moravia-Terry Palmer, Lansing-Joseph Wetmore. Ex. Officio members: John West (online), Gabriel Yurdon (online), Carol Sutkus, Frank Clarke, Jesse Lloyd, Michelle Wunderlich (online), Aaron McKeon, Natalie Stanton
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda made by Joseph Wetmore, seconded by Terry Palmer. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from June 17, 2025, Board Meeting as distributed via email. Motion to approve the minutes made by Joseph Wetmore, seconded by Ed Wagner. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- D. Public to be Heard: None Heard
- E. Director's Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting) for an audio/video of Dr. Effler's presentation please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
Watershed Rules and Regulations
Project Update:

The water purveyors won case #2, challenging NYSDOH's July 2024 denial of their rulemaking request concerning updating Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations. The court circulated its decision (provided with the July 2025 OLWMC board meeting documents) on July 3, 2025. Below are decision-relevant quotes from the judge:

"This Court will not be complicit in the silencing of municipalities fighting zealously to protect the potability of the drinking water of residents of New York State. DOH's determination is a final agency determination and is subject to review pursuant to Article 78.

"This Court is genuinely confused about why the DOH is donning proverbial blinders and refusing to acknowledge a fact that their own science proves. Their behavior is, frankly, the definition of arbitrary and capricious. The Respondents attempt to paint a picture that the Petitioners are being unreasonable in attempting to force DOH to adopt their proposed amendments. This is an unsuccessful, blame-shifting mischaracterization."

"The Petitioners are not upset about the DOH's refusal to promulgate the amendments they

proposed. Rather, they are upset at the DOH's decision, after years of research, meetings and proposals, to promulgate ANY new WRRs at all. The Petitioner is not insisting that DOH adopt all of their proposed WRRs. They are asking that some amendments to the existing WRRs be made in order to address HAB's which negatively impact the Petitioner's responsibility and ability to provide safe drinking water to their constituents. The Petitioners are reasonably and rationally asking the DOH to confirm their acknowledgment that nutrient pollution contributes to HABs and to come up with new WRRs that attempt to remediate this issue as the existing ones have not proven to be sufficient in this regard."

"Rather than engaging in a power struggle with results that endanger New York's residents, this Court questions why DOH doesn't simply work with the Petitioners to draft new WRRs that outline the remediation efforts DOH asserts they are already engaging in, after dedicating hundreds of millions of dollars to such an important cause. If the Respondents truly believe that all is well with

respect to the potability and recreational function of Owasco Lake's water for the present and the foreseeable future, then why make such sweeping proclamations about the importance the State has placed upon fixing the problem?"

"The Petitioners were stripped of any ability to protect their residents from a scientifically established threat. DOH's determination was contrary to all relevant science, all State-funded studies, and was made arbitrarily and capriciously."

"DOH is hereby directed to work collaboratively with the Petitioners to draft updated WRRs that address the very real problem of nutrient pollution caused by agricultural practices."

Partnering agencies, including the Cayuga County Planning and Health Departments and the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB) are collaborating with OLWMC staff to produce a more refined and easier to interpret regulatory watershed map.

Staff, Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects

Project Review:

Project Update:

The OLWMC staff article published in Auburnpub on June 27, 2025, composed by Adam Effler, featured the status of the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations update.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Update:

9E Coordination Committee members, the CCSWCD and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets collaborated on tabulating agricultural best management practices (BMPs) implemented within the Owasco Lake watershed to-date for inclusion within the committee's progress report.

The next 9E Coordination Committee meeting will be held on July 23, 2025.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

No new updates

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

No new updates

Municipal Codes and Ordinances

No new updates

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Programming:

The New York Harmful Algal Bloom System (NYHABS) link is now available to support NYS HABs monitoring efforts. The NYS program has a new url: on.ny.gov/nyhabs

The DEC's virtual HABs surveillance training was offered to volunteers on May 29, 2025.

A new research initiative at SUNY ESF, supported by a \$2 million donation from Sam and Carol Nappi, aims to better understand cause of algal blooms in Skaneateles Lake. This work, led by Dr. Stephen Shaw, Chair of the Environmental Resources Engineering Department, will study both harmful and non-toxic blooms that affect water quality, recreation, and public health in the region. The project will use tools like satellite imaging for daily monitoring, nutrient tracking, and predictive modeling to assess bloom risks. By working with local partners—including government agencies and community organizations—the research team hopes to develop practical strategies to protect lake health across the Finger Lakes; lakes in Cayuga

County and beyond, could apply these findings to improve drinking water quality and support recreation using data-driven approaches.

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Update:

A contract solicitation for hunting and stewarding the property was drafted and is poised for posting on the OLWMC's website.

Venice Property Acquisition Update:

Documentation required for closing on the property acquisition is mostly in order, and the OLWMC will schedule closing in the near term.

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:

No new updates

Organizational Bylaws Review:

The OLWMC Members are underway with reviewing the final draft for proposed updated OLWMC bylaws.

Grant Projects and Funding

NFWF SOGL Project Update:

The total willow cuttings earmarked for the project were enumerated at 27,000 cuttings in boxes of 700-1100 cuttings per box.

The project team will hold a site visit on Friday, July 18, 2025, to finalize plans and meet remaining needs for construction permit approval.

Relevant NYS Programming:

Owasco Lake Impairment Listing Review:

The week of January 13, 2025, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notified the NYSDEC that it is now required to designate Owasco Lake as an impaired water body due to HABs. Read more here: <https://www.epa.gov/tmdl/epas-addition-96-waterbodypollutant-combinations-new-york-2020-2022-303d-list>

Proposed Ambient Water Quality Guidance Values for Phosphorus Project 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 Update:

The Village of Moravia has bonded another \$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. While wastewater treatment is a necessity for any municipality, Davis said that in Moravia it's even more important because the village is in the Owasco Lake watershed. 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.

DEC's Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) grants are available, which now can fund road salt reduction plans. These plans can be funded in the "nonpoint, non-agricultural" category. These grants are part of the CFA and therefore are open to applications now. The actions in those plans can then be funded by WQIP grants in future rounds. One of the most meaningful things to be done at the municipal level is to adopt road salting best management practices to reduce use of road salt, while maintaining safe roads. Green Resiliency Grants Now Open (NYS Announcement in their words):

New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation is now accepting applications for the next round of Green Resiliency Grants. Governor Kathy Hochul made \$60 million available for vital stormwater management and resilient infrastructure projects in flood-prone communities across New York State. The program advances Governor Hochul's comprehensive clean water and resiliency agenda to protect New Yorkers from extreme weather, while making these projects more affordable to minimize the financial impact on local ratepayers. **Applications are due by 5:00 pm on August 15, 2025.** For questions, email Green Resiliency Grants or contact EFC's Community Assistance Teams.

NYS Relevant Bills Review:

Finger Lakes Watershed Steward act (S7627/A8073): This bill will be redrafted to address the watershed rules and regulations issues for Owasco Lake Watershed.

PFAS disclosure act (S227/A3296): The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that there exists no safe level of PFAS, and legislators are proceeding with legislation to require a clear and concise procedure for testing of PFAS in wastewater discharges. This will require operators with a SPDES permit to disclose measured PFAS levels with the public.

Harmful algal bloom monitoring and prevention act (S8356/A8867): Reintroduced under the 2025 legislative session, under new print, NYS Senate bill S1833 Enacts the 'Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring and Prevention Act.'

On June 10, 2025, Senate Bill S1833, which enacts the "harmful algal bloom monitoring and

prevention act,” was passed by the New York State Senate, delivered to the NYS Assembly, and referred to the Environmental Conservation Committee.

- F. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Joseph Wetmore reported that Cayuga Lake has had early widespread HABS outbreak.
- G. Treasurer’s Audit and Finance Report
 - i. June 2025 Financials Approval – Ed Wagner reported as of June 30, 2025 Total Checking Account \$313,452.42; Total Current Assets \$317,602.61; Total Liabilities and Equity \$373,032.61. Motion to approve finance report made by Ed Wagner and seconded by Terry Palmer. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
 - ii. Adam reported on the maturing CDs. We will have one maturing every 3 months to assure we will have an adequate cash to meet needs.
- H. Lake Level Report – John West reported the lake elevation at 712.68 ft. Main gate is back in full operation. Continues to monitor the weather forecast and make appropriate adjustments.
- I. NYSDEC FL Watershed Program – Gabriel Yurdon, for an audio update regarding funding opportunities please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- J. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Carol Sutkus provided an update that Abby Hai will be a new member of the Board of OWLA, volunteers are doing stream sampling and continuing the HABS program.
- K. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update – Frank Clarke reported on 7/22/25 a recycling event that discusses recycling options and what happens to recycled materials; 9/5 GIS and Drones event at CCC 9:30-3:30 registration required at CCE website. Cayuga County Fair Starting July 29 -Aug 2, at Union Springs Fire Department.
- L. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Jesse Lloyd-for an audio/video of this presentation please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- M. Communications: August 27, 2025, Global Aquatic Research will be presenting research on the association between Harmful Algal Blooms and foam on Owasco lake.
- N. Issues of Concern: None heard.
- O. Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday September 16, 2025. It was decided to schedule the next meeting in September and forego the August meeting.
- P. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Joseph Wetmore, seconded by Terry Palmer. Vote was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Meeting of the Members

Owasco – Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb -Coleman, **City of Auburn** – Ginny Kent

- A. Members– Roll call: Owasco-Ed Wagner, City of Auburn- Ginny Kent
- B. Resolution 02-2025 to add the Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority (CCWSA) as an Ex Officio Director
 - Motion to approve Resolution 02-2025 made by Ed Wagner. Motion seconded by Ginny Kent. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- C. Meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Vivian Cunningham

OWASCO LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT COUNCIL, INC.

RESOLUTION

A meeting of the Members of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, Inc. was convened on July 15, 2024 at 10:00 A.M. at City of Auburn Council Chambers, 24 South Street, Auburn, NY 13021 and the following resolution was duly offered and seconded to wit:

Resolution No. 02-25

Resolution to Add the Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority (CCWSA) as an Ex Officio Director to the Owasco Lake Watershed

Management Council (OLWMC)

MOTION BY: _Ginny Kent_____

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 1411 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law (“N-PCL”, and hereinafter referred to as the “Act”), and a Certificate of Incorporation (the “Certificate”) filed with the New York Secretary of State on the 23rd day of February, 2011, the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, Inc. (the “Corporation”) has been established as a not-for-profit, local development corporation to relieve and reduce unemployment, promote and provide for additional and maximum employment, improve and maintain job opportunities, instructing or training individuals to improve or develop their capabilities for such jobs, carrying on scientific research for the purpose of aiding a community or geographical area by attracting new industry to the community or area or by encouraging the development of, or retention of, an industry in the community or area, lessening the burdens of government and acting in the public interest, including undertaking programs and activities in furtherance of managing, monitoring and protecting the water resources of Owasco Lake and the water resources within the Owasco Lake Watershed for the well-being and benefit of the residents of the County; and

WHEREAS, the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC) is committed to coordinating actions for the protection and restoration of the health of Owasco Lake and its watershed, ensuring that Owasco Lake will continue to serve as a source of public drinking water, a recreational asset, an economic driver, and a vital

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natural resource for the well-being of residents and those who benefit from its protection, both now and for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority (CCWSA) shares a complementary mission to provide Cayuga County with quality water and sewer services, driven by the needs of the people and municipalities of Cayuga County, while ensuring that these services are provided at a reasonable cost, and prioritizing the protection of local resources and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the missions of the OLWMC and the CCWSA align with one another, particularly in the areas of environmental protection, water quality, and sustainable resource management; and

WHEREAS, members and partners of the OLWMC have expressed interest in welcoming the CCWSA as an Ex Officio Director, recognizing that this collaboration will foster better communication, increase efficiency, and create synergies between the two organizations for the benefit of Owasco Lake and its watershed; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion of an Ex Officio Director from the CCWSA will

enhance the ability of the OLWMC to effectively carry out its mission, provide valuable insight into local water and sewer needs, and promote a holistic approach to managing water resources within the watershed area;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council hereby invites and approves the addition of the Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority (CCWSA) as an Ex Officio Director of the OLWMC, with the authority to participate in meetings, provide advisory input, and collaborate with the OLWMC and its members in furthering the mission of the Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CCWSA Ex Officio Director shall have a voice in discussions but shall not have voting rights, in accordance with the established protocols for Ex Officio Directors.

SECOND BY: Ed Wagner

Dated: July 15, 2025

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Owasco Lake Watershed
Management Council, Inc.

Hon. Aileen McNabb Coleman, Cayuga County Legislator
Member, ex officio

Hon. Edward Wagner, Supervisor, Town of Owasco
Member, ex officio

Ginny Kent, Councilor, City of Auburn
Member, ex officio

CERTIFICATION

STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF CAYUGA

I, Ginny Kent, the undersigned, Secretary of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, Inc. (the "Corporation"), do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing extract of the minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Corporation, including the Resolution contained therein, held on July 15, 2025, with the original thereof on file in my office, and that the same is a true and correct copy of said original and of such Resolution set forth therein and of the whole of said original so far as the same relates to the subject matters therein referred to.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that (A) all members had due notice of said meeting; (B) said meeting was in all respects duly held; (C) pursuant to Article 7 of the Public Officers Law (the "Open Meetings Law:"), said meeting was open to the general public, and due notice of the time and place of said meeting was duly given in accordance with such Open Meetings law; and (D) there was a quorum of the members present throughout said meeting.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that, as of the date hereof, the attached Resolution is in full force and effect and has not been amended, repealed or rescinded.
