



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

August 16, 2022- Director's Summary

Regulatory and Planning and Projects Updates

Watershed Rules and Regulations Update:

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. This Workgroup has met four times thus far. During its most recent August 2, 2022 meeting, the technical workgroup revised the Storage of Petroleum, Chloride Salt and Coal provision of the proposed regulations, which will need minor revisions. Further details are outlined within the NYSDOH's project update report ([8.16.22 Monthly Owasco WRR Update for OLWMC.pdf](#)) delivered to the OLWMC Board of Directors, Ex Officio Partners, and engaged members of the public prior to the August 16, 2022 OLWMC public board meeting. The overall timeline for the project, described within the NYSDOH update, is as follows:

- Workgroup will meet approx. 6 times - June to Oct 2022
- NYSDOH will publish proposed amendments to WRRs- Nov 2022
- There will be a three-month public comment period- Feb 2023
- NYSDOH will submit their response to comments- Mar 2023
- NYSDOH will publish amendments to WRRs - May/June 2023

NYS Tributary Legislation Project Review:

An 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. The new law would offer permit-based protections that are currently provided to waterways with higher classifications. That is, if passed, the law will require the need for permit for certain stream access and project(s) scenarios. The bill passed both NYS houses and will need to be signed into law.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9E) Update:

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 planning process, which focuses primarily on limiting watershed sourced discharges of sediment and nutrients to Owasco Lake. The third and final 9E public meeting was held July 25, 2022. The project deadline is August 31, 2022. The OLWMC will provide a coordination role for future projects and programming according to the recommendations of the 9E.

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

Project Review:

Consultants for the City of Auburn's NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) gave to Auburn City Council on July 14, 2022 their presentation regarding potential water quality contaminant sources and source water protection recommendations.

Project Update:

On August 18, 2022, the DWSP2 working group will review the draft report and recommended implementation steps.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Reporting

Project Review:

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC's) NYHABs notification page is available for the 2022 monitoring season. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) encourages the community to "know it, report it, and avoid it."

Project Update:

A verified HAB was observed at the north end of Owasco Lake on August 10, 2022. Observations of HABs are increasing throughout the eastern Finger Lakes Region. The Owasco Watershed Lake Association leads the volunteer HABs surveillance program for Owasco Lake.

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Updates

- The OLWMC's July 30, 2022 feature article with the Citizen newspaper spotlighted measurable outcomes from the Lake Friendly Living Coalition's May educational series of events.
 - The feature article poised for publication in mid-August, 2022 will spotlight recent upgrades planned for the Village of Moravia's wastewater treatment facility.
- On July 29, 2022, Members of the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) used the OLWMC's physical watershed model for watershed science education. They used the model

again for presentation at the Hazard Library on August 2, 2022 and again at Seymour Public August 3. The Hazard Library event hosted 30 children ages 3 to 9 and 8 adults. Participants live in both the Owasco Lake and Cayuga Lake watersheds.

- On August 2, 2022, Cayuga County dairy farmers, as members of Partners for Healthy Watershed, provided a CAFO tour of Patterson Farms in Auburn, NY. The updated 2022 CAFO permit and the installation of on-farm best management practices were discussed.
- Mark Apfelbacher, CD3 Systems, will present at the September, 2022 OLWMC public board meeting on the newly upgraded boat wash station at the Emerson Park Boat launch.
- Senator Rachel May (NYS Senate District 53) plans to attend the OLWMC's September public board meeting.

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. Moreover, the goal of LFL awareness is 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 Coalition provided educational and hands on events during the May 2022 awareness series. 17 Lake Friendly Living community events were held across the Finger Lakes Region during the month of May. OLWMC staff coordinated webinar presentations on the NYS Climate Smart Communities program and the implementation of Emerson Park's new rain garden. Further, staff partnered with the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) for the May 21 community shrub willow planting project at the OLWMC's nursery in the Town of Owasco. The nursery will act as a long-term source of shrub willow for the future installation of riparian buffers within the watershed. In total, 462 shrub willow canes were installed. This project may 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. During the June 21, 2022 OLWMC public board meeting, Senator Mannion (NYS Senate District 50) delivered a NYS Legislative commemorative resolution endorsing the Finger Lakes wide effort. 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's (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 can 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.
- Staff will install an additional watercourse level sensor and assembly for a targeted stream monitoring location at Long Point Road.

Project Update:

The two-year pilot project grant period will be complete at the end of August, 2022. Project partners are discussing funding options for continuing the operation and maintenance of the watershed watercourse level sensors moving forward.

Land Holding

Project Review:

- The OLWMC is nearing the final transfer of a land preserve from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) that will advance its position as a land conservation steward for properties within the watershed. TNC acquired the property in the summer of 2021 using funds from the NYS Water Quality Improvement Program for the purpose of protecting the Owasco Lake water quality. The property consists of 164 acres located near 6053 Filmore Road in Sempronius (with a small portion in Summerhill). The Cayuga County tax map numbers are 212.00-1-51.2 and 51.2 (Sempronius property), and 223.00-1-1.822 (Summerhill property). 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.
- 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.’ The policies were adopted by the OLWMC at its June 21, 2022 public board meeting.

- A property liability insurance policy has been selected to cover the OLWMC’s new exposure.

Project Update:

- OLWMC’s Board of Directors has agreed to own and manage the Filmore Road property for the purposes of water quality protection and passive recreation. The OLWMC’s commitment to these terms is articulated in Resolution No. 02-22 approved at the July 19, 2022 OLWMC board meeting.
- The Notice of NYSDEC Grant Agreement has been provided to OLWMC. The OLWMC has agreed to follow the stewardship and management protocols approved by the DEC, as indicated in its adapted management protocols for the property.
- In early August, 2022 the NYSDEC approved the transfer of the Filmore Road property to the OLWMC.
- The property transfer closing will be scheduled for the fall of 2022.

Collaborative Monitoring Projects

Watershed Tributary Monitoring Project:

OLWMC staff continue to provide assistance with OWLA’s tributary monitoring program indented to support calibration of the 9E Plan SWAT watershed model.

Innovative Septic System Project:

OLWMC staff continue to assist with water quality monitoring efforts for an advanced septic system that was installed at the Y Camp on the eastern shore of Owasco lake. The project, spearheaded by TNC, in partnership with the Cayuga County Department of Health, is evaluating the effectiveness of an advanced phosphorus removal technology and will provide a related educational opportunity for campers and staff.

Annual Asian Clam Survey:

On August 9, 2022, in partnership with the Cayuga County Planning Department, OLWMC staff supported an annual field survey of aquatic invasive Asian Clams at the north end of Owasco Lake. Official results of the survey have not been tabulated, yet fewer clams were observed overall.

Grant Projects and Programs Underway

- **GLRI Conservation Kick Project**

Project Review:

In partnership, the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) 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 reviewed and approved the final WASCOB design.

Project Update:

CCSWCD is scheduled to install the on-farm WASCOB in September, 2022.

- **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:

On August 11, 2022, the OLWMC was informed that it's RCPP project proposal was not selected for funding.

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.

Summary Prepared by Adam Effler, August 12, 2022