



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

April 18, 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** – Gary Mulvaney, **Village of Groton** – Theodore Skibinski, **Summerhill** – Charlie Ripley, **Sennett** – Tom Blair, **Dryden** – Anne Clark
Executive Director- Adam Effler

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler: Welcomed Aimee Clinkhammer from NYSDEC.

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: **Owasco**-Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb -Coleman, **City of Auburn** – Ginny Kent, **Locke** – Thane Benson (online), **Scipio** – Melinda Pitman (online), **Fleming** – Karen VanLiew, **Village of Groton** – Theodore Skibinski (online), **Sennett** – Tom Blair,
Ex Officio: Ann Robson, Aimee Clinkhammer (Finger Lakes Hub NYSDEC), Nick Colas, Olivia Green, John West, Frank Clarke, Marissa Jordan, Anna Feldman, Chuck Mason,
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda made by Ed Wagner and seconded by Ginny Kent. Unanimous vote, motion carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from the March 21, 2023, meeting. Minutes were distributed electronically prior to the meeting: Motion to approve made by Ginny Kent and seconded by Aileen McNabb-Coleman. Unanimous vote, motion carried.
- D. Public to be Heard: Chuck Mason from Auburn City Clerk’s Office discussed-Owasco Lake clean up this weekend 4/22/23 will meet at Mill St dam at 10AM. Clean up starts for Earth Day. Coupons for free tree seedling will be distributed to participants.
- E. Director’s Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting)

Watershed Rules and Regulations

Project Update:

The project Workgroup will convene on May 2, 2023 to continue discussing the community consensus updated WRR. The following details were provided within NYSDOH’s project update report (4.18.23 Monthly Owasco WRR Update for OLWMC) delivered to the OLWMC Board of Directors, Ex Officio Partners, and engaged members of the public prior to the April 18, 2023 OLWMC public board meeting:

General Update:

NYSDOH convened weekly interagency agency meetings to review the proposed regulations, compile feedback and discuss watershed-wide strategies to help meet water quality goals. NYSDOH’s Division of Legal affairs completed its review of the proposed watershed rules & regulations and coordinated reviews with legal staff from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYS Agriculture & Markets. State staff are looking forward to gathering in-person on May 2 with the technical committee.

Tentative Schedule:

Additional State Agency Legal Meetings	April 2023
Legal meeting with City of Auburn	April 2023
Follow up with State-Local workgroup	May 2, 2023
Make final revisions to regulations	Sept 2023
Begin State Amendment Process	Oct 2023

NYS Tributary Legislation Project Review

S4162 was reintroduced in the 2023 legislative session under a new print number: S1725. There has been general opposition to the bill by NYS Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) based on the potential for stream restoration project delays due to new permitting requirements for Class C streams.

The NYS Senate, at the insistence of Environment Chairman Pete Harckham, has included protections for Class C streams in their budget. Governor Hochul vetoed regulating class C streams in December, 2022 with a veto memo arguing the bill belonged in the budget with monetary resources for implementation. The version included in the Senate’s “one-house” budget modifies the bill to exempt Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) from permitting requirements, if they have an MOU with the NYSDEC outlining appropriate stream protection measures. The ultimate goal of the stream protection bill is to protect stream corridors from disturbance, not to complicate the work of SWCDs. Furthermore, the reduction in permitting requirements for SWCDs would help alleviate some of the NYSDEC budgetary/staffing concerns that the Governor indicated as part of her opposition to the bill. Importantly, the bill now includes \$1 million in implementation funds to cover staff hires to implement.

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects Updates

- The annual Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division Annual Report for 2022 is nearly complete. The report will be printed in the form of a brochure and delivered to municipal offices for further public distribution. A digital version of the report will be made available to municipalities that wish to feature the report on their website. Staff will provide an associated update to Auburn City Council on May 11, 2023.
- OLWMC staff have provided for new visibility of the OLWMC’s ‘Clean, Drain, Dry’ portable boat stewardship billboard, which is now positioned at a Cayuga County owned pull-off along Route 38. The billboard will be relocated at the Emerson Park Boat launch over the summer.
- Published feature articles with the Citizen newspaper continue to target recognition of watershed residents making strides in watershed protection. The OLWMC’s feature article with the Citizen for April features lakeshore residents using proper erosion controls on construction projects. The May article will feature collaborative efforts towards ditch

remediation along Ensenore Road.

- The Owasco Lake watershed's 2023 Lake Friendly Living (LFL) event will be a raingarden expansion project held at Emerson Park on May 20, 2023 from 10AM-2PM. Volunteers are encouraged to participate. Wegmans Food Markets will sponsor the cost of lunch for volunteers at the event. LFL Coalition partners are assisting with the preparation of event flyers for the rain garden event as well as other action events that will be held across the Finger Lakes Region. A request was made for a NYS legislative resolution to commemorate the LFL Coalition again in 2023.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Update:

The Owasco Lake 9E watershed plan Coordination Committee, charged with coordinating and funding implementation of the 9EP, discussed its 2023 work plan at its most recent March 30, 2023 meeting. The Committee will continue to convene on a monthly basis with the next meeting scheduled for April 27, 2023.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Project Update:

- The Cayuga County Planning Department and Owasco Lake and watershed water quality monitoring partners are finalizing a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for submittal to the NYSDEC that will reflect monitoring logistics for the 2023 field season.

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

- A refined draft of the City of Auburn's DWSP2 was recently 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.

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:

- Consistent with previous year, in 2022, the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) led the volunteer HABs surveillance program for Owasco Lake.
- Generally, year over year, observations of HABs are increasing throughout the eastern Finger Lakes Region. Importantly, associated cyanotoxin levels in Owasco Lake's raw water have been elevated this year from previous years.

- HABs season has ended for 2022, and the NYSDEC’s NYHABs notification page is no longer available for reference. The NYSDEC’s HABs Archive Page is available for reference. During 2022, 198 waterbodies statewide were listed with "Confirmed HABs" NYHABs. Over 1,600 HAB reports were collected by NYSDEC and its partners, and of these, over 1,000 met DEC criteria for a Confirmed HAB. The reports ranged from a single observation to widespread blooms that were persistent throughout the season. HABs may occur on waterbodies throughout the year, although fewer blooms occur as water and air temperatures decrease.

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Review:

- OLWMC closed on the property transfer of the Fillmore Nature Preserve from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on January 10, 2023. Fillmore Nature Preserve property boundary signage was installed by OLWMC staff with the help of TNC on March 8, 2023. The associated field trip accommodated the first annual property inspection to meet the OLWMC’s annual property inspection commitment.

Opportunities:

- 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:
 - 00-acre parcel in Locke, mixed farmland
 - 72-acre parcel in Venice, dense wetland

Hyfi Watercourse Level Sensors Project Review:

- OLWMC staff currently maintain 16 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 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.
- 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 two-year pilot project grant period is complete.
- The NYSDEC does not support the future use of the level sensors and the development of rating curves to generate tributary flow estimates to be used for future SWAT model calibration. A funding request was made to maintain level sensors within the Owasco Flats, and the remaining sensors are likely to be decommissioned.
- OLWMC staff will uninstall and return Hyfi tributary level sensors except for funded sensors positioned within the Owasco Flats.

Programs, Funding, and Related Opportunities

SOGL

Project Review:

The OLWMC submitted a Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) 2023 project pre-proposal that targets funding stream restoration and improvement projects along stream reaches of the Owasco Inlet in the southern municipalities of Moravia and Locke. Prior surveys and monitoring by Cayuga County have identified several locations of streambank erosion and flooding along the proposed reaches. This proposed project serves to address streambank erosion in two main tributaries that encompass 60 percent of the acreage of the lake's watershed and are responsible for approximately 40 percent of phosphorus loading into the lake. This proposed project is in conjunction with the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, with project monitoring that ties into tributary monitoring plans by the Owasco Watershed Lake Association.

- Total Amount Requested: \$299,640.00
- Matching Contributions Proposed: \$100,360.00

Project Update:

A Sustain Our Great Lakes funding proposal is being developed in partnership with Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) and EA Consulting, targeting stream restoration along the Owasco Inlet. Based on a successful pre-proposal we were invited to submit a full project proposal.

The CCSWCD is collecting photos of potential project sites between Booth Hill Road and Cat Path Road in the Town of Locke. Landowners in that reach along the Owasco Inlet have expressed concern about severe streambank erosion in those areas.

TAIP

Project Review:

The Tributary Assessment 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. OLWMC staff plan to expand this initiative, and propose that 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. Municipal resolutions and engagement with the NYS Department of Transportation and Cayuga County Highway Department are underway. OLWMC staff are finalizing planning and approvals for the expansion of tributary identification signage in the southern portion of the Owasco Lake watershed.

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: Aileen discussed that the Cayuga County Legislature will readdress the water quality monitoring.
- G. Treasurer’s Audit and Finance Report
 - i. March 2023 Financials Approval – Ed Wagner reported that as of March 31, 2023 Total Cash on hand was \$50,000 in a 6-month CD, \$100,000 in a one-year CD and \$109,785.89 in the checking account. Total Liabilities and Equity were \$333,570.79. Motion to approve the report made by Ed Wagner seconded by Aileen McNabb-Coleman unanimous vote, motion carried.
 - ii. Request \$200 for OLWA for use of development of the rain garden. Motion to approve request made by Aileen McNabb-Coleman and seconded by Ginny Kent. The vote was unanimous and motion carried.
- H. Lake Level Report – John West’s report is the department is dropping the lake flow today through Thursday for work on lake. Level 712.5 ft and holding steady for summer levels.
- I. 9EP SWAT Modeling – Anna Feldman, Yale MS student, program on Evaluating BMP scenarios on SWAT

Watershed Management. To view this informative presentation, please go to <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

- J. 'Our Owasco' Behavioral Change Project Update –Marissa Jordan-Evidn is republishing articles concerning the contribution of farming for the community and are planning future programs for the farming community.
- K. The Nature Conservancy Update – Olivia Green- The Nature Conservancy recently closed on an easement in the Town of Venice on 95 stream-crossed acres in the watershed with lots of wildlife and varied plant life. This is private property and will be protected in perpetuity.
- L. NYSDEC Hub Update – Tony Prestigiacommo -not available. Aimee Clinkhammer discussed a new project with Ag & Markets to provide cover crops in CNY Finger Lakes counties. She also announced Federal funding for tree planting on nonfederal land for municipalities and nonprofits. The governor recently announced listening tours on an environmental act.
- M. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Ann Robson, OWLA, discussed presentations for Earth Day and providing trees for people participating in cleaning up Owasco Lake. WCNY will present on 5/11/23 at 11AM *Bloom* a program on HABS with interviews of local people. She also discussed the need for volunteers for water quality sampling for the upcoming season.
- N. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update – Frank Clarke: Today at 1:00 a tile drainage workshop at Soil and Water Conservation District will be held.
- O. Partners for Healthy Watersheds Update – Greg Rejman unavailable.
- P. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Ally Berry to view this presentation go to <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- Q. Communications: None heard
- R. Issues of Concern: None heard.
- S. Schedule Next Meeting scheduled for May 16, 2023, at 10.00 AM.
- T. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Ed Wagner seconded by Karen VanLiew. There was a unanimous vote, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Vivian Cunningham

Attachment: Groton Village Resolution.

**RESOLUTION BY THE VILLAGE OF GROTON TO JOIN THE OWASCO LAKE WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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 lessen the burdens of government and act in the public interest in a number of ways, including undertaking programs and activities in furtherance of managing, monitoring and protecting the water resources of Owasco Lake and within its watershed for the well- being and benefit of the residents who use these water resources and the residents who live within the watershed; and

WHEREAS, the By-Laws of the Corporation allow for the addition of Directors to the Corporation by majority vote of the current Directors; and

WHEREAS, participation of the municipalities located within the Owasco Lake Watershed as Directors of the Corporation will provide all of the Directors a greater understanding of the issues affecting Owasco Lake from a watershed-wide perspective and enhance the Corporation’s ability to obtain grant funding for the implementation of watershed protection projects; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village of Groton hereby declares its intent to join the Corporation and thereby authorizes and appoints Code/Zoning Officer Theodore Skibinski to become a Director of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council and to represent the Village of Groton on the Corporation’s Board of Directors.

The question of the foregoing motion was duly put to a vote on April 3, 2023 and upon roll call was as follows:

Mayor Christopher Neville	Voting – Yes
Trustee Morey	Voting – Yes
Trustee Conger	Voting – Yes
