



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

April 19, 2022, 10:00am – Director’s Summary

Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD) Updates

- The OLWIPD of the OLWMC is watching closely for watershed land disturbances that might pose a threat to increased sediment runoff and pollutant loading to the lake.
- Watershed Inspectors participated in a septic system inspection training program offered by the Cayuga County Department of Health March 28 and 29, 2022.
- On March 31, staff met with Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District (TCSWCD) staff to coordinate planning and preparation for a collaborative sediment sock implementation project for reducing erosion along exposed ditches in Owasco Lake watershed portions of Tompkins County.
- OLWIPD staff performed a scheduled tour of the Village of Moravia wastewater treatment facility on April 12.
- On April 21, Watershed Inspectors will participate in a sediment and erosion control training course provided by the Cayuga County SWCD.

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach

- The OLWMC’s April feature article with the Citizen newspaper spotlighted the Lake Friendly Living Coalition’s pledge program, recent NYS commemorative resolution, and May, 2022 awareness webinar and live event series.
- Staff have finalized the OLWIPD/OLWMC combined 2021 annual report. Consistent with previous years, the annual report was prepared in the form of an informational brochure and delivered to watershed municipal offices for further distribution.
- The Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) plans to provide watershed science education in the classroom and are poised to use the OLWMC’s physical grant awarded watershed model as an educational tool.
- The OLWMC’s aquatic invasive species (AIS) ‘Clean, Drain, Dry’ Portaboard® trailer will be moved from its winter location outside the Cayuga County Parks and Trails office to the Emerson Park boat launch for the purpose of increased visibility.

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. The achieved goal of the LFL awareness week in 2021 was 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 is underway with planning and preparation for its May 2022 awareness webinar and live events series that will focus on the intersection of water quality protection and climate smart programming. Promotions for the series will be forthcoming. This year, the group has facilitated onboarding Conesus, Honeoye, and Keuka Lake watershed organizations, as new members to help advance the common Finger Lakes Region messaging campaign. Over the course of this field season, the OLWMC and OWLA will finalize the installation of LFL signage on Tributary Adoption and Identification Pilot Program (TAIPP) sign posts throughout the watershed.

Project Update:

- As a founding member of the Finger Lakes Coalition, the OLWMC coordinated a NYS Legislative resolution commemorating Lake Friendly Living Awareness in the Finger Lakes Region. Endorsement resolutions passed in both houses in March. On April 7, OLWMC staff hosted an introductory meeting for Senator John Mannion (District 50) and Assemblymember Kelles (District 125) and LFL Coalition members to offer an opportunity for collaboration, mutual support, and program recognition.
- OLWMC staff helped prepare the introductory presentation for the May awareness series that is now available for viewing on the Coalition's website (www.flrwa.org/lake-friendly-living). Staff also helped coordinate, among local leaders, webinar presentations on the NYS Climate Smart Communities program and the implementation of Emerson Park's new rain garden. All event registrations will be available on the Coalition's website.
- The LFL Series events calendar will be published via the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce and Life in the Finger Lakes magazine. Event promotional flyers are forthcoming.

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 flow 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 watercourse level sensors. Many of the sensors casements have cracked during winter freezes, and Hyfi has shipped replacement sensors that have been engineered to be

resistant to cracking. OLWIPD staff will be installing those replacement sensors during the spring of 2022.

Hyfi Project Updates:

1. With project support from OLWMC staff, OWLA's 2022 sediment and nutrient sampling program, which has elements of both routine and storm event sampling, will align with watercourse level sensor locations. A project will provide invaluable lake loading information for continued calibration of the SWAT model.
2. The project team has requested an additional sensor and assembly for a newly targeted monitoring location on Long Point Creek.
3. The Owasco Lake watershed piloted Hyfi sensor platform recently won the Verizon Climate Resilience Prize for 2022.

Watershed Partner Collaboration- Projects Updates

- 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 process and has recently developed an appendix to report recent project and programming outcomes associated with 9E recommendations. There will be a third public meeting for the public to review project updates.
- The Steering Committee for the updated community consensus watershed rules and regulations (WRR) awaits a meeting schedule from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to discuss next steps and will be convening soon. NYSDOH upper management are holding off scheduling a joint DOH and WRR Steering Committee meeting until they meet with the NYS Chamber in April.
- The OLWMC offers partnership and support for the City of Auburn's NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2). The working group has identified high risk areas and is finalizing source water protection recommendations.
- The OLWMC endorsed the Town of Owasco's application for a grant from NYS and Federal representatives for a sanitary system improvement project.
- The OLWMC continues to work towards a transfer of ownership of a ~160-acre priority parcel in Sempronius from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to the OLWMC that will advance the council's position as a land conservation steward within the watershed. Insurance details and premium estimates were provided by our insurance provider. 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 land preserves. The OLWMC will develop a land stewardship/maintenance plan for land holdings to ensure project responsibilities are met.
- OLWMC staff are coordinating with the State University of New York Environmental Science and Forestry for a May 2022 collaborative willow planting project at the OLWMC's nursery in the Town of Owasco with the intent that the nursery will act as a long-term source of willow canes for the installation of future riparian buffers within the watershed. This project can also host an opportunity for a student undergraduate internship and/or capstone project in 2023.

- The OLWMC is ramping up its LED road flares promotional program in partnership with Wegmans Food Markets, as part of a Finger Lakes regional effort. LED flares provide a safer and watershed friendly alternative to conventional incendiary flares.
- Our Keynote Presenter for next month's May, 17 OLWMC public board meeting will be Kirsten Workman, Nutrient Management and Environmental Sustainability Specialist from Cornell ProDairy. She will present on advancements in, and recommendations for, cover cropping with the Owasco Lake watershed.

Grants Projects and Programs

- GLRI Conservation Kick Project

Project Review: In partnership, the Cayuga County SWCD assisted a watershed farm land owner to finalize their application for the installation of a water and sediment control basin (WASCOB). The project will be funded, in part, by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Conservation Kick Program. The City of Auburn invested the required cost share for the grant award to be 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 (*17,258 'water quality credits' will be generated by the practice installation. This reflects an estimated 17,721 pounds of nitrogen and 1,262.5 pounds of total phosphorus reductions over the course of the project period*). Project partners finalized contract details. Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District Engineer and Auburn Director of Municipal Utilities have reviewed the final WASCOB design for approval.

- NRCS RCPP

Project Update: On April 13, the OLWMC submitted a project proposal through the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program (NRCS RCPP). We 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.

- Climate Smart Communities

Project Update: The Town of Owasco has earned the bronze level certification through the NYS Climate Smart Communities program. This is the greatest program certification achievement of any municipality within Cayuga County. The Town's application was approved for 20 actions in 7 categories for a total of 172 points.

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; we continue to encourage the Board of Directors to reach out to representatives from these towns to elicit municipality interest.

HABs

- NYHABS

Project Update: The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC's) NYHABS website remains unavailable until the 2022 monitoring season begins in May 2022. We are coordinating a HABs reporting training opportunity by the NYSDEC Finger Lakes Hub to ensure partners and volunteers properly identify and report HABs occurrences in 2022.

Prepared by Adam Effler, April 14, 2022