



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council  
March 21, 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** – Nancy Niswender, **Summerhill** –  
Charlie Ripley, **Sennett** – Tom Blair, **Dryden** – Anne Clark  
**Executive Director**- Adam Effler

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler:

A. Board of Directors – Roll call; **Auburn**-Ginny Kent, **Cayuga Co**-Aileen McNabb, **Owasco**-Ed Wagner, **Fleming** – Karen VanLiew, **Moravia** – Terry Baxter, **Village of Moravia** – Gary Mulvaney, **Scipio**-Melinda Pitman, **Niles** – Joan Jayne, **Locke** – Thane Benson (online)

B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve agenda made by Joan Jayne seconded by Gary Mulvaney motion carried unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes from the January 17, 2023, meeting. Motion to approve minutes made by Joan Jayne seconded by Gary Mulvaney motion carried unanimously.

D. Discussion of notes from the February 21, 2023, meeting:

E. Public to be Heard:

F. Director's Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting)

**Watershed Rules and Regulations**

Project Review:

NYSDOH project updates are posted on the OLWMC's website (<https://www.olwmc.org/projects>)

Project Update:

The project Workgroup will convene on May 2, 2023 to continue discussing the community consensus updated WRR.

NYS Tributary Legislation Project Review

Project Review:

### Project Update:

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 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.

### **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.

### **Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)**

#### Project Update:

The second 9E Coordination Committee meeting was held on March 2, 2023. A live tabular spreadsheet was developed for the group to track projects completed, underway, and proposed in the context of the recommendations of the 9EP. The group will target existing and future funding pathways to support 9EP implementation.

Our next group meeting is scheduled for March 30, 2023. Project meetings will track a semi-monthly schedule.

### **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) have convened with City of Auburn water resource managers and partners to identify potential sources of Owasco Lake water quality contamination and provide recommendations for resource protection. Project consultants provided recommendations to Auburn City Council on July 14, 2022. The DWSP2 committee reviewed and edited the draft plan. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and NYSDOH are also reviewing the plan and will provide comments. Barring any changes based on agency feedback, the plan can be finalized. At that point, Auburn City Council will be asked to endorse the plan and name the implementation team. During the last meeting, the committee discussed implementation steps and expressed support desired from consultants and NYSDEC/NYSDOH to help maintain momentum.

- The Town of Owasco’s application for the DWSP2 was received and reviewed by NYS agencies. A program award to the Town of Owasco from NYS would piggyback on the City of Auburn’s plan and extend resources to target continued and more detailed planning, facilitated by the NYS-funded consultants, to coordinate and propose specific projects. The proposed projects and programming would represent the broad recommendations of the overall watershed-based plan.
- 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.

### **Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Reporting**

#### **Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects Update**

##### Project Review:

- Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) awareness (and mitigation) project partners decide to provide for new visibility of the OLWMC’s ‘Clean, Drain, Dry’ portable billboard currently positioned at the Emerson Park boat launch. In 2023, staff are planning to target improved visibility at the south end of the watershed by positioning the billboard on a Cayuga County owned pull-off along Route 38. The billboard was relocated from the Emerson Park Boat launch back to its winter location adjacent to the Cayuga County Parks and Trails building.
- The Town of Dryden Conservation Board is considering its recommendation to the Dryden Town Board for the Town to resolve to take the Lake Friendly Living (LFL) Pledge.
- OLWMC staff have committed to monthly feature articles with the Citizen in 2023. Consistent with previous years, articles will target recognition of watershed residents making strides in watershed protection.

##### Project Update:

- OLWMC staff are finalizing the annual Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division Annual Report for 2022, which will include a summary section of the OLWMC’s broad accomplishments over the course of that year. 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.
- The OLWMC’s March staff feature article with the Citizen newspaper provides background concerning the objective of reducing phosphorous loading to Owasco, as well as related information about the Lake Friendly Living program and the NYSDEC’s ‘look for the zero’ campaign.

## **Land Holdings**

### **OLWMC 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.

### **OLWMC Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Update:**

- 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.

### **Consideration of Future Land Holdings (Update)**

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

- **Partner Projects Review:**

- At year-end in 2022, the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) accepted the donation of a conservation easement on 160 acres of farmland from the Post family in the Owasco Lake watershed. The easement provides for the expansion of existing stream buffers. FLLT staff and volunteers will plant native trees and shrubs in these areas later this year.
- FLLT partnered with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to restore several acres of wetlands on a parcel currently owned by the Land Trust that will be transferred to NYSDEC for inclusion in the state's Owasco Flats Wildlife Management Area.

## **Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring**

### **Project Review:**

- The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will be paring down its funding of the Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) in the Finger Lakes Region by nearly half. They will cover the costs of between four and eight samples this year and expect to cover four samples in future program years. Local lake stewards will be responsible for covering the costs and sampling for any additional samples.
- Owasco Lake and watershed monitoring partners prepared a comprehensive monitoring budget that includes costs for 1) a new Owasco Lake monitoring role by

the Finger Lakes Institute, Hobart William Smith Colleges, 2) laboratory analysis for watershed tributary samples collected by the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA), 3) continued funding of the USGS gauge station along the Inlet, 4) continuation of the Citizen's Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) and 5) the continuation of Hyfi level sensor use for monitoring water levels within the Owasco Flats constructed retention basins. The Cayuga County Planning Department submitted elements of the program budget to the NYSDEC for approval as part of their 2023 Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA) budget.

Project Update:

- Owasco Lake tributary 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.

**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.

Project Update:

- OLWMC staff will uninstall and return Hyfi tributary level sensors except for funded sensors positioned within the Owasco Flats.

**Programs, Funding, and Related Opportunities**

Opportunities Review:

Distribution of NYS 2022 Environmental Bond Act funding is still being developed. Most likely, the details will be hashed out, refined, and ultimately implemented through the NYS budget. General project goals can be found here: [https://cleanwaterandjobs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Bond-Act-funding-by-program\\_final.pdf](https://cleanwaterandjobs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Bond-Act-funding-by-program_final.pdf)

Opportunities Updates:

**1. The Sustain Our Great Lakes Program announced the 2023 Request for Proposals.**

**Their solicitation (in their words) is italicized below:**

*The Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) program is soliciting proposals to benefit fish, wildlife, habitat and water quality in the Great Lakes basin. The program will award up to \$18.7 million in grants in 2023 to improve and enhance: 1) stream, riparian and coastal habitats to benefit species; 2) water quality in the Great Lakes and its tributaries.*

*In 2023, grant funding will be awarded in six categories:*

- Habitat Restoration to Conserve Species and Improve Water Quality*
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Great Lakes Communities*
- Expand Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Great Lakes Communities*
- Invasive Species Control to Protect and Enhance Restored Habitat*
- Conservation Practices and Regenerative Agriculture on Working Lands*

SOGL Project Update:

The OLWMC submitted a 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

2. 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.

3. The DEC delivered their annual solicitation for the ‘Buffer in a Bag’ program. To qualify, landowners must have property in New York State with at least 50 feet bordering a stream, river, or lake, and provide photos or a map of the planting location. Qualifying private and public landowners may apply for a free bag of 25 tree and shrub seedlings for planting near streams, rivers, or lakes to help stabilize banks, protect water quality, combat climate change, and improve wildlife habitat. Visit NYSDEC's website for more information about the Buffer in a Bag application process and requirements. Applications are due by 3 p.m. on April 7, 2023. Contact <mailto:treesfortribs@dec.ny.gov> with questions.
4. **Navigating Grant Funding: Municipal Success Stories-** DEC and the NYS Association of Regional Councils hosted and recorded a webinar on March 1, 2023 to highlight strategies used by municipalities of various sizes across New York State to secure grant funding. Municipalities shared information, such as how they access grant funds, what barriers they’ve had to overcome, lessons learned, the skill sets needed, and the key players necessary to access grant funding. DEC encourages municipal officials, especially those who think they do not have the expertise to apply for grants, to view the [recorded webinar](#).

### **Municipal Funding Opportunities Review**

1. The NYSDEC Municipal Zero-emission Vehicle (ZEV) Rebate Program has awarded \$567,500 from the Environmental Protection Fund to municipalities for the purchase or lease of electric light- and medium-duty fleet vehicles. The Municipal ZEV Rebate Program continues to support municipal efforts to mitigate further climate change. Since it began in 2016, the ZEV Rebate Program has awarded over \$1.5 million (including this round) towards the purchase or lease of 114 plug-in hybrid vehicles and 182 all-electric vehicles.
2. Governor Hochul recently announced the new Green Purchasing Communities Program that helps local governments to ensure that the products they are purchasing have a lower environmental impact. Local governments that participate will receive recognition for their commitment to purchasing green products and services through the Climate Smart Communities program. Learn more here: <https://ogs.ny.gov/green-purchasing-communities>

The Nature Conservancy is interested in purchasing additional lands for possible turning over to OLWMC for stewardship. Discussion of the Board holding further properties that would require additional responsibilities on the part of the organization in terms of

monitoring, insurance, nature of properties and potential for recreation.

- G. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: None heard.
- H. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
  - a. January 2023 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported as of January 31, 2023, Total current assets \$290,576.79 and Total Liabilities and Equity \$365,566.49. Motion to approve made by Mel Pitman seconded by Karen VanLiew vote was unanimously approved. Motion carried.
  - b. February 2023 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported that as of February 28, 2023 Total current assets \$289,815.00 and Total Liabilities and Equity \$ 363,232.28 Motion to approve made by Ginny Kent seconded by Karen VanLiew vote was unanimously approved. Motion carried.
  - c. Pursuing annual audit and gathering necessary documents. The bookkeeper prepared the pro forma with the budgetary outlook for the next several years that has been uploaded via the NYS Comptroller's office as required and will be upload to the OLWMC website. Delivered pro forma prior to the meeting 2019-2022 actuals and 2023 has been approved, 2024-2026 are estimates. Resolution to approve pro forma as delivered made by Ginny Kent and seconded by Mel Pitman. Vote was unanimous. Resolution passed.
  - d. Dr. Effler brought to the Director's attention that the checking account has dropped below \$200,00 and suggested transitions some finances to an interest-bearing account to provide a \$450,000 safety net in case of an unexpected expense. Tompkins County Bank offers CD interest 3.2% at 6 months, 4 @ 12 months. Adam suggested moving \$50,000 into a 6-month CD and \$400,000 into a 12-month CD. This would generate \$5600 over one year. Joan Jayne made a motion to approve allocate the funds to 6/12-month CD and seconded by Ginny Kent. Vote was unanimously approved.
- I. Lake Level Report – John West- Lake elevation picked up about 1 foot with snow melt. Working to get to 712.5 ft. for summer elevation. Keeping an eye on Spring rains to raise lake level slowly.
- J. Cayuga County Soil and Water, 2022 Watershed Implementation – Tim Schneider to view presentation go to: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- K. Tompkins County Soil and Water, 2022 Watershed Implementation – Jon Negley: to view presentation go to: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- L. 2023 Lake Monitoring Planning Update– Michele Wunderlich- Partially funding Owasco Lake tributary sampling program, in addition to numerous other programs.
- M. 'Our Owasco' Behavioral Change Project Update –Marissa Jordan-presented at the recent OWLA symposia.
- N. The Nature Conservancy Update – Olivia Green: Stewardship and training project later this month. Stony Brook and Cayuga County septic Phosphorus pilot installation started. Reforestation pilot kicked off in riparian replanting projection for ambitious tree planting goals.
- O. NYSDEC Hub Update – Tony Prestigiacomo: unavailable.



- P. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Ann Robson: Great presentations from Evidn, and others. The Scientific presentations from symposium are available on *You Tube* under OLWA.
- Q. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update –Frank Clarke- March 23 Landscape to Lake program, 4/1 Electronics recycling event, 4/18 tile drainage workshop.
- R. Partners for Healthy Watersheds Update – Greg Rejman-unavailable
- S. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Ally Berry to view this report please visit. <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- T. Communications: Finger Laker Partners for invasive species (prism) has 2023 summer jobs available.
- U. Issues of Concern: None heard.
- V. Next meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2023, at 10:00 AM.
- W. Adjourn. Motion to adjourn made by June Jayne seconded by Gary Mulvaney unanimous vote. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Vivian Cunningham