



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

October 15, 2024, 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** – 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, Meeting called to order at 10:02 AM.

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: **Owasco**-Ed Wagner, **City of Auburn** – Ginny Kent, **Niles** – Joan Jayne, **Scipio** – Nancy Hart, **Fleming** – Karen VanLiew, **Town of Moravia** – Terry Palmer, **Dryden**-Anne Clark (online). Ex Officio attendees: John West, Ani Fish, Carol Sutkus, Frank Clarke, Jesse Lloyd, Lexie Davies (NYS DEC, online), Doug Kierst Cayuga Co Soil & Water, Abigail Hai
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve the emailed agenda made by Joan Jayne and seconded by Terry Palmer. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from September 17, 2024, Board Meeting: Motion to approve the emailed September 17, 2024, Board Meeting minutes was made Nancy Hart by and seconded by Ed Wagner. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- D. Public to be Heard: None Heard
- E. Reorganization Resolution – Ed Wagner presented a resolution to improve recruitment and retention of OLWMC employees by formally exploring with the City of Auburn the employment of the Council’s employees. Motion made by Ed Wagner and seconded by Ginny Kent. Discussion included that such a change will require a change in bylaws and discussion of financial remuneration. Ginny Kent suggested the City Council is aware of the difficulty recruiting employees and thinks the Council may be supportive. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried. The resolution will now go to the Auburn City Council.
- F. Director’s Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting). Audio/visual updates can be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
Staff, Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Project Updates
 - The OLWMC’s staff feature article published with the Citizen on September 20, 2024, featured the OLWMC’s advancement of its collaborative stream restoration project on the Owasco Inlet.
 - The October feature article will provide recommendations for pre-winter construction site stabilization.
 - On September 18, 2024, OLWMC staff partnered with the Cayuga County Planning Department to present on threats of invasive species with school children at the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District’s (CCSWCD’s) Conservation Field Days.
 - OLWMC staff maintained the OLWMC’s Shrub Willow Nursery on September 30, 2024. The shrub material is established well enough for cutting and repurposing elsewhere. Partners attending the October 3, 2024, Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency meeting were welcomed to resource the material for their projects.
 - OLWMC staff will be presenting at the March 8, 2025, Bob Brower scientific symposium, featuring topics

including 9E implementation, OLWIPD roles, and seeking funding for agricultural programming.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Update

- The City of Auburn is finalizing its grant contract with NYS, according to the proposed Owasco Lake HUC12 stream corridor assessment project. That project will provide support for proposed land acquisitions therein by the Finger Lakes Land Trust. The 9E committee is considering replicating this project for priority subwatersheds across the watershed, understanding that stream corridor assessments will provide a pathway for funding related stream restoration projects.
- The committee will be pursuing dedicated funding for a farmer-driven OLWAP that will piggyback on a comparable program for Skaneateles. Committee members will schedule meetings with officials to discuss this collaborative approach.
- The next 9E Coordination Committee meeting is scheduled for October 23, 2024.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Owasco Lake Tributary Monitoring Project Update

- OWLA's 10th and final Owasco Lake tributary sampling run of 2024 was conducted on September 23, 2024.
 - There remains funding for storm event sampling, if there is a storm-based exceedance of the decided level threshold (i.e., 6 feet) at the Inlet USGS station.
- Assistant professors from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) provided processing and analyses in kind for both tributary and lake data from recent years. The monitoring team convened on October 2, 2024, to discuss trends and recommendations.

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

Project Update:

The project Community Advisory Group is finalizing changes to the DWSP2 for transmittal to, and approval by, NYS. Among other recent changes, the group is including the Owasco Lake Watershed Agricultural Program concept within the proposed plan for the prospect of NYS funding the farmer-driven program in coming years.

Municipal Codes and Ordinances

Project Review:

- Proposed erosion and sediment control ordinances concerning new construction activities were prepared for OLWMC directing municipalities for their independent board review and consideration for adoption.
 - 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.
 - The Town of Fleming reviewed the proposed ordinances and concluded that they already have adequate protections in place concerning new construction activities as part of an existing overlay district.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Programming Updates:

- The NYSDEC's NYHABs is updated daily and made live at 11AM the following day.
- As of October 10, 2024, there were over 50 HAB reports for Owasco Lake that were more than two weeks old, but reported this year, and four reports less than two weeks old.
- Water testing for the City of Auburn and Town of Owasco conducted on October 8, 2024, revealed the presence of low levels, 0.23 ug/L and 0.26 ug/L respectively, of the toxin microcystin within the drinking water. The drinking water was deemed safe because the levels remained below the Environmental Protection Agency's 10-day health advisory level of 0.3 ug/L.
- This year, HABs have been observed statewide, with many reports generated within the Finger Lakes

Region. Climate change, nutrient pollution, and invasive species are considered important drivers for HABs development. Regional advocates, watershed organizations, and municipalities call for stricter regulations and enforcement of nutrient pollution entering the Finger Lakes. Governor Kathy Hochul recently committed an investment of 42 million dollars to the newly formed Eastern Finger Lakes Coalition of Districts to enhance Finger Lakes water quality. The funds are intended to help farmers manage stormwater runoff and associated pollution.

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Update:

- On September 25, 2024, the perennial garden installed around the perimeter of the public access lot was overseeded to improve establishment and limit the competition of nuisance weeds. Preserve signage was also installed.
- The 'Boot Brush' station is ready for pickup.
- We will be including the construction of a picnic table adjacent to the kiosk.
- Construction of the kiosk will take place, starting October 15, 2024.
- The grant final report will be due in November 2024.

Federal Grant Projects and Funding

SOGL Project Update:

- The Interim Programmatic Project and Annual Budget Report, submitted to the NFWF on September 4, 2024, were approved.
- The first request for project reimbursement was paid in September 2024 and a contractor invoice was paid, accordingly.
- The project team held its recent monthly meeting on October 8, 2024. EA Engineering is finalizing the existing site conditions set, and the 30% design set was drafted and under internal senior engineering review. They submitted the initial project design to OLWMC and CCSWCD staff the first week of October for review. EA Engineering will be starting the NYSDEC/USACE permitting package this month to complete as much as possible before the 60% Design Set is finalized. Project implementation will take place in 2025.

NYS Recognition and Relevant Bills Review

- NYS Senator Rachel May and Assemblymember Anna Kelles honored the Lake Friendly Living Coalition through the presentation of a NYS proclamation commemorating the Finger Lakes' Community Celebration of Lake Friendly Living in May 2024.
- On the morning of June 14, 2024, participants were invited to Ventosa Vineyards, Geneva, to join those from across the region who care deeply about the health of the Finger Lakes and to make connections and learn about proposed NYS legislation aimed at mitigating environmental threats therein. The legislators shared information about the following proposed bills they are cosponsoring to address Harmful Algal Blooms, the discharge of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) into our waterways, and other conservation efforts:
 - The **New York Open Water Data Act (Senate 239E/Assembly 3299A)** would enable better water governance statewide by asking water-related agencies to come together to create a common set of water data standards for the state and a public-facing interface where such data can be shared, viewed, and used by interested parties.
 - The **Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs) Monitoring and Prevention Act (Senate 8356/Assembly 8867A)** would develop and maintain a comprehensive state 'clearinghouse' to bring together existing and new available statewide cross-sectional and longitudinal data and information on harmful algal blooms, potential and known causes, best practice interventions, expertise, and funding resources. These data and the subsequent report would enable the state to effectively and efficiently administer a grant program supporting data-driven best practices in prevention and mitigation of harmful algal blooms.

- The **PFAS Discharge Disclosure Act (Senate 227B/Assembly 3296)** would require those proposing to discharge pollutants into New York's waterways disclose whether their existing or proposed discharges contain PFAS.
- The **Biosolids Spreading Ban (Assembly Bill A8317)** would prohibit the sale or land application of biosolids from wastewater treatment facilities unless such biosolids are treated and tested to not exceed the maximum contaminant levels established in the public health law.

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, and Skaneateles.

- G. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: Terry Palmer asked about public education for the new Fillmore Preserve. Adam suggested a grand opening event which was supported by the directors. Ed Wagner suggested the Moravia Town Board be included in events surrounding the Fillmore Preserve as well as the Preserve be included in nature trail literature in the county.
- H. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
 - i. September 2024 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported that as of September 30, 2024, Total checking and savings were \$430,041.92, and Total Liabilities and Equity were \$493,167.78. Motion to approve the finance report was made by Ginny Kent and seconded by Terry Palmer. Ed Wagner suggested the Council explore investing another \$50,000 in CDs. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried. Adam will provide draft budget for 2025 at the November meeting.
- I. Lake Level Report – John West reported the lake water surface elevation at 712.08 ft. He will be monitoring the rainfall expected and will working with the elevation accordingly. At the end of month or in November will begin to draw down lake level. It has been a relatively dry summer so recent rain has not affected the lake level a great deal.
- J. Cayuga County Department of Health Septic System Inspection Program – Ani Fish's presentation can be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- K. NYSDEC FL Hub Update –Lexie Davis-updates can be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>. DEC encourages participation in a rock salt usage survey.
- L. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Carol Sutkus-assessment of treatment of hemlock for wooly adelgid is underway, beginning planning for the annual Bob Bower scientific symposium in March 2025, Carol wrote an article for Citizen asking people to write to legislators regarding algae blooms.
- M. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update –Frank Clarke reported a maple production seminar will be held tomorrow at Cayuga Community College; a weigh-in for the giant pumpkin contest is 10/19; Wednesday, 11/13/2024, 9:30-12:30 pm Cooperative extension will conduct a solar workshop at Cayuga Community College.
- N. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Jesse Lloyd's presentation on the monthly watershed inspection can be accessed at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- O. Communications: Adam shared that OLWMC is reaching out to ESF to share the data analysis of tributary waters monitoring.
- P. Issues of Concern: Nancy Hart expressed the Scipio Town's concern about quarry pond with HABS in Scipio for Cayuga Lake headwaters. The Town of Scipio is also seeking funding for the building a salt shed.
- Q. Next Meeting will be November19, 2024 at 10am.
- R. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Joan Jayne and seconded by Nancy Hart. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:26 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Vivian Cunningham