



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

November 19, 2024, 10:00-11:30 AM – Meeting

Meeting of the Directors

Owasco – Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb -Coleman (online), **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 was called to order at 10:00 am.

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: Owasco-Ed Wagner, Cayuga County-Aileen McNabb-Coleman, City of Auburn-Ginny Kent, Niles, Joan Jayne Scipio-Nancy Hart, Fleming-Karen VanLiew, Town of Moravia- Terry Palmer, Lansing-Joseph Wetmore. Ex. Officio attendees: John West, Jesse Lloyd, Tony Prestigiacomo, Michelle Wunderlich, Abby Hai
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve agenda made by Joan Jayne and seconded by Terry Palmer. The vote was unanimous, and motion carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from October 15, 2024, Board Meeting: Motion to approve October 15, 2024, minutes as distributed via email made by Nancy Hart and seconded by Ed Wagner. The vote was unanimous, and motion carried.
- D. Public to be Heard: none heard
- E. Director’s Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting) For an audio and visual of this report please visit <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

Watershed Rules and Regulations

Project Update:

During the week of October 21, 2024, the Tompkins County Water Resources Council (WRC), advisory board to the Tompkins County Legislature, approved a letter to the governor encouraging local water purveyors' use of watershed rules and regulations. This letter was written in response to the NYS Department of Health's July 2024 letter to the Town of Owasco and City of Auburn terminating the project.

Staff, Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Project Updates

- The OLWMC’s staff feature article published with the Citizen on November 14, 2024, featured lake aquatic and watershed terrestrial invasive species of concern. Jesse Lloyd’s article was selected as an ‘editor’s pick top story.’
- 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 October 28, 2024. Nearly 50

replacements were done. The shrub material is established well enough for cutting and repurposing elsewhere and partnering agencies have been notified.

- OLWMC staff will be presenting at the March 8, 2025, Bob Brower scientific symposium, featuring topics including 9E implementation, OLWIPD roles, and supporting fundraising for agricultural programming, and

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

Project Update

- The 9E Coordination Committee is developing a 2024 report to feature the 9EP projects and programs that have been advanced over the course of the last year.
- The committee continues to advance ongoing grant projects and programming and has scheduled its next meeting for November 20, 2024.

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

Owasco Lake Tributary Monitoring Project Update

- Doctorate Assistant Professors from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) provided processing and analyses in-kind for both tributary and lake data collected from recent years. They are scheduled to present their finding for discussion during the December 17, 2024, OLWMC board meeting.
- Subsequent topics of discussion have included the want to fund and install tributary flow monitoring sensors that track flow to generate nutrient proxy loading, as well as small weather stations to better constrain how localized storms drive nutrient inputs. The proposal would include the delivery of real-time data to the internet, as part of a long-term strategy for early warning capabilities for HAB-likely conditions. There is a National Science Foundation grant solicitation that should be opening soon, which we may collaborate on.
- There have been growing concerns and community outreach regarding lake foam that collects on and near the shoreline this time of year. In partnership, the City of Auburn Municipal Utilities Department created a purchase order under professional services for a single lab analysis by Global Aquatic Research (GAR) to sample lake foam this year; GAR plans to perform specialized laboratory analysis of a single foam sample on Owasco Lake for emerging lake contaminants Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). GAR researchers planned to collect a foam sample on Sunday, November 10, 2024. They started at the north end and found foam but not enough to get an adequate sample. They need 6-8 liters of foam volumetrically, which collapses into 600-800 milliliters of a water sample. The field team embarked on a second sampling trip on November 13, 2024, and again were unable to collect a sample.
- OLWMC staff are working with GAR to include Owasco Lake within their upcoming Water Resources Institute grant submission. The pre-proposal is due Nov. 22 and if they get funded, they will be sampling next year. Owasco, Seneca, Keuka, and Skaneateles are all included within the project proposal. There is one sampling trip to each lake proposed during 2025, and GAR would quantify PFAS concentrations and a few water quality parameters in foam, the surface microlayer, and lake water. The overarching purpose is to understand how PFAS partitions between these phases, which impacts both monitoring and routes of exposure. This will also establish a baseline that partners can build on in future work. A secondary project feature proposed would be to implement in Owasco Lake the foam reporting tool that was developed with the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association ([Canandaigua Lake Foam Survey](#)). This will involve coordinating with and training citizen scientists to use the tool. After sampling and data collection is complete, a stakeholders meeting would be scheduled in Fall/Winter 2025-2026, and representatives from all four lakes (as well as Canandaigua Lake) would be included. The team would use this meeting to consider the impact of the project on management strategies, public outreach, and next steps. The OLWMC provided a letter of support for the collaborative grant proposal.

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

Project Review:

- Based on NYS's decision to terminate amendments to 10 NYCRR Part 104.1 City of Auburn and Town of Owasco Watershed Rules and Regulations, the amendments being a recommendation included within the draft City of Auburn DWSP2, that feature was removed from the plan, allowing the plan to move forward to completion. The project Community Advisory Group met with project consultants on August 14, 2024, to review final details of the draft plan.
- 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.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Programming Updates:

- The NYSDEC's NYHABs, updated daily and made live at 11AM the following day, as of November 2024, reported at least 60 HABs observations tracked for 2024.

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.

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Update:

- Construction of the kiosk and boot brush station took place, starting October 15 and was completed on October 17, 2024.
- The grant final report was submitted on October 21, 2024.
- The grand opening was held November 7, 2024, with promotional support provided by CC Chamber of Commerce.
- OLWC is looking forward to one future acquisition from TNC.

Federal and NYS Grant Projects and Funding

SOGL Project Update:

- EA Engineering is finalizing the existing site conditions set. The 30% design set was drafted and is currently under their internal senior engineering review. They submitted the initial project design to OLWMC and CCSWCD staff the first week of October for review. Additional surveying work was required to complete the 30% design, and CCSWCD supported that effort on November 8, 2024. EA Engineering started the NYSDEC/USACE permitting package to complete as much as possible before the 60% Design Set is finalized. Project implementation will take place in 2025.
- An additional project update report was submitted, as required, to the NFWF on November 11, 2024.

NYS Recognition and Relevant Bills

Project 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).
- The Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs) Monitoring and Prevention Act (Senate 8356/Assembly 8867A)
- The PFAS Discharge Disclosure Act (Senate 227B/Assembly 3296)
- The Biosolids Spreading Ban (Assembly Bill A8317)

Project Update:

NYS Senator Rachel May and Assemblymember Anna Kelles will provide an update on the status of these legislative bills during the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal meeting scheduled for the evening of November 20, 2024.

NYS Grants and Programming

During the fourth week of October 2024, the OLWMC updated pre-qualification status for grants eligibility through NYS's state financial system server. This included updating the OLWMC's annual organizational, audit, and tax accounting information.

F. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: none heard

G. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report

- i. October 2024 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported that as of October 31, 2024. Total Assets \$462,920.69; Total Liabilities and Equity \$462,920.69. Motion to approve financial made by Nancy Hart and seconded by Ed Wagner. The vote was unanimous, and the motion was approved. Dr. Effler announced the \$100,000 CD matured in October and was renewed.
 - ii. 2025 Budget Approval – Ed Wagner presented the 2025 proposed budget, and the process used to develop the budget. Joan made a motion to approve the OLWC 2025 proposed budget. Motion seconded by Nancy Hart. The vote was unanimous, and the motion approved. Town of Lansing and Summerhill have agreed to provide OLWC baseline funding toward the goal of 100% community buy-in for the watershed. This is helpful for grant funding.
- H. Lake Level Report – John West reported the lake elevation at 710.97 ft. He continues to monitor the weather and rainfall and adjust lake levels accordingly. The weather has been dryer although significant rain in the forecast may require adjustments. Will lower elevation to 710 ft. by the end of December.
- I. NYSDEC FL Hub Update – Tony Prestigiaco for full DEC update see: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- J. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Nancy Hart for Carol Sutkus- community members from OWLA are working on lobbying for approval of the updated WWR; continue to work on the Bob Brower symposium for Fall, OWLA is strategizing for projects for 2025, will have a booth at the annual craft fair on 12/7-8/2024 10a-4p at Cayuga Community College.
- K. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update – Daniel Welch-unavailable
- L. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Jesse Lloyd: for the watershed inspection report visit: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- M. Communications: Dr Effler announced the December meeting program will be the SUNY ESF doctorate assistant professors discussing analysis of tributary and lake data.
- N. Issues of Concern: None heard
- O. Next meeting will be on Tuesday of December 17, 2024.
- P. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Nancy Hart seconded by Ed Wagner. The vote was unanimous; the

motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:59 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vivian Cunningham

Recording Secretary

