

OWASCO LAKE WATERSHED RULES & REGULATIONS EFFORT 2017

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of the Public Participation Plan for the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations Effort (WRR) is to create a well-attended and engaged public forum for education on, and discussion of, the current Owasco Lake WRR and options for improving these WRR to best protect and preserve water resources within Owasco Lake and its Watershed. As with most Public Participation Plans, this will involve the establishment of a project steering committee, a combination of facilitated community meetings and targeted stakeholder meetings, public comment periods and a range of mechanisms for two-way project communication including a project web site and social, print and broadcast media. Please note that this draft Public Participation Plan only brings the project through to final drafts and submission of the drafts to NYS Department of Health Officials at the Division of Water Resources.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee will be used to help guide the public participation process from the introductory phase through development of draft revisions, public comment periods and on to final drafts.

A Steering Committee consisting of nine (9) members is recommended:

- TWO (2) LEGISLATOR REPRESENTATIVES (Aileen McNabb-Coleman & Mike Didio)
- OLWMC – 1 REPRESENTATIVE (Leslie Baxter – OLWMC member representing Scipio Town Board)
- OWLA – 1 REPRESENTATIVE (Ken Post – also a small farmer)
- AGRICULTURE & FARMING – 2 REPRESENTATIVES – FROM 2-FARM SECTORS AND SUB-WATERSHED AREAS (Greg Rejman from Sunnyside Farms and 2nd Representative TBD)
- COUNTY DOH – BOARD OF HEALTH: 1 REPRESENTATIVE (Kathleen Cuddy – Director of Public Health)
- TOWN OF OWASCO: 1 REPRESENTATIVE (Ed Wagner, Supervisor)
- CITY OF AUBURN: 1 REPRESENTATIVE (Debby McCormick – City Councilor)

Steering Committee Members will need to remain engaged and dedicated to the project for its entire course, participating in the full range of community and stakeholder group meetings.

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

In addition to the Steering Committee and the series of public/community meetings, a series of targeted stakeholder discussion meetings will be incorporated into the Public Participation Process. At this draft stage, the following four (4) stakeholder groups have been identified:

- AGRICULTURE AND FARMING COMMUNITY
- LAKE SHORE OWNERS AND LAKE ADVOCATE GROUPS
- MUNICIPAL AND STATE/FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS
- BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND COMMERCIAL CONTRACTORS

The Steering Committee will be responsible for confirming the stakeholder groups, including outreach to stakeholders to ensure participation and input.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN PRIOR TO FORMAL START OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

I. REVIEW OF DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN BY NYSDOH DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

With the general approval of the Draft Public Participation Plan by the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council Board of Directors and Technical Advisors, the draft plan will be forwarded to the NYS Department of Health, Division of Water Resources for informal review, feedback and guidance. With consensus from the Agency that the Public Participation Plan is sufficient, the plan will be finalized and Project Introduction Meetings with local, elected officials can be scheduled.

II. PROJECT INTRODUCTION MEETINGS WITH LOCAL & STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS AND MEDIA

A review of similar efforts to revise and update established Watershed Rules and Regulations within the state have shown that the process typically brings opposing views into focus, sometimes leading to a charged public discourse regarding the watershed rules and regulations. It is therefore important to introduce the project to local, elected leaders in advance of getting started, providing education and background on the WRR and outlining the proposed public participation process. The following Introductory Meetings are recommended:

- Auburn City Council and Owasco Town Board | Project Support Resolutions
- Cayuga County Legislature Work Session
- Introductory Meetings with State and Federal Representatives / Staffs
- Introductory Meeting with editorial staff at the Citizen newspaper

A NOTE ON THE INITIAL PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

It is important to structure the initial public information meetings (and project introduction meetings with local, elected officials) as an educational forum on the Owasco Lake Watershed, the water quality challenges for the Lake, the current watershed rules and regulation and their use as a tool to preserve, improve and protect Owasco Lake water quality. We recommend the following content be incorporated into these initial meetings:

- BROAD PROBLEM STATEMENT TO FRAME THE ISSUES
- NUTRIENT LOADING CONCERNS AND RANGE OF LAND USES CONTRIBUTING TO NUTRIENT LOADING
- WATERSHED RULES & REGULATIONS AS A LAND USE MANAGEMENT & REGULATORY TOOL:
 - AUTHORITY & HOW THEY ARE MEANT TO WORK
 - BROAD SUMMARY OF EXISTING PROVISIONS
 - DEFINE THE AREAS THE REGULATIONS ADDRESS
 - GENERAL STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES OF CURRENT WS R&R (NOT PRECONCEIVED SOLUTIONS)
- GENERAL OUTLINE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS & OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE & COMMENT
- FEEDBACK & COMMENT FROM MEETING PARTICIPANTS

GENERAL OUTLINE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

- STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING & PROJECT KICK-OFF
- PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS #1 [BOCES], and #2 [MORAVIA OR TOMPKINS CO.]
- STEERING COMMITTEE RECAP MEETING(S)
- FOUR (4) STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS:
 - AGRICULTURE AND FARMING COMMUNITY
 - LAKE SHORE OWNERS AND LAKE ADVOCATE GROUPS
 - MUNICIPAL AND STATE/FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS
 - BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND COMMERCIAL CONTRACTORS
- STEERING COMMITTEE RECAP MEETING(S)
- PUBLIC "RECAP" MEETINGS #1 [BOCES] AND #2 [MORAVIA OR TOMPKINS CO.]
 - PROBLEM STATEMENT - "THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE HEARD"; STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED
 - SUMMARIZE STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT
 - SOLICIT & DOCUMENT FEEDBACK
 - RECAP ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS FROM THIS POINT GOING FORWARD...
- STEERING COMMITTEE RECAP MEETINGS & DEVELOPMENT OF DRAFT WRR REVISIONS
- CIRCULATION OF DRAFT WRR REVISIONS: ALL AVAIL. MEDIA OUTLETS & TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS
- PUBLIC MEETINGS ON DRAFT WS R&R: #1 [BOCES]; #2 [MORAVIA OR TOMPKINS]
- PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – PUBLIC FEEDBACK & STEERING COMMITTEE RESPONSES
- FINALIZE DRAFT; PUBLISH AND PREPARE SUBMISSION TO STATE DOH
- PRESENTATION OF FINALIZED DRAFT TO AUBURN CITY COUNCIL, TOWN OF OWASCO AND COUNTY LEGISLATURE (POSSIBILITY OF JOINT MUNICIPAL MEETING AT EMERSON PARK?).
- MUNICIPAL RESOLUTIONS FROM AUBURN AND OWASCO SUPPORTING THE FINAL DRAFT AND DIRECTING SUBMISSION TO NYS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, DIVISION OF WATER PROTECTION ON THEIR BEHALF.

