

Letter from the Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee  
**WSC Working on Otsego Lake Plan**

<https://www.allotsego.com/watershed-supervisory-committeewsc-working-on-otsego-lake-plan/>

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This is in response to your editorial last month, titled “Resurrect WQCC, Please.”

The Water Quality Coordinating Committee did, indeed, address important issues—that have only gained in urgency. Invasive plant and animal species, harmful algal bloom occurrences and, most importantly, the very safety of water for drinking and recreation, are concerns that have all grown since 2016.

The editorial concludes with, “Surely reformation of the WQCC deserves consideration as we look to the future.” We agree with this and are currently reviewing information from this previous group. It is also clear, however, that many things have changed since the WQCC was put together. The facts are that in Otsego County there are different challenges with the county’s different bodies of water. The concerns of Otsego Lake are not the same as those for Canadarago Lake or the Susquehanna River. Clearly, one size does not fit all when it comes to addressing water concerns.

The most pressing issues of Otsego Lake now are being addressed by the Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee. That committee, established under New York State law, is a collaborative effort of the Village of Cooperstown and the towns of Middlefield, Otsego, and Springfield. Representatives of each of these serve on the committee. Meetings are at least once per month and are open to the public.

The WSC oversees the health almost 400 septic systems. Their installation and improvement over the past 30 years has protected lake water quality.

With the occurrence of HABs last year, the WSC took the lead in working toward a Comprehensive Lake Management Plan and has been supported by the village and towns. We have enlisted the knowledge of many organizations, including the Otsego County Conservation Association, the Otsego Lake Association, the SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station and other community leaders to learn as much as we can. The work of the WQCC that was done previously will be used in this work. This plan will provide a structure for the study of HABs in the hope of better understanding them.

The WSC is currently working with New York State and is networking with other lakes who have successfully developed lake plans.

Bringing together governments, environmental groups, local businesses, and concerned citizens will ensure that the lake plan will both address the concerns of the community and provide a guide to protect our most valuable local resource.

The Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee