

## Experimental Lakes Area - Reprieve?



April 24, 2013 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Peterborough, ON - The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) is cautiously enthusiastic today, upon news that the Province of Ontario and the Province of Manitoba have committed to keep the Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) open through a proposed collaboration with the federal government, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and other partners.

While no financial commitments have yet been confirmed, FOCA applauds today's announcement as a positive step toward saving this internationally-renowned freshwater research resource. "We have been concerned about the future of aquatic science since the federal government announced the ELA closing in May, 2012," says Terry Rees, Executive Director of FOCA. **"On behalf of Ontario's 250,000 waterfront property owners, today we applaud the Province for stepping forward to support this important water science, in the name of informed public policy."**

As Ontario Premier Wynne noted today, "I think the ELA is a gem. It's an important scientific endeavour and I don't believe that either provincially or regionally, nationally or internationally, we can afford to let it go."

FOCA will continue to provide input toward a robust plan for the continuance of the ELA. FOCA is a non-governmental membership organization based in Ontario that represents over 500 community groups across the province.

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### Background:

\* The world renowned ELA was slated for closure as of March 31, 2013. Although there was talk of a transfer to a new operator, the government had remained tight-lipped about negotiations until this morning's announcement (April 24, 2013) from the Office of the Premier of Ontario:

[http://www.foca.on.ca/xinha/plugins/ExtendedFileManager/demo\\_images/ontario\\_supporting\\_the\\_experimental\\_lakes\\_area.pdf](http://www.foca.on.ca/xinha/plugins/ExtendedFileManager/demo_images/ontario_supporting_the_experimental_lakes_area.pdf)

\* FOCA was one of the first in May 2012 to break the news about the ELA closure announcement, and has remained vocal throughout the fight to "Save the ELA." Read FOCA's April 2nd, 2013 press release, urging the governments of Canada and Ontario to negotiate in good faith toward a realistic transitional offer to alternate operators:

[http://www.foca.on.ca/xinha/plugins/ExtendedFileManager/demo\\_images/ELA\\_Closure\\_Deadline\\_Passed\\_without\\_comment\\_LOWDPOA\\_FOCA\\_release.pdf](http://www.foca.on.ca/xinha/plugins/ExtendedFileManager/demo_images/ELA_Closure_Deadline_Passed_without_comment_LOWDPOA_FOCA_release.pdf)

\* The ELA is a series of 58 lakes near Kenora in northwestern Ontario where whole-lake experiments have been conducted for nearly fifty years. ELA research was the first to make the connection that phosphates and detergents in household cleaners were impacting algal blooms in our lakes-leading to international changes in product formulations. The ELA has undertaken ground-breaking research into acid rain, climate change, fish management and essentially all the ways humans and industry impact our freshwater systems.

\* For more on this issue, visit: <http://www.foca.on.ca/ela>

### Media contact:

Terry Rees, FOCA Executive Director  
705-749-3622 [info@foca.on.ca](mailto:info@foca.on.ca)