

**Ministry of Natural  
Resources**

Office of the Assistant  
Deputy Minister  
Regional Operations  
Division and Far North

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**Ministère des Richesses  
naturelles**

Bureau du sous-ministre  
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MNR450IT-2012-1590

September 27, 2012

Mr. Terry Rees  
Executive Director  
Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association

via email: [trees@foca.on.ca](mailto:trees@foca.on.ca)

Dear Mr. Rees:

Our Ministry is moving forward with the three year transformation plan announced in the provincial budget. We're taking a hard look at everything we do to make sure we're modernizing our business where we can, focusing more closely on our core mandate, and reviewing our programs and services to reduce costs where possible.

As signalled in the 2012 Ontario Budget, one element of our transformation plan is to refocus our efforts in stewardship and partnership activities.

Since the Ontario Stewardship program was created 16 years ago, there has been significant growth in both the number of stakeholders engaged in the Ontario Stewardship program and their capacity to deliver resource management activities. We will take advantage of the growth in community-based stewardship over the past decade or so. Instead of focusing much of our assistance through stewardship councils, we will engage with a wider range of community groups.

The result is that the Ontario Stewardship Program, with a Stewardship Coordinator dedicated to supporting each individual stewardship council's work, will end. Instead, a group of 25 Partnership Specialists working at the district level will work with a broader range of stakeholders across Ontario to address MNR's resource management priorities. We expect the new model to be fully functional by the end of March 2013.

These 25 new Partnership Specialists will be associated with the same Districts that currently offer the Ontario Stewardship program: Aurora, Aylmer, Bancroft, Fort Frances, Guelph, Kemptville, Kirkland Lake, Midhurst, North Bay, Parry Sound, Pembroke, Peterborough, Sault Ste Marie, Sudbury and Thunder Bay.

This change was communicated today to our Stewardship Coordinators and other staff.

Mr. Terry Rees

Council Chairs were also advised of the change today and we will continue to connect with Councils in the coming days and weeks to provide information on the new approach and to answer questions.

MNR remains committed to environmental stewardship and we value the relationships with our partners and environmental organizations including Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association. We will continue to support community-based stewardship activities through targeted grants, property tax incentives, youth employment programs, and through our new District partnership specialist positions.

Please contact Neil Hayward, Manager, Stewardship and Conservation Incentives Section at [neil.hayward@ontario.ca](mailto:neil.hayward@ontario.ca) or by phone at (705) 755- 1251 if you have any questions on this new delivery model or for further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Hayward".

Carrie Hayward  
A/Assistant Deputy Minister  
Regional Operations Division

c: Minister Gravelle