

FOCA Strategic Plan

2014-2017

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1. Introduction

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, Inc. (FOCA) is a, non-profit, member-based association operating within and throughout the Province of Ontario. Since 1963, FOCA has represented the interests of waterfront property owners on matters relevant to their continued prosperity.

Incorporated in 1974, FOCA is supported primarily through membership fees, derived annually from approximately 600 member associations and individual supporters that collectively represent approximately 50,000 individual families owning waterfront properties. Waterfront property owners in the Province of Ontario form a substantial part of local communities and pay a substantial portion of the municipal taxes collected. Members will benefit from FOCA representation to ensure long-term environmental integrity of Ontario's freshwater, appropriate land use planning, fair taxation and sound risk management for volunteer groups.

FOCA maintains an office in the City of Peterborough for the purpose of carrying on the functions of the organization, with a current staff of three full-time employees. FOCA has a volunteer Board of Directors that are elected at an Annual General Meeting held each year in March. A great deal of the work accomplished by FOCA is through its' committees which are comprised of Directors and other volunteers that act as resources on specific areas of interest to the organization. FOCA maintains relationships with a number of provincial and federal agencies in order to advance our policy interests and

to accomplish our mission, particularly in the area of environmental quality. FOCA maintains a number of relationships as required and as appropriate with other not-for-profit (NGO's) and for-profit organizations with complementary objectives.

The primary roles of FOCA are those of advocacy, communication, education and support for waterfront association and individual members, concentrated primarily in the following areas of interest:

- environmental stewardship
- land use planning
- risk management, and insurance
- fair taxation
- municipal services
- emergency services
- rural roads, boating, and association management.

Where members do not exist we represent the environmental concerns of the watershed as a whole.

FOCA undertook a strategic planning process in 2011 in order to revise and update the key strategic themes and objectives of the organization and to manage objectives and initiatives going forward. The management and Board of FOCA developed this strategic plan by soliciting input from our stakeholders and using this input to develop the strategic themes and objectives.

In June 2014, FOCA held a strategic Board retreat to review the current priorities of FOCA, and reaffirmed the commitment of the organization to the strategic themes identified in the existing Strategic Plan. Based on ongoing member surveys and continual reflection, the Board will continue to use this overall guidance through 2017.

FOCA has continually expanded our membership and includes lake and road associations and waterfront property owners. FOCA's approach will be concentrated on supporting our membership by effectively addressing priority policy issues, and by advocating on behalf of Ontario's waterfront property owners.

FOCA must effectively balance the demands on its resources. The purpose of this strategic planning process is to prioritize activities and provide guidance for operations, positioning the organization for growth and greater vitality in the future. New initiatives and significant undertakings will be conditional on approval and review relative to our strategic interests and our long-term objectives.

2. Mission and Vision

The following is FOCA's Mission and Vision:

Mission

To protect thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario.¹

Vision

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) will continue to be the pre-eminent Ontario-wide organization representing cottagers and permanent waterfront residents. FOCA is responsible for promoting vibrant and sustainable waterfront communities through effective communication, education and advocacy. FOCA will:

- Encourage and empower positive environmental stewardship by providing information and tools
- Promote and provide leadership for sound public policy on key issues
- Align with other key partners that support like goals and objectives

¹ Our Mission statement was developed to emphasize FOCA's provincial scope, which separates us from other local and regional groups. For this reason, the word "Ontario" was retained. The verb "protect" was perceived as more active and urgent than alternate verbs such as "promote" or "support". "Waterfronts" was chosen to encapsulate our dual focus on "waterfront environments" and "the waterfront living experience." The adjective "thriving" implies a positive present-day experience while "sustainable" implies legacy (preserved for future generations). Together, "thriving" and "sustainable" encompass FOCA's public policy efforts (taxation, land use planning, etc.) and our efforts to cultivate strong waterfront "communities" and educating waterfront property owners about the importance of restoring and/or preserving the natural environment.

3. Organizational Description and Core Activities

FOCA will effectively communicate to our stakeholders, and represent waterfront property owners, by providing up to date products and services that will address the needs and concerns of our members by:

- Acting as advocates to address major waterfront property owners concerns.
- Promoting sustainable waterfront communities.
- Providing educational material.
- Building strong political and partner relationships.
- Expanding our representation to all Ontario waterfront communities.

Our core customer groups include:

- Lake Associations
- Lake Association Members
- Individual Supporters
- Road Associations

Other stakeholders include:

- Sponsors/Partners
- Regional Umbrella Groups

Our offices are currently staffed with the following positions:

- Executive Director
- Membership and Programs Coordinator
- Communications and Development Coordinator

Staff is supported by voluntary members of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has knowledge of local and provincial issues and expertise to assist our members to achieve common goals.

4. Strategic Themes

Based upon analyzing our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), as identified in our 2011 survey to stakeholders, FOCA remains focussed on 4 strategic themes: **Communications, Funding, Advocacy, Value Proposition.**

FOCA utilizes a committee structure to develop objectives related to our strategic themes. The strategic themes and resulting objectives are regularly reported to and monitored by the Board of Directors and updated as required.