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FOCA Elert - April 2016



High Water

Water levels and flows across much of central Ontario remained elevated this week, due to past precipitation and snow melt, and are currently stable or receding at most gauging stations, according to recent statements issued by the Surface Water Monitoring Centre. **For updates, see:** <http://ontario.ca/flooding> (or click image at right)



Sections of Ontario cottage country, including Muskoka, Bancroft, the Gull River and other areas, have experienced **high water** in recent weeks, and the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) has created a new Task Force to investigate recent water and ice damage to docks and boathouses in that region. **FOCA met with the Task Force** representatives from MLA on April 19th in Bracebridge, to discuss next steps. [Read the MLA media release](#). (PDF, 1 page)

Next week (May 1st-7th) will be **Emergency Preparedness Week** in Canada. As part of our role on the [Partners for Action "P4A" Stakeholder Group](#), FOCA is committed to making our communities stronger in the face of climate change. FOCA knows we will see more extreme weather events in the years ahead, and encourages all property owners to remain updated on the issues, risks and responses. Get an overview, here: <https://foca.on.ca/climate-change-and-waterfront-ontario/>

Dock Permit Dysfunction

Recent changes at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) related to the **permit process for docks and boathouses** are causing a great deal of angst across waterfront Ontario. FOCA continues to follow this situation and is pressing MNRF to resolve this uncertainty. See more information from FOCA, here: <https://foca.on.ca/municipal-authority-over-boathouses-decision/>



Property Tax Re-assessments are coming

Following the presentation by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) at the FOCA AGM in March, please note that **property tax re-assessments have begun rolling out across Ontario.**

Results are already out for Leeds~Grenville, Simcoe and the Sudbury area (see a [CBC news item](#) on this topic). To see the trends in your neighbourhood, or find out when your local figures will become available, visit: <https://markettrends.trimap.com/?l=en#/>

Remember: if you disagree with your MPAC assessment, there is a way to ask for reconsideration. **The process has changed this year**, and FOCA has posted the newest info here:

<https://foca.on.ca/how-to-challenge-your-property-assessment/>



detail from MarketTrends map

Cottage Succession

FOCA's Cottage Succession Seminars are back! We will be on the road again this Summer, with estate lawyer Peter Lillico, talking about the importance of having a cottage sharing agreement, and how to keep your 'family' in the family cottage.

Our first event of 2016 will be held **in Peterborough on Friday, May 27th** with our partners at the Canadian Canoe Museum (2pm-4pm). This event is free to FOCA members & Canoe Museum volunteers and members.



Register with FOCA now to secure your space: info@foca.on.ca 705-749-3622

NOTE: An online option is being investigated for this event; please let us know if you'd like to attend by webinar!

For more about the FOCA Cottage Succession Seminar series, visit: <https://foca.on.ca/cottage-succession/>

Thank you to FOCA's Gold Sponsors!



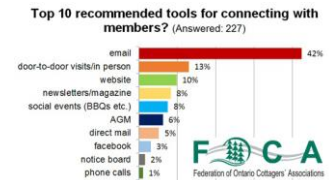
Lake Association Membership - recruitment and retention

FOCA 2015 Association Survey Results:

FOCA's latest Member Association survey results reveal trends about lake associations in Ontario.

Find out how your Association compares on benchmarks such as:

- number of Association volunteers?
- annual fees charged?
- events and programs undertaken?
- most effective tools for communicating with members?



FOCA Members can access the Survey results from a new members-only post on the FOCA website, here: <https://foca.on.ca/association-member-recruitment-retention-tips/>

***NOTE:** You will need your FOCA Member Login to access this web post.*

Don't have your Login yet? Get it here: <https://foca.on.ca/get-login/>

Contact the FOCA office if you experience any technical difficulties (info@foca.on.ca 705-749-3622)



A Regional Membership Initiative of note:

Also posted on our new [Membership Recruitment & Retention](#) webpage, read about a new initiative from the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) who, together with partner organizations, is encouraging local realtors to **"gift" a membership** in MLA to new home purchasers in the region. Consider how you might adapt this idea for your community!

Events - Upcoming

May 27-28, 2016 - **Muskoka Summit on the Environment:** This year's theme is: **Solutions for a Warming World.** [Read the draft program, and Register now!](#) Speakers include Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada, and David Miller, President & CEO of the World Wildlife Fund, Canada. FOCA is once again proud to be a Gold Sponsor of this biennial event. See you there!



Algonquin Land Claim

FOCA members in eastern Ontario can follow the latest news and developments in the process surrounding the Algonquin Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle, here:

<https://foca.on.ca/algonquin-land-claim-agreement-in-principle-signed/>

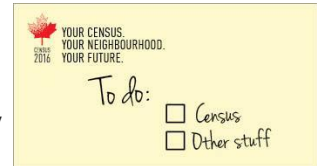
Update: Green Energy Transmission Route amended

Members at the Mill Lake Guardians Association (MLGA) contacted FOCA last year, with concerns about the proposed location of a transmission line for the Henvey Inlet project, which was slated to run across private lands at the lake. FOCA, MLGA and others lobbied for consideration of alternate routes, and we have learned from MLGA that the route has been amended! Read about this, and other green energy issues, here: <https://foca.on.ca/approving-green-energy-projects/>

Census Information

The Canadian Census begins May 2nd this year, and FOCA encourages all our waterfront property families to participate! Information collected through the census helps improve important services in your rural, and urban, communities. **Did you know:**

1. The census is mandatory.
2. There are two types of census questionnaires. 1 in 4 Canadians will receive a long-form census with 60 (instead of 10) questions.
3. Planning services for your community requires an accurate count of all its members. The benefits to your community increase with every completed questionnaire!
4. Your information is protected by law and is confidential.
5. Census results will be released in 2017.



What should you do?

- Watch for your census questionnaire package; complete and return it promptly
- Get more details about the census, here: http://www.census.gc.ca/ccr16_r000-eng.html

Thank you to FOCA's Silver Sponsors

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Recent Events

April 1-3, 2016 - FOCA was at the busy **Spring Cottage Life Show** in Toronto. Thank you to our Board members and all those who came to visit us during the three-day event! This year the FOCA booth included a large "spin to win" wheel, with colour-coded trivia questions about cottage country issues. Here's one sample:

Which routine should you follow, to prevent spreading invasives when you move your boat from one waterbody to another?

1. Stop, Drop and Roll
2. Hop, Skip and Jump
3. Clean, Drain and Dry

ANSWER: see end of this E!ert!



Special congratulations to our "**Spin to win**" draw winner: **Bob Theisz of Nine Mile Lake Cottagers Association in Parry Sound!** He received a \$250 gift certificate to spend at Canadian Tire, sponsored by our partners at Cade Associates Insurance Brokers and Travelers Canada, underwriters of the CottageFirst group insurance program available exclusively to FOCA members!

April 12, 2016 - FOCA, along with our partners at Cade Associates, attended the Cottage Country Planning Event in Huntsville about **Planning and Environmental Issues**, including "Roads in Cottage Country from a Surveyor's Perspective," and more. [Download the event Agenda](#). (PDF, 8 pages)

Great Lakes Updates

A recent survey by the International Joint Commission indicated that 85% of Great Lakes citizens believe protecting the Great Lakes is highly important. Read [Lake Ontario Waterkeeper's recent blog](#) on the topic, including a link to the media release about the survey.

FOCA recently participated in a "Cross-Border Collaboration on Water" Roundtable, hosted the **U.S. Consulate General** and partners in Toronto. Consul General Juan Alsace was looking for high impact initiatives that could be actionable within the next 1-3 years. Many challenges lie ahead, but it is encouraging - and imperative - that there is strong political leadership on water issues on both sides of the border.



FOCA joined more than 100 environmental, health and advocacy groups in signing a letter to urge the Canadian and U.S. federal governments to designate **radionuclides** as Chemicals of Mutual Concern under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. For a link to the letter, and more on Great Lakes topics, visit: <https://foca.on.ca/great-lakes-strategy-and-action/>

Website Options for Lake Associations

Option 1: Single Webpage from FOCA

As one of many member Association benefits, FOCA can post a basic webpage for our member Associations who want an online presence, but lack the technical expertise to maintain one. Get details here: <https://foca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Member-Association-Webpage-Offer-2016.pdf>. (PDF, 2 pages) Click the image at right to visit the new webpage created by FOCA for the **Gould Lake Ratepayers Association**.



Option 2: Customizable Website Solution from MyLakeTown

Looking for a more comprehensive website template that enables your Association to post lots of information, engage member conversations, and make your own updates over time? **MyLakeTown.com**, FOCA's newest Corporate Sponsor, has a great web solution that is specially tailored to lake associations. Click the image at right to visit the website created by MyLakeTown for the **Lake Manitou Area Association**.



FOCA is pleased to announce that member Associations can access a special discount offer from MyLakeTown. Get the details, here: <https://foca.on.ca/mylaketown-association-website-offer/>

TSW Bridge Closures

Parks Canada announced temporary bridge closures and/or delays on some swing bridges and sites along the Trent Severn Waterway (TSW), as a result of planned spring maintenance.

Download details in the [Information Bulletin](#) released by Parks Canada on April 11th. (PDF, 2 pages).



Regional Updates

Lanark County residents may register to attend an **April 30th** workshop about the plan to spray roadsides with ClearView herbicide to eliminate wild parsnip. Get details here: <http://www.insideottawavalley.com/news-story/6497362-lanark-county-continues-plan-to-control-wild-parsnip-with-april-30-workshop/>

Georgian Bay news: FOCA's Executive Director, Terry Rees, participated in 100th Anniversary celebrations for the [Georgian Bay Association](#) (GBA) on April 2nd. Congratulations to our friends and colleagues at GBA on reaching this milestone, and here's to the next one hundred years!

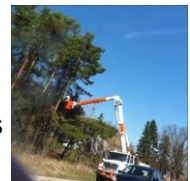


image courtesy GBA

The **City of Greater Sudbury** was awarded a grant from the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to conduct **9 sub-watershed studies** over the next two years.

With a geographic area of 3,627 square kilometers, the City of Greater Sudbury is the largest municipality in Ontario, based on land mass. Home to 330 lakes, Greater Sudbury is locally known as the "City of Lakes" and contains more lakes than any other municipality in Canada. Needless to say, these water resources are an important aspect of daily living in this community. The City of Sudbury hopes to get a "360° look" at the health of their watersheds, and to develop a strong framework for responsible development to preserve and enhance the natural environment. This new information will help support future efforts and inform updates to their "[Waterfront and Rural Background Study](#)" (PDF, 36 pages) as part of the City of Greater Sudbury Official Plan review process.

April 7, 2016 - Hydro One announced it will invest \$20-million this year in the Districts of **Muskoka and Parry Sound** to reduce tree-related outages to improve reliability for 40,000 customers. In 2015, trees caused more than 400 outages on the segments of line targeted by this investment. Get a link to the Hydro One notice, here: <https://foca.on.ca/utilities-and-rural-services-overview/>.



April 24, 2016 - **Big news!** Canada's Federal Budget 2016 included \$5.5-million in funding for the **Lake of the Woods**. [Read more here...](#)

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Cottage & Home Insurance Package for FOCA Members



Municipal Call-out

Following a great talk about municipal engagement by Dave Meslin at the FOCA Spring Seminar last month, FOCA has decided to "call out" good examples of work by cottage-country Municipalities who are making efforts to keep seasonal and waterfront residents informed and engaged. *Here's one example worth sharing:*

The **Municipality of Dysart et al** (in the Haliburton Highlands) has posted great video resources on their webpage! Check out "Conserve - a Cottage Story" and much more, here: <http://www.dysartetal.ca/videos/>

Share this news with [contacts at your Municipality](#), and please encourage them to [get on the FOCA EAlert list](#) to stay in-the-know about cottage country issues!

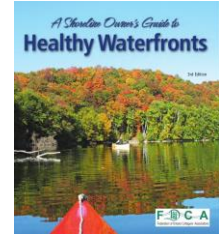


Thank you to FOCA's Bronze Sponsors



Shoreline Reading

Read the digital version of the new **Shoreline Owners' Guide to Healthy Waterfronts**, about what YOU can do at your own property to help with FOCA's mission, "to protect thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario." Here's the link: <https://foca.on.ca/shoreline-owners-guide-to-healthy-waterfronts/> (or click the image at right)



Did you know that FOCA Member Associations can ask the office for multiple copies of the **Shoreline Owners' Guide**? It makes a super handout at your AGM, or as part of a Welcome Package for new property owners in your community. While the guide is **free to members**, there is a cost for shipping; alternately, arrange to pick up copies at the FOCA office at no cost, or connect with us at one of our [events](#) around Ontario this summer. Contact FOCA: info@foca.on.ca 705-749-3622

Your Role

How can you help FOCA? There are many ways to help us with our mission, **To protect thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario**, including:

1. support your local lake Association
2. encourage a friend or colleague to get on the [FOCA Eler](#) list - join 10,000 subscribers who receive our monthly updates about waterfront Ontario!
3. connect with FOCA on social media:

Like us on Facebook 

Follow us on  **twitter**

View our videos on  **YouTube**

Find out more about your role, here: <https://foca.on.ca/about/your-role/>

Did you know? You can always find FOCA's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels quickly and easily: look for the social media icons located along the bottom of every page of the FOCA website: <https://foca.on.ca>
(See the image at right, where the links have been circled in red)
Please share the news, and connect with us on social media today!



Answer to Spin-to-Win Question (see: Recent Events, above)

Correct ANSWER = **#3 > Clean, Drain and Dry** your boat to avoid spreading invasive species from one waterbody to another! Get more boat tips from FOCA here: <https://foca.on.ca/safe-boating/>