

AGM & Spring Seminar for Lake Associations



by Webinar
Saturday
March 6, 2021

FOCA welcomed over 140 attendees at our inaugural **Virtual AGM & Spring Seminar** on Saturday, March 6, 2021—making this our largest AGM of the past decade!

“Just wanted to say: ‘You did a great job!’ with the AGM webinar. I live in the Parry Sound area so having the ability to be there virtually was a great help.” ~Jan, Mill Lake Village Cottagers Association

Thank you!

Today's Event Sponsor:



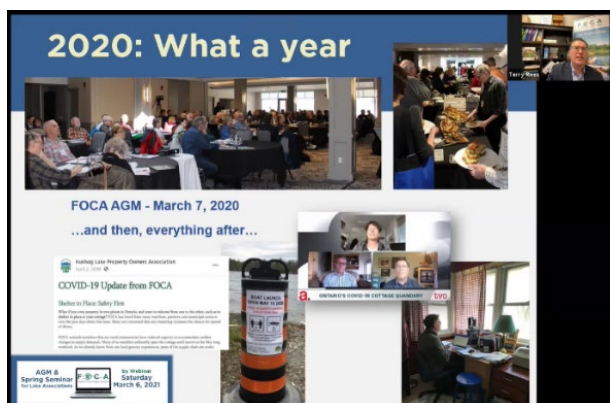
Links to download copies of the slide presentations:

- [FOCA Updates- Files & Programs](#) (PDF, 3 MB) by Terry Rees, FOCA Executive Director
- [FOCA's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan](#) (PDF, 2 MB) by Marlin Horst, FOCA Board President
- [FOCA Annual General Meeting of Members](#) (PDF, 900 KB) by the FOCA Board
- [FOCA Achievement Award presentation](#) (PDF, 2 MB) by Tony Lepine, Chair - Member Services and Benefits Committee, to the **Long Point Ratepayers' Association**
- [Lake Partner Program presentation](#) (PDF, 4 MB) by Liz Favot, FOCA Assistant Lake Stewardship Coordinator at the Dorset Environmental Science Centre
- [Phragmites and Green Shovels Collaborative presentation](#) (PDF, 3 MB) by Colin Cassin, Invasive Species Centre
- [Volunteer Association Considerations for 2021, including liability issues](#) (PDF, 4 MB) by Michelle Lewin, FOCA Communications & Development Coordinator, with liability issues presented by Ross Fraser, Broker, Cade Associates Insurance Brokers.

Event Highlights:

FOCA Updates & Reflections on 2020:

Despite all the challenges of 2020, FOCA and our member Associations emerged stronger and more vitally important than ever before. **How did we do this?**



- by helping volunteer groups shift necessary association business to virtual platforms
- by giving voice to property owners' rights to socially distance at their waterfront residences during the pandemic
- by delivering timely updates and public health recommendations for waterfront communities
- by sharing success stories among lake associations, to inspire each other.

FOCA continues to work alongside partners on programs such as the [Lake Partner Program](#) and [invasive species](#) prevention and mitigation, including [Asian carp](#) awareness, especially for our members on the Great Lakes.

FOCA held many webinars throughout 2020, to keep members informed during the pandemic, but also on topics of perennial interest such as [Cottage Succession](#) and Water Level Management, together with emerging issues like the Gypsy Moth. If you missed a webinar of interest, contact us (communications@foca.on.ca) for member access to the recordings.

The Executive Director's presentation also included policy updates, as FOCA was busy throughout 2020 with many files, including [rural broadband](#), supporting [Conservation Authorities](#) in the face of Bill 229, and concerns over Ministerial Zoning Orders that threaten good [land use planning](#). [Electricity pricing](#) dominated the later part of the year and the beginning of 2021, with the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) order that Hydro One must eliminate the Seasonal Electricity Class of customers, resulting in tens of thousands of families facing large increases in their electricity bills. FOCA continues to hold intervenor status at the OEB, and we launched an [online campaign](#) that has already resulted in over 1,800 seasonal property owners writing their MPPs to explain how this change will negatively impact families in rural and remote areas.

For more on these and other topics, ensure you are subscribed to receive e-news from FOCA in the monthly [EAlert](#), and use the [search feature](#) on the FOCA website to find current information on hundreds of cottage country subjects.



"Thank you for another great AGM and presentations. I always have a long list of ideas and initiatives to share and reset goals after every meeting. We all miss the personal contact but the team at FOCA are keeping us all connected, informed, motivated, and inspired regardless of the venue!!" ~Ann, Hastings Highlands Interlake Group & Lake St. Peter Property Owners Association

FOCA Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2023:

Throughout 2020, the Board of Directors and Staff worked to update FOCA's Strategic Plan, by conducting an in-depth survey of membership, and considering the challenges and opportunities facing our organization, to arrive at a set of **six priority goals**:

- promoting healthy lands, lakes and rivers
- advocating for responsive government
- serving lake and road associations
- championing affordable and safe rural living
- building capacity
- fostering community.



For all the details, please download a copy of [FOCA's Strategic Plan 2020-2023](#) (PDF, 1.4 MB)

You Asked, FOCA Answered:

Finding ourselves ahead of schedule, with the AGM set to start at 9:45am, a **Q&A session emerged**, with many answers being handled verbally during the event, and others by follow-up email afterwards.



Marlin and Michelle feeling very proud to be running early...

Attendees asked us to share answers to the Q&A topics – here are the highlights.

COVID-19 news, including ongoing border closures: visit FOCA's webpage: <https://foca.on.ca/covid-19-update-from-foca/>

FOCA's Sponsorship Policy: visit <https://foca.on.ca/about/sponsors/> and download "Why become a Sponsor" which includes the FOCA Sponsorship Policy on the second page. Some of our sponsors provide special offers to FOCA members, including [this offer from Canadian Eco Products](#) for 5% off Separett waterless toilets. Visit the [FOCA Benefits webpage](#) for more offers.

FOCA Member Benefits Sheet:

[FOCA Benefits with Access Codes](#) – to provide to all your member families

[Version without Codes](#) – you could use this version for a membership drive!

Electricity Pricing: quick links to main points of interest:

- FOCA campaign to contact your MPP: https://foca.good.do/fair_electricity_pricing/
- to sign up for FOCA's dedicated electricity e-news: "[The Power Line](#)"
- for news as-it-becomes-available, and historical background on this file: <https://foca.on.ca/electricity-pricing/>

Short Term Rentals: FOCA feels education is key, in promoting responsible rental. For resources, including municipal responses to the issues, visit: <https://foca.on.ca/responsible-cottage-rental/>. Also, see an information sheet inviting discussion about your local concerns, from our partners at CottageLINK Rental Management: [click to read the notice](#). (PDF, 1 pg)

Rural Broadband: There was a [presentation about broadband](#) (download PDF of slides, 2 MB) at the FOCA Fall Seminar 2020, and FOCA posts information and updates here: <https://foca.on.ca/utilities-and-rural-services-overview/>

Fireworks: FOCA does not have an official position for or against fireworks. Much information, including how some municipalities respond with bylaws, is posted here: <https://foca.on.ca/flying-fire-lanterns-fireworks/>

Forest Management Plans – what Associations should know: Read the forestry article in the [2020 FOCA Lake Stewards Newsletter](#) (pages 16-18), and see our webpage: <https://foca.on.ca/using-our-forest-resources-sustainably/>

Nuclear Waste Management: visit <https://foca.on.ca/nuclear-waste-management/>

Property Taxation (and MPAC Assessments): visit FOCA's webpage: <https://foca.on.ca/focas-property-tax-position-overview/>

Starry Stonewort: download a PDF (4.3 MB) of the [slides from a presentation](#) at FOCA's 2020 AGM & Spring Seminar.

Gypsy Moths: visit FOCA's Invasive Species webpage: <https://foca.on.ca/invasive-species/> and scroll down to the section about Gypsy Moths, which includes a link to FOCA's June 2020 webinar on the subject, and a Q&A sheet about management.

Pesticide use by Hydro One: see their webpage: <https://www.hydroone.com/about/corporate-information/vegetation-management/practices>, and contact Hydro One Customer Service with any questions about the use of Garlon or other management practices: 1-888-664-9376

First Nations Land Acknowledgement: How could associations develop their own local acknowledgements? To identify the first nations in your area, search the online map, here: <https://native-land.ca/>. This is FOCA's wording, for our meetings in the Peterborough area:

I'd like to start by respectfully acknowledging that I'm hosting this webinar from the traditional territory of the Mississauga, Anishinaabeg, and that the waterfront lands of Ontario are home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis. We offer our gratitude to our First Nations for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations. May we honour those teachings.

Tires submerged in lakes - an unanswered question!: One attendee asked a question to which FOCA has no answer. If your association has information, please [share it with us](#):

"Our lake association has found documentation of the placement of artificial reefs for fish habitat composed of used automobile tires in the late 1980's. We are in the process of confirming this and trying to find the reefs. Have any other lake associations found this in their historical documents?"

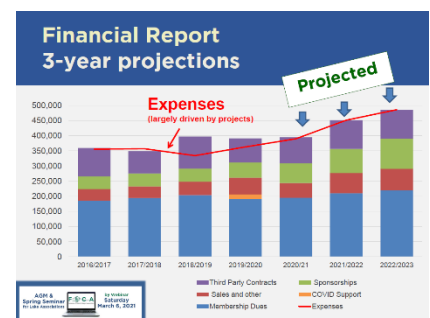
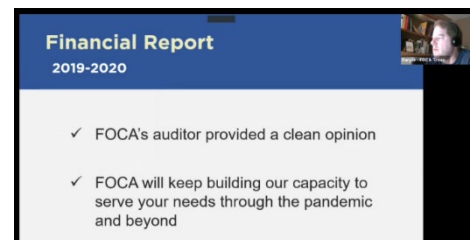
FOCA Annual General Meeting of Members:

All business to be conducted at the FOCA 2021 AGM was passed, including updating FOCA's bylaws to allow meetings to be held by phone or other electronic means (such as this webinar). Voting was by Zoom Poll, with one voting member from each FOCA Member Association in good standing.

Review all the details in the [Official Notice to Members](#), including links to download the Minutes of the last AGM, and the audited financial statements for the past year. We had assumed that some of our association members might face difficulty retaining members and collecting fees in 2020, but overall we are pleased to report that FOCA's revenue and expenses have not been significantly negatively affected by COVID-19.

In addition to presenting the financials of the last fiscal year, FOCA's Treasurer Daryle Moffatt presented **budget projections**, which propose:

- Targeting a balanced budget, with any increases in (mostly staff and contractor) expenses covered through project funds
- A modest increase in Association membership dues (as approved at the March 2020 AGM)
- A modest increase in Individual supporters, and other sales revenue (such as our event registrations and sales of DVDs on cottage succession)
- A modest increase in corporate sponsorships
- Anticipated flat third-party contracts (which refers to public sector grant revenues).



On behalf of the Governance and Nominations Committee, FOCA's Board President thanked two outgoing Directors and the 9 Directors continuing in their terms before asking for a Motion to elect 1 Director standing for re-election (for their second 3-year term), and 3 new Directors. For more about all our Directors, visit: <https://foca.on.ca/about/team/>

FOCA 2020 Achievement Award Presentation:



*...drum roll, please, for the recipient of the
2020 FOCA Achievement Award...*

the **Long Point Ratepayers' Association!**

The FOCA Achievement Award celebrates the successes of the FOCA community, and encourages us to share success stories and best-practices among member associations. Over the years, the Award has been presented to groups of all sizes, and from all parts of Ontario.

Quite often we recognize associations for their environmental efforts, but 2020 was a unique year, and in this case the recipient Association was nominated under the category "political involvement" for their successful advocacy on behalf of seasonal property owners, as a result of an Order in Norfolk County in late April 2020 from the Haldimand Norfolk Medical Health Officer prohibiting all seasonal property owners from outside Haldimand or Norfolk Counties from occupying their seasonal residences, under threat of fines up to \$5,000 per day.



Presentation of the 2020 FOCA Achievement Award to John Henderson of the Long Point Ratepayers' Association, by Tony Lepine, Chair of the Member Services and Benefits Committee.

The Long Point Ratepayers' Association (LPRA) engaged their MPP, brought their plight to the attention of the Premier's Office, as well as the two local Mayors, secured media attention for the issue, and launched an appeal of the Health Order—which was rescinded, just on the cusp of the May long weekend! Throughout, the LPRA encouraged its members to follow social distancing practices and other guidance of the government and Chief Medical Officer of Health.

As we enter 2021 with the potential for more "us versus them" sentiment in cottage country, we congratulate the LPRA for taking actions that were reasoned, well communicated, and highlight the power of speaking with a united voice. There has been no subsequent talk of issuing such an Order again—either in the Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit, or any other place in Ontario.

For more about the criteria for the Award, past winners, and how to nominate your own great Association, visit: <https://foca.on.ca/member-services/foca-achievement-award/>

An attendee comment:

"Congratulations John and the LPRA! Well done. You certainly are deserving of this award this year. I remember reading the article last year and I couldn't believe it. I am impressed at your thoughtful actions." ~Sherrie, Lake Bernard Property Owners Assoc.

The Lake Partner Program 2021

This session was generously sponsored by Yamaha Motor Canada.

Dr. Liz Favot, who has recently joined FOCA as the Assistant Lake Stewardship Coordinator working at the Dorset Environmental Science Centre, presented information about the Lake Partner Program (LPP). Some highlights:

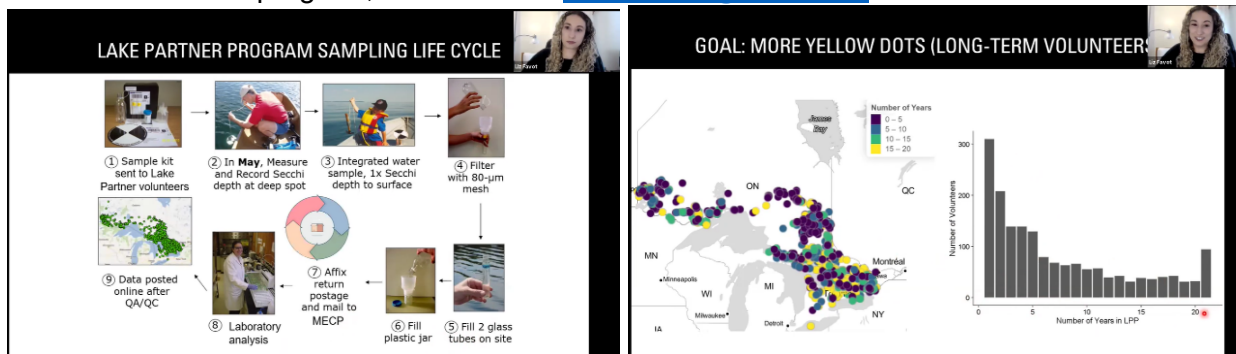
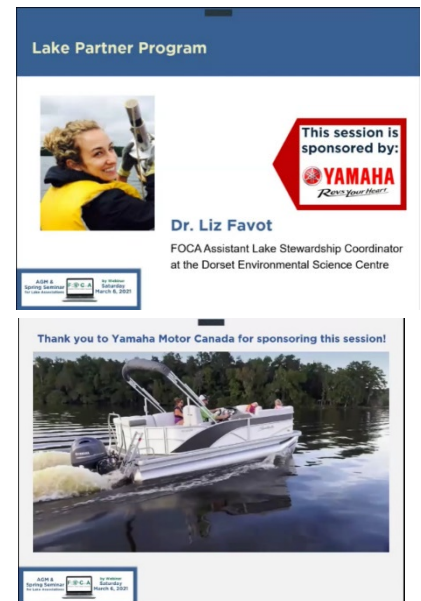
- 25 years of volunteer monitoring
- The largest volunteer-based water quality monitoring program of its kind in Canada
- Over 600 volunteers annually collecting samples and recording water clarity in 550 lakes at over 850 sampling locations, with samples analyzed by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks chemistry lab.

For lots of interesting data related to the LPP, download a copy of Liz's slides (see the link on page 1 of this summary).

FOCA posts results and related information here:

<https://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program>

To contact the LPP program, call or email: lakepartner@ontario.ca 1-800-470-8322



Phragmites Collaboration: Green Shovels

Colin Cassin of the Invasive Species Centre presented about **invasive Phragmites**: its identification, impacts and control including the challenges of limited tools and coordination to date.

As a result, FOCA and partners have come together as the

Green Shovels Collaborative to

work on a framework for

management, and to spotlight and

support community projects aimed at managing invasive

Phragmites. This initiative is providing funding for equipment,

materials and supplies, and some professional services. Watch for

project reports from FOCA in the coming months! We post info

about Phragmites here: <https://foca.on.ca/invasive-species/>



Related resource: [Invasive Phragmites Best Management Practices Guide](#)

(download PDF; 73 pages, including images that compare native and invasive Phragmites, from the Ontario Invasive Plant Council)

Association Best Practices: Volunteer Considerations for 2021

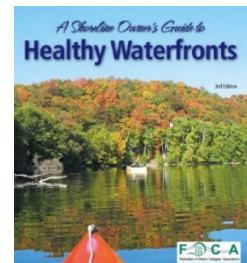
This session was generously sponsored by Aviva.



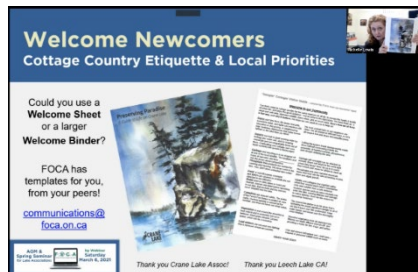
Ontario cottage country was hugely popular in 2020 as the pandemic and travel restrictions led people to isolate at their waterfront properties. All indications are that 2021 will be as busy, if not busier. We know there will be new visitors and new property owners, some of whom bought their property over the winter, sight-unseen. We expect that education is going to be critical this year, as some of these folks will be having their first cottage country experience.

What would we like them to know? And how will we welcome them, and shepherd them into our community with an understanding of the special considerations of living at the waterfront?

FOCA has publications like the ***Shoreline Owner's Guide to Healthy Waterfronts***, that we encourage you to share! Find it, and other resources, on FOCA's website: <https://foca.on.ca/news/publications/>



FOCA also has examples from your fellow lake associations of welcome sheets and even a full welcome binder, adapted from the Crane Lake Association's "Preserving Paradise" publication. These are FOCA members-only resources that you can adapt and customize to your local needs. Download copies from the links below, or email communications@foca.on.ca for assistance:



[Full Lake Association Binder template](#) (Word doc, 8 MB)

[1-page sample Welcome Sheet](#) (Word doc, 56 kB)

Next, **Ross Fraser of Cade Associates Insurance Brokers** spoke about liability considerations for volunteer associations during the pandemic. To paraphrase (*while noting that this is for information, and not intended as legal advice*): as of January 2021, Aviva (the underwriters of the FOCA Lake Association Insurance program, which many member Associations use) as well as others' policies, now specifically EXCLUDE coverage for liability protection in connection with any Contagious Disease. However, part of Bill 218 ("Supporting Ontario's Recovery and Municipal Elections Act") which passed in December 2020, prevents legal action from any individual being infected with or exposed to COVID-19, if the organization made a "good faith effort" to act in accordance with public health guidance and laws. Legal action can only be brought if "gross negligence" can be shown. Download a copy of Ross' slides for all the details, from the link on first page of this Summary.

Michelle's presentation ended with reminders to access the important resources for member Associations in FOCA's digital "Toolkit" posted here: <https://foca.on.ca/toolkit-overview/>.

Need your Member Login for this, or other members-only information? Email communications@foca.on.ca and we'll reply with details, during business hours.

One of the Toolkit resources is an overview for lake associations thinking about holding a digital AGM: [Member Offer for FOCA to host Members' AGMs during the Pandemic](#) (PDF, 341 kB). This document has tips for your association executive to review if you're planning your own virtual AGM, and also outlines FOCA's offer to help member Associations to host a basic Annual General Meeting of Members of up to 1.5 hours, on FOCA's Zoom platform, on a fee-for-service basis. Details are in the "Member Offer" attachment above, and the final 1.5 pages of the document is a fillable form for you to complete and return to FOCA by email, if you'd like to

discuss this option further. **Please note:** FOCA's digital AGM offer is subject to staff availability, and will not extend to meetings where there are potentially contentious issues to be decided, significant financial decisions being made, or major changes to bylaws or Board structure being voted. The legal experts from Borden Ladner Gervais LLP who hosted FOCA's [Association Governance webinar](#) back in May 2020 emphasized that associations should defer votes on contentious issues until after the pandemic; FOCA continues to follow this advice.



While many organizations cancelled events in 2020, FOCA challenges our member Associations to consider adapting and going virtual with at least one event in 2021.

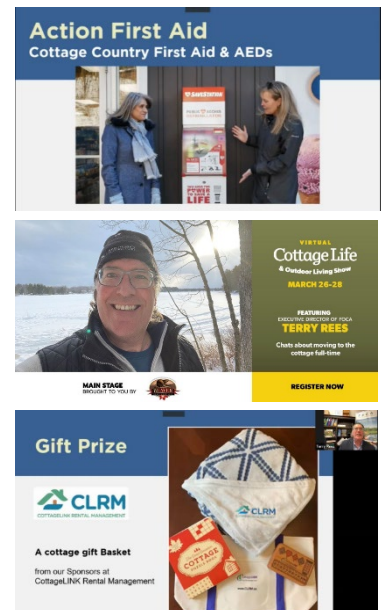
For inspiration, review the [Association Success Stories](#) (download PDF of slides, 6 MB) that were presented at the FOCA Fall Seminar in November 2020! Think about the volunteer skills you already have at hand, and what new ones you might need to host an online webinar, a virtual fishing derby or a Friday night Facebook Live sing-along with guitars at the campfire. Try to find ways to increase your community's health and happiness, and make deliberate choices about the "new world" we want to live in and be a part of, after the pandemic.

If your Association will be holding some in-person events this year, FOCA strongly encourages you to review and refer to [the COVID-19 Volunteer Checklist](#) (PDF, 156 kB) from Volunteer Canada, to ensure you and your volunteers stay safe.

Final Thoughts:

Terry closed out the Spring Seminar for Lake Associations with a few final updates and upcoming event notices:

- FOCA will host a lunch-and-learn webinar about **Cottage Country First Aid & AEDs** on Wednesday April 21st 2021, brought to you by our partners at Action First Aid. Watch for a registration link in the upcoming March FOCA Elert.
- FOCA will speak on the Main Stage at the **Virtual Spring Cottage Life Show**, giving Top Tips for extending your time at the waterfront this year. The show runs from March 26-28, 2021. Register for free attendance: <https://shows.cottagelife.com/>
- Event Gift Prize winner: the prize—a cottage gift pack from our partners at CottageLINK Rental Management—goes to: **Rachel Parsons** of the Ril Lake Cottage Association!



A final attendee comment: "...thanks for organizing and running a very impressive virtual AGM and webinar ... This has been a very difficult and challenging year for everyone, and it has brought about a lot of changes in cottage country. It means a lot to us to have a group like FOCA to help us steer through it all." ~Pat, Steenburg Lake Community Association.