

Welcome to Cottage Country! – from FOCA

You likely came here for the same reasons we do: to escape the hustle & bustle of urban life, and enjoy the great outdoors. You're in the right place. We have fresh air, clean and safe lakes, abundant wildlife, starry skies, and so much more. **Here's how we all keep it that way, and why it matters.** We hope we can count on you to help us!

Enjoy your time in cottage country. Be aware that pets, excessive noise, and lights can interfere with relaxation or star gazing, or neighbouring kids' bedtimes.

Septic systems are kept in good working order by limiting water use and keeping chemicals and non-degradable items out. Overloading your cottage (and your septic system) with guests can wreck the balance.

Garbage and recycling in cottage country is not usually picked up at "curbside" but needs to be dropped off at one of the local landfills. Don't leave your mess for others to clean up.

Phosphate free products are needed for washing and cleaning. Also, we never wash in the lake. Don't drink untreated lake water!

Food is not left outside overnight and **BBQ's** are cleaned after use, so animals are not attracted to the leftovers.

Boats used in other lakes or rivers are cleaned, drained and dried before launching in our lake. Bait buckets and live bait are never emptied into the lake.

Campfires are enjoyed safely. The status of the Forest Fire danger is posted on area roads. Daytime burning is banned in the summer, and fires are never set when windy.

Boat with care! Watch your wake – it can impact loons and other shoreline nests.

Vegetation in and around the shoreline is kept natural and is purposely not cut or fertilized. Short grass attracts Canada geese, which can be a big nuisance.

Lead sinkers are not used and **fishing line** is retrieved whenever possible.

Remember that **noise** travels further on the lake than you think! We all unwind in different ways, so let's all respect that, and find ways to share this beautiful place.

Letting the system break biodegradable waste down without overloading it limits the possibility of harmful bacteria, phosphorous, and nitrogen entering the lake from septic system failure (smelly, harmful and expensive).

Garbage left overnight can be attacked by animals. **Bears** will return to the same spot where they found "food" for up to 5 years!

Phosphates and other harmful chemicals make their way into the lake promoting excess plant and **algae** growth.

Wildlife and cottagers live together safely when they respect each other's boundaries. Only view wildlife from a safe distance. Don't let dogs roam.

Why? **Invasive species** such as zebra mussels can enter the lake, causing disease and damage to native species. Don't be the reason for spreading invasives!

The closest fire station is so far away that a spreading fire poses danger to everyone. Never leave a fire unattended. Keep water handy and douse your fire thoroughly when finished.

In most part of Ontario, the legal speed limit for motor boats is 10 km/h within 30 metres of shore.

Shoreline vegetation does an important job filtering septic & surface run-off, and provides a home for fish, frogs, turtles. Don't tear out in-water plants—mother nature put them there for a reason!

Line and sinkers left behind can—and have—trapped or poisoned wildlife such as loons.

Relax and enjoy cottage country! Learn more about all cottage country subjects:

<https://foca.on.ca/>