

2022

# Lake Stewards Newsletter

## In This Edition

Extreme Weather & Preparedness  
Floating Container Residences • Private Roads  
Short-term Rentals • Why Ontario Lakes Need Youth

**F C A**  
Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations



**Land Acknowledgment:** We start this newsletter by recognizing and thanking the traditional stewards of the lands and waterways where we work and live. The waterfront lands of Ontario are the traditional territories of many diverse Indigenous peoples who recognize the sacredness of water, the interconnectedness of all life, and the importance of protecting land and water for the generations yet to come.

We are all on a journey towards truth and reconciliation and offer this recognition as an important step in that journey. We live in different locations, and so we encourage each of you to dedicate yourselves to move forward in the spirit of respect, reciprocity, learning and sharing that learning.

Cover image courtesy Sarah Robertson, Jack's Lake

## Words from the FOCA Executive Director and Board President

This pandemic has surely turned our lives upside down. For any of you or your families who have suffered directly from the virus, we offer our heartfelt thoughts. All of us are anxious to get beyond this health crisis and economic turmoil as soon as possible. Summer 2022 is showing some glimmers of hope, so let's all commit to doing our best to keep our families and our communities safe and healthy!

Though it has been a very unusual time, our community of lake and road associations across the province has adapted and found new ways to thrive.

*FOCA's Mission remains to effectively serve and represent Ontario's lake associations, waterfront property owners and waterfront communities through education, communication and government advocacy.*

In our rural communities, change is afoot: the exodus to the lake is like nothing we've seen before. There's never been such turnover of existing properties, new builds, and renovations at the lake. People are moving to cottage country, freed from their offices in major centres, and spending way more time at the lake.

Statistics Canada reported that between 2016 and 2021 the average population growth across the entire province of Ontario was 5.8%, but in many rural census areas it was much higher, into the double digits. Even if there is a slowdown in the exodus from urban centres in the coming years, rural population growth is expected to remain higher (at 1%/yr) than it has been for the last 40 years.

This rural influx has implications for utilities, internet and cell availability, garbage, roads, retail, and contractor services in our small towns. FOCA continues to participate

in discussions around rural economic recovery, and to educate waterfront property owners about how to manage their own cottage or camp succession plan, as generational shifts in ownership continue.

It has never been more important to have a unified voice for waterfront Ontario – FOCA's role for the past 60 years.

Early in 2021, FOCA reached out to new waterfront property owners with important messages about sustainability through our participation in the 2021 Virtual Spring Cottage Life event, and by creating a new webpage and video resources devoted to welcoming folks to cottage country: <https://foca.on.ca/cottage/>.

While our individual perspectives may differ from our neighbours (whether they are new or established), we have so much in common: a love of the waterfront, clean water, and the family legacy that is a big part of belonging to a lake or river community.

*Neighbourliness is contagious, and so is the deep love of our special places on the water, so please share both liberally!*



**Terry Rees**  
FOCA Executive Director



**Ian Crawford**  
FOCA Board President

## Power Outages in Cottage Country

An extreme weather system known as a derecho carved a path of destruction across south central Ontario on the May 2022 long weekend, leaving hundreds of thousands with downed trees and without power for days, weeks, or even longer in some rural, remote and island locations.

A derecho is a rapidly-moving thunderstorm complex that produces widespread wind damage. In this case, winds reached hurricane force (peaking at just over 130 km/h) in a running path from Sarnia to Ottawa, and onward beyond Quebec City. The first mobile phone alert for thunderstorms was sent out by Canada's National Public Alerting System during the event, although not everyone received the alert. The damage to transmission towers near Ottawa exceeded that of the 1998 ice storm, with several structures toppled by fierce winds. Environment Canada later confirmed that an EF2 tornado struck Uxbridge, and there were losses of life along the storm path.

FOCA's thoughts go out especially to those who experienced the storm firsthand, those who lost loved ones or suffered losses on their properties, and those who were left stranded behind downed power lines and trees along rural roads.

In the week following, as power came back on gradually for the FOCA staff in Peterborough and beyond, we were heartened by the many stories of neighbourliness, resilience, and community spirit that emerged in the storm's aftermath. Neighbours banded together to check on each other, to share shelter, and to clear fallen trees and debris.

Our partners at Hydro One, who serve customers across this region, asked FOCA to reach out to our member groups in affected areas that were still without power more than two weeks after the storm. Here is part of their message:

*Hydro One crews have restored power to nearly 760,000 customers following a destructive storm on May 21. Due to the severity of damage, some customers in rural, remote and island locations in the Bancroft and surrounding area will be without power for several more days. In the Tweed and surrounding area, a small number of customers may be without power for several more weeks due to the extraordinary level of damage.*

## Safety Around Downed Power Lines

**If you or your neighbours are without power, report the outage by text to 92887 (WATTS), online through Hydro One's outage map or app, or by calling 1-800-434-1235.**

**Hydro One reminds everyone of these important tips:**

- It's critical to stay at least 10 metres back from a fallen line, even if it does not appear to be live.
- When climbing to clean up debris from rooftops and trim back trees, it is important to remember to look up and stay at least three metres away from overhead lines.
- Power lines can present dangers even if they aren't downed because electricity can jump (or "arc") away from the lines.
- If you need to replace any damaged fences and decks or replant trees in Hydro One service areas, please call Ontario One Call at 1-800-400-2255 or visit [OntarioOneCall.ca](https://ontarioonecall.ca) before digging, as there could be underground infrastructure on the property—particularly in urban locations.
- If you have damage to the electrical equipment on your property, visit the Electrical Safety Authority's website (<https://esasafe.com/>) to find a licensed electrical contractor to complete the repairs.

*Sincere thanks to all the crews who work around the clock to restore power.*

Cottage country waterfront properties are predominantly remote, and we can't predict when the next storm will happen—once in a hundred years seems overly optimistic these days—but Hydro One customers can sign up for outage alerts online: <https://www.hydroone.com/request-a-service/outage-alerts>, and we can all review power safety and emergency preparedness tips with family and friends.

**Learn more on the following pages. >**



# Preparedness for Extreme Weather Events

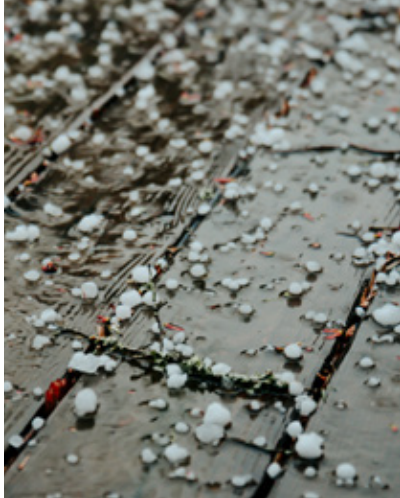
by Cade Associates Insurance Brokers

*The following tips pertain variously to your urban home on a municipal system, or to a remote waterfront property on a well and septic system. Wherever you find yourself when extreme weather strikes, there are important steps to take.*

## Wind

The season for intense windstorms and tornados in Canada typically runs March to October, but high winds can occur year-round. When you have advance notice of a possible storm, consider these tips to prepare your home:

- close and secure all doors and windows; high winds entering homes can create high internal pressure and cause more damage
- move patio furniture, garbage cans, and other loose outside items to a secure location
- designate a meeting place in the home in case of a tornado or severe high-speed wind event; it should be as low as possible, and prepared with an emergency kit, thick blankets and other important items to weather-out the event
- make trees more storm resistant by trimming damaged or aging limbs, and have larger trees checked regularly by a professional arborist
- consider installing permanent shutters on windows and strengthening garage doors.



## Rain

The increased frequency of localized, intense rainstorms is an unfortunate reality, and the resulting water damage can be devastating. The speed and unpredictability of these flash storms creates an uncomfortable vulnerability to homeowners. Take these steps to prepare your property and reduce potential damage:

- repair aging or damaged roofing
- clear eavestroughs and ensure downspouts feed away from the foundation of your home
- ensure sump pumps are running, and connected to battery backup if possible
- if on a municipal water system, consider installing a backwater valve
- keep valuable items off floors, or store them in water-tight bins
- install covers or grates for basement window wells
- clear all floor drains of obstructions
- grade your property so it slopes away from the foundation
- remain aware of local rivers, dams, streams and other bodies of water, as water levels can increase quickly
- if you are away, ask someone to check your home for damage after the storm passes, once safe to do so.

## Lightning

Lightning generates intense heat that can surge through electronic circuits or plumbing and even start fires. Best safety practices should be utilized during a severe thunder and lightning storm. As soon as you hear thunder, get to a safe location and stay indoors for at least 30 minutes after the thunder ends. If someone is struck or otherwise injured by lightning, seek medical help immediately.

### If your home is struck by lightning:

- call 911 if you see or smell fire or smoke, and evacuate the property immediately
- check for signs of fire or charred marks on the roof and through the home
- check your smoke detectors, circuit breakers, outlets and light switches for functionality
- shut off natural gas if your home has corrugated stainless-steel natural gas tubing (CSST); have the gas company come to check the lines
- have a licensed electrician check your structure's wiring if there are any signs of damage
- use surge-protector devices to reduce the chance of damage to your electrical equipment.

## Hail

Hail forms when water vapor in updrafts hits a freezing point. Ice forms and then falls, to be coated by water again. Hailstones can be as small as peas or as large as softballs, and the larger ones can cause injury and serious damage. Environment Canada issues Severe Thunderstorm Warnings for anticipated hail events.

### How to Minimize Hail Damage to Property:

- large hail can shatter windows; closing the drapes, blinds or window shades can help prevent the wind from blowing broken glass into the building

- park vehicles under cover if possible
- move patio and lawn furniture indoors
- consider using impact-resistant material if you are planning to replace your roof.

## Insurance & Water Damage

Some policies will have higher deductibles or sub-limits of insurance when it comes to water-related damage. Each policy is unique and Insurers do not always use the same terminology. When considering your coverage, here are some terms to ask your Broker or Agent about:

- **Water & Wind:** Strong winds can send debris airborne, creating openings in your home and allowing water to enter. Most insurance policies will cover the damage caused by this water.
- **Sewer Backup:** Heavy rains can overwhelm sewer or septic systems, causing them to back-up. Coverage for Sewer Backup is available from most Insurers in Canada.
- **Surface or Overland Water:** Water which rapidly accumulates on the surface of the ground, often from heavy rain or rapid snowmelt, can enter your home through ground-level doors or windows.
- **Ground Water:** Water which infiltrates underground through basement walls and foundations is considered ground water. Often this water enters slowly, seeping in over time. This type of damage is excluded by most insurance policies, considered a maintenance issue, although some Insurers offer coverage for resulting damage after a sudden and unexpected infiltration.
- **Flood Water:** When a natural or man-made body of water overflows, it is often considered flood water. Flood coverage is becoming more widely available from Insurers across the province in recent years. Water related coverages, such as Sewer Backup, Surface/Overland Water, Ground Water and Flood, are often underwritten by Insurers based on data including geographic location and a property's relation to known watercourses or other exposures. This means not all properties are eligible for all water coverages, so speak with your insurance provider to discuss your property specifically.

*Note that government disaster assistance will only apply to a primary residence, not a secondary home such as a cottage.*

## A healthy lake is a happy lake.

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## Emergency Preparedness in Remote Areas

*As many of us have recently experienced, severe weather can disrupt utilities and other services. Public Service Canada recommends that homes, cottages or camps be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours without power, tap-water, or assistance from emergency responders. Your family can be better prepared for the unexpected by creating an Emergency Plan and Kit.*

### Emergency Plan

Take time now to prepare a Plan with your family. You may not be together when an emergency takes place, but the prepared Plan will help everyone work through the situation:

- plan how to contact one another if not at home
- draw a plan of your home/cottage with emergency exits and meeting places
- write down the location of fire extinguishers, electrical panels, drains, gas valves
- document emergency contact information for doctors, family, insurance claims, etc.
- make copies of important documents, including the Plan, and store them in a known and secure location.

Emergency preparedness starts with you  
**be prepared**

**build a kit**

- ✓Customize your kit
- ✓Pack enough for 3 days
- ✓Refresh twice a year

First aid kit	Non-perishable food
Crank radio	Water (4L/person/day)
Flashlight	Medication
Documents & cash	Batteries & chargers
Clothing & blankets	Personal items

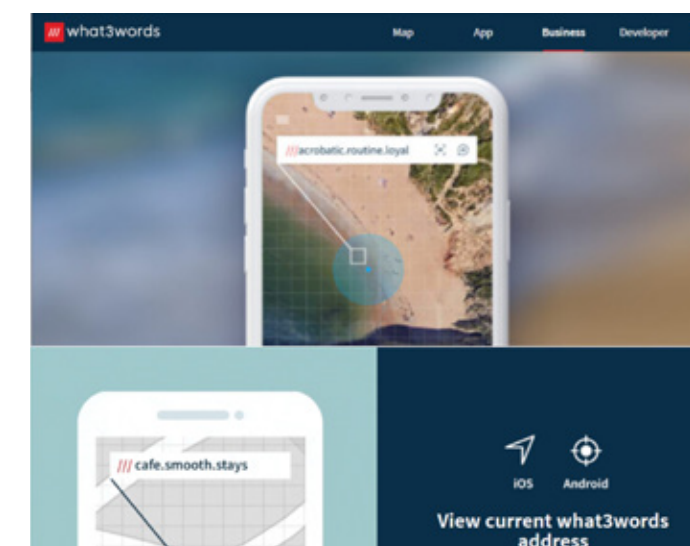
[ontario.ca/beprepared](https://ontario.ca/beprepared)

### Emergency Kit

A basic emergency kit should include water, food, can opener, flashlight, radio, first aid kit, cash and keys, important family documents, necessary medications and medical equipment, plus any special supplies for babies or pets. **Plan now to keep your family safe during the next emergency.** Learn more here: [getprepared.ca](https://getprepared.ca)

### Create an Emergency Locator Sheet

Each waterfront home should have a handy and visible list of emergency phone numbers posted prominently, along with detailed directions to your property. This will aid first responders in finding your location – critical information that may save a life, and that (in a panic) may be hard to describe – especially if a guest is making the call. See: <https://foca.on.ca/emergency-response-in-remote-areas/> for a sample locator sheet to get you started.



### Emergency Geolocating: There's an App for That

Ontario's emergency services recommend the What3Words App that works globally to help you tell emergency responders exactly where you are, by converting latitude/longitude combinations into unique 3-word sequences. Proviso: for the app to work, you still need a bar of internet or satellite service, but you can save common locations like your cottage. Learn more: <https://what3words.com/how-to-use-the-what3words-app>.



# Floating Container Residences

Coming soon to a waterfront near you?

*Last summer, a floating shipping container came to the attention of the Gloucester Pool Cottagers' Association (GPCA), a FOCA member group in the District of Muskoka. In February 2022, GPCA's President, Cheryl Elliot-Fraser spoke to fellow members at FOCA's AGM and Spring Seminar about the issue.*



Image courtesy GPCA

These repurposed shipping containers are marketed as floating homes, but can be a navigational hazard, a visual blight, and an environmental risk. They are currently subject to no building, safety, or environmental standards, and pay no property taxes.

Various routes of investigation are being pursued by FOCA and some of our member groups, including:

- **Municipal jurisdiction:** setting bylaws that prohibit or restrict the placement of these structures
- **Provincial jurisdiction:** addressing the practice of “camping on the water” through possible amendments to the Public Lands Act
- **Federal jurisdiction:** challenging the designation of these structures as “vessels” under the Canada Shipping Act 2001.

In late March 2022, FOCA arranged a meeting with concerned members and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNDMNR) to discuss how the regulations under the provincial Public Lands Act address on-water “camping”.

MNDMNR also solicited public input through a Bulletin posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario, asking for feedback by April 19, 2022. In the words of the Registry posting, “no regulatory changes are being proposed at this time, but input from the process is intended to inform consideration of potential future changes intended to address growing concerns around the impacts of this activity on Ontario waterways.” The call for input generated 450 responses, over 300 from concerned “cottage” interests.

The Township of Georgian Bay and others currently have a bylaw in place prohibiting the use of a Floating Structure as a dwelling. GPCA has reported that at the federal level at the end of March, Parks Canada has issued a cease-desist order, and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change continues to investigate environmental damage and impact.

Members can login on the FOCA webpage where the GPCA slide presentation and related news are posted: <https://foca.on.ca/land-use-planning-overview/>.

# Short-term Rental

A new FOCA Working Group

*In 2021, FOCA established a Working Group (WG) of staff and volunteer Board Members on the subject of Short-term Rental (STR) in cottage country.*

The objectives of the WG are to collaborate with like-minded organizations on matters related to STR; to follow developments and track news on FOCA's website (<https://foca.on.ca/responsible-cottage-rental/>); to provide an informed perspective about STR to FOCA membership, municipal partners, and partner organizations to share best practices and tools that address STR at the municipal level; and to produce a summary report about STR for use by FOCA member Associations as well as our municipal partners, particularly in the lead-up to the October 2022 municipal elections, and as part of the process of engaging with new Councils thereafter.

FOCA's intent is to respond to this evolving phenomenon in our waterfront communities, to share information, and educate about and promote responsible rental, to support our member Associations and our municipal partners.

## What's the issue?

FOCA's member associations and our municipal partners have become increasingly aware of properties being used for occasional or continuous short-term rental. Since the advent of property-sharing websites like AirBnB and VRBO, and with steadily increasing real estate values, there has been a significant emergence of existing owners and new buyers who are using their waterfront homes as rental units.

FOCA recognizes that the rental of cottage properties is a response by some waterfront property owners to the increasing costs of owning and maintaining these properties. FOCA is asked regularly for advice on what can be done to address the impacts of this changed use from single family, owner-occupied homes, to commercial and transient use.

We hear from members who have been frustrated by experiences with poorly managed rental properties in their immediate vicinity, and also from those who are interested in finding out how to rent (and how to insure for rental).

## The causes of concern are many, but include:

- irresponsible and inconsiderate use of the property or neighbouring properties
- excessive numbers of occupants, resulting in parking issues as well as the potential overload of septic systems with related water quality concerns

- inappropriate use of fires and fireworks, or ignoring fire bans
- noise
- unsafe or inconsiderate boating practices
- garbage problems.

Without a point of contact to an absentee owner, and with a constant flow of brand-new short-term vacationers, neighbouring residents can be faced with recurring aggravation and unresolved concerns. There is a concern that a shift to short-term accommodation in residential areas is changing the fabric of our waterfront communities, as neighbours change weekly (or even more often), and new visitors arrive without knowledge about some of the peculiarities of remote rural living.

The oversight or control of land use is mostly the domain of the local municipality, often chronically understaffed and lacking the regulatory framework to resolve after-hours issues and concerns that residential properties are being converted into commercial ‘hotels’ – without proper regulatory oversight. The desire to have some recourse for the problems associated with STR is shared by rural residents, local councils, fire officials and others, and is not isolated to one area or region.

A range of municipal responses to STR are in place or being planned across Ontario, and will be summarized in FOCA's Report, expected later in 2022. We hope this report will help to answer questions such as:

- Which, if any, of these municipal approaches seems to be providing the most positive outcomes for all involved?
- How can property owners best engage with their municipalities to bring the subject of STR to the table?

FOCA supports a philosophy of responsible use that encourages waterfront owners to educate and inform all guests and visitors about rural waterfront living and etiquette, to work with neighbours to promote harmonious relationships, and to be good environmental stewards by ensuring the sustainable use of waterfront properties recognizing the limits of the existing septic system, road capacity, and other community considerations.

If you have input to submit to the FOCA STR Working Group, please forward it to [info@foca.on.ca](mailto:info@foca.on.ca).



# Rogers home internet is now in cottage country



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Staying connected wherever you are is more important than ever. With families spending more time at the cottage, having reliable and fast home internet means you can work, learn, stream and play on multiple devices at once without the worry of interruptions.

That’s why we’ve extended our coverage to offer Rogers Wireless Home Internet across cottage country in areas around Muskoka, Kawarthas, North Bay, McDougall and many more. We’re here to keep you and your family connected to the things you love. And with seasonal suspend¹ you have flexibility to pause your service in the off-season and re-activate it when you need it.

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†Rogers was ranked first in the umlaut Mobile Data Performance audit in Q2, 2021. Visit <https://www.umlaut.com/en/benchmarking/canada>. \*Unlimited packages include a high-speed usage allotment. Once exceeded, your download and upload speeds will be reduced until the end of your current bill cycle. Online activities will continue to function at reduced speeds; however, the quality of higher bandwidth activities such as video conferencing and streaming will likely be reduced, especially when multiple users are connected to the home network. We will email you once your household has reached 75% of its high-speed usage allotment for the month. Usage further subject to Rogers Data Policy for these packages (see [rogers.com/terms](https://rogers.com/terms)). 1 Subject to change without notice, available to customers at eligible addresses. 2 Based on gateway modem hardware with WiFi 6 technology. ³Rogers & Design and related brand names and logos are trademarks of Rogers Communications Inc. or an affiliate used under license. © 2022

# A Focus on Rural Connectivity

*The pandemic has highlighted an increase in the demand for all services in waterfront Ontario, and connectivity is chief among them.*

FOCA is pleased to be aligned with partners at Rogers Communications to promote rural connectivity, improved safety, and digital access for our communities. Reliable and fast internet helps families live, work, and stay connected at their favourite waterfront. “Rogers has been leading an aggressive ramp up of our network’s reach to connect more homes to fast and reliable internet,” said Andre Oliveira, Vice-President of Service Expansion at Rogers Communications.

Rogers also offers seasonal suspend to give you the flexibility to pause your service in the off-season and reactivate it when you need it. Whether you are unwinding or working at the cottage, you can stay connected with Rogers wireless home internet so you can stream or surf to your heart’s content. Learn more: <https://foca.on.ca/rogers-offer-whi/>.



Rogers supported FOCA as our Technology Sponsor at the *2022 Annual General Meeting and Spring Seminar for Lake Associations*, held by webinar on February 26, 2022.

FOCA was pleased to welcome members from across Ontario to participate in the webinar event, although we look forward to gathering again in person in the future.

*“I actually like this format a lot. It is great for providing information, no travel, everyone has a great seat, and you can hear and see the information clearly.”*

~2022 Spring Seminar webinar attendee feedback

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## A NEW START

As a cottage owner, you know the amazing feeling of opening weekend and the promise it holds for another remarkable season. The same feeling can fade quickly as you realize the cottage you once loved is now tarnished, dated and in need of many costly repairs. Perhaps the cottage is too small for your growing family, or inadequate for your picture-perfect retirement.

Either way, you will need to make a decision. Do you renovate and add on? Sell and buy new? Tear down and build from scratch? These are not easy choices, especially if you have a longstanding relationship and many treasured memories at your cottage.

At Home Hardware Building Centre, we want to be part of the conversation and help you discover what is best for you and your family.

For over 70 years, the Beaver Homes & Cottages program has helped aspiring and practiced cottagers alike realize their dreams and potential in home building. Schedule a no obligation consultation. Our expert staff will be ready to answer all of your questions.



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## Green Shovels Collaborative

FOCA continues our work through the **Green Shovels Collaborative**. The Collaborative is a group of organizations with a shared interest in protecting nature and the economy while addressing invasive species issues, and includes the Invasive Species Centre, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Ontario Invasive Plant Council, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and FOCA.

The Collaborative's efforts have had a particular focus on *Phragmites australis*, considered one of Canada's worst invasive species. Invasive Phragmites is a very tall and fast-growing perennial grass now covering nearly 17,000 hectares of shoreline, wetlands and road allowances. It creates ecological dead-zones and impacts at-risk species. Management and eradication of invasive Phragmites has become an increasing cost for municipalities across Ontario.



*Phragmites hand-cutting, image courtesy Georgian Bay Forever*

Through the Phragmites Control Fund of the Green Shovels program, FOCA was able to fund several on-the-ground invasive Phragmites projects for our member associations in 2021. Local efforts focused on education and outreach; control, management, and eradication; or a combination of both. Thank you to all the program participants!

FOCA is offering program funding again in 2022 to interested member groups. Stay tuned to the FOCA Elert (our e-news) and our website for updates.

Learn more about Invasive Phragmites, including a 1-hour webinar about its characteristics, spread and controls, here: <https://foca.on.ca/phragmites/>.

## IsampleON continues in 2022

FOCA is very pleased to announce that the **Invasive Species Awareness and Monitoring Program for Lakes Education Ontario (IsampleON)** is continuing in 2022.

FOCA launched the IsampleON program in 2021 with our colleagues at the Invasive Species Centre (ISC), to help our member associations undertake targeted outreach, education, and sampling for invasive mussels and spiny water flea in lakes on the Canadian shield. Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are recognized as one of the pressures on our Great Lakes basin waterways, and a leading global cause of biodiversity loss. The project is intended to help prevent AIS like invasive mussels from becoming established in Ontario's inland lakes.

Lakes selected for this monitoring program should have calcium concentrations that could support a freshwater mussel population (at least 12 mg/L). Calcium is one of the parameters measured by water samples in the annual Lake Partner Program (see more on the next page), and is a nutrient that is required by all living organisms.

In 2021, 25 lakes were selected for the IsampleON program, with a total of 50 volunteers representing those lakes. The volunteers collected water samples which were sent back to the ISC for lab analysis for positive or negative evidence of invasive mussels or spiny water flea. Our volunteers also posted and shared information about invasive species prevention in their own communities by posting signs and sharing information in their local newsletters and on social media.

*For 2022 even more lakes have been selected, and sampling is in progress. We once again would like to thank the volunteers for their hard work and dedication!*

We know early detection is essential to protect our lakes and rivers from the negative impacts aquatic invaders have on these key ecosystems. Learn more on the program webpage: <https://foca.on.ca/isampleon/>.



# About the Lake Partner Program

Located in the heart of Muskoka is the Inland Waters Section of the Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Branch of the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP), home to Ontario's Lake Partner Program (LPP).

What originally began in 1996 as a collaboration between FOCA, the Lake of the Woods District Stewardship Organization, and the District of Muskoka, is now the largest and longest-running program of its kind in North America.

Each year, hundreds of volunteers collect water samples from lakes in Ontario, which are tested by MECP for total phosphorous, calcium, chloride, and water clarity. These data are accessible in digital format to volunteers, the general public, private organizations, researchers, and scientists. Through the work of LPP volunteers, a dataset over two decades long has been compiled, providing an overview of the historical trends of Ontario's recreational water bodies.

*The LPP is a great example of community water monitoring, bringing communities with a shared interest for lake preservation together.*

## What is tested?

### Phosphorus

An essential element for organisms and the aquatic systems they inhabit; controls algal growth in most Ontario lakes. Gathering water samples to be tested for total phosphorus helps track lake conditions over time. Increased phosphorus may stimulate algal growth which can have implications for aquatic environments, such as reduced water clarity and/or deep-water oxygen levels, and increased frequency and size of algal blooms.

### Calcium

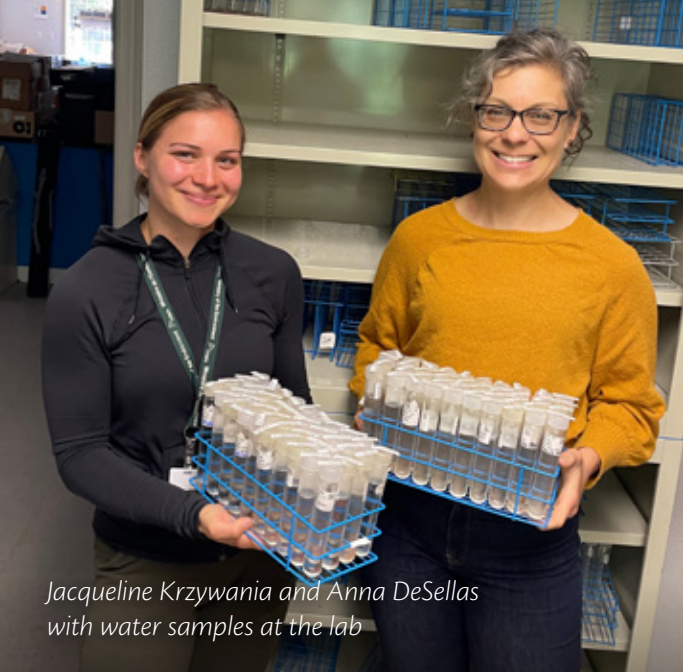
A vital nutrient that many organisms rely on, including mollusks, crayfish and water fleas. Studies have shown certain Daphnia (water fleas, a type of zooplankton) are particularly sensitive to calcium levels. Within many Ontario Shield lakes, decades of acid loading and logging have led to a decline in calcium, which is expected to get worse in the face of climate change. For the tiny Daphnia, calcium levels below 1.5mg/L have been found to limit reproduction, and are therefore a cause for concern. In our current environment, the need for calcium testing and tracking is more apparent than ever.

### Chloride

Chloride is a natural component of freshwater environments. Like phosphorus, an excess of chloride can have serious implications for lake-dwelling organisms. In Ontario, the use of road salt is a common contributor of chloride, as it makes its way into waterways via runoff, melting snow, and vehicular movement. Monitoring chloride levels is essential to provide information that can be used to assess environmental risk and inform policies or programs aimed at protecting aquatic life.

### Water Clarity

LPP volunteers track water clarity using Secchi disks. Water clarity or Secchi Depth, corresponds to the depth at which light penetrates into the lake. Factors such as biological turbidity (i.e. algae), non-biological turbidity, and dissolved organic carbon can have a direct effect on light penetration. Secchi disk readings can help track changes over time.



Jacqueline Krzywania and Anna DeSellas with water samples at the lab

## How often does sampling take place?

Volunteers who sample lakes on the Canadian Shield collect one sample per year in the spring. Off-Shield lakes are sampled once a month during the ice-free period (typically May to October). In addition to these samples, volunteers test for water quality by taking six Secchi disk readings, monthly.

## How to get involved

Interested in joining the Lake Partner Program? Call 1-800-470-8322 toll-free, email us at [lakepartner@ontario.ca](mailto:lakepartner@ontario.ca) or download the registration form on FOCA's webpage: <https://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program/>.

## Meet the Lake Partner Team

### Anna DeSellas

Anna is the Inland Lakes Monitoring Scientist and LPP Coordinator. She oversees the operation of the LPP, including communications, delivery/return of sampling kits, and the publishing of LPP data to Ontario's Open Data Catalogue, which makes the data publicly accessible.

### Jacqueline Krzywania

Jacqueline is the 2022 Assistant Lake Stewardship Coordinator for FOCA. She participates in the annual kit mail-out, kit retrieval, data entry for the LPP, and – together with Anna – answers questions related to the LPP via email or phone correspondence.

### Chemistry Staff

The chemistry staff Christiane Masters, James Rusak, Ron Xu, and Jaden Evans perform total phosphorus, chloride and calcium analyses.

### Volunteers

LPP volunteers play a vital role in the program by collecting water samples and Secchi readings. Without the time and effort contributed by these individuals, the LPP would not be where it is today. Thank you for your continued interest in monitoring lakes in Ontario!

An advertisement for Jayne's Luxury Rentals. It features a woman with blonde hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and light-colored pants, standing on a grassy area next to a calm lake. In the background, there are trees and a small boat on the water. The text 'Isn't it time your property paid you back?' is overlaid on the image. Below this, it says 'Luxury Property Owners Contact Us To List'. At the bottom left, there are logos for 'REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL', 'REALTOR', and 'RE/MAX'. At the bottom right, the text 'Jayne's LUXURY RENTALS' is written in a script font, followed by the phone number '705-706-7900' and the website 'jaynescottages.com'.

## 2021 LPP Quick Facts

550 inland lakes sampled

5,600 samples analyzed

600 volunteers

800 sampling sites

3,000 Secchi disk readings



# FOCA Achievement Award

Despite the challenges of the ongoing pandemic, in 2021 FOCA's member associations across Ontario found creative ways to engage, advocate, and to foster waterfront community through local efforts.

The annual FOCA Achievement Award was presented at our 2022 Annual General Meeting and Spring Seminar, held by webinar in late February 2022.

## Award Recipient

The **Lake Bernard Property Owners' Association (LBPOA)** in the District of Parry Sound was announced as the recipient of the 2021 FOCA Achievement Award. Congratulations!

With around 400 waterfront properties, Lake Bernard is part of both the Township of Strong and the Village of Sundridge. Increased reports of blue-green algae, increasing water levels due to climate change, and the risk of a declining Lake Trout population – among other factors – drove LBPOA to bring together their two townships and several other key stakeholders to form a *“Roundtable on Lake Health for Lake Bernard.”*

Since September 2020, the Roundtable has met (virtually) on a monthly basis. With FOCA's Report on Septic Re-inspection Programs in-hand, the Roundtable has worked to collaborate and share best practices on promoting lake health, and to educate about lakefront wastewater management systems. Efforts included web postings, webinars, and a septic survey which was delivered to all lakefront property owners via the two councils. This is a great example of a collaborative effort between municipal partners and a local volunteer association, for the benefit of the lake environment!

## 2021 Honourable Mentions:

FOCA received so many strong nominations from member Associations for the 2021 Achievement Award, that several Honourable Mentions were also handed out:

**Loon & Turtle Lakes Cottage Association** (District of Muskoka) was acknowledged for their environmental initiatives including water sampling, naturalized shoreline program, audit of aquatic plants and *“No Grass, No Geese”* project with partners at the Muskoka Watershed Council and Watersheds Canada.



**Lake St. Peter Property Owner's Association** (Hastings County) was acknowledged for their successful door-drop of 230 packages of shoreline educational materials, a campaign that resulted in a 50% increase in overall association membership over the past 2 years! Materials included a *“good neighbour” guide* (adapted from one by the Muskoka Lakes Association), healthy shorelines messaging in support of the local (pending) proposed Shoreline Bylaw, and boating etiquette information from Safe Quiet Lakes.

**Golden Lake & Bonnechere River Property Owners Association** (Renfrew County) was acknowledged for their extended collaboration and ultimate success in obtaining an amendment to the *Bonnechere River Water Management Plan* in 2021, after numerous historical flood events.

**Halls & Hawk Lakes Property Owners Association** (Haliburton County) was acknowledged for doubling their membership figures through engagement efforts in their 75th anniversary year including environmental undertakings as well as a new youth event (fishing derby), a bakers' contest, paint-along sessions, parade of lights and *“floating markets”*, and the release of a commemorative book about the history of the area.

**About the award:** The FOCA Achievement Award is presented each year to a FOCA member association to celebrate the successes of the FOCA community, and encourage peer sharing of best practices.

## Who can apply:

As you are busy on the water this summer, please take pictures of your lake association in action, and consider applying for the FOCA Achievement Award on behalf of YOUR great association!

We welcome all applicants who are current FOCA Member Associations (lake or road groups) in good standing. The Award is not open to our Affiliate or Supporting Groups who do not pay per-member annual fees to FOCA, but who are nevertheless our valued regional partners. Please do not apply if you received the Award for the same or similar accomplishments in the past 5 years.

Past Award winners have demonstrated accomplishments beyond the day-to-day scope of volunteer Association work, with new/novel ideas or scaled-up efforts that serve as an inspiration to fellow members across the province in areas such as:

- environmental stewardship
- land use planning initiatives
- research and/or education
- political involvement
- membership growth and engagement,

or other initiatives in line with FOCA's vision of *“thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario, now and for future generations.”*

Nominations for the 2022 FOCA Achievement Award will be received through November 30th. Past recipients, criteria, and the nomination form are available here: <https://foca.on.ca/foca-achievement-award/>.

*The 2022 Award will be presented at the next FOCA Annual General Meeting & Spring Seminar, scheduled as an in-person & webinar event on Saturday, March 4, 2023. Watch for event details in the FOCA Elert in the new year.*



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# Private Roads

## The “last mile” to the waterfront

*Among FOCA’s member associations, around 40% are associated with or have some formal responsibilities for a local private road (or roads).*

FOCA works hard to serve and support these groups and their unique needs. As we’ve often said, “if you’ve heard one road story, well, you’ve only heard one road story...” as the complexities are considerable, and no two roads are truly alike.

FOCA also believes there are unknown hundreds of other “road groups” across Ontario trying to function without the benefit of a peer group, or FOCA’s community knowledge base.

While some groups begin as “hand-shake” agreements between neighbours, most road organizations are becoming more formal over time due to generational shifts (the “roads guy” is no longer able or willing to do the work) or ownership shifts (actual ownership and rights-of-way may not be well understood, and property sales mean re-starting the conversation with new players). Usage is shifting too, as some formerly seasonal roads now do duty, year-round.

### Challenges for rural road groups include:

- organizing themselves, governance issues
- membership issues (nonpayers, equity, usage)
- economic and funding issues
- technical and engineering challenges
- legal and related issues
- liability concerns.

An effective road association is one that can successfully organize, maintain, and manage private roads. This may include marking danger areas with navigational aids, posting speed limit signs, or initiating crime watch programs to prevent vandalism. Effective road management may also require fundraising for regular repair and maintenance, bigger capital projects or improvements, buying sensitive land areas for preservation, or retaining legal services.

### FOCA’s work on roads

FOCA has an opportunity to be a partner in helping rural road groups to succeed. Often the actual ownership and right to use these roads is unclear, and therefore maintenance and repair obligations are also confusing and difficult to enforce.

In 2019, FOCA conducted a comprehensive survey of our road association members across the province. Summary results from the deep dataset are available to all our Member Associations upon request. FOCA acts as a clearing house for road resources, and can give general information, but not detailed or professional advice. Our 2019 survey asked questions about maintenance practices, budgetary considerations, signage, policing, municipal agreements, and more. Many factors affect expenses for our road groups, including road length, seasonal or year-round upkeep, bridges or culverts, and other considerations. With regard to data on annual fees being charged, responses included everything from less than a hundred dollars, to more than a thousand dollars per property!

In 2021 the FOCA Board of Directors created an ad hoc Working Group to dive deeper into the open-ended survey data, and to collate information from peer associations about the nature, problems, and successes of roads groups.

FOCA has been working with colleagues at the Ontario Good Roads Association (now rebranded ‘Good Roads’) to gather additional information about risk management, service standards, engineering resources, and to gauge municipal interest in assuming roads – or at least funding some aspects of private road maintenance.

In early 2022, FOCA’s Executive Director spoke to a full house of municipal partners at the Good Roads annual conference, emphasizing that private road owners are a large constituency in rural Ontario municipalities, and seeking their ongoing interest in our shared challenges and concerns.

There are a handful of Ontario municipalities that have offered one-time or annual grants or limited-service agreements to organized road associations. Members can reach out to FOCA for more information. If your municipality offers grants or limited-service agreements, please tell us your local experience, as we pull together more case studies and anecdotes about private road maintenance in Ontario cottage country. And if your association has a road question, please get in touch! Email: [info@foca.on.ca](mailto:info@foca.on.ca).

# Incorporated Associations:

## ONCA is here

*After more than a decade, the **Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA)**, was finally proclaimed on October 19, 2021. FOCA has been preparing our member Associations for this for many years!*

If your association is incorporated in Ontario, you have until October 2024 to review or update your by-laws to comply with ONCA and transition to its new rules. (If your association is not incorporated in Ontario, this development does not affect you, but you might decide to take this moment to review and update your association by-laws, regardless.)

The FOCA Governance and Nominating Committee is in the process of reviewing FOCA’s by-laws and Articles (what used to be called Letters Patent) to see what if any

updates are required to bring FOCA into compliance with ONCA. If necessary, members will vote on any changes at the FOCA Annual General Meeting (AGM), scheduled for March 4, 2023. Notice of any business to be conducted at the AGM will be circulated to members in early February, in accordance with FOCA’s by-laws.

### Think ONCA applies to you?

Start by watching the recording of FOCA’s April 2022 members-only webinar about ONCA with a legal representative of Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO). Member Associations can also access additional handy resources, links, and governance tips on annual filings, taxes and annual meetings, under the member login on our ONCA webpage: <https://foca.on.ca/onca-overview/>.

## FOCA Association Insurance



### Complete coverage for your lake, land or road association.

As a member of FOCA, your cottage, lake, road or land group is eligible for the FOCA Association insurance program. This program gives you and your volunteers peace of mind as you carry out your important work, including regattas, water hazard marking, hosting education and social events, maintaining your community’s road and more! Policies are available at exclusive FOCA Member pricing and are customized to meet your needs, able to provide General Liability, Directors & Officers Liability and Volunteer Accident Coverage.

**Request a quote today!**

[cadeinsurance.com/FOCA](https://cadeinsurance.com/FOCA)  
**1 844 CADE 1ST**

[clientservices@cadeinsurance.com](mailto:clientservices@cadeinsurance.com)  
Cade Associates Insurance Brokers  
Underwritten by Aviva Insurance Company of Canada



# Ready, Set, Go! for Municipal Elections

Once every four years, you have an opportunity to vote for your Municipal Councillors and Mayor or Reeve. The next Ontario Municipal Elections will be held on **Monday, October 24th, 2022**.

The municipal level of government delivers some of our most valued public services including roads, policing and emergency response, land use planning, garbage and waste management, by-law development and enforcement. You pay annual property taxes in your municipality to fund these services, along with provincially mandated social services costs that are downloaded to the municipality by the Province.

### Who can vote?

You are eligible to vote if you are a Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, and are a resident, owner, or tenant of property in Ontario (or their spouse).

**IMPORTANT:** If you own or rent a permanent and a seasonal residence in Ontario, you can vote in both municipalities. Your adult children do not qualify to vote at your second residence, unless they are co-owners or co-renters. Similarly, if the cottage is owned by a trust, you do not qualify to vote in that municipality.

Check if you are on the municipal Voter List using “**Voter LookUp**”: <https://voterlookup.ca/home.aspx>. This service is managed by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). MPAC provides this information to election clerks in support of municipal election events. For more about voting, consult: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/2022-voters-guide-ontario-municipal-council-and-school-board-elections>.

Your municipal clerk is the ultimate authority and holder of the voters list, so check with them to confirm your status, or to ask any questions about the voting process in your municipality!

### Why vote?

Waterfront property owners (WPO) represent a significant number of the residents in many rural municipalities, and have a large stake in the future of these communities. WPO pay over \$800-million in annual property taxes, forming the backbone of many rural municipal budgets.

Municipal Councilors are more likely to be non-partisan, inclusive and accessible to lobbying efforts, and to vote as they choose (compared to Provincial or Federal politicians who are more likely to be compelled to vote with their party).

It matters who represents you as your local elected officials. Learn more here: <https://foca.on.ca/municipal-election/>.

### Lake Associations: get involved

*Your local association can help to spread the word and provide the opportunity for all candidates to communicate with lake residents. Here are some ways to participate:*

1. Local associations can engage with their municipality to determine voting options, and circulate this information to residents. The deadline for a municipality to pass by-laws authorizing the use of alternative voting is May 1st in the year before the election; therefore, for the upcoming election you have only the options that are already approved by your municipality.
2. Spread the news in your Association newsletter, email updates, and on social media. Remind your members that this election is an important opportunity to influence local issues, and that they are entitled to vote as property owners.
3. Write to all the candidates on behalf of the lake community, explaining how many residents are represented by the association. Ask for their position on top issues of concern, and offer to post or circulate their replies.

## FOCA Historical Highlights

### 1970s

After significant lobbying by FOCA and others, the Municipal Elections Act was amended to lower the voting age to 18 (from 21) and to remove most vote qualifications related to property ownership (renters could now vote).

### 1980s-90s

FOCA lobbied for over a decade to make voting easier for seasonal residents by moving the Municipal vote date back from its traditional December date, and by securing alternate voting methods such as mail-in or phone ballot options. These changes came into effect in 1996.

4. Consider hosting an All Candidates Event prior to the election. Know your audience: if your members tend to scatter after Labour Day, time your event for a weekend in the late summer that is likely to draw a crowd, or hold an online event. Invite the local media, and inform candidates if you have done so. Circulate questions in advance to the candidates, and assign a moderator or time-keeper to keep things flowing smoothly. Take pictures!
5. Check out FOCA’s Guide to getting involved with your municipality for more tips: <https://foca.on.ca/municipal-engagement-guide/>.

### Tips to get your issue onto candidates’ radar:

- Identify yourself as a constituent of their riding.
- Give a short explanation of how the issue affects you personally, and whether you support or oppose it.
- Use facts and figures to support your argument. Suggest a solution.
- Be concise and stick to the issue if you want to express your opinion or ask for their stance on an issue.
- Hand them a 1-page brief on the issue to take away and reference in the future.
- Thank them for their time, and remind them you will be discussing the matter with your neighbours, and voting to support the issue at hand.
- Mention specifically if you want a written response, then follow up with them in two weeks if there has been no reply.

## About Third Party Advertising

**FOCA offers the following information, which should not be considered legal advice:**

Be aware of rules about ‘Third Party Advertising’ and avoid endorsing a specific candidate. Conducting all-candidates meetings, asking candidates questions, and posting or sharing the answers are NOT Third Party Advertising, provided you do not endorse or oppose a particular candidate.

Learn more here: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/2022-third-party-advertisers-guide>.



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Products featured in photo: Model 200 Sunroom with Acrylic roof, ThermoDeck insulated floor, Alumadeck outdoor decking, Sunspace railings, Sunlight Sunroom lighting kit, Sunshade blinds.







# Be #WakeAware

Cottage country boaters, lake associations, and marinas from Lake Erie to Sudbury to the Thousand Islands are all pledging to **Be #WakeAware** this boating season.



## You can too.

Closed borders and isolating away from urban centres led to huge increases in the use of Ontario's waterways over the past two years, and new 'staycationing' incentives will keep the heat on cottage country this year. There were nearly 200,000 new Pleasure Craft Operator Cards (PCOCs) issued in 2021, after a peak of 237,000 issued in the first year of the global pandemic! That is a lot of new boaters on our waterways. We all can't wait to be back on the water this season, but let's do it safely and responsibly. Let's all pledge to **Be #WakeAware**.

## Why is wake an issue?

Boat wakes can be a danger to swimmers, canoes and paddleboarders, and can swamp loon nests at the shore. According to a University of Windsor study published in the *North American Lake Management Society's journal, Lake and Reservoir Management*, wake generated by recreational boats has the potential to erode the shoreline, damage infrastructure like docks, and disrupt aquatic ecosystems. Over one summer season on Whitestone Lake in Ontario's cottage country, the authors wrote, "recreational boat wakes accounted for ~61% of total wave energy" at the study site.\*

## How to be #WakeAware when boating

Potentially damaging wakes are caused by plowing boats leaving a boat launch or marina, or sudden deceleration or turns near shore. Look behind your boat to ensure you minimize the impact of your wake on shorelines and docks. Always travel at a safe speed near shore and when approaching narrows, and watch your wake to minimize the impacts to others.

Boaters need to be aware of the size of their wake during displacement (travelling low in the water) and transition (with the bow up) to getting on plane (coasting with little drag). Position passengers throughout the boat to reduce the time spent in transition and get on plane as soon as possible. Take waterski, surf and wakeboard fun 200 metres or more away from shorelines. These are small changes that have a big impact and are at the core of what it means to **Be #WakeAware**.

## About the Be #WakeAware campaign

The Be #WakeAware campaign was launched in 2021 as a joint initiative of the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA), Safe Quiet Lakes (SQL), and the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA). The campaign prompts boaters to watch their wake impacts and move any 'big wake' fun to an appropriate area of the lake, far away from shorelines.

This year, marina operators across Ontario are coming on board as **#WakeAware Marine Ambassadors** to spread the word at the water's edge to new and long-time boaters. Dawn Campbell of Balsam RPM in the Kawarthas was one of the first to sign on to the campaign. "A lot of people don't realize when they whip out of here," she says, "how much damage their wake does to docks and other boats." All marina operators are encouraged to join the campaign, and pledge to spread the word by signing up here: <https://www.bewakeaware.com/#marine-ambassadors>.

## Here's where YOU come in

Everyone who loves Ontario cottage country is encouraged to learn more about wake impacts in a quick one-minute video posted to the campaign webpage: <https://www.bewakeaware.com/>. Then, share the news with your fellow association members and friends. Use the hashtag **#WakeAware** on social media, and remember to thank your local marina when you see them proudly displaying their Marine Ambassador sign. If your local marina is not on the Marine Ambassadors list yet, talk to them about why they should be!

*Together, we are all part of the solution for waterfront Ontario.*

—  
\* journal citation above: "Relative importance of recreational boat wakes on an inland lake", C. Houser, A. Smith, J. Lilly, Lake and Reservoir Management, 2021, Vol. 37, No. 3, 227-234.



## Don't gopher just yet!

If you're planning on doing any work around the cottage like planting trees, building a fence or installing a deck, you'll need to request an underground locate to safely identify buried utility lines on your property.

Knowing what's below protects you and your family from injury, disruption of vital services and expensive repairs.

## Dig safe in 5 steps

### 1. Call or click before you dig

Ontario One Call: **1.800.400.2255** or **OntarioOneCall.ca**

### 2. Wait for locates

Don't get started on any digging until you've received confirmation from all utilities listed on your locate. Expect a minimum of 5 business days, so plan ahead.

### 3. Respect the marks

A service representative will mark where the underground infrastructure runs through your dig area and will provide a locate sheet with a diagram of what has been located. If markings aren't required, you'll still receive a response from the utility to indicate that your work area is clear.

### 4. Follow utility guidelines

Be sure to follow any additional digging instructions outlined by each utility on your locate.

### 5. Dig with care

You're all set! Gopher it and start digging safely!

**HydroOne.com/MindtheLines**

Mind the Lines | **hydroone**

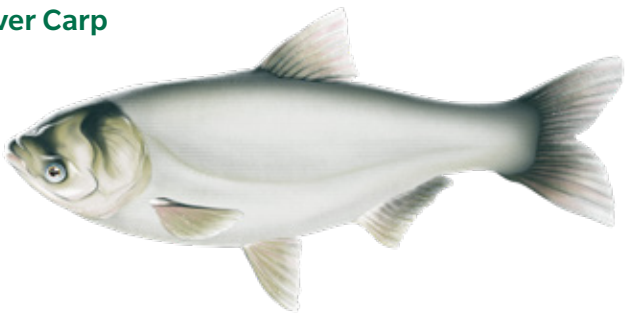


# Asian Carps: Meet the Invaders

Asian carps pose a threat to native species and overall biodiversity in Canada. Asian carps were introduced to the United States in the 1960-70s for biological control of plankton, algae, plants and snails in aquaculture ponds. Flooding and intentional release allowed the fishes to escape into the Mississippi River basin in the 1970s-1990s and they have been advancing towards the Great Lakes ever since.

There are four species of Asian carps that are invasive to North America. Be on the look-out for: Silver Carp, Bighead Carp, Black Carp and Grass Carp. None of these species currently have established populations in Canadian waters.

## Silver Carp



- Deep-bodied, wide fish with an upturned lower jaw
- Large, broad scaleless head (about 1/3 of body size) with a toothless mouth located in the middle of the head pointing forward

## Bighead Carp



- Deep-bodied, wide fish
- Large, scaleless head with a toothless mouth located in the middle of the head pointing forward



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## Black Carp



- Long, narrow body with a blunt, scaleless head
- Small toothless mouth located in the middle of the head pointing forward with a pointed snout
- Teeth in its throat (pharyngeal teeth)

## Grass Carp



- Slender, oblong shaped body with a rounded belly
- Wide, scaleless head with a toothless mouth
- Mouth located in the middle of the head pointing forward with a very short snout

## Why is FOCA concerned?

If any of these Asian carps species enter the Great Lakes and establish a population, they will have detrimental effects on commercial and sport fishing industries, recreational boating, and tourism across Ontario.

## Physical Threat

Silver Carp can jump over three meters out of the water and pose a huge threat to boaters by causing injury to passengers, and damage to boats and equipment.


## Ecological Threat

Bighead, Silver and Black carps threaten the food supply for many native fish populations. They are avid filter feeders and can eat up to 20 per cent of their body weight in plankton per day.

Plankton is the food that most aquatic species rely on; therefore, these carps have the potential to outcompete native fishes and other species. Grass Carp in particular can eat up to 40% of their body weight a day in aquatic plants, which could destroy valuable wetlands and other key habitats that native fishes, birds and other wildlife species rely on.

**DON'T MAKE DAMS  
YOUR FINAL DESTINATION.**

**STAY  
CLEAR  
STAY  
SAFE**



Water levels near dams can change in seconds without warning.

Keep your distance. **Don't be dam ridiculous.**  
[opg.com/watersafety](http://opg.com/watersafety)

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## Socio-economic Threat

A decline in native fish species could damage Ontario's commercial and sport fishing industries. The presence of Asian carps is known to decrease water quality and increase the presence of toxic algal mats along shorelines. These effects can also cause noxious smells that would negatively impact the use of beaches and lakefronts.

## What can you do?

- Never introduce live fish into Ontario lakes or rivers.
- Learn how to identify Asian carps and how to prevent the introduction or spread of these unwanted species.
- If you have any information about the illegal importing, distribution or sale of live Asian carps, report it immediately to the Ministry of Northern Development Mines Natural Resources and Forestry TIPS line at 1-877-847-7667.
- If you believe you've seen an Asian carp or other invasive species in the wild, please contact the toll-free Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, or visit <https://www.eddmaps.org/> to report a sighting.
- Download the Baitfish Primer app to familiarize yourself with native and invasive fish species.

For resources and more, visit: <https://www.asiancarp.ca/>.

**4 SIMPLE TIPS FOR  
SEPTIC SYSTEMS**

If you take good care of your system, you will save yourself the time, money and worries involved in replacing a failed system. Here are a few tips.



**1 SCRAPE YOUR DISHES**  
Scraping your dishes into the garbage will make sure solids don't go into your septic system.



**2 KEEP THE PLANTS AWAY**  
Don't plant trees or shrubs too close to the system or leaching bed.



**3 PUMP IT OUT**  
Pump your tank out when solids reach 1/3 of your tank's capacity. Keep records of system maintenance or service calls. Keep an 'as built' system diagram for reference. Know the location of your tank and tile bed.



**4 CONSERVE WATER**  
Reduce the amount of wastewater your system must treat. Replace old toilets with low-flush models.

**A poor system can degrade water supplies and reduce property values**

**oowa.org**



# Hydro: Seasonal Class

For many years, FOCA has participated as an intervenor at the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) where electricity pricing decisions are made.

One significant recent decision was to eliminate the seasonal rate class of all Hydro One electricity customers, and redistribute them in other existing rate classes that negatively impact tens of thousands of families.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, FOCA led a campaign that saw seasonal property owners send 1,956 emails and calls to MPPs, expressing concern with this decision and its financial impact on our families. The OEB released its decision in late 2021, confirming the seasonal rate class will go; but, acknowledging the impact of all this stakeholder input, they have directed that the changes will be phased in over a decade, which will save seasonal customers thousands of dollars in the interim.

Still, billing inequities due to the **Rural & Remote Rate Protection Plan** for permanent residents remain, and FOCA's work on this file will continue.

## Property Assessments: an MPAC update

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) spoke at FOCA's **2022 Spring Seminar** about the current state of property assessments, as well as voter enumeration for the upcoming October municipal elections. (The municipal vote list is generated from MPAC's housing records.) Due to the ongoing pandemic, MPAC reported that assessment updates are once again postponed, and property assessments for 2022 and 2023 tax years will continue to be based on the market at January 1, 2016. Therefore, your property's current MPAC valuation relates to that date, even though market value has risen substantially in the meantime. If you built on vacant land, renovated, or added to an existing property last year, MPAC will have reassessed your valuation, but these figures are all still based on 2016 market values.

**FOCA members can login to review the event slides on our webpage:** <https://foca.on.ca/focas-property-tax-position-overview/>.

# Outdoor Fire Safety Reminders from AFFES

It's summer in Ontario and although we're all excited to soak up the sun and enjoy our natural surroundings, please don't forget that **Ontario's Outdoor Burning Regulations are in effect from April 1 to October 31**. You can help us prevent wildland fires. Do your part in keeping fellow Ontarians safe!

### Here are a few things to keep in mind:

**If you are cleaning up around the yard**, the team at Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES) Branch of Ontario's Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry would like to remind the public to use caution when performing any outdoor burning. In order to dispose of yard waste and woody debris, we encourage you to use methods such as composting or the local landfill.

If you must burn, be sure to follow Ontario's outdoor burning regulations, including:

- fires are to be ignited no sooner than 2 hours before sunset, and extinguished no later than 2 hours after sunrise
- always have on-hand the proper tools and water supply adequate to contain the fire at the site
- know the rules for safe outdoor burning.

To consult the full set of outdoor burning regulations under Ontario's Forest Fire Prevention Act, visit [www.ontario.ca/outdoorburning](http://www.ontario.ca/outdoorburning).

**If you are planning to have a campfire**, help us reduce the risk of wildland fires this season by keeping safe campfire practices in mind. Whether you're planning to roast marshmallows in the back yard, prepare a shore lunch, or simply stay warm on an overnight trip, follow these tips:

- build the fire on bare soil or rock in a location sheltered from the wind
- make sure the fire is a safe distance from all flammable material, including overhanging branches
- keep the fire small and tend to it at all times
- put out the fire when you are done. Soak it with water, stir the ashes and soak it again. Repeat until the ashes are cold to the touch.

As always, if you do encounter smoke or flames in a wildland area, **take note of how to report it:**

- If the fire is located south of the Mattawa and French Rivers, **call 911** to report a wildland fire.
- If the fire is located north of these rivers, report it by calling **310-FIRE** (no area code is needed).

Know the fire hazard near you by consulting the interactive fire map at [www.ontario.ca/forestfire](http://www.ontario.ca/forestfire).

### Watch for Waterbombers

When you are out enjoying Ontario's waterways this season, remember that waterbombers need room to scoop water from lakes. Boaters who venture too close can obstruct fire-fighting efforts and create a dangerous situation for themselves and pilots.

Waterbombers will not scoop from a lake or river if encroaching watercraft pose a safety hazard. Help fight wildland fires by staying clear of waterbombers while out on the water.

—

We are so lucky to be surrounded by this incredible natural landscape, so let's do all we can to keep it safe from wildland fires this fire season.

Share these tips with your neighbours and families, and don't forget to explore the full set of fire prevention tips by visiting [www.ontario.ca/fireprevention](http://www.ontario.ca/fireprevention).



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# Why Ontario's Lakes Need Youth

by Megan Quinn

Coordinator of Conservation Biology (Eastern),  
Nature Conservancy of Canada,  
with additional FOCA tips for Lake Associations

*Some of my earliest memories of Ontario are of the water.*

I was nine when I moved to Canada, and as my aeroplane broke through the clouds and descended to Toronto, the entire world looked blue. I was captivated by the vast ocean below me – which I learned was actually Lake Ontario – and a world I never knew existed came into focus.

An invitation to a friend's cottage in Muskoka quickly became my own personal oasis. Days stretched in the sun, floating on docks, and hurling myself into the water were followed by nights around a campfire, curled up with a book, listening to loon calls.

### A short-list of community science monitoring programs:

**Canada Lakes Loon Survey**  
<https://www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/canadian-lakes-loon-survey/>

**Ontario Turtle Tally & Frog Watch**  
<https://report.adoptapond.ca/>

**Neighbourhood Bat Watch**  
<https://batwatch.ca/>

**Lake Partner Program**  
of water quality monitoring  
<https://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program/>

Connect with a variety of other watch programs (frogs, ice, plants, worms, and more) here:  
<https://www.naturewatch.ca/>

As a young immigrant to Canada, time spent around lakes is a key part of what made me fall in love with this country. Now, as a young adult, I have the pleasure of watching other youth do the same.

Encouraging youth to care for our lakes is one of the most important things we can do to ensure their protection. It's not hard to get youth excited about conservation, but there are ways you can help support the next generation of stewards at your lake association.

## Create an Environment of Learning

The cultural and environmental history of your waterway is a great place to start.

Whether it is teaching young people about the safest way to navigate a boat through shallow water, or showing them your grandmother's favourite picnic spot, sharing stories about the lake or river helps to make young people feel part of the broader waterfront community.

**FOCA TIP:** hold a lake-wide **scavenger hunt** that can be done in teams or solo, on a single weekend or throughout the season, to encourage everyone to discover and learn more about places around the lake of historic interest, oddities, and special spots worth sharing! Ask local businesses to supply some prizes, and consider designating an "under 18" prize, an "age 19-30" prize, and a "Boomer to Gen Z" group prize, to ensure a range of involvement. Ask folks to snap pictures as they go and upload to the association's Facebook page, or submit by email for your next Newsletter.



Engaging youth in Nature Conservancy of Canada survey of Whitefish Lake, District of Thunder Bay

## Community Science Engagement

Involving youth through community science projects on your lake is a fantastic way to promote a sense of ownership, while contributing valuable scientific information. Even something as simple as a community shoreline cleanup can be a great way to get young people involved.

Technology is quickly making community science more accessible for everyone. Phone apps, like eBird (<https://ebird.org/home>) and iNaturalist (<https://inaturalist.ca/>) not only make it easier to record the plant and animal species in your area, but also help you identify them. You don't need to be an environmental expert to discover what species are on your waterbody, and that makes these apps a great tool to connect youth with ecology. Consider hosting a bioblitz or community identification day to involve youth. Learn more about bioblitzes here: <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/bioblitz+guide>.

**FOCA TIP:** There are lots of annual "counts" and "tallies" that youth can do. Many such programs are listed in the Appendix (page 41 onward) of FOCA's **Guide to Citizen Science at the Lake:** <https://foca.on.ca/citizen-science-guide>.

## Authentic Youth Representation

If you're serious about youth involvement, invite young professionals to join your lake association as board members. Youth board members bring diverse, powerful perspectives, and having a genuine say in the decision-making process creates a sense of ownership and purpose.

Proving youth with authentic employment is essential to create robust environmental protection. Funding for summer student positions makes it possible to hire young people to complete essential work such as restoration, invasive species removal, and outreach.

Volunteer programs, like the Canadian Conservation Corps (<https://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore/conservation-corps/>) and Ocean Bridge (<https://ocean.org/learn-explore/youth-programs/direct-action/>) connect youth across Canada looking for immersive, meaningful conservation experience with partners who have a project. Consider exploring if these programs are a good fit for your lake association.

Young people are not interested in token inclusion. Approaching their involvement in your lake association with sincerity and enthusiasm will go a long way to ensure future generations can experience the wonder of Ontario's lakes.

**FOCA TIP:** If a full-time Board position is too much of a commitment for the Millennials in your waterfront community, ask them to dedicate their talents to a particular project, which feels more manageable as a volunteer entry-point. Tap their social media, video or event skills! Just remember to be clear about what role they will fill and provide an estimate of the time commitment required. Consider what's in it for them: offer to be a reference on their resume to sing the praises of their volunteer efforts.

### Inspiring Canada - by canoe

## Join us on our final portage to the water's edge

Opening summer 2023

**Become a supporter and help move the collection to its new home!**

Support for this project is provided by The Weston Family Foundation, The Government of Canada, The Government of Ontario, The City of Peterborough, and Peterborough County.

[canoemuseum.ca/move](http://canoemuseum.ca/move)

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# Clean + Drain + Dry:

## It's the Law

As of January 1st, 2022, the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry has regulated the movement of watercraft (boats, canoes, kayaks, etc.) under the *Invasive Species Act, 2015*.

Watercraft are a significant potential carrier of invasive species, and Ontario's new regulations allow us to better prevent and slow their destructive spread. Boaters need to take action to look for and remove plants or other invasive 'hitchhikers' from boats before moving between waterbodies.

*Before transporting a boat or boat equipment overland, boaters are now required to:*

- remove or open drain plugs to allow water to drain from the boat or boat equipment
- take reasonable precautions to remove all aquatic plants (weeds), animals and algae from any boat, boat equipment, vehicle or trailer.

*Before reaching a launch-site or placing a watercraft in any body of water in Ontario, boaters are required to ensure their boat, boating equipment, vehicles or trailers are free of all:*

- aquatic plants
- animals
- algae.

It is now illegal to place a boat, boating equipment or any vehicle or trailer into any body of water if there are any aquatic plants, animals or algae attached to it.

Members can contact the FOCA office to get **signage for your local boat launch** to remind people to clean, drain and dry: "It's the Law". Learn more about the new regulations, and how they will help us prevent and slow the spread of invasives, on our webpage: <https://foca.on.ca/invasive-species/>.



*FOCA works year-round on behalf of thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario.*

**Please support us!**



*Image courtesy Eric Boysen, Bennett Lake*



Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

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