

The Achievements of the Farren Lake Property Owners Association

The following was prepared for a May 2025 newsletter article

Preserving Water Quality Through Monitoring

Water Quality Monitoring for Phosphorus, Nitrogen, Calcium, Chloride and Clarity levels through Ontario's Ministry of the Environment Lake Partner Program partnered with FOCA: (Since 1996).

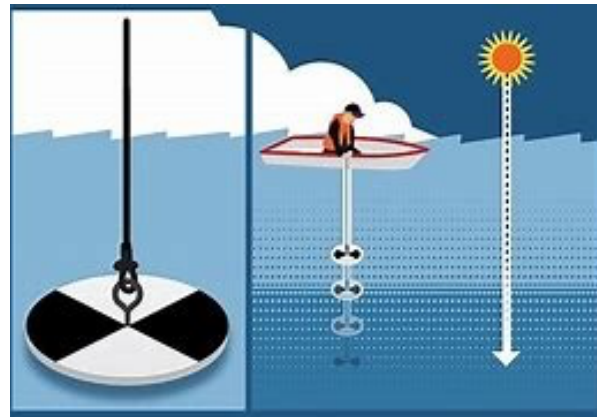
by Inland Waters Section of the Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Branch of the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP lab) supported by FOCA through the Lake Partner Program (LPP)

Provides Scientific analysis of water sample. Samples are tested for total phosphorus, calcium, chloride, and water clarity. After careful scientific quality-checking, the dataset is released to the volunteers, the public, researchers and other scientists.

What FLPOA volunteers do: In spring, takes a water sample at the deep spot in the lake and mails it to MECP lab.

For Water Transparency Level (Clarity)

What FLPOA volunteers do: Every month May to November, take Secchi disc reading at the deep spot in the lake making a record of the result and the atmospheric conditions at the time. The results are mailed to the The Dorset Environmental Science Centre, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks after the last reading each year.



Monitoring for Water Transparency (Clarity)

Watershed Watch/RVCA (Since 1991 and before)

Watershed Watch is a monitoring program on 39 lakes in the Rideau Valley. The program is building a set of ambient (baseline) data that can be used to show trends and changes in the condition of the watershed lakes. It will act as an **early warning system to identify trends or problems in water quality**. Water samples are taken four times a year to measure E. coli, dissolved oxygen, nitrogen and phosphorus in conjunction with RVCA at 8 different deep spots on the lake.

What an FLPOA volunteer does: They arrange access to the lake for RVCA with a boat and dock.

Improving Water Quality Actions

Septic Tank Inspections

A deficient septic system (perforated tank, leaky plumbing, clogged leaching bed, etc.) **releases pollutants such as phosphorus and coliforms into the environment**, contaminating our lake and even seeping into the water table that provides many with drinking water.

What FLPOA Executive did: Farren Lake through FLPOA was one of seven lakes requesting an onsite septic inspection program with mandatory inspections every ten years.

Tay Valley Township Control By-law to Limit Development on Farren Lake (2019)

Farren and Adam Lakes were determined to be the most sensitive lake to phosphorus loading in the Township. As a result of the monitoring noted previously by different governments and agencies, work done by engineers, the township and the FLPOA, amendments were made to the Official Plan of the Township to protect water quality by freezing development.

What FLPOA Executive did: It made representations to the township that the lake was not just on the brink of overdevelopment, but had passed that point, according to scientific data, and that water quality had to be protected.

Fish Habitat Restoration (2021-2024)

Watersheds Canada sponsors a fish habitat restoration project through the placement of brush bundles to replace natural buffers lost through development and to increase the capacity to filter excess nutrients and sediment

What FLPOA volunteers did: In 2022 and 2023, with the help of Watersheds Canada, 52 brush bundles were assembled and transported by boats to suitable areas.

Maintain and Restore the Shoreline

Naturalizing Shoreline (Ongoing)

Maple/RVCA

The strip of moisture loving trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants along the edge of a lake, river, wetland, or other watery habitat is called the riparian zone. This ribbon of life enhances the beauty of the shoreline; shades and prevents the heating of water, which can kill aquatic creatures; protects water quality by filtering the run-off of pollutants like fertilizers and pesticides from land; controls soil erosion, which muddies streams and ruins fish spawning habitat; and provides food, cover, and nesting sites for a rich variety of life forms on land and in water. It thus reduces water run-off that causes algae blooms and excessive weed growth;

What FLPOA volunteers have done. Over the decades, along with other environmental groups, FLPOA has encouraged the ribbon of life. Volunteers have helped to plant suitable vegetation in the buffer zone to improve lake quality. The best buffer strip is 20 meters wide, a goal that is hard to achieve on this lake. The recommended minimum depth of the ribbon of life used to be 9 meters, today's standard has increased to 15 meters from the shoreline.

Encouragement and Education of Property Owners as Lake Stewards

Love Your Lake/ Farren Lake State of the Lake Report (2009)

Farren Lake Stewardship Action Plan (2012)

Love Your Lake is a shoreline evaluation and stewardship program of the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds and the Canadian Wildlife Federation that kicked off many years of hard work to create a Lake Management Plan..

What FLPOA has done: In 2006, FLPOA began a lake management process. In 2007, a survey of property owners was undertaken and the 2008 conference with partners in the community set the stage for the planning process, a “State of the Lake” report. The 2009 report served as a tool for identifying concerns facing the lake as a baseline for future monitoring and stewardship initiatives. In 2012, The Farren Lake Stewardship Action Plan was developed as a road map to help achieve the association’s objectives. In 2013, reports were given to each landowner outlining voluntary stewardship actions that improve the health of the lake. The shoreline of each property on the lake was evaluated noting the degree of impact on and near shore.

Concern About Mining Related Activity in the Vicinity of Farren Lake (2008-2009)

In 2008, FLPOA was made aware of prospecting on private land in our area, and the little defense property owners had to ensure their surface property rights.

What FLPOA did: Encouraged members to write to their MP and political leaders proposing the unification of surface and mineral rights on private lands in Southern Ontario where the province owns the mineral rights and other proposals.

State of the Lake Environment Report (2001)

Rideau Valley Watershed Watch Program produced an evaluation of the lake as a whole based on its sampling of the water described above with recommendations.

What FLPOA volunteers have done: This information was disseminated at an annual meeting and in newsletters.

Encouragement and Education of Members as Stewards of the Waters and Lands of Farren Lake

Continuing education and awareness programs about:

- phosphorus and the importance of phosphate-free detergents;
- regular septic maintenance;
- fertilizer-free properties;
- invasive species , especially zebra mussels and Eurasian water milfoil, emerald ash borer, and yellow flag iris;
- “no wake” areas to protect loon nesting sites;
- gypsy moths;
- fishing regulations;
- boating safety and regulations;
- shoreline planting .

What FLPOA does: Communication with members through annual meetings, emails to members, newsletters, surveys, special meetings.

Representation in the Interests of the Water or Environment of Farren Lake

What FLPOA does:

Ongoing Liaison with : Tay Valley Township (TVT) ; Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA); Federation of Cottage Owner Associations; Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; Environmental Awareness interest groups such as Watersheds Canada.

Ongoing Meetings with: TVT elected officials and personnel; The Lake Networking Group, in person or by Zoom with a group of lake associations to share common interests and concerns in spring and fall; the OPP when called upon to attend workshops or meetings.