

# 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

## Message from the CEO

As we reflect on 2024, I am honoured to highlight the remarkable accomplishments of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA). FOCA continued to expand its influence and relevance for Ontario's cottagers and waterfront residents. Our commitment to protecting, informing, and uniting Ontario's waterfront communities has remained steadfast.

This year, FOCA proudly represented 250,000 families living seasonally and year-round in waterfront communities across the province. Our membership is strong with 525 member associations, including 227 Road Associations. We are further supported by our corporate sponsors, program grant partners, and 350 valued "Friends of FOCA," our annual supporters. As the hub of this knowledge network, FOCA helps cottagers gain valuable insights, expertise, and membership benefits.

In November, the FOCA Board of Directors gathered to assess our progress and chart a path forward with a new Strategic Plan under my leadership as the newly appointed CEO. This roadmap will guide FOCA's ongoing efforts to champion waterfront community interests, amplify your voices on critical issues, and ensure access to vital resources.

Throughout 2024, FOCA introduced new programs and enhanced existing member value-add initiatives, reinforcing our role as a trusted partner for waterfront communities.

Highlights included:

- Advocacy on proposed changes to capital gains tax policies, land use planning policy and enhanced source water protection measures.
- Expanding our environmental stewardship initiatives, including support for lake health monitoring and the prevention, detection and responsible management of invasive species that threaten Ontario biodiversity.
- Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders to ensure Ontario's waterfront residents have a voice in decisions impacting their communities.

FOCA remains committed to ensuring all our members have the support and resources they need to thrive. We recognize the diverse challenges facing waterfront communities—from environmental preservation to infrastructure maintenance—and will continue to advocate for solutions that benefit our members.

Looking ahead, FOCA is poised to be a catalyst for growth, collaboration, and positive change.

We will build on the strong foundation established this year, supporting our members every step of the way.

Thank you for being part of this vibrant community. I look forward to our continued work together.



LESLEY LAVENDER

## Outreach & Events

<p>Total Newsletter Subscriptions</p> <p><b>21,500</b></p> <p>(+1,184)</p>	<p>Total Newsletters Sent</p> <p><b>280,244</b></p> <p>68% open rate</p>	<p>FOCA Website Users</p> <p><b>61,000</b></p> <p>(+4%)</p>	<p>Social Media Followers</p> <p><b>4,828</b></p> <p>+Now on Instagram</p>
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**54**



### events attended or presentations delivered by FOCA across Ontario

including locations in eastern Ontario from the Rideau to Renfrew, the Bay of Quinte, Haliburton, the Kawarthas, Muskoka, Tay Township, Grey County, the Bruce Peninsula, Manitoulin Island, near Espanola, and the Sudbury area.

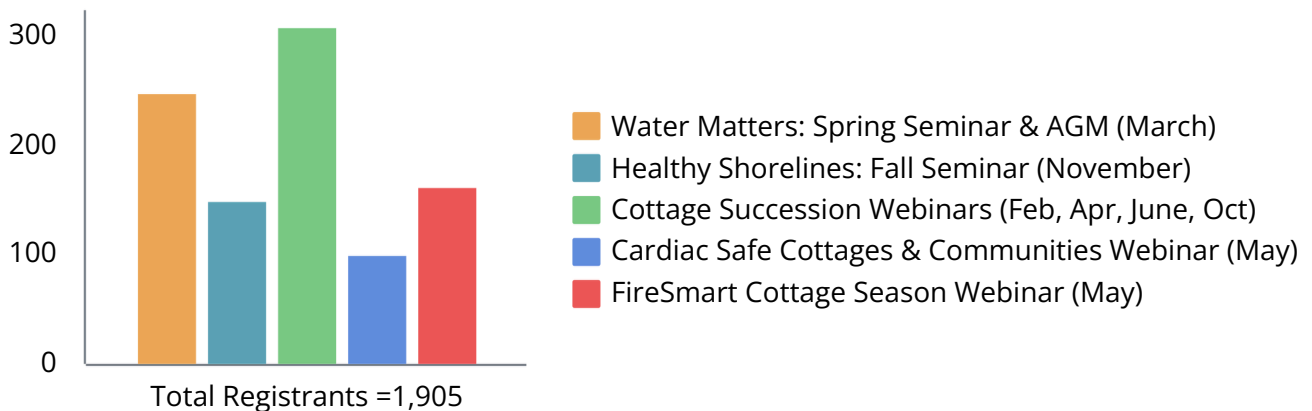


### Member Surveys Conducted

- Water quality in Ontario (February)
- Membership needs and FOCA's value (August)
- Association benchmark data (September)



### Hosted 8 Learning Events for Members and the Cottager Community



## Member-Value Additions



Park'N Fly member discount on parking costs



Cade Associates Insurance Brokers offered exclusive access to CottageFirst Group Insurance Program + discount on Association Insurance



Rogers Communications partnered with FOCA to offer a Preferred Pricing Plan discount to individual cottage owners

## Advocacy



**May**

Lobbied the federal government to **oppose the changes to the Capital Gains Tax** generating hundreds of letters to government officials and resulting in coverage in all media



**October**

Participated in Invasive Species **Advocacy Day at Queen's Park** and met with Minister Graydon Smith (Natural Resources) to address invasive species concerns and funding opportunities



**March**

Wrote to the province to express our serious concerns about **land use planning changes in Ontario's Bill 185**, the "Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024"



**January**

**Member of Transport Canada ON-Rec Boating Advisory Committee** informing members about changes to vessel restriction regulations, noise emissions, and proposed mandatory PFDs

*FOCA is actively engaged in advocacy and public policy efforts year-round to support waterfront communities. This work takes many forms—sometimes it's behind-the-scenes conversations, letters, and meetings with key stakeholders, while other times it involves larger, more visible campaigns and roundtable discussions. FOCA is committed to creating conditions that protect and enhance Ontario's freshwater environments and support resilient rural communities.*



**February**

Participated with partners in Invasive Species Awareness Week



**April**

Lobbied the Ministry of Health and Public Health Ontario to **ensure the continued testing of private drinking water**



**May**

When **Parks Canada's new mooring restrictions** went into effect, FOCA followed this change in policy & communicated it to our associations



**September**

Joined many partner organizations to participate in the **Ontario Biodiversity Council to call for action against biodiversity loss**

## Programs



**546 Lakes**



**917 Sites**



**629 Volunteers**

The **Lake Partner Program** by the Numbers

Authored **90 customized reports** for LPP participants AND released **2 new educational videos** to promote the program



**6 Additional Programs which include:** IsampleON, Green Shovels, Invasive Species Collaborative, Boater Pathways, FireSmart, Source Water Protection



Monitored for invasive species using new **eDNA sampling method to track zebra mussels and spiny water flea**



Awareness and messaging to Great Lakes members about the threat of **invasive carps and tools for identification**

# Chair's Message

2024 was a year of excitement and change! It has been an absolute pleasure to serve as your Chair of the Board of Directors. We are fortunate to have a talented Board of Directors who have provided guidance and engaged in lively debate throughout the year. The average Board member volunteers over 230 hours of their time annually.

Thank you to my fellow Directors—**Rick Blickstead, Harry Kim, Donna Commerford, Carol Armstrong, Michael Peterson, Richard Peters, Cath Devlin, Ian Crawford, Eric Stuart, Mary Ann Peden, and Diana Piquette.** Your experience and advice have been invaluable to our collective efforts.



A big thank you to our dedicated staff, who have stood by us through challenges and triumphs, ensuring FOCA's continued success. Finally, to all our Members, thank you for your unwavering support, thoughtful input, and active engagement.

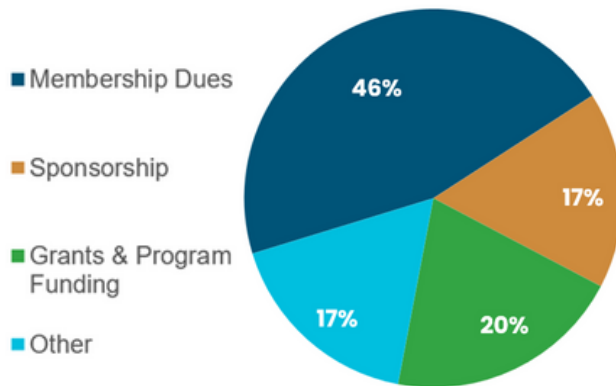
As we look ahead, I am confident that together we will continue to build a vibrant and resilient cottage community.

Here's to a prosperous and impactful 2025 for FOCA and everyone we serve!



**DEBORAH MARTIN-DOWNS**  
MUSKOKA LAKES ASSOCIATION

## 2024 Revenue at a Glance



FOCA maintains strong financial management, guided by the Board Finance Committee. As we navigate rising costs, we continue to secure revenues to support an expanding waterfront community and protect Ontario's lakes from multiple stressors.

Membership remains our primary responsibility and income source, contributing nearly half of all revenues. We deliver year-round member benefits, advocacy, and communications while appreciating the support of "Friends of FOCA" and donors.

Additional revenues come from corporate sponsorships, program funding, and event registrations, creating a stable, diversified approach. The Board remains focused on investing strategically and ensuring FOCA's future financial strength.

### 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

