

**At the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA), we believe individuals and communities play a vital role in caring for and shaping the future of Ontario's waterfronts. Join a dedicated team where your passion for the environment, rural living, and community engagement will make a meaningful impact. At FOCA, we value collaboration, learning, and innovation—and we're proud to support a province-wide network that spans generations. Together, we work to sustain and enhance the cottage experience for today, and for generations to come. We are currently seeking an:**

## **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Biologist**

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) is seeking a qualified Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Biologist to lead field assessments and develop management plans for up to eight Ontario lakes as part of its 2026 AIS Lake Assessment Pilot.

This role is ideal for a recent graduate or early-career professional with expertise in aquatic ecology, invasive species, and field-based environmental assessment. In addition to identifying invasive species, the successful candidate will document native aquatic plant communities and interpret their role in maintaining healthy lake ecosystems. This ecological context is essential to ensure that management recommendations support both prevention and long-term ecosystem integrity.

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations is a not-for-profit membership organization representing lake, cottage, camp, road, and rural waterfront resident associations across the province. Our members steward over 15,000 km of shoreline and 50,000 hectares of privately-owned waterfront lands, from Kenora to Kingston, Lake Erie to Temagami.

## **Key Responsibilities**

### **Field Assessments**

- Conduct on-site surveys to identify and document aquatic invasive species (AIS)
- Identify, document, and assess native aquatic plant communities
- Evaluate overall lake health, including the ecological role of native vegetation
- Assess habitat characteristics and ecological vulnerabilities
- Map AIS occurrences and native plant distributions using standardized protocols

### **Pathway & Risk Analysis**

- Identify potential vectors and pathways for AIS introduction and spread
- Evaluate lake-specific risk factors and ecological pressures
- Interpret how native plant communities influence resistance or susceptibility to invasion

### **Reporting & Planning**

- Prepare detailed written reports for each lake, summarizing findings and analysis
- Clearly distinguish between invasive and beneficial native species in reporting
- Develop actionable AIS management plans that protect native biodiversity
- Provide recommendations suitable for future funding applications (e.g., ISAF)

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

- Liaise with lake associations, volunteers, and community stakeholders

- Help improve understanding of both invasive threats and the importance of native aquatic plants
- Communicate findings in accessible, non-technical language

### **Collaboration & Coordination**

- Work closely with FOCA staff to coordinate site visits and timelines
- Contribute to project documentation and knowledge-sharing efforts

### **Deliverables**

- Site assessments completed for up to eight lakes
- Documentation of both AIS presence and native aquatic plant communities
- GIS-supported mapping and field data records
- Eight written lake reports with ecological context and AIS findings
- Eight action-ready AIS management plans that support ecosystem health

### **Qualifications**

- Degree (B.Sc. or M.Sc.) in biology, ecology, environmental science, or related field
- Demonstrated knowledge of aquatic ecosystems, including both invasive species and native aquatic vegetation in Ontario
- Proven ability to identify common native and invasive aquatic plant species
- Experience conducting fieldwork, including species identification and ecological assessment
- Strong analytical and technical writing skills
- Valid driver's license and access to transportation and ability to travel to multiple lake locations
- Ability to work independently and manage time effectively in a field-based role

### **Preferred**

- Experience with AIS monitoring, mapping tools (e.g., GPS/GIS), and reporting
- Familiarity with Ontario's Invasive Species Action Fund (ISAF) or similar programs
- Experience working with community groups, volunteers, or environmental organizations
- Boating experience and/or water safety certifications

### **APPLICATION PROCESS:**

Expressions of interest, including a resume and cover letter, will be accepted until **May 25, 2026**. Please send your application confidentially to [programs@foca.on.ca](mailto:programs@foca.on.ca) with the words "**Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Biologist**" in the Subject line.

*Information provided by or about candidates for these positions will be used only for candidate selection. We thank each applicant for taking the time and effort to respond; however, only candidates to be interviewed will be contacted.*

### **Additional Details**

- Part-time contract position
- Flexible working hours anticipated to be 336 hours over a four-month period
- Candidates must provide their own laptop and basic content creation tools
- Travel expenses reimbursed in accordance with FOCA policies

This position contributes to a province-wide effort to protect freshwater ecosystems, strengthen community resilience, and support sustainable environmental stewardship across Ontario.