

FOCA 2014 Annual General Meeting & Spring Seminar

Saturday, March 1, 2014
at Hart House, University of Toronto

Event Summary

from notes by FOCA Board of Directors and Staff

The meeting began with FOCA Executive Director Terry Rees welcoming attendees, including webinar participants—a new option offered this year to include members from across the Province, making the best use of available technology. Terry introduced Ken Grant, President of the FOCA Board of Directors, to Chair the Business Meeting.

Business Meeting Summary:

(Note: official Minutes are drafted separately, for review and approval at the next AGM)

Secretary Kay Soares confirmed quorum. Ken thanked all our community volunteers and noted an excellent turn-out at the event. Ken spoke about the ongoing development of the Board of Directors and its committees, to align FOCA for long-term success. Ken noted that FOCA membership numbers have remained strong this year, following the fees increase approved at the 2013 AGM. FOCA was also encouraged to discover our 2013 Membership Survey revealed that almost 90% of respondents reported their own association membership was either steady or up, over the previous year.

The Minutes of the previous AGM on March 2, 2013 were reviewed and adopted. The Treasurer's Report, presented by Jeff Clark, was presented and carried. Jeff reviewed audited financials of 2012-13 and budget projections through 2016, noting no further expected membership fee increases for that period. Membership retention remained high this past year; public sector funds are projected to decline further in coming years due to government fiscal constraints. A motion was carried to allow the Board of Directors to appoint financial auditors for the fiscal year 2013-14.



The Nominations Committee Board Slate as presented by Ken was adopted. Ken introduced the current Board of Directors, and in particular the two new members: Terry Kennedy of Kennebec Lake Association, and Ian White of Lake of Bays Association. Four Board members continue in their term; five Board members were renewed for a second three-year term. You can learn more about your Board at www.foca.on.ca/about-foca.

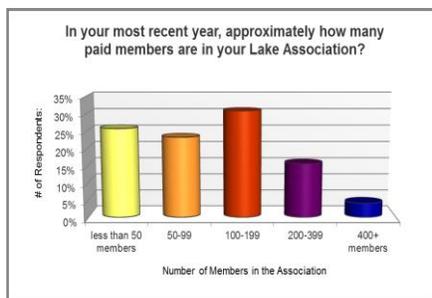
Ken thanked two departing Board members, Malcolm Burwash and Bill Cheshire, for their time and support. On behalf of the staff, Board and membership Ken thanked Terry Rees, on the occasion of his tenth anniversary as Executive Director of FOCA, marked by a gift presentation. This concluded the 2014 Business meeting.



Report from the Executive Director:

Terry Rees gave an overview of his ten years as Executive Director, having served six Presidents of the Board, and having launched the FOCA Year in Review publication and overseen numerous FOCA programs including Docktalk, the Lake Planning Handbook, WRAFT, the Lake Partner Program, fire prevention & invasive species awareness, boating safety and marker buoys, among others.

Looking at the past year, Terry noted that in 2013 FOCA had another busy year of policy and environmental initiatives. FOCA brought the Algonquin Land Claim to the attention of property owners in eastern Ontario, through a series of public information sessions. Partnerships continued with the Ministry of the Environment for the Lake Partner Program, and the Ministry of



Natural Resources for FireSmart. FOCA participated in many speaking engagements and numerous committee, partnership and policy meetings. At the governance level, FOCA implemented a member fee increase and bylaws update, as approved at the 2013 AGM. FOCA conducted an extensive Membership Survey in 2013; Terry reminded members to contact the office for the summarized results, including association fees levels and many more topics.

Members can also enquire for a video link to the full Fall 2013 Seminar presentation by Bob Sandford on the subject of climate change and resilient communities. Contact info@foca.on.ca or 705-749-3622 for these, and other, member materials.

Looking to the year ahead, Terry noted that 2014 will demand increased civic engagement, specifically with a Municipal Election scheduled for October 27, 2014 and possible other election announcements pending.

FOCA’s Elert will continue to be our most effective tool to share information on emerging issues that matter to all waterfront property owners. While our subscriber list continues to grow, it is imperative that member associations share these updates with their members, to get the full value of FOCA’s work on their behalf. Members should also note that there are constant updates to the FOCA Hot Topics pages online at www.foca.on.ca, including policing costs, extreme weather and hydro rates.

Terry previewed FOCA’s work on a revised website, coming soon to better serve members as a search tool and ongoing vehicle for timely and topical information sharing.



FOCA announced an exciting new member benefit: the “**CottageFirst**” Group Insurance Program (launch date = March 28th at the Spring Cottage Life show). FOCA is very pleased to endorse Cade Associates Insurance Brokers as our exclusive partner, providing cost-effective coverage for FOCA members. Get a quote on this unique, comprehensive insurance package for cottage, home, auto and more! Visit www.cottagefirst.com or call 1-844-CADE1ST (844-223-3477).

In summary, Terry identified the following priorities for FOCA members in 2014:

1. Civic engagement: get your members to connect online, whether for late-breaking news, to stay in touch in emergency situations or simply to build your community
2. Environmental Bill of Rights: have your say, and stay on top of key policy changes
3. Municipal Elections: get to know your candidates; get your members involved; run for office; vote at your rural municipality!
4. Association Governance issues: Ontario’s Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) and anti-spam legislation are expected this year. Review your association bylaws now, and get on the EAlert list to stay in touch for the latest news from FOCA
5. Risk Management: talk to your insurer to confirm coverage for your association as well as your personal coverage; deliver tangible benefits to your members in the form of financial savings and security by introducing them to the new CottageFirst group program!
6. Water Quality: get involved with FOCA in our new invasives monitoring program, and keep up your efforts to build our long-term water quality science through the Lake Partner Program.

FOCA Achievement Award:

The FOCA Achievement Award is the opportunity to recognize, share and celebrate the leadership role played by member associations across the province. The recipient’s activities must be consistent with FOCA’s Mission, to protect thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario. FOCA’s Membership Coordinator, Tracy Logan, presented the 2013 Award to **Pike Lake Community Association**. Kay Rogers accepted the recognition award on behalf of Pike Lake, and spoke of the interrelationship between environmental stewardship, community engagement and external relations with municipal and regional partners, in their efforts to protect their lake and surrounding area. 2013 Honourable Mention was awarded to the Peninsula Lake Association. Find more online at www.foca.on.ca/FOCA_Achievement_Award.



Speaker - Dave Ireland, Managing Director of the Royal Ontario Museum’s Centre of Discovery in Biodiversity:

Dave presented a visually stunning overview of his efforts at the ROM, communicating science through story and images to engage people in the importance of biodiversity. Public events such as “bio-blitzes” are just one means of personalizing the experience of biodiversity at your waterfront.



During lunch hour, attendees were invited to network and to connect with FOCA Corporate Sponsors at the event including Xplornet, Cade Associates, Milfoil Solutions, OFAH Invasive Species, and FOCA's newest Gold Sponsor Superior Propane.



Special thanks to our event sponsors:



The afternoon seminar session contained important environmental updates:

Speaker - Ellen Schwartzel, Deputy Commissioner, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario:

Ellen explained the Environmental Bill of Rights, a twenty-year-old tool enabling public input into environmental policy. Through a show of hands in the room, Ellen noted that many FOCA members already take advantage of their right to comment via the EBR, and she encouraged others to participate.



Lake Partner Program Updates: FOCA's Tracy Logan gave an update on the Lake Partner Program, introducing a new video explaining the monitoring protocol for Lake Stewards, and encouraged others to get involved in water sampling at their lake. The Lake Partner Program Interim Coordinator, Christie Davies, was in attendance and brought the 2013 sampling data, for members' review.

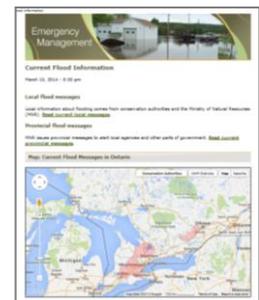


Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Program:

Matt Smith of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) introduced the new FOCA Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Program, a collaboration with MNR and OFAH. Matt previewed the online EDDMaps (Early detection and distribution system) for tracking invasives in Ontario. Interested individuals are encouraged to contact the FOCA office to get involved in the program: info@foca.on.ca or 705-749-3622.

Speaker - Vince Ewing, District Manager, Bancroft District of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)

Vince reviewed MNR's role in monitoring water levels across the province and sharing this information with local conservation authorities and municipalities. The public is encouraged to check the MNR's flood information webpage ontario.ca/flooding, which is updated in real-time. Vince took pointed questions from the floor about cottage country flooding in Spring 2013. He commented that most of the dams administered by MNR were originally built for logging and other purposes, although today they are perceived by the public as a flood control system. Vince summarized the Spring 2013 flood as an extraordinary rainfall and snow melt event. Terry Rees concluded the afternoon's discussion with assurances that FOCA continues to pursue improved communications protocols on water management, on behalf of our members.



FOCA Members may contact the office for links to the day's slide presentations: info@foca.on.ca