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FOCA Member Updates

FOCA members can now benefit from a discounted rate when ordering 10+ copies of the *Take the Plunge Stewardship Guide*. For details and to place an order, please contact the FOCA office at 705-749-3622 or info@foca.on.ca.

FOCA's Lake Stewardship Newsletter will be coming out soon! Remember that pdf versions of past FOCA newsletters can be found on our website - to view them click [here](#).

Attention Webmasters: Click [here](#) to add a FOCA link to your cottage or road association website. Likewise, be sure to let us know if you would like your website to be a link on our Regions/Members pages.

FOCA FireSmart Program

Every year the MNR responds to over 1350 wildfires, half of those caused by humans. The majority of human caused wildfires are due to careless burning practices and failure to control and extinguish campfires, grass and brush fires.

FOCA and the MNR have partnered together to bring cottagers the information and resources they need to *Be FireSmart* at their cottage and in their communities. To learn more visit the [FireSmart page](#) of the FOCA website.

Cottage Country News

Current Fire Situation

There has been an early start to the fire season this year with grass and brush fires across Ontario. Dry, windy and unseasonably warm weather has prompted officials to issue high and moderate fire danger notices throughout the majority of cottage country. Overnight frosts have delayed grass and other plants from sprouting, which normally act as a deterrent to the spread of fire across dry leaves lying on the ground. Be sure to follow fire risk



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and fire ban information in your area by checking out the [MNR's Aviation and Forest Fire Management website](#).

2010 - International Year of Biodiversity

FOCA is a member of the [Ontario Biodiversity Council](#), and is the Stewardship Liaison for the [Stewardship Network of Ontario](#). May 17 is the launch of the 2010 State of Biodiversity Report for Ontario. This valuable benchmark helps to quantify the state of our natural legacy in Ontario, to describe the risks to our biological resources, and what the future holds.

Feature Topic: Invasive Alien Species

Invasive alien species are one of the largest threats to biodiversity in Ontario. What are they? They are plant and animal species that have been introduced outside of their normal distribution and are able to establish and spread and modify ecosystems, habitats or species. They have been introduced to Ontario through fish stocking, ship ballast water, or the escape of garden plants.

There are often no natural predators for these species, which allows them the opportunity to displace native species. In many cases, their invasion can threaten the environment, economy and human health. Examples of invasive alien species are zebra mussels, Asian carp, Eurasian watermilfoil and buckthorn.

What can you do?

- Inspect your boat, trailer and fishing gear for hitchhikers
- Drain any water from your boat before leaving a waterbody
- Wash and dry your boat, trailer, tackle and equipment before entering another waterbody
- Empty your bait bucket on land - never into the water!
- Report any new findings to 1-800-563-7711 (Invasive Species Hotline)
- Do not plant invasive alien trees, shrubs or perennials (e.g. goutweed, english ivy, periwinkle)
- Write a letter to the Canadian government to urge them to stand up on issues such as the Asian carp invasion. For more information on Asian carp and directions on how to support this effort [click here](#).

Links:

[FOCA Invasive Species Fact Sheet](#)
[Ontario Invasive Plant Council](#)
[MNR Aquatic Invasive Species Program](#)
[OFAH Invasive Species Awareness Program](#)

Tip of the Month - Reduce your Footprint



Water heaters make up a huge part of your monthly energy bills. To save money and help the environment, try lowering the temperature setting on your water heater. The thermostat is often preset at the factory to 140 degrees. Lowering it to 120 degrees could provide a savings of approximately 15 percent! Lowering the temperature can also help to prevent accidental scalding.

Ontario Water Conservation Alliance

The Ontario Water Conservation Alliance is a newly formed coalition of environmental organizations, businesses, labour unions, municipalities and individuals seeking a comprehensive water conservation and efficiency strategy as part of the Ontario Government's planned Water Opportunities Act. FOCA has joined the Alliance and we encourage you to consider joining as well.

Ways to lend your support:

- Join the Alliance: email operations@rideauinstitute.ca
- Join their Facebook page: [OWCA on Facebook](#)
- Send a letter to the Premier and Opposition Leaders calling on the Province to commit to a comprehensive water conservation and efficiency strategy ([send letter now](#))
- Share this email with your contacts.

Cottage Dreams Cancer Recovery

Volunteers needed to review donor cottages

FOCA encourages members to get involved with the [Cottage Dreams Cancer Recovery Initiative](#). Cottage Dreams needs volunteers to review donor cottages throughout Ontario - contact the FOCA office to find out how to meet some of your cottage neighbours and do a little to help cancer survivors find a place to rest and recover. Finally, don't forget to sign up for their upcoming [Mosquitoes and Mojitos Party](#) on May 7th at Steam Whistle Brewery Roundhouse in Toronto!

Past editions of FOCA Elerts are available on the FOCA website and can be accessed by clicking [here](#) - feel free to send the link to your members!