

FOCA Fall Seminar Event

November 5th, 2011 (Toronto)



It was a glorious Fall day for the FOCA Seminar in Toronto this year. Thanks to all our members, sponsors, partners, volunteers, Board and staff who made the day a success.

With regrets from the FOCA President, Ted Spence, who was out-of-country, **introductory remarks** were provided by **Carole Russell**, FOCA's new Vice-President. Carole welcomed attendees, both new members and those who have known FOCA a long time. She **thanked FOCA's hard-working volunteers**, including **Don Payne** (FOCA roads advisor) who joined us for the day's events. A special welcome was also extended to **Patricia Drew** who had travelled from Winnipeg, representing the Lake of the Woods and District Property Owners Association, FOCA's largest member Association.



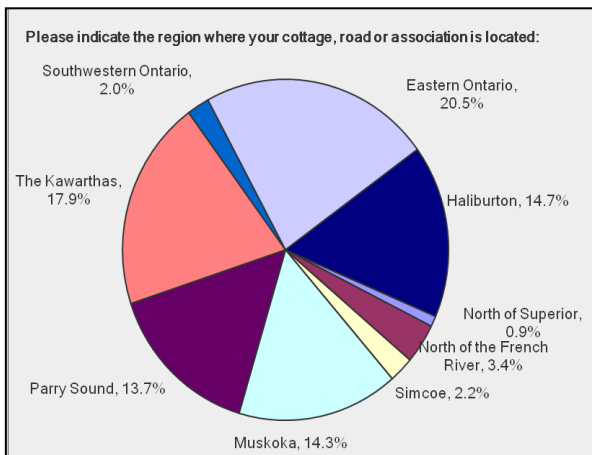
Carole outlined the importance of waterfront property owners; we are **one of the largest economic and demographic forces in rural Ontario**. We are a force to be reckoned with, and can have a strong voice if we work together!

Ron Higgins, FOCA's other new Vice-President, reported on the 2011 **Strategic Plan Review** undertaken by FOCA's Board of Directors and staff, and on the results of the significant member survey that was part of that process.

Ron reported that FOCA's core "customer groups" include: Lake Associations, Lake Association Members, Individual Members, Road Associations, sponsors & partners, and regional "umbrella" groups.



With 600+ survey respondents, we obtained an impressive and statistically significant sampling that roughly mirrors the geographical distribution of FOCA's membership. 78% of the respondents have been associated with FOCA for at least 5 years. We heard what was most highly valued among FOCA's



existing "products and services" and **what issues are most important to you:**

- the environment (particularly water quality)
- the affordability of waterfront living (taxes, insurance, utilities)
- having a voice, and having our communities' views represented and protected.

We heard that we need to communicate better, with our members and stakeholders, to build an informed and involved community that understands the value of FOCA and sees clear benefits from membership.

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Terry Rees



Michelle Lewin



Carole Russell



Ron Higgins

Ron concluded by explaining that the Board and staff have identified 4 strategic themes and have aligned into committees along these lines. Next steps include: finalizing our objectives for the short- and longer-term for each theme, providing direct feedback to the many survey respondents who posed individual questions, and issuing a Final Strategic Report. **Plan to attend the FOCA Annual General Meeting (scheduled for March 3, 2012) for the next update!**

Terry Rees, FOCA Executive Director, gave the **Political Advocacy Update**, noting that advocacy and leadership was important to our survey respondents and has historically been a vital part of FOCA's mandate. As one survey comment noted, FOCA is weakened by the perception that we have a *"disbursed membership who don't see themselves as a group."* Building stronger connections with all our stakeholders will create a stronger, unified presence for FOCA's advocacy efforts.

Terry noted that there have been elections at all three levels of government over the past year. Job and budget cuts are coming at the Federal level. At the Provincial level are some new ministers who hail from rural ridings, including Michael Gravelle (Natural Resources) and Rick Bartolucci (Northern Development and Mines, Chair of Cabinet). FOCA maintains a presence on numerous committees and is arranging meetings with key Ministers and opposition critics, to establish channels of communication on behalf of waterfront property owners in Ontario. Terry concluded by encouraging all members to get in touch with their own elected representatives and [be vocal on the issues](#); until our politicians hear from their constituents, they can remain blissfully unaware of key waterfront issues.

Next, **Michelle Lewin**, **FOCA Communications & Development** Coordinator, gave a call-to-action to Association representatives to get their members to sign up directly for [FOCA Elerts](#) (news alerts by email). There really is strength in numbers, and we need to quantify to our partners and to government that we have a strong and connected community. Email is a cost-effective means of getting out key information in a timely manner. During the recent Provincial Election, **FOCA fought for members' rights to choose which residence riding to designate for the purposes of voting**. If you relied on your association to forward updates to you, the election was likely over by the time you got the news. **Sign up today!** Look for the red "sign up" box on the FOCA website: www.foca.on.ca

Michelle "deputized" Agnes Seaton, Secretary of the Pengally Bay Ratepayers Association on Georgian Bay, for helping to get 61 of her members to agree to subscribe directly to the FOCA Elert. This solved Agnes' problem of routinely getting "unsubscribed" when she forwarded along FOCA messages. (Because she was not using the "Forward to a Friend" button within the Elert, anyone she sent to could inadvertently unsubscribe Agnes!)



*We need your email address, and we need your fellow members' email too.
Get in touch with FOCA to discuss the options, and receive your own GOLD STAR—by email, of course.*

Attendees took advantage of the **morning coffee break to network** with their peers, ask additional questions of FOCA staff, and collect materials from **FOCA sponsors** who were on-site: [Whitewater Docks](#), [Hydro One](#), [TyeDee Bin](#), [Seaco Marine](#) and [Inclined Elevation](#). As well, there were displays from our partners at the Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters, and free magazines from Cottage Life and Boating Ontario.



Nancy Parker of Cottage Life Magazine, with Terry and Michelle of FOCA

After the break, **Michelle** spoke about **FOCA Products & Services** and the tangible rewards of FOCA membership. In addition to supporting our sustainability and advocacy efforts, a FOCA membership gets you a **discount on insurance for your cottage and your boat**, through [Atrens-Counsel Insurance Brokers](#). A show of hands in the room indicated that members are already taking advantage of this great deal. Call today for a quote to find out what you could be saving: **1-877-627-6222**.

FOCA members also receive discounts on [BOATsmart!](#) PCOC tests—use your online code: **FOCA384** to save \$10. [One Stop Fire Products](#) also offers discounts to FOCA members on fire pumps and accessories. Call them for details: 1-888-207-5939.

All FOCA members can select to receive deals from [Boats & Places](#): free issues in 2011-12 if you tell the FOCA office you're interested, plus 20% discounts on Boats & Places boating DVDs & magazine subscriptions. Just use your member code online: **foca**.

FOCA has a long-standing relationship with **Cottage Life Magazine**, and we're pleased to be able to extend a special [Cottage Life subscription offer](#) to all our members at the lake level: \$45 for 2 years (includes 2 free issues). Remember to use your FOCA code when you renew: **focaoffer**.

Associations: note that every paid member of your group qualifies for these benefits!

Visit the FOCA website for more links to all the benefits of membership: <http://www.foca.on.ca/Join-FOCA>

You can access the FOCA Facebook page from a handy link on the Home Page: www.foca.on.ca. Remember to “like” us and tell your friends. We’ve discovered that our largest audience on Facebook is over the age of 55; congratulations to all of you who are being technologically adventurous!

Terry continued with the **FOCA Programs Update**. FOCA proudly partners in the **Lake Partner Program** (LPP) of volunteer environmental monitoring. Terry acknowledged **Vicky Jackson** of the Ministry of the Environment, which administers the program. Congratulations to the LPP which just received the 2011 Technical Excellence Award from the North American Lake Management Society! Find out how to get involved with water quality monitoring at your lake: www.foca.on.ca/lake-partner

FOCA supports the **FireSmart** program of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The 2011 Fire Season was record-breaking, with over 632,000 hectares burned in 1,330 fires across the province. Get tips on fire-proofing your property: www.foca.on.ca/fire-smart

FOCA's **Cottage Succession Seminar** series was a great success again this year, with more than 350 people from 60 different lakes attending our events across the province.



Chad Trantor

Terry thanked estate lawyer Peter Lillico, and introduced **Chad Trantor** from **Trantor & Associates**, sponsors of the 2011 events. FOCA members get a substantial discount on "The Cottage Plan" from www.cottagesuccession.ca **(Tell them FOCA sent you!)** We hope to continue the series next year. To find out about hosting an event in your region, please complete and return an [Application form](#) to the FOCA office.

FOCA supports the **Bear Wise program** of the MNR. There are 75,000 - 100,000 black bears in Ontario. When natural food sources run low, bears may be attracted to garbage found in or around your cottage. Become "bear wise" by learning how to store garbage properly, by putting away bird feeders after winter, and what to do if you encounter a bear. (Hint: never run or turn your back on a bear!) Get all the tips: www.foca.on.ca/bear-wise

FOCA is proud of its **Risk Management program**, providing liability insurance coverage through Atrens-Counsel Insurance (underwritten by Aviva). Terry thanked **Bob Maynard** of Atrens-Counsel for helping to provide solutions for over 80% of our Association members through this program. Call: **1-877-627-6222**.

Each year, FOCA presents the **Jerry Strickland Award of Merit** to a member association in recognition of accomplishments that support the cottage "way of life" and the principles of Strickland, FOCA's past Executive Director and tireless champion for cottagers. **Kay Soares**, FOCA Director, presented the 2011 award to the [Crane Lake Association](#). With over 200 waterfront properties, located south of Parry Sound, Crane Lake has over 50 miles of shoreline and is the last in a series of lakes that flow down the Blackstone River into Georgian Bay. Their township does not have a fire department. The Crane Lake Association has undertaken to maintain a fully-equipped fire boat and 5 portable fire pumps at the lake. **Darlene Cade Fraser** and **Bruce Sanderson** of Crane Lake spoke of their efforts with lake testing and the volunteer fire program at their lake. An annual drill is disguised as games to ensure adults and kids alike are trained in the use of the equipment, in case of a fire emergency. Congratulations to Crane Lake for your ongoing efforts!



Kay Soares and Crane Lake members

After lunch, Terry welcomed **Dr. Norman Yan**, Professor of Biology at York University, who also works in



Norm Yan – "The threat of Calcium decline"

partnership with the MOE's Dorset Environmental Science Centre. Norm gave a spectacular presentation about **"The threat of Calcium (Ca) decline for the life in Canadian Shield lakes."** He outlined the causes of environmental Ca decline, with links to acidification, logging and climate change, and showed proof that Ca has fallen enough to damage aquatic life. Lake Ca is determined by Ca levels in the soils, and by runoff. Norm outlined the role of *Daphnia*, the "little living lawnmower" that acts as a water purifier as it ingests algae from lake water. Ca-rich animal plankton (such as *Daphnia*) are lost whenever Ca declines below a critical threshold. Most Canadian

Shield lakes have low Ca levels, linked to thin, mineral-poor soils, climate change, decades of acid rain, a few logging cycles and (apparently paradoxically) recent reductions in acid input. Calcium decline is an emerging threat to our forests and lakes and more knowledge and research is essential to help develop strategies to deal with the problem. What can be done? Norm particularly advocated the use of wood ash for Ca supplementation in our forests.

Next, **Leora Berman** spoke about “**The Land Between,**” a unique part of Ontario’s landscape that covers a great deal of “cottage country” and has important features that Leora and her partners are passionate about protecting. Leora is a resident of Lake Kashagawigamog and the coordinator of The Land Between. Leora explained the Vision and Goals of the organization: to raise awareness and develop a culture of respect for the distinctive ecological, cultural and social features of this important region. The process can be modelled for other Lake Plans, by considering the distinct abiotic (landscape), biotic (flora and fauna) and cultural (historical and current land uses) aspects of a region, which influence its demography and economy. These, explained Leora, are the “A-B-C’s” of lake planning. Leora provided an overview of the “Ecotones,” areas of transition on the landscape. The Land Between is an “arc” of rich diversity with many inter-connected aquatic resources and is home to rare species and communities, including Ontario’s only lizard, the five-lined skink. The region is vulnerable and sensitive to disruption and under increasing development pressure.



Leora Berman – “The Land Between”

The day’s events concluded with the Waterfront Residents After Fair Taxation (**WRAFT**) **Annual General Meeting**, chaired by **Allan Morson**. The dissolution of the WRAFT Corporation was ratified by the members in attendance, and financials of the fiscal year ending September 30, 2011 were approved. Henceforth, the activities of WRAFT will be undertaken under the auspices of the FOCA Taxation Committee. On behalf of FOCA, **Karl Fiander**, FOCA Director, welcomed the WRAFT Directors to the FOCA Taxation Committee.



Allan Morson, WRAFT

Special thanks to our lunch sponsor, [Yamaha](#), and our event sponsor, [Hydro One](#). Thank you to [Nature Clean Living](#) who provided a great gift basket as a door prize, and to [Kidde Canada](#) for the smoke and CO detectors that were given out during the day’s events.

To view the individual slide presentations digitally, [click here](#). If you attended but didn’t complete the event survey, please [click here](#) to submit an online version.



John of Inclined Elevation



Listening to the presentations

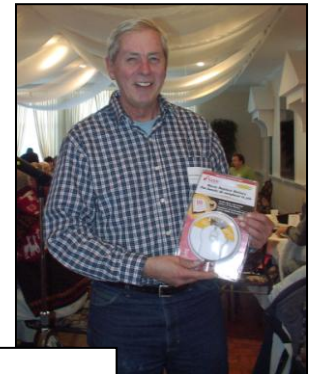


Roger, Nature Clean gift winner!



Karl with Tye, the Bear

FOCA Fall Seminar, November 5th, 2011



“Yes, see? I told you I was there!”



**We look forward to seeing you at our next event:
the FOCA Annual General Meeting, scheduled for March 3rd, 2012**