

Maximizing Membership Value

*Benefits, Impact &
Our Strategic Vision*



Lesley Lavender

CEO,
THE FEDERATION OF ONTARIO COTTAGERS'
ASSOCIATIONS (FOCA)

She has a strong background in association management, having served as CEO of the Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce in the Bay of Quinte region. There, she demonstrated her skills in building a sustainable and inclusive community through advocacy, education, programming, and networking, with a deep understanding of the challenges facing communities that welcome both seasonal residents and long-term inhabitants.

Stepped into Leadership with FOCA, April 2024



Your Voice for Waterfront Ontario



Our Purpose



Vision To sustain and enhance the cottage experience for generations.

Mission We empower and enable our members by being the leading provider of advocacy, resources, education, programs and services for Ontario cottagers.

Values

- Member-focused
- Collaborative
- Advocate
- Responsible Leader
- Knowledgeable
- Evidence-based





A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR COTTAGERS

FOCA is the only go-to provincial advocacy organization committed to sustaining and enhancing the Ontario cottage experience.

We work collaboratively to identify and address key issues by providing credible expertise, environmental stewardship, targeted programs and services, and a robust network of strategic partners.





INFORM



PROTECT



UNITE

Today's Agenda

MAIN TOPICS

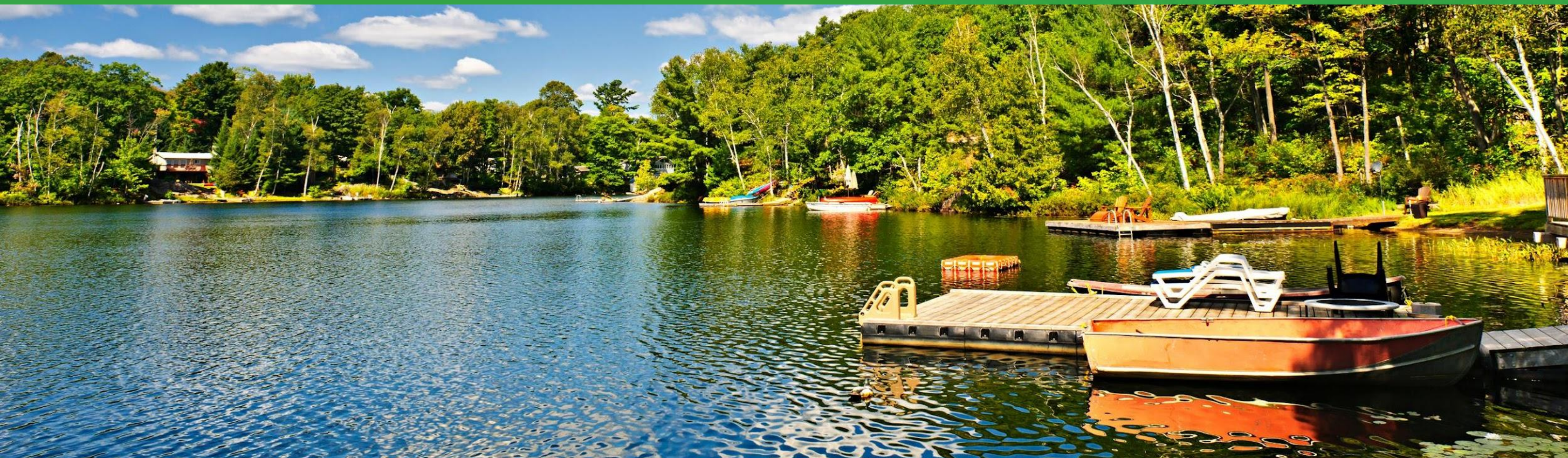
The Value of FOCA to Your Association
and to You as a Member of Your
Association

Tips on how to leverage the value

What's on the Horizon

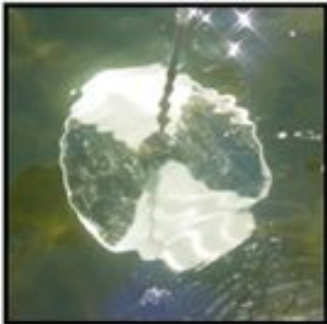


Everything FOCA does has
an impact on your property.





WHAT THE LAKE PARTNER PROGRAM MEASURES

Total Phosphorus (TP)	Water clarity	Calcium (since 2008)	Chloride (since 2015)
Important nutrient controlling the growth of algae in Ontario Lakes	Estimated using a Secchi Disk	Essential element that is required by all living organisms	There have been increases in chloride levels across the province due to road salt
			





Ongoing FOCA Programs, Long-term Files & Other Important Topics:

- ✓ The Economic Impact of Waterfront Property Owners
- ✓ Impacts of a Changing Climate (water levels, extreme weather, ice changes, Lyme disease, ...)
- ✓ Citizen Science
- ✓ Land Claims and Reconciliation
- ✓ Great Lakes Strategy & Research
- ✓ Property Taxation & MPAC Assessments
- ✓ Algae (Algal Blooms)
- ✓ Docks Permits & Boathouses
- ✓ Source Water Protection (Conservation Authorities, wells...)
- ✓ Water Quality, Healthy Shorelines & Lake Stewardship
- ✓ Lake Partner Program of Water Quality Monitoring
- ✓ Invasive Species Prevention (including Phragmites, Carps, IsampleON, Spongy Moth...)
- ✓ Cottage Succession Planning
- ✓ Emergency Preparedness in remote areas
- ✓ Risk Management for Volunteer Associations
- ✓ Lake Planning for community groups
- Government Engagement & Relations (elections, who does what? getting engaged in municipal budget planning, ...)



Latest News

April 2025 – the Municipality of Trent Lakes has released a great 2-page overview for new waterfront property owners explaining why natural shorelines matter, tips for living on a septic system, and concerns around chemicals, sprays, and fertilizers. [Download a copy](#) (PDF, 2 pages) and share it with your own municipality!



The Issue

FOCA has tips and hints to help you get the most out of the cottage country experience.

Your Role

New to cottage country? Spend a few minutes with FOCA's previous Executive Director Terry Rees in one of the videos below...

Looking for resources to share with neighbours who are new to cottage country? FOCA has templates of Welcome Messages, a Lake Association Binder and more... Visit our [Association Toolkit](#) webpage for more.

Video Resources:



Thinking about buying a cottage? Start here: [Watch this video](#) (online; 7 mins) for tips from FOCA about choosing an area, finding the perfect cottage or building your own, learning about your property, and connecting with the local lake association.

WWWW



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FOCA has hundreds of pages of rural waterfront resources! Search any topic:

enter keyword(s) here...

[SEARCH](#)

Water Management Plans

What FOCA sees

FOCA has been vocal to government about the need to address Water Management Plans (WMP) and reinstate public consultation in the process.



FOCA Video: [Understanding your Cottage Country Septic System](#) (YouTube, 10 min, 2018)



FOCA Video: [Welcome to Cottage Country! Thinking about buying a cottage? Start here.](#) (YouTube, 6 min, 2021)

Have you read FOCA's economic impact report yet?

The Economic Impacts of Waterfront Property Households in Ontario. This is a digital-only FOCA publication.

[Learn more here.](#)



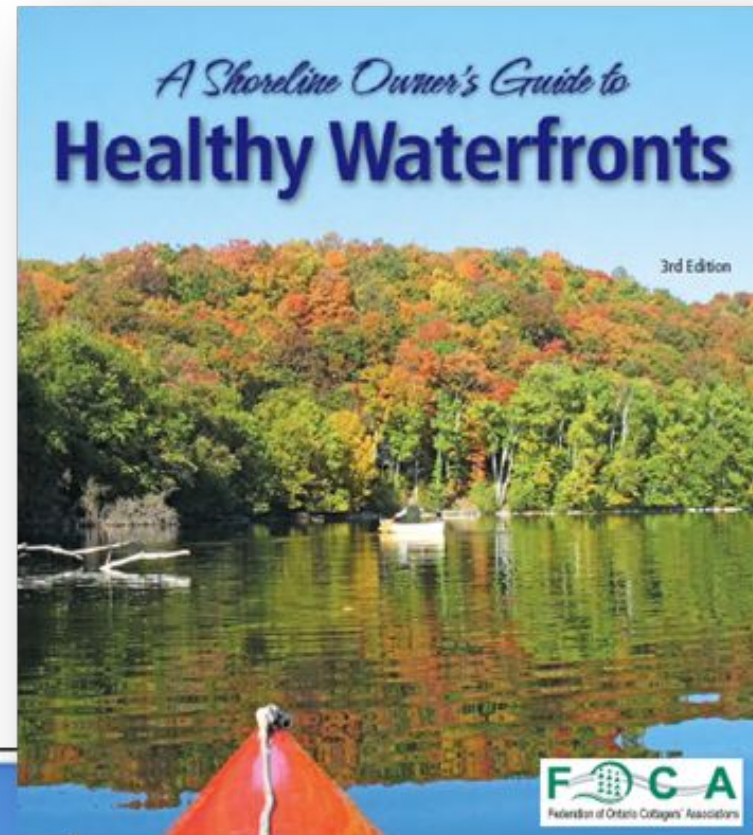
The Role of Waterfront Property Owners in Rural Economic Development

A Shoreline Owner's Guide to Healthy Waterfronts

erways,
ed, in the
pacts.

Print & Video Publications

signs, brochures, reports...



FOCA Cottage Country Septic System Video

foca.on.ca/

[publications-videos/](https://foca.on.ca/publications-videos/)

NEW!

Guide to Aquatic Plants in Ontario

2.0 Aquatic Plants of Ontario

This chapter provides key identifying information about some of the more common plants in our province, including species that are found in northern and southern Ontario lakes.

The plants in this chapter were chosen based on the author's experience surveying aquatic plant communities in lakes across Ontario. The species listed here were some of the more common species found in those surveys or species of greater interest, but that is not to say they are the most common and there are certainly many, *many* more.

Before we dive in, we need to define a few terms:

Native plant species are those that have been found historically within a certain geographic range.

Non-native plants are species that have not been found historically within the range of interest but have become established and are able to successfully reproduce without human assistance. Not all non-native plant species are problematic ecologically or economically.

Invasive plant species, as defined by the **Ontario Invasive Species Act**, are non-native plants that have the potential to cause environmental and/or economic harm if they become introduced and established here.

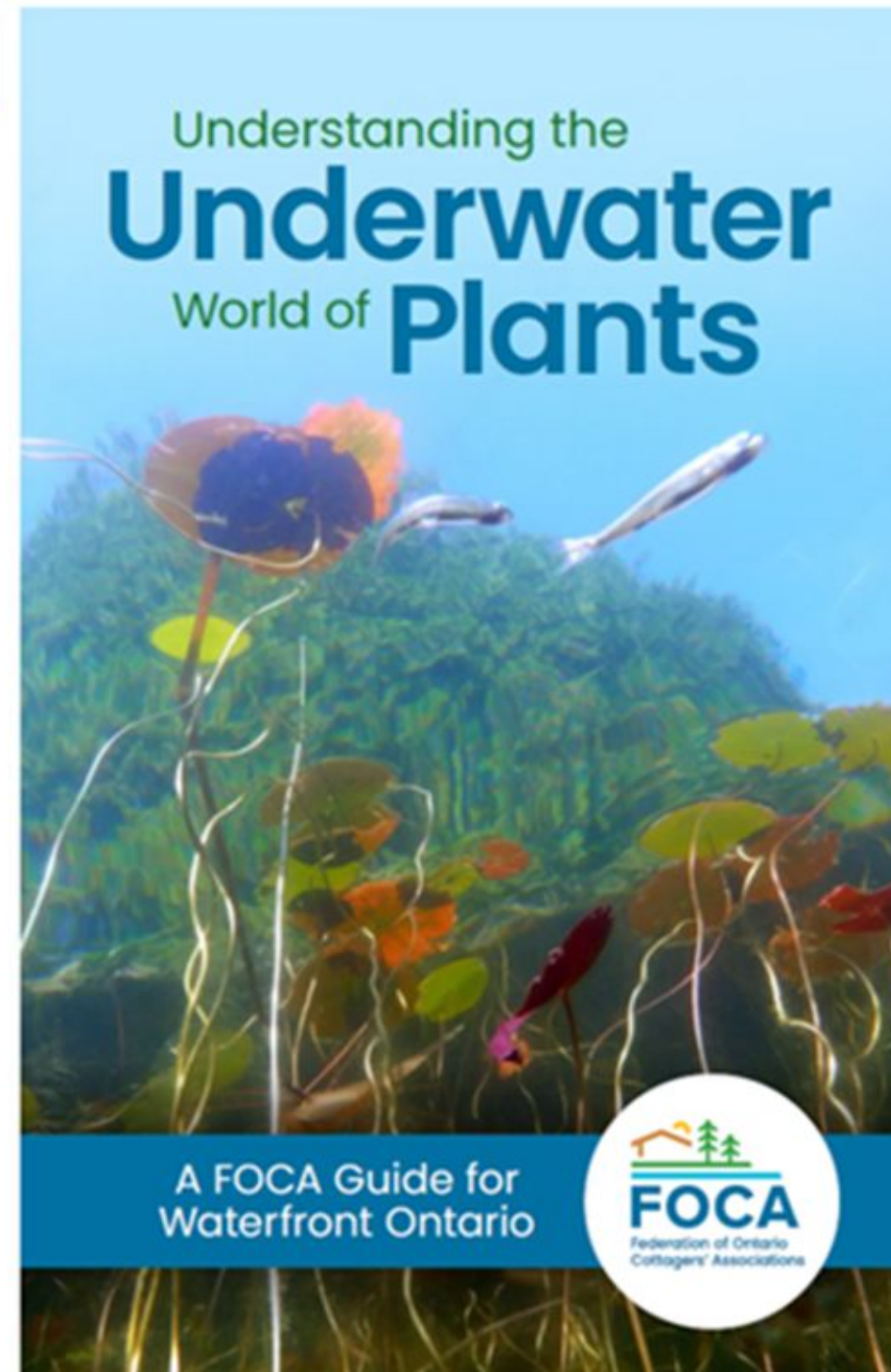


Look for this icon throughout chapter 2;
it indicates an invasive plant species

It is important to note that the term 'invasive' is sometimes used to describe the behaviour of a plant that is highly competitive with its ability to proliferate and spread. This type of 'invasive' behaviour can apply to both native and non-native species. In this guide, when we refer to invasive species, we are using the definition provided above to refer to species that the Ontario government has specifically identified as problematic, non-native species. For an up-to-date list of invasive aquatic plant species in Ontario, visit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/invasive-species-ontario>

In this chapter, plant descriptions are divided into sections by **emergent**, **floating-leaved**, **free-floating**, and **submersed** plants. The chapter ends with an additional discussion of **algae**, which are not aquatic plants but are often a subject of great interest to waterfront users, and in some cases (such as stony stonewort) can look like a plant!

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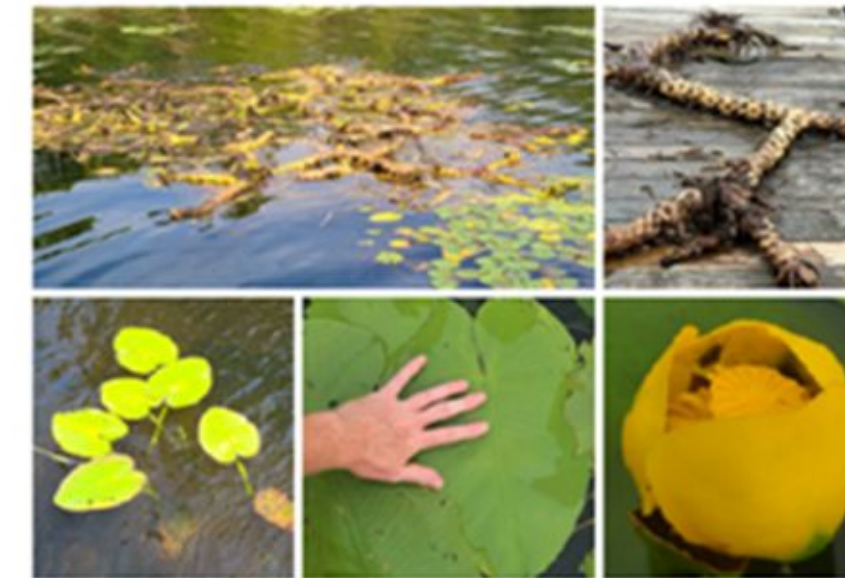
Yellow Pond Lily (*Nuphar variegata*)

These lilies are typically found in the shallow areas of lakes, right before the lake turns to shallower marsh land. They often occur in large circular patches, sprouting from tubers buried under the sediment in calm areas. These tubers can sometimes become dislodged and float on the surface, which can sometimes be mistaken for a large snake!

Key ID features:

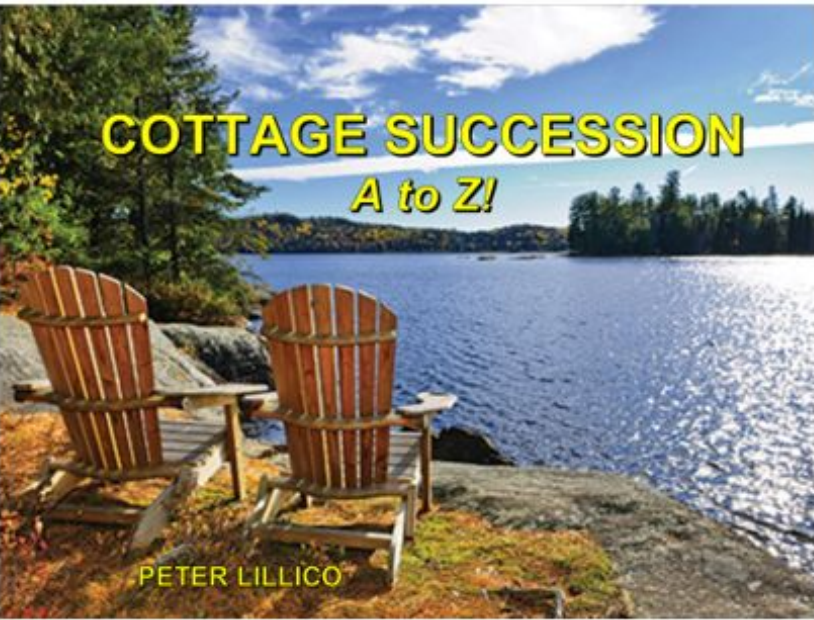
- large, heart-shaped leaves with rounded lobes (10-25 cm long) and veins running out from the main vein
- thick stems with one flat side
- large, scaled tubers that sometimes become dislodged and create large floating masses
- vibrant yellow flowers (4-6 cm wide)

Yellow pond lily is the preferred food for moose and is an important source of food and shelter for waterfowl, muskrats, beavers, and fish.



Yellow pond lily (top left to bottom right): Habitat; tubers; leaves; leaf; and flower

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FOCA
Federation of Ontario
Cottagers' Associations



FOCA Elert ~ November 2024

For the Love of the Waterfront...
As a not-for-profit organization, FOCA relies on the generosity of our members and community to continue our vital work. **This Giving Tuesday, please consider making a one-time or recurring donation to FOCA.** Your support helps us advocate year-round for sustainable waterfront living across Ontario. Together, we can make a difference. Thank you for supporting FOCA!

[DONATE](#)

Recap: FOCA Fall Seminar

FOCA Fall Seminar: Healthy Shorelines
held on November 9, 2024 by Zoom webinar



Thank you to our speakers, our session sponsors, and all our attendees for posing questions and making the 2024 FOCA Fall Seminar such a success! All paid registrants

Short Term Rental Accommodation
As reported by **The Star**, the Tax Court of Canada recently ruled that a condo unit regularly rented out for short-term leases on Airbnb was subject to HST on the property value when sold. Get a link to the article (a Star subscription is required to access this item), as well as earlier news about municipal responses to rental accommodations, on FOCA's webpage: <https://foca.on.ca/rental/>

FOR RENT

Wildfire Community Preparedness Events
FOCA encourages each of our member associations to apply for a **\$500 award** to hold a **Wildfire Community Preparedness Day** between May and October next year. There are lots of [resources](#) available to help you plan your local event. Learn more and apply by January 31, 2025, here: <https://firesmartcanada.ca/programs/wildfire-community-preparedness-day/>


\$500
APPLY NOW!
APPLICATIONS OPEN
SEPTEMBER 1 - JANUARY 31, 2025

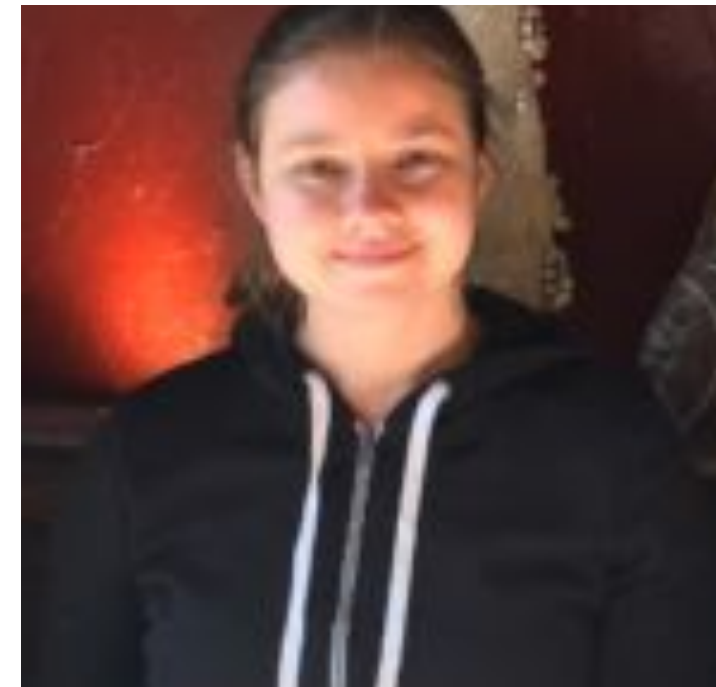




Michelle Lewin
Manager of Communications &
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Dana Yonemitsu
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Coordinator



Deanna Forgie
Programs Coordinator



Lesley Lavender
CEO



Portia Buchanan*
Membership Coordinator



Terry Rees*
Source Water Protection
Program Coordinator



Dana Zashi*
Social Media Coordinator
(Summer Student)



Gavin Vance*
Lake Stewardship
Coordinator



Exclusive Monthly Plans. Only for Preferred

5G Infinite Lite

~~\$105.00~~

\$35/mo±

\$35/moz for additional lines

After Automatic Payments & Bring Your Own Device on
New Activations

- **60GB** of shared data at speeds up to 250 Mbps, data at reduced speeds thereafter**

- **Unlimited calling, texting and data within Canada¹**

- Access to 5G network

- Unlimited international texting and picture/video messaging from Canada

* Prices may vary based on province



Get Plan >

5G Infinite Essential

~~\$115.00~~

\$40/mo±

\$40/moz for additional lines**

After Automatic Payments & Bring Your Own Device on
New Activations

- **100GB** of shared data at speeds up to 1Gbps, data at reduced speeds thereafter*

- **Unlimited calling, texting and data within Canada and the US**

- Access to 5G network

- Unlimited international texting and picture/video messaging from Canada, and the US

* Prices may vary based on province



Get Plan >

5G Infinite Premium

~~\$125.00~~

\$70/mo±

\$70/moz for additional lines**

After Automatic Payments & Bring Your Own Device on
New Activations

- **250GB** of shared data at speeds up to 1Gbps, data at reduced speeds thereafter

- **Unlimited calling, texting and data within Canada, US + 64 countries**

- Access to 5G network

- Unlimited international texting and picture/video messaging from Canada, the US plus 64 countries

* Prices may vary based on province



Get Plan >



Cottage Succession

Canadian Tax Implications of Cottage Succession Planning: For Canadian and US Residents

FOCA
Federation of Ontario Cottage Owners

Kaz Nesbitt, CPA, CA
Executive Director, The Nesbitt Group

Peter Uffico, LL.B.
LL.B., B.Sc., Solicitor, Harker



LEARN HOW TO SAVE A LIFE IN 1 HOUR.

CPR 60

- 100% online
- 1 HOUR only
- Extra day activity
- Age 15+

In just 1 hour, learn how to perform CPR and use an AED - greatly increasing your confidence to step in and take action. Bye bye bystander, hello hero!

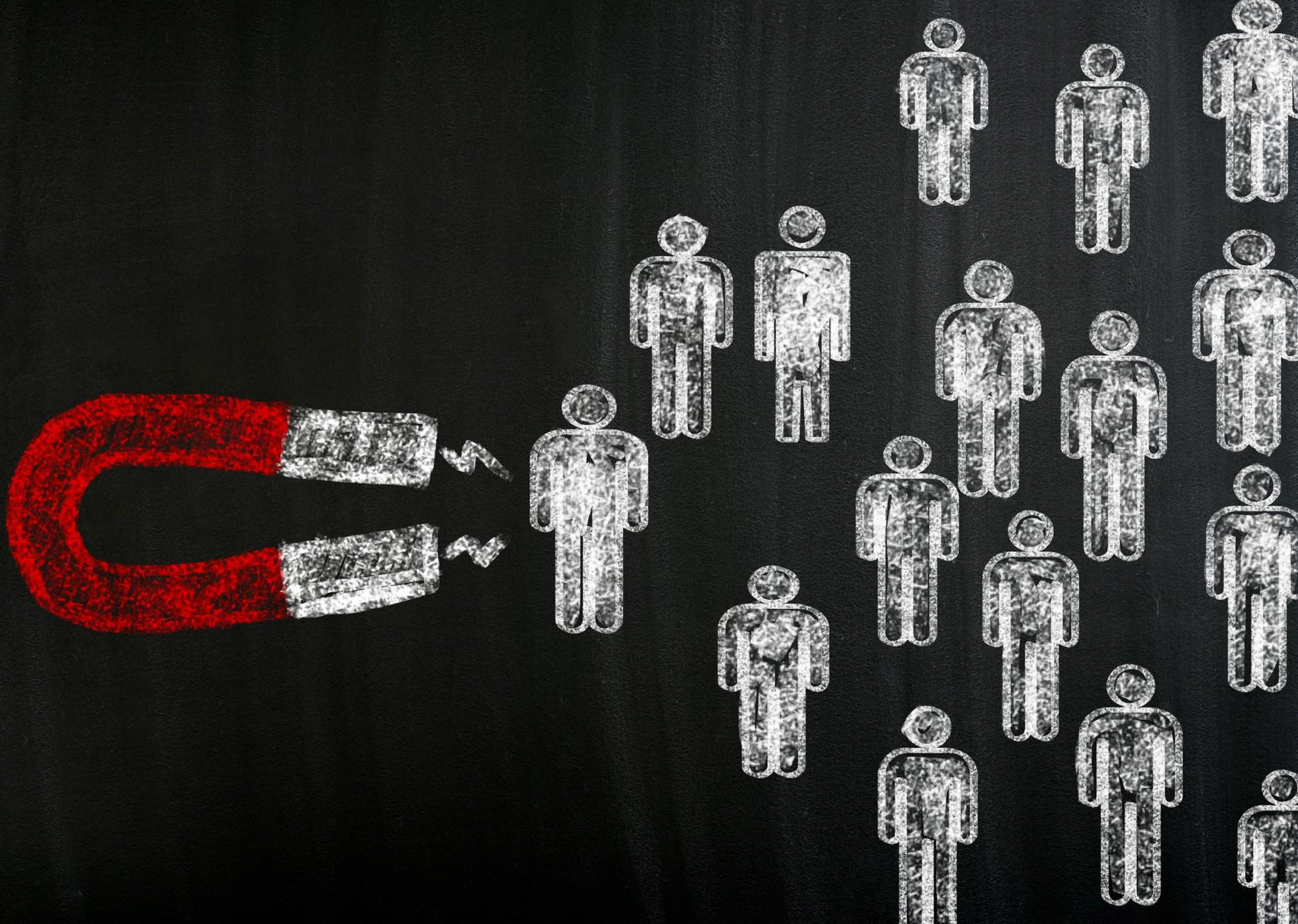
RECEIVE \$10 OFF!
cprin60.ca

CadeAssociates
Insurance Brokers Limited



Discover Your Caribbean Oasis

FOCA Members
Receive
\$100/day Voucher



MEMBERSHIP WITH FOCA IS A STRATEGIC ASSET



Leverage your FOCA membership to demonstrate that your association is not only locally engaged but also **part of a powerful, coordinated effort** to protect Ontario's waterfront communities. It's a signal to prospective and current members that **your association is informed, connected, and working proactively** for their interests—today, and into the future.



Local Knowledge



Scientific Expertise



Mobilization



Amplification



Associations...



...IN ACTION



FOCA Association Benchmarking Survey

October - November 2024

invited all titled executives of our
525+ member associations to participate

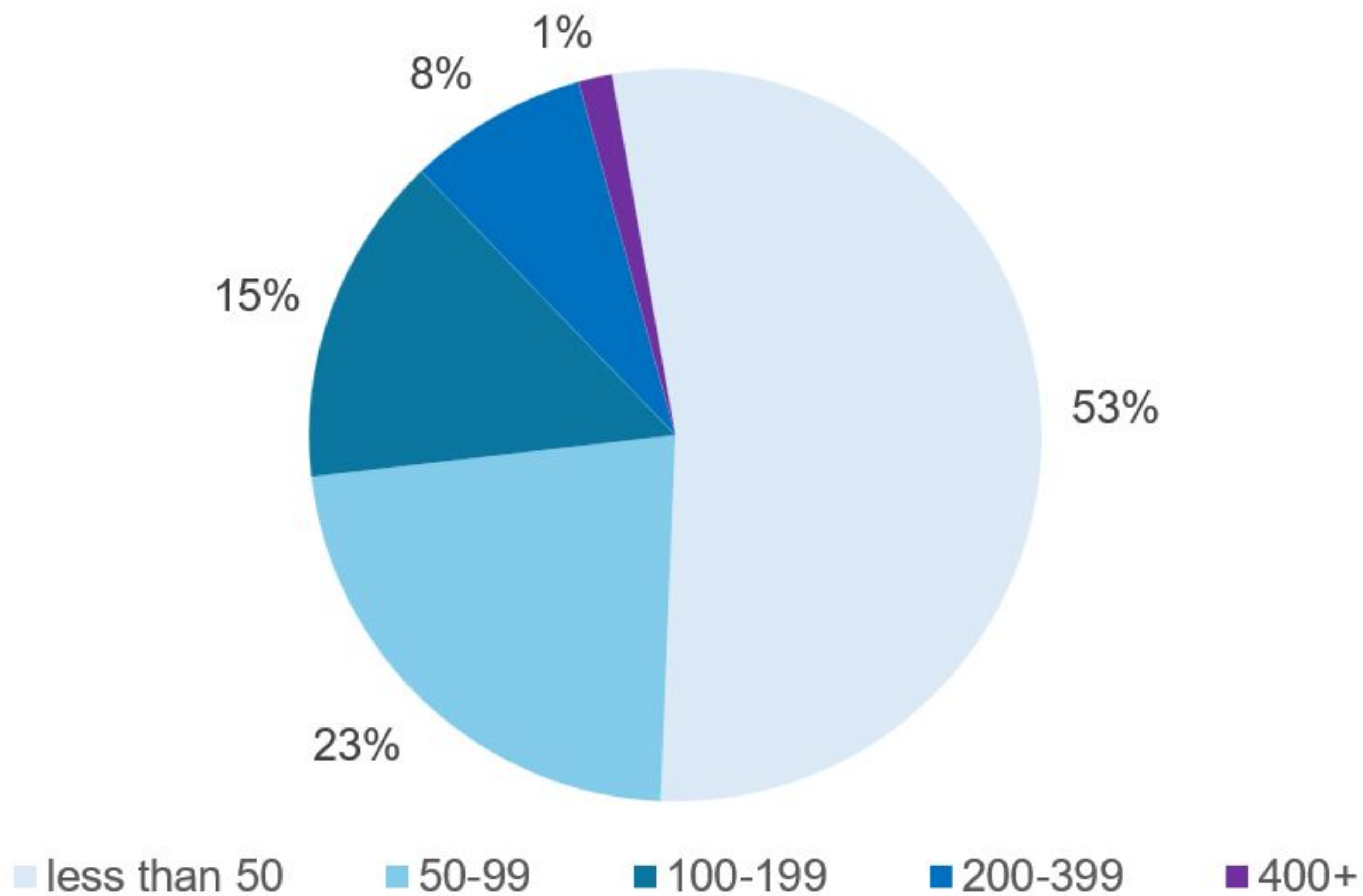
284 Associations

completed the survey - **thank you!**

Purpose is to help us:

1. Identify strengths and gaps
2. Inform strategic planning
3. Track performance over time
4. Increase accountability and transparency
5. Inspire ideas
6. Strengthen our advocacy efforts

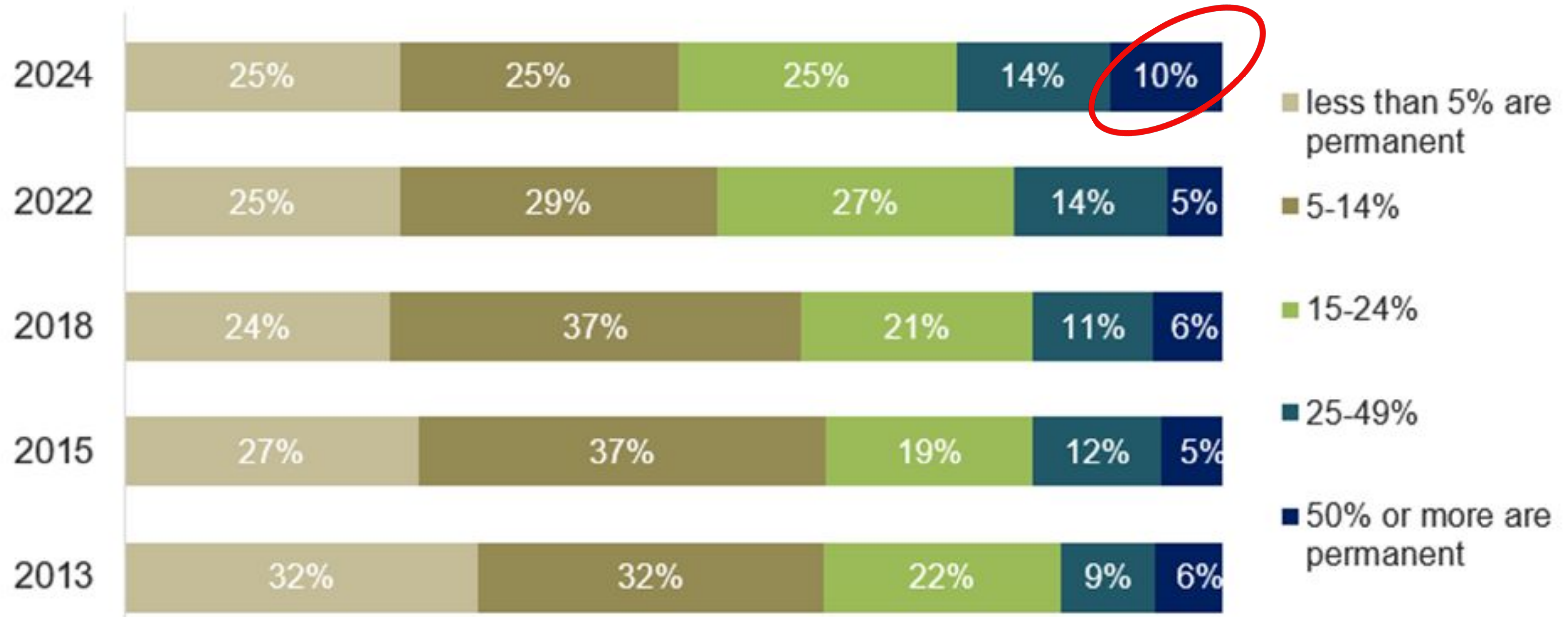
of members last reported by FOCA Associations





What percentage of properties at your waterbody (or along your road) is owned by permanent/year-round residents?

(2024 FOCA survey = 282 respondents)



FOCA e-news: May 2025

NOTE: your device may truncate this message.
If it doesn't end "Inform. Protect. Unite." you should click below to see all the news:
[click here to view as a webpage instead](#)



Our vision is to sustain and enhance the cottage experience for generations

At First Light: Top Cottage Country News



Lake Partner Program Status

Thank you to everyone who has copied FOCA on your letters to the Premier and Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks

FOCA: Impact, Thought Leadership & Advocacy



Bill 5 – comment by May 17

More...

FOCA has written the Premier, Ministers and all MPPs to oppose **omnibus Bill 5** that proposes to dismantle the **Endangered Species Act** and remove various environmental protections from the development permit process. Use FOCA's template to send your own letter before the public comment period closes on **May 17, 2025**. Click "more" for details on FOCA's Land Use Planning webpage.

Images are from Ontario's [Species at Risk](#) webpage

Source Water Protection

More...



May 12 marked the 25th anniversary of the **Walkerton water tragedy** in Ontario. Read FOCA's media release on the subject, and a joint-letter sent to the Province with our partners at the **Canadian Environmental Law Association** and others, calling for action on safe drinking water for all Ontarians. Click "more" for links on FOCA's webpage.

Advocacy Win: Support for Rural Infrastructure

More...



FOCA was pleased to see the Province launch a

Partner Updates & Regional Notices

Fires in North Western Ontario

More...



Numerous fires from runaway brush fires have already been reported in Ontario this fire season. The extra tinder on the ground from ongoing ice storm cleanup is fuel for the flames.

In southeastern Manitoba and near Kenora in Ontario, a dangerous fire system has already caused over 1000 evacuations. Click "more" for links to the news and current Ontario fire map (source of the image).

Safe Boating Awareness Week

More...



May 17 - 23, 2025 is Safe Boating Awareness Week, an ongoing initiative of the **Canadian Safe Boating Council** (CSBC) to reduce accidents, injuries and fatalities among boaters. Click "more" for important information including video tips about large and small craft from a link to CSBC on our Boating webpage.



Event: Ontario Biodiversity Summit

More...

May 21-22, 2025 in Peterborough - Join FOCA and our environmental partners at the 2025 Ontario Biodiversity Summit with the theme: **Our Turning Point for Nature**. Click "more" to be taken to the

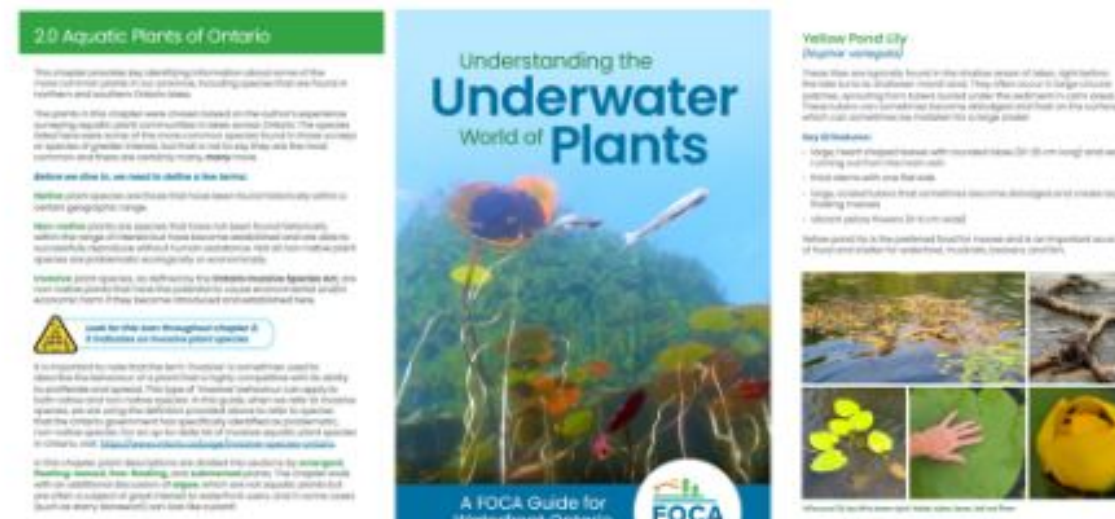
FOCA has hundreds of pages of rural waterfront resources! Search any topic:



Publications & Videos

Access digital copies of FOCA's newsletters, reports, brochures and video productions below. Also get up-to-date on current events by reading our monthly e-news, the [FOCA Elert](#). **Please share these resources with others!**

Latest Releases:



FOCA Guide: [Understanding Aquatic Plants in Ontario](#) (PDF, 92 pages, 9 MB download) – Do you know what's living in your lake? FOCA is often asked "What's this 'weed' in my water?" This guide was created to help you answer that question on your own Ontario waterfront. It includes chapters on:

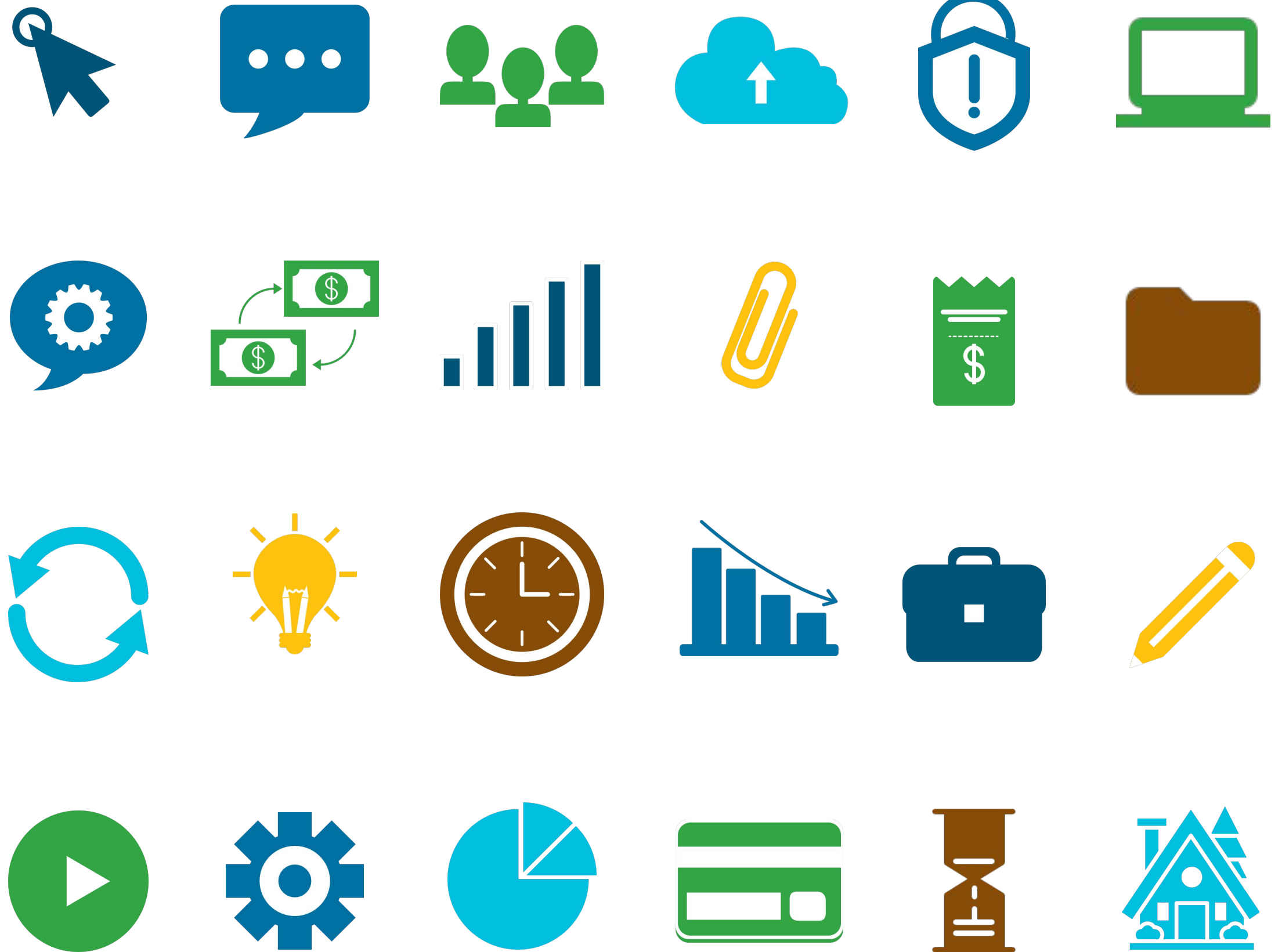
- **plant ecology** and their role in the ecosystem
- **plant IDs** including descriptions, photos and illustrations of common aquatic plants in Ontario; we included a section on

Member Benefits

Ensure ALL your fellow
members know about their
FOCA Member benefits &
“Sub-Account” **web login!**

<https://foca.on.ca/benefits>

contact: info@foca.on.ca



You're missing members-only content!

The following updates are only available to members of our [Member Associations](#), and [annual supporters](#).

If you are already registered on the FOCA website, please login below with your Username and Password.

Need help with your login? [Contact us](#) for assistance during business hours. Not yet a Member Association? [Find out why you should be!](#)

Username

Password



☐ Remember Me

LOG IN

[Forgot Password](#)

To create a new sub-account, reach out to your Treasurer or renewal contact for the unique link for your association.

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If you have already created a sub-account with your own username and password, use the green “Member Account” button to sign in.

Account

Log in to access member materials.

Username

Password

☐ Remember Me

[Forgot Password](#)

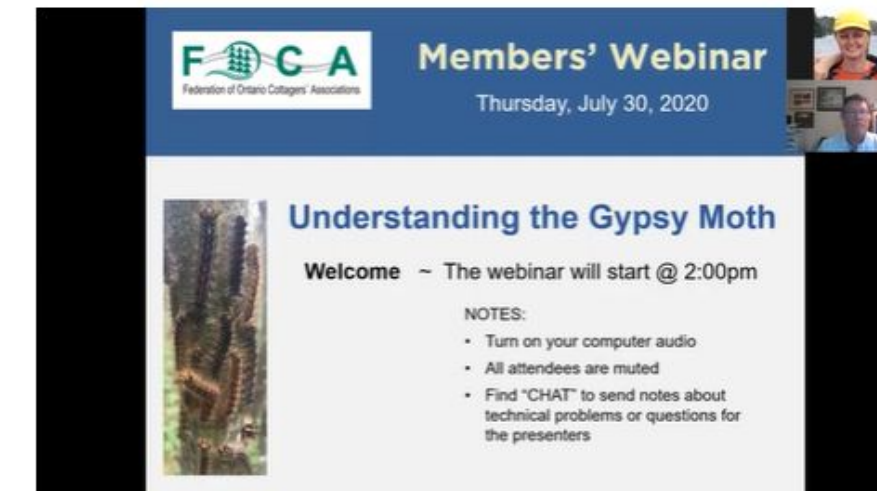
If you do not know your password, you can select forgot password. If you forgot your username and which email you signed up with you can contact FOCA at info@foca.on.ca

The following is members-only content!

2021 FOCA webinar: 2021 LDD impacts & 2022 forecast, by Dan Rowlinson, Provincial Forest Health Monitoring, Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, spoke about LDD impacts at the **2022 FOCA AGM & Spring Seminar**. The slides include information about the pest's background, life cycle, spread, and control. [Click here to download the slides](#) (PDF, 6.4 MB)



2020 FOCA webinar: Understanding the Gypsy Moth (July 2020) FOCA, the Director of Integrated Pest management for Natural Resources Canada, and representatives from Zimmer Air Services & BioForest who undertake pest surveys and aerial spraying came together to answer questions about the current state of LLD moths in Ontario. **Here are related resources that were circulated to registrants, after the webinar:**



- [Download the 2020 FOCA webinar slides](#) (PDF, 7 MB)
- [Questions & Answers about the Moth](#), from webinar attendee questions, answered by Paul Zimmer (PDF, 8 pages)
- [MNRF Gypsy Moth notes](#), 2020 (PDF, 2 pages)
- [Gypsy moth egg mass surveys for woodlot owners](#), MNRF (PDF, 5 pages)
- [Organizing Aerial Spraying Programs](#), Ontario 2015 (PDF, 4 pages)

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[SEARCH](#)

Spongy Moth

What FOCA sees

Outbreaks of Spongy moth occur every 7 to 10 years, and southern Ontario has been in one since 2019.

On behalf of our members in affected areas, FOCA has hosted **webinars with industry experts** about the life cycle and management of this pest. Members are invited to login below for access to the webinar slides.

The Issue

Lymantria dispar dispar (LDD) or “**Spongy moth**” (formerly known as gypsy moth) is a forest defoliating insect found in Ontario.



Ways Associations show value to their members

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS...

Annual clean up

**Outdoor music
concerts**

AGM now on Zoom

**Canada Day boat
parade**

Community fire safety

Canoe for cancer

Benthic monitoring

Water level monitoring

Treasure hunt

Photography contest

**Loon nest building
& loon watch**

Community yard sale

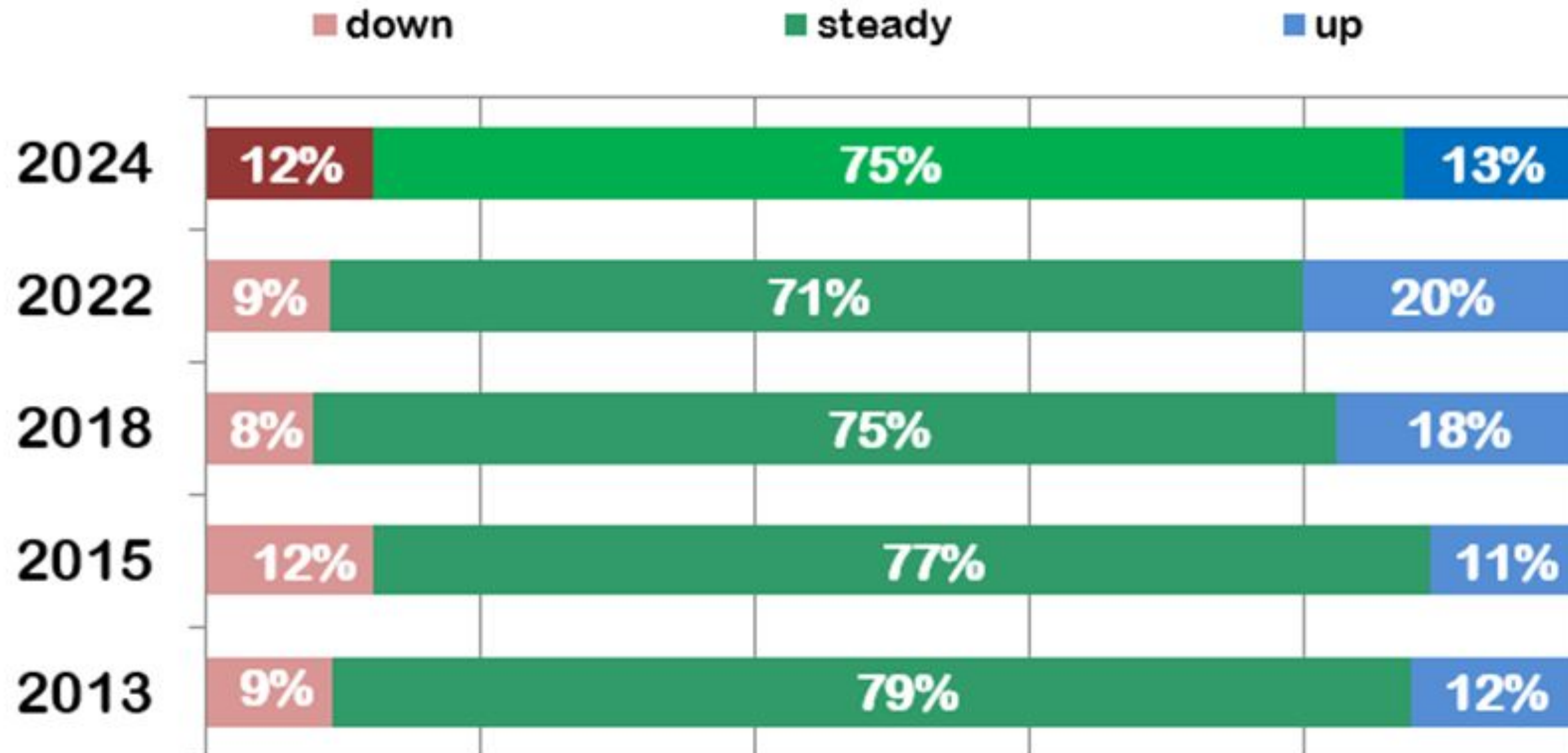


FOCA

What is the trend in your association membership, compared to a year ago?

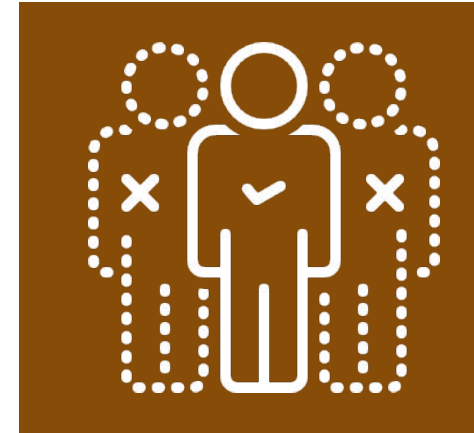
(2024 = 281 Respondents from separate FOCA member Associations)

88% said **"Steady"** or **"Up"** in 2024



Among those whose membership numbers are DOWN

**12% OF 2024 SURVEY
RESPONDENTS**



lower participation rates
(less than half of all
properties around the lake,
road, etc. are members)



lower dues (most under \$30)

To Ponder: lower rates are
no guarantee of success



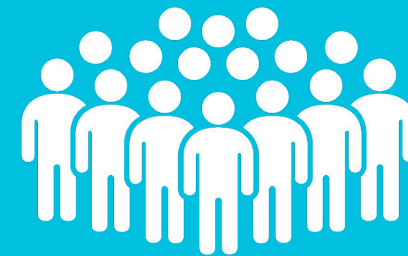
**least likely to accept
payments by e-transfer**

Among those whose numbers are UP

13% OF 2024 SURVEY RESPONDENTS



more likely to have
younger volunteers
(1/3 under age 50)

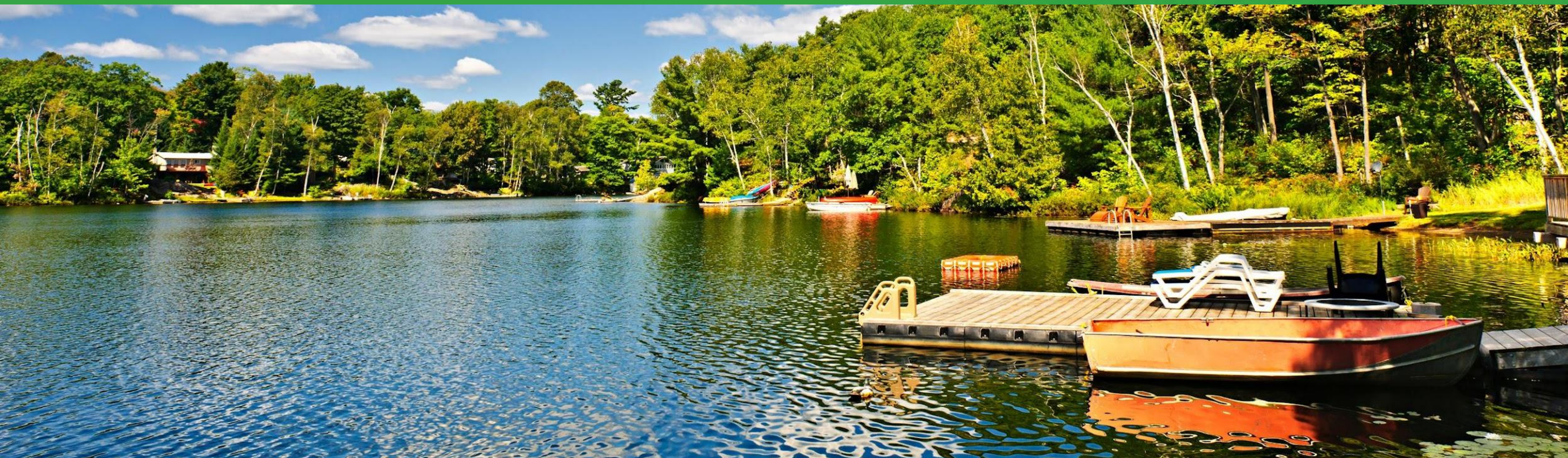


unlikely to have
fewer than
50 members

#1

top priority=
membership recruitment,
retention & engagement

Everything FOCA does has
an impact on your property.



WHAT'S UPCOMING IN 2025

**Lake Planning
Handbook
2nd Edition**

**Lake Partner
Program
Water Quality
Testing**

**Lake
Stewards
Magazine**

**Coming July*

**FOCA Fall
Seminar**

**November*

**Member
Advisory
Groups**

**New!*

**Meetings with
Dignitaries,
Ministers,
Mayors, Party
Leaders**

Sustaining and enhancing the cottage experience by being the leading provider of advocacy, resources, education, programs and services for Ontario cottagers.

Your Voice for Waterfront Ontario

