

Report on FOCA meetings, Fall 2019 and Spring 2020

On behalf of the Talpines Board of Management, I attended two general meetings of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations in Toronto in the fall of 2019 and early spring 2020; these gatherings of about 100-120 people represented a good share of the 500+ lake associations, and over 50,000 member families with memberships in FOCA. Talpines is among the smaller groups having membership in FOCA, but each association is given an equal voice at the table, and we are able to share the benefits which FOCA offers to all. Important ways in which FOCA helps groups whose members own recreational properties (or live year-round in cottage country) are by monitoring government activities which impact water quality, conservation measures and keeping abreast of environmental challenges such as erosion, watershed management, phragmites eradication, aquaculture, MPAC assessments, hydro bill proposals, etcetera.

In Waubashene, we are fortunate to be on an open body of water which does not carry some of the dangers of 'enclosed' lakes (ie blue-green algae, excess concentrations of salt or chloride) and have relatively little boat traffic, but we are still vigilant about the quality of our water (through regular purity testing and turbidity monitoring through the Lake Partner Program). The measurements we contribute to the Provincial information base helps advance conservation studies which ensure the environment we enjoy now will be safe for future generations. As well as sharing results with relevant government decision-makers, FOCA helps to bring scientific data to individual cottage owners, and thus forms a vital link in our experience of the Waubashene area.

Apart from the benefits Talpines has from FOCA as a group, there are valuable resources which are available to individual members, such as direction on septic bed placement, advice on plantings which encourage a thriving ecosystem, and even considerations on the insurance implications of storing fire wood too close to a cottage. As well, Talpines members are given discounts on cottage and boat insurance, frequent "e-lets" on topics of interest to cottagers, seminars on cottage succession planning and savings on subscriptions to the iconic "Cottage Life" magazine. Talpines' dues to FOCA are a wise investment in our future.

Christine Hurlbut-Carelse