

FOCA (Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association) Fall 2017 Meeting Summary

The topics for discussion at FOCA's Fall 2017 event, held on Nov 4th, were building a sense of community, volunteerism and how to connect with younger generations for the good of our lake associations.

Here is a brief summary of the day's events. Links are provided so you can read more on the great discussions and presentations.

In addition to providing a summary of FOCA's work over the last year, Executive Director Terry Rees's presentation touched on our members' ongoing interests in membership growth and retention, and finding new and younger volunteers to ensure the vibrancy of lake associations for the future. Here is a link to Terry's presentation.

<http://files.constantcontact.com/06a23c4d001/e92242c3-ee4f-4cac-8ca6-57341e3fd9a5.pdf>

FOCA was very pleased to have "The Water Brothers", Alex and Tyler Mifflin, as guest speakers. They are cottagers on Georgian Bay. The brothers' passion for environmental education and conservation has led them to become water ambassadors in Canada and around the world. They strongly believe in ensuring that audiences, particularly young people, are aware of the challenges we face in relation to our most precious resource: water. They want youth to become part of the emerging solutions that will need to be implemented in the coming years, in order to harmonize our relations with ecosystems that support all life on earth. To see more about the Water Brothers, stream their Season 4 videos, here: <http://thewaterbrothers.ca/>.

During discussion groups which followed, excellent ideas emerged on the following topics:

1. Tips for finding new members - <http://files.constantcontact.com/06a23c4d001/fb8733c7-76e3-4b8c-b874-c5c2bc73a210.pdf>
2. Tips for engaging younger members:
<http://files.constantcontact.com/06a23c4d001/7a072771-a645-4601-bff8-e071b6a50d1b.pdf>
3. Gaps and needs: <http://files.constantcontact.com/06a23c4d001/6a0728bf-401c-4dca-86ae-90244ed93db1.pdf>

The afternoon consisted of presentations and discussions related to engaging new volunteers and young people. Guest speakers were:

1. Jacob Rodenburg, Executive Director of Camp Kawartha and co-author of "The Big Book of Nature Activities", focused on the youngest definition of youth: those under 18 years of age. Jacob encouraged associations to connect local nature experts with youngsters, and to consider offering kids' day camps, as well as opportunities to perform simple acts of naturalization. <http://files.constantcontact.com/06a23c4d001/f1fb7c05-f012-4c41-9e5f-55364fe3bcbc.pdf>
2. Thomas McAuley-Biasi, Chair of Emerging Leaders for Biodiversity, urged our members to establish one-to-one connections with Millennials (roughly, the 18-to-35 year olds), and to share the passion that fuels your own involvement in the lake association.

<http://files.constantcontact.com/06a23c4d001/438b36f1-8be5-4921-ab4d-5302dab9b52c.pdf>

3. Mike Hendren, Executive Director of the Kawartha Land Trust, echoed the call to “never waste a crisis!” Identify the transformative issue(s) at your own lake that will speak to new members and encourage new volunteers. Mike noted that we often expect volunteers to do too much; try asking for help at a one-time event instead of requiring a Board commitment. <http://files.constantcontact.com/06a23c4d001/3e16448b-5c9e-41e7-bb60-a958347a7b81.pdf>

The day concluded with the launch of the 2017 video “Lake Associations”, <https://foca.on.ca/lake-associations-a-video>. . Our OLA former President, Karen Hunt, is featured in this video.

The OLA is a member of FOCA and benefits from the work this organization does on behalf of Lake Associations in Ontario. If you’d like to know more, please visit their website www.foca.on.ca