

**ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS  
FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT  
OCTOBER 24, 2023**

PRESENT: Mark Robbins, Chair Cosette Arseneault-Deraps Merrill Elliott Jim Kelly

Tammy Mathieson-Harbaugh Erin Stewart Peter Sword Neil Wiens

ABSENT: Mark Braet, Vice Chair Christina Callegari Akhil Davis Chris Geberdt

Dan Polsky Grayson Goodman Dr. Bruce Tufts

STAFF: Adam Weir, Liaison Matthew Robbins Chris Robinson Mark Ryckman

GUESTS: Randy Fawcett Stu Paterson Roy Polsky

The OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee (FAC) met via Zoom on October 24, 2023.

**1. Introductions**

The first item on the agenda was the introduction of new committee member, Tammy Mathieson-Harbaugh. Tammy brings an extensive background in outdoor activities and education. She is on the Board of Directors of the Bluewater Anglers Club (OFAH Zone J), has been very involved on their Salmon Derby Committee as well as other club activities and programs in her community.

Each committee member was encouraged to introduce themselves to Tammy and to identify one accomplishment of the FAC that they participated in.

**2. Official submissions since previous FAC meeting (A. Weir)**

A brief review of official submissions submitted since the last FAC meeting was conducted. Questions and comments were sought.

1. Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program – Wave 3 – Cumulative Effects, Aquatic Species at Risk, Habitat Banking.
2. Proposal to allow Jade Perch to be added to the list of eligible species for culture/sale in Ontario.
3. Recovery Strategy for small- and large-bodied Lake Opeongo Lake Whitefish.
4. MNRF's proposal to allow the transport of preserved bait and the temporary movement of bait into and out of Bait Management Zones.

A. Weir reported that the response to the MNRF bait transport proposal resulted in a comment from a bait harvester in that they felt the OFAH was putting too much focus on the management of commercial bait operations.

N. Wiens asked if the Bait Association of Ontario (BAO) was still representing bait harvesters. It was generally believed that the BAO was no longer active (confirmed by M. Robbins November 8, 2023).

A discussion took place about the protection of fish below the species level (i.e., different forms or ecotypes of the same species) and how this fits into the context of landscape management approaches generally taken by MNRF.

**Action item** – A. Weir: To reach out to MNRF about a presentation on small- and large-bodied forms of Lake Opeongo Lake Whitefish and other unique forms of fish in Algonquin Provincial Park.

**3. Development of Committee Guidelines (M. Robbins)**

The committee then moved to the topic of developing committee guidelines. This is to be an ongoing discussion by the FAC and a living document that will be subject to change, as necessary.

In review, some of the benefits of developing committee guidelines as a reference document (not a policy) include:

- Supporting committee work as it performs a number of functions such as: ○ flowing information, from and to OFAH Zones (for example via Zone members sitting on both the FAC and FMZ Councils);

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- tracking issues, considering and providing advice to the Board of Directors on government proposals to change policies, management actions, and legislation;
- acting as a sounding board to government for preliminary consultation and engagement on proposals.
- Providing thoughtful and considered advice to the Board of Directors and requiring all committee members to be fully engaged and active in all forms of committee business (i.e., monitoring and reporting activities and issues at the local level, regional or provincial level, attending meetings, providing input during meetings, or reviewing and commenting on draft materials in a timely way).
- Establishing expectations that will facilitate the effective and efficient operation of the committee while providing better support to the Board of Directors as it considers proposals and submissions.

The guideline topic for this meeting was discussion about feedback, input, etc., when distributing draft submissions.

**Action item** – A. Weir, M. Robbins: A template will be developed to ensure that all drafts are complete with regard to supporting background materials, links to the original posting site, relevant legislation, applicable OFAH policy, etc.

**Action item** – M. Robbins: OFAH fisheries policy review should be an on-going agenda item to ensure policies are current and useful.

**Action item** – A. Weir: Ensure that all committee members have up to date OFAH fisheries policy materials. The committee supported the following guidelines related to the review of, and comment on, draft submissions.

Wherever possible:

1. Draft submissions will be circulated for review for a period of two weeks, where feasible.
2. All committee members will respond to the draft, at a minimum, to acknowledge that they have received and read the draft and have no comments to offer.
3. All committee members will respond using the “reply all” feature to ensure that all other members are fully aware of additional information and positions on the topic.

Next meeting guideline topic: Code of Conduct (Schedule B of OFAH Constitution & Bylaws)

### **5. FMZ Advisory Council updates report – new strategy, report, and master spreadsheet (A. Weir)**

FMZ updates were compiled and circulated as pre-meeting reading material. A master spreadsheet will be maintained to track FMZ advisory council proposals, decisions, topics of discussion, etc. Feedback from the group on the new approach - FAC supports the new approach and recommends that the summary be included with the FAC Report to the Directors. The report will only include information from the FMZ Council approved minutes and will be marked as confidential information.

### **6. OFAH commercial fishing policy (defer until next meeting/M. Braet absent)**

#### **7. Live fish marketing regulations (M. Robbins)**

A brief overview of the transport and sale of live fish and aquaculture regulations in Ontario was provided as a follow-up to the MNRF Jade Perch proposal.

#### **8. Roundtable discussions**

N. Wiens – FMZ 6 Walleye. Concern that MNRF is satisfied with “maintaining the current status” of Walleye fisheries across the zone while at least half of the lakes have a status of overfished, overfishing, or rebuilding. It is the position of the committee that a more ambitious goal needs to be set and that there may be lakes in the area that are candidates for regulation changes to help improve the quality of these fisheries.

C. Arseneault-Deraps – First Nations (FN) involvement in FMZ advisory councils. Asked how FNs were engaged in FMZ advisory council discussions and whether MNRF is taking a collaborative approach (co-production) on fisheries management.

**Action item** – A. Weir: To approach MNRF to attend FAC meeting to discuss the current status of FMZ advisory councils and the management of the commercial fishery on the Great Lakes.

**Action item** – A. Weir: To circulate material that will provide all FAC members with a basic understanding of the FMZ advisory councils.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Robbins  
Chair