

2020

FISHERIES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT



ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS



FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR -- PETER SWORD (NEW LISKEARD)

MEMBERS

Justin McGinnis (Kenora)

Dan Polsky (Sturgeon Falls)

Brian Sutcliffe (Griffith)

Merrill Elliott (Carleton Place)

Jim Kelly (Schomberg)

Dennis Wiseman (Owen Sound)

Joe Tetreault (Cambridge)

Jim Bertulli (Copper Cliff)

Mark Robbins (Lindsay)

Dr. Bruce Tufts (Elginburg)

Adam Weir (Staff Liaison)

MUNICIPAL ANGLING TOOLKIT

Due to ongoing fishing bans, the committee provided insight and feedback towards the development of a strategic document to address common issues experienced at the municipal level and to help avoid further angling restrictions. The OFAH's Fish and Wildlife Intern was guided by the committee in the creation of the Municipal Angling Toolkit; a pamphlet-style handout to help municipalities target unwanted behaviour, avoid fishing bans and access restrictions, and to keep communities fishing.



The OFAH has developed this toolkit to help municipalities target unwanted behaviour, avoid fishing bans and access restrictions, and to *keep communities fishing*.

Fishing is a proven socio-economic driver for many communities. It's a time-honoured tradition for families and great for people's health by getting them active outdoors. There are approximately 1.4 million licensed anglers in Ontario who contribute more than \$2.2 billion annually to the provincial economy. Many businesses and local economies rely on tourism created through fishing.

LITTERING



- Provide accessible garbage and recycling bins with frequent pick up and removal
- Signage in known angling and/or problem locations
- **Molok Waste Containers**
- Coordinated cleanups (fishing clubs, community groups)
- Fish cleaning stations

TRESPASSING



- Clear signage, in multiple languages with graphics, indicating where fishing is restricted
- Additional lighting
- Fencing and gated entry
- Docks, fishing nodes, and piers
- Provide contact information for enforcement (**Crime Stoppers** 1-800-222-8477, **Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry TIPS line** 1-877-847-7667)

PUBLIC URINATION/DEFECATION



- Provide public washrooms or portable toilets
- Social media clean-up campaigns (i.e. responsible/respectful angling outreach)

ofah.org/fisheries/resources

NOISE



- Implement stricter noise bylaws
- Increase enforcement presence
- Social sanctioning campaigns and programs - "see something, say something"
- Encourage anglers to advocate for responsible behaviour through online forums, social media platforms, and angling clubs

PARKING



- Provide accessible parking lots in key locations
- On-street parking meters
- **Smart parking** and parking apps
- Regular public transit route
- Implement parking bylaws for problem areas
- Increase enforcement of parking bylaws

BANK DEGRADATION



- Plant riparian vegetation such as native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers to stabilize the bank
- Section off and restrict access to critical areas
- Foster meaningful community connections by engaging local stakeholder groups in stewardship and habitat improvement projects
- Collaborate with **Conservation Authorities**, and where applicable, **ALUS Canada** on restoration initiatives
- Create areas designated for people to get down to the water's edge, so they don't continue to use the bank

INVASIVE SPECIES



- Education and outreach signage at municipal boat launches, docks and other access points
- Distribute fact sheets on invading species and best practices for anglers to prevent the spread of invasive species
- Collaborate with the **Invading Species Awareness Program**
- Document and submit invasive species observations using the **Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System (EDDMaps)**
- Provide bait disposal area/containers

OTHER IDEAS AND RESOURCES

Create a working group. Working groups are a proven strategy for finding mutually beneficial solutions to common problems. Have regular meetings and seek input from stakeholders including residents, angling clubs, enforcement, municipal staff, the MNRF, and the OFAH. Publish an accessible municipal map of key locations, including garbage receptacles, public washrooms, where to fish, rules, etc.

OFAH video: **Respectful Fishing - What Not to Do**

OFAH video: **Be a Responsible Angler**

ofah.org/fisheries/resources

BASS REGULATIONS IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ZONE 20

A proposal to separate the seasons for Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass was posted online by the MNRF for public comment. The MNRF also provided early season opportunities in the proposal for both bass species. The committee has been involved in bass-related discussions for nearly a decade and was instrumental in kickstarting the research that led to the splitting of the bass seasons. With advice and support from the committee, the OFAH provided an official submission on the MNRF's proposal supporting the split season; however, due to uncertainties and unknowns with the early season opportunities (catch and release only, reduced limits), the OFAH was not supportive of the early season options.



FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLANNING FOR FMZ 15

The OFAH has a seat on the FMZ 15 Advisory Council and has been involved in its fisheries management planning process for several years now. During this time, the committee has been kept abreast of regulatory discussions for various sportfish and has contributed input and feedback throughout the process. Along with other stakeholders and the MNRF, the committee has helped guide the development of a fisheries management plan for the zone and a draft plan will likely be posted online for public comment later in 2021.



MODERNIZING PLEASURE CRAFT LICENSING AND THE PLEASURE CRAFT OPERATOR COMPETENCY PROGRAM

The committee was engaged on Transport Canada's proposals for Pleasure Craft Licensing and the Pleasure Craft Operator Competency Program and was not supportive of the proposal to implement a \$15 fee to process an application to obtain, renew, transfer or duplicate a Pleasure Craft Licence. Despite this, the committee provided input to head office staff on strategies for using funds generated through the fee proposal to enhance boating services and to be earmarked for conservation initiatives and infrastructure grants related to boating.

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Pleasure Craft Licence

[Selection of Application Type](#)

[Questions and Answers](#)

Application Type Selection

 **Due to measures being implemented by the licensing centre to contain the COVID-19 virus, applications for pleasure craft licences may experience disruption. Because of this, processing times for pleasure craft licence applications have been changed from five (5) business days to fifteen (15) business days. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.**

Please review the application types below and select "**I am a Pleasure Craft Owner**" or "**I am a Boat Dealer**" radio button. (required)

I am a Pleasure Craft Owner
 I am a Boat Dealer

New - You wish to obtain a Canadian pleasure craft licence number for a new or previously unlicensed pleasure craft.

Transfer - You have acquired a Canadian licensed pleasure craft and are required to transfer the pleasure craft licence to your name.

Duplicate - Your pleasure craft licence is either lost or destroyed - you want a duplicate copy of the original licence.

Update PCL Application - There are changes to your name or address, description of your pleasure craft, or your contact information requires update.

Renew - Your pleasure craft licence will be expiring or has expired - this will renew your PCL for an additional 10 year period.

SET FINES AND TICKETABLE OFFENCES

In November 2020, the MNRF provided the opportunity to comment on their proposal to increase set fines for certain recreational and commercial fishery offences and establish new ticketable offences. The committee supported increasing set fine amounts, but also highlighted the need to enhance enforcement capacity across the province: an OFAH advocacy priority. The committee was aligned with establishing new ticketable offences to facilitate enforcement, recognizing that the MNRF should also take this opportunity to revisit and rethink other legislative issues in the Ontario Fishery Regulations and Fisheries Act.



CHANGES TO LAKE TROUT REGULATIONS IN FMZ 6

The MNRF proposed changes to the Lake Trout regulations in FMZ 6 to extend the winter angling season and remove certain exceptions to provide increased angling opportunities. This proposal was fully endorsed by the committee because key indicators and data gathered under the Broad-scale Monitoring Program show Lake Trout populations are stable across the zone. The committee suggested the Ministry re-evaluate and open sustainable fishing opportunities in other FMZs across the province in the same way and highlighted the importance of FMZ Advisory Councils in fisheries management.



MULTIPLE LINES FOR COMMON CARP AND RULES AROUND CHUMMING

In June 2019, the MNRF posted a proposal to allow the use of multiple lines when fishing for Common Carp and clarification of existing provisions as they relate to chumming. A decision on this proposal has been made, and since, new regulations have been implemented. The MNRF implemented many of the recommendations provided in our feedback and now the committee is exploring opportunities to get traction on consolidating and standardizing multiple line regulations in the Great Lakes.



2020

BIG GAME

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT



ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS



BIG GAME ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR -- NEIL WIENS (SHUNIAH)

VICE CHAIR -- DAVID DIXON (PORT PERRY)

MEMBERS

Rick Moore (Keewatin)

Gerry Giesler (Powassan)

Eric Smith (Arnprior)

Wendell Crosbie (Lanark)

Wally Motz (Kincardine)

Dr. Chris Davies (Lakefield)

Tony Jackson (Fullarton)

Keith Munro (Staff Liaison)

BLACK BEAR

On January 17, 2020, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry John Yakabuski announced from the Mario Corbellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre that the government was consulting on a full return of the spring bear hunt for the 2021 season. On March 13, 2020, the MNRF posted a notice on the ERO announcing that a decision had been made to reinstate a regular annual spring black bear season starting in 2021, in addition to some other changes to bear hunting in the province. This decision followed approximately two decades of advocacy on the part of the OFAH, including countless direct discussions between the committee and MNRF staff.

Over the course of 2020, the committee spent much time discussing black bear management on Bruce Peninsula, which saw the fall season cancelled and the spring season reduced to a single week starting in 2020. At the committee's direction, OFAH staff are preparing a letter to the MNRF highlighting the need for increased management attention to that population of black bears to ensure both sustainable hunting opportunities and the continued conservation of that population. The committee also discussed possible black bear harvest management options that could be employed in instances of black bear conservation concern.



MOOSE

On February 25, 2020, the MNRF announced their decision to proceed with some of the proposed changes originally consulted on in 2019. The committee received updates from the MNRF on the new changes and provided the MNRF with feedback from OFAH members, who hold a wide range of views on these changes. The committee also provided input into the OFAH's ongoing moose communications efforts to ensure that hunters have the information they need to navigate the new system in 2021 and beyond.

The committee directed Head Office staff to draft a letter to the MNRF on the importance of moose aerial inventories (MAI) for effective moose management. The committee provided comment on a draft of this letter, which will be sent to the MNRF once the information from the 2021 MAIs are available in order to include any needed comments on the potential impacts of COVID-19.



WHITE-TAILED DEER

The committee had several conversations with the MNRF regarding deer seasons and deer harvest planning. In those conversations, the committee members shared the diversity of ways in which OFAH members, and deer hunters in general, hunt, while highlighting the importance of maximizing sustainable opportunities. The OFAH has a longstanding ask that the MNRF review the controlled deer hunt program in order to ensure that it is still functioning as intended and not unnecessarily restricting opportunity.



ELK

The committee received an update from the MNRF on the 2020 aerial survey of elk in the Bancroft-North Hastings herd. This survey estimated the population to be approximately 200 animals, which is considerably lower than previous estimates although there is some uncertainty as to whether this represents a decline or whether previous estimates were imprecise. Regardless of the cause, this new estimate prompted discussion among the committee about the need for increased focus on this population in order to ensure its conservation and that the re-introduction efforts of the MNRF, the OFAH, and countless volunteers are not wasted.



CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

The committee received a presentation from the MNRF on the Proposed Prevention Regulation Changes to follow up on the finalized CWD Prevention and Response Plan (<https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-2065>). The committee supported these changes as they closely mirrored the OFAH's own recommendations from a 2018 letter in response to the detection of CWD on a Quebec red deer farm. Following the feedback from the OFAH and other groups, the MNRF adopted these changes, greatly reducing the risk of CWD entering Ontario.



WOLVES & COYOTES

At the December 2019 advisory committee meetings, the Big Game and Small Game Advisory Committees met together to discuss a potential hunting regulation change to firearm restrictions around wolf and coyote hunting during big game seasons with the goal of removing unnecessary restrictions around the use of centrefire rifles and shotgun loads over a certain size. Following that meeting, OFAH staff shared the committee's desired changes with staff from the MNRF's Species Conservation Policy Branch. While not an official OFAH submission, it was an opportunity to make MNRF aware of the OFAH's desired outcomes. Following this discussion, the MNRF amended O. Reg. 665/98: HUNTING and as of April 1, 2020 a new section in the Hunting Regulations, under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act will enable hunters to possess and use (a) a centre-fire rifle; or (b) shells loaded with ball or shot larger than number two shot while hunting small game during a big game season, so long as they have either; a) a valid licence for the species of big game that has an open season in the area and at the time the person is hunting; or (b) a person who has a valid licence to hunt wolf or coyote and is hunting wolf or coyote under the authority of that licence.



2020

SPORTING DOGS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT



ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS



SPORTING DOGS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR -- DR. JOE WILSON (MONO)

MEMBERS

Jim Baker (Guelph)

Greg Steeves (Cameron)

Lauren Tonelli (Staff Liaison)

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR HUNTING WITH DOGS

The Code of Conduct for Hunting with Dogs pamphlet has been completed and has been distributed to all Conservation Officers across Ontario. These will also be distributed to hunters using dogs as deemed appropriate by the Conservation Officers. It is also available on the OFAH website.



Code of Conduct for Hunting With Dogs

Hunting with dogs is a heritage hunting activity that has been a tradition in Ontario for over 150 years, predating Confederation.

The activity of hunting with dogs is slowly changing in Ontario due to "rural urbanization". Therefore, dog hunters will need to become more aware of, and sensitive to, the changing demographics on the landscape.

This Code of Conduct is designed to help dog hunters adapt in order to protect our hunting heritage for future generations to enjoy.

1. PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Public image is the key to success for landowner/hunter relations; be mindful that you represent all hunters who use dogs when in the community and in the field.



- Remember that it is a privilege to be allowed to hunt on private property.
- Treat landowners with respect and follow any instructions given by the landowner.



2. ASK PERMISSION

- Before the hunt, ask for permission from as many landowners as possible whose property your dog may cross, realizing that dogs may travel several kilometers in pursuit of game.
- Obtain permission before releasing dogs onto private property.
- Hunters entering private property to retrieve dogs or game need to be aware of landowners' wishes and have their permission to enter.



- Obtain permission before dispatching game, especially near buildings.
- When entering the property to retrieve game, leave firearms off the property or in your vehicle unless permission is granted, otherwise retrieve dogs and leave the property.
- Get written permission from property owners, when possible, to avoid misunderstandings.

The OFAH recognizes the importance of using sporting dogs in various different types of hunting. In addition to enhancing hunting opportunities, sporting dogs are used to promote responsible stewardship of wildlife by locating, tracking and recovering game. The OFAH ensures that the use of sporting dogs is understood and protected in provincial wildlife management, regulations and policy.

Supported by:



Ontario Sporting Dog Association

North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association, Ontario Grand River Chapter

Ontario Deer Hound Association

Big Game Blood Trackers Ontario

ofah.org/sportingdogs

3. PRECAUTIONS

- Make every reasonable attempt to prevent dogs from entering areas where they are not permitted to be.
- Avoid unacceptable landowners and areas that could create conflict.
- Attempt to intercept and retrieve dogs before they leave the areas that you are permitted to hunt on.
- If an incident arises, remain calm, courteous, and respectful to landowners. Explain the unintended situation and contact police and/or conservation officers if problems arise.



4. DOG TRACKING AND RETRIEVAL

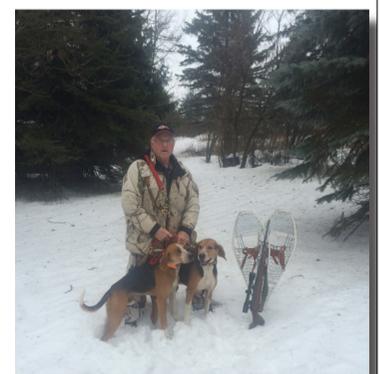
- Ensure there is proper identification and contact information on each dog.
- It is highly recommended that hunters use tracking collars on hounds used to hunt deer, coyotes, and other game so that they can be tracked, intercepted, and retrieved as quickly as possible.

5. FIREARMS

- Comply with all rules and regulations laid out in the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act understanding that different areas of the Province may have different requirements.

6. CARE AND TRAINING OF HUNTING DOGS

- Keep hunting dogs in good health and condition. Supply them with food, water, medical care, and especially weather appropriate shelter.
- Do your utmost to have a well-trained, obedient dog for the particular hunting activity you are engaged in.



TRAIN & TRIAL AREAS

A letter has been sent to John Yakabuski, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, regarding the expansion of training and trialing areas. The OFAH will be continuing to pursue this issue with the MNRF.



DOGS AND TRESPASSING

A coyote hunter was charged with trespassing when his hound crossed signed property 1-1/2 miles from the hunter. The courts recently found the hunter guilty of trespassing because his dog was trespassing and was ordered to pay a \$400 fine.



DOURO-DUMMER DOG BYLAW

A letter of concern was sent to the Township of Douro-Dummer regarding its proposed dog bylaw, due to its potential to impact individuals who keep dogs for the purpose of hunting. The original draft of the bylaw prohibited keeping dogs tethered outside for more than ten consecutive hours. Due to the opposition to that aspect of the bylaw, the township council removed that section entirely.



2020

AGRICULTURAL

LIAISON ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS



AGRICULTURE LIAISON ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR -- KERRY COLEMAN (OXFORD MILLS)

MEMBERS

Tony Jackson (Fullarton)

Dr. Joe Wilson (Mono)

Mike Bohm (Douro-Dummer)

Larry Campbell (Burlington)

Dave Ferguson (Alvinston)

Larry Miehl (Woodslee)

Andy Millar (Fenelon Falls)

Paul Mussell (Manotick)

John Williamson (Inverary)

Lauren Tonelli (Staff Liaison)

WILD PIGS

Planning began for the 2021 launch of the OFAH's Wild Pig Trail Camera Detection Protocol, which outlines how hunters can use trail cameras to detect pigs. Because it is a voluntary project, it can advise and encourage individuals but can't control the level of effort. The OFAH has recently received funding through the Green Shovels Collaborative in order to create a controlled surveillance program out of the detection protocol. The money will be used to purchase trail cameras which will be provided to participants with instructions on how to utilize them. This will allow us to determine if there are or are not pigs in an area.





HELP THE OFAH FIGHT THE SPREAD OF WILD PIGS

a destructive mix of feral domestic pigs and Eurasian wild boar. Follow these instructions to set up your trail cameras for wild pigs and report your findings.

PLACE CAMERAS where there is sign of wild pigs. If that's not possible, choose locations being used by other animals (like deer trails) that are within wild pig habitat: wetlands, deciduous forests, the edges of crops (especially corn and soybeans), pastureland, forest-field edges and near water sources.

BAIT can significantly help attract wild pigs. Salt licks, especially blue cobalt blocks, can attract pigs and are easy to maintain. Corn works better, but straight corn can harm deer during the winter and should be mixed with whole oats at a ratio of 1:1. Soured corn by soaking in water with yeast and sugar in a closed container for at least three days makes it a better pig bait and less attractive to deer.

SET CAMERAS to capture 3-5 photos per trigger, with a delay between triggers that will prevent the memory from filling up too quickly. Check cameras as needed based on the memory capacity and battery life and adjust settings if necessary. Cameras should be moved to a new area after a maximum of five months in one location. Be prepared to move your camera if you find pig sign in another location.

REPORT ALL SIGHTINGS OF PIGS (even if you're unsure) to the Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711 or info@invadingspecies.com. Include the date, location (address, GPS coordinates, etc.) and a photo. Make sure all young pigs are reported.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about wild pigs, and this project, visit www.ofah.org/wildpigs.

Consult relevant land use and wildlife regulations for your area before setting up a trail camera or putting out bait. Always exercise caution when working around wildlife.

WILD PIG SIGNS

WILD PIG TRACKS look like deer tracks but the front toes are more rounded and point slightly outward and the dew claws are wider than the front toes.

WILD PIG



DEER



ROOTING is when wild pigs use their snout to dig up soil while feeding.



WALLOWES are pig-sized indents in the mud, often filled with water.



Photo Credit: U.S. Department of Agriculture- Wildlife Services







Position the camera facing North whenever possible to prevent it being triggered by the sun. The distance from camera to target area will depend on the trigger range of each camera.

Put the bait as far from the camera as you can while still getting reliable triggers. This will help get clear pictures of groups of pigs.

Secure game camera with a lock or security box.

Set camera approx. 1m up a tree or fence post.

Young pigs, or piglets, are smaller than adults and may have spots or stripes on their backs.

Wild pigs eat mostly vegetation like crops, roots, tubers, and mast.

Cut any vegetation that may obstruct camera view or cause false triggers.



CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

The ALAC has been staying up-to-date on chronic wasting disease in the province. Recently, the MNRF posted a Decision Notice on the Environmental Registry for the proposal to reduce the risk of CWD entering Ontario.

Highlights of the decision are:

- MNRF can now regulate the movement of all cervids in Ontario, not just native species;
- to move a cervid in Ontario it is necessary to have a cervid movement permit with some limited exceptions;
- any cervid moved into Ontario must be from a CWD free jurisdiction and a herd that is certified as CWD free;
- the possession and all uses of attractants from deer urine and other parts is prohibited;
- there are further restrictions on animal parts of cervids coming across the border.

One weak link is still the issue that federal border services officers have no delegated authority to enforce provincial legislation.



HABITAT CREATION ON FARMS

The Committee has ongoing discussions on ways to increase the creation of wildlife habitat on farms. Recently, Carolyn Callaghan from the Canadian Wildlife Federation presented on her current research on habitat creation and her involvement on various government groups regarding biodiversity. Carolyn's research and issues related to habitat and biodiversity on agricultural lands is of interest to the ALAC. Pollinator habitat protections and enhancements will have far reaching benefits for many other species, including game species.

A committee member brought to the attention of the committee precision farming and the involvement of Pheasants Forever in the program in the US. The program encourages farmers to leave unproductive portions of fields fallow.



HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

This has been an ongoing agenda item for this committee. This refers to both crop and livestock depredation. Hunting has been and will continue to be one of the most effective means of reducing wildlife problems.



2020

LAND USE/ACCESS/TRAILS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT



ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS



LAND USE/ACCESS/TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR -- MICHAEL EVERS (INNISFIL)

VICE CHAIR -- BRIAN MOORE (WATFORD)

MEMBERS

Jeremy Funk (Sioux Lookout)

David Chenier (Haileybury)

Roy Polsky (Val Caron)

Bob Emery (Perth)

Stephen Huntley (Beeton)

Lauren Tonelli (Staff Liaison)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT CHANGES (BILL 197 AND ASSOCIATED ERO POSTINGS)

Through the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, the Ontario government has made changes to the Environmental Assessment Act that are intended to streamline the environmental assessment process. Some of the more concerning changes include the creation of a list of projects that will require an environmental assessment, and the movement of certain environmental assessment processes out of the Environmental Assessment Act (EAA). OFAH staff were directed to draft a response to the movement of the environmental assessment process for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves out of the EAA and into the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act. The committee discussed the idea that some projects that are permitted in parks are operating under the concept of “no net loss” where damage in one location is offset by improvements in another; the committee voiced concerns with the fact that that system would still result in damaged habitat.



CROWN LAND DESIGNATED “FOR PARKS PURPOSES”

The LUATAC has discussed the potential that Crown land that was originally designated “for parks purposes” could be transferred from the MNRF to the MECP. Crown land ‘for parks purpose’ may end up being transferred to MECP and could therefore not be available for hunting purposes unless specifically authorized by MECP.



ALGONQUIN LAND CLAIM

The Ontario Government opened an additional round of consultations on parcels of land proposed to be transferred to the Algonquins of Ontario. The Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee as well as head office staff reviewed the changes to ensure that hunter and angler interests are being considered and acknowledged by the government in their decision-making process. Of major concern to the OFAH are Land Use Permit holders and their ability to retain and access their LUPs in perpetuity.



PROPOSED TC ENERGY PUMPED STORAGE PROJECT

The LUATAC chair brought a potential concern with a new energy project up to the committee and staff indicated that they would review the project. The OFAH Fisheries Biologist submitted comments to the Department of National Defense regarding our concerns over the proposed energy project in Meaford, Ontario on Georgian Bay. Our major concerns were effects on fisheries populations, and potential decommissioning plans. We are, however, supportive of energy solutions which will not cause lasting environmental damages.



TC Energy's Proposed Pumped Storage Project

Community Update
November 2020

DISCUSSION RE: HUNTING AND FISHING ACCESS IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

Due to COVID-19, already existing access issues are exaggerated for two reasons 1) more people are trying to get outside by going hunting and fishing and 2) many municipalities are attempting to limit the number of people who are coming from other areas of the province. The OFAH has requested that the government consider funding fishing and hunting municipal infrastructure projects (such as boat launches and designated fishing areas). Many current access issues stem from lack of parking available around access points, which is also being exacerbated by municipalities charging high rates for non-residents. The committee members were asked to consult with their respective Zones and consider possible access solutions that they would like to see the OFAH pursue.



HUNTING IN PARKS

A member of the committee brought forward an initiative to get a deer hunt in a nearby Provincial Park through a controlled hunt that would be bows only, in temporary stands, with limited tags available. Considering the deer hunt would take place in a season where the park would not be busy or would be closed, this should not create any significant conflict. The hunt could also allow the park to keep staff on longer into the fall. This is in line with the OFAH's broader advocacy to increase hunting opportunities in more Provincial Parks.



2020

SMALL GAME/MIGRATORY BIRDS/WETLANDS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT



ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS



SMALL GAME/MIGRATORY BIRDS/WETLANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR -- MAYA BASDEO (ANCASTER)

MEMBERS

Stephen Huntley (Beeton)

Kerry Coleman (Oxford Mills)

Roy Polsky (Val Caron)

Dr. Chris Davies (Lakefield)

Kathy Richardson (St. Catharines)

Lauren Tonelli (Staff Liaison)

SANDHILL CRANES

The OFAH continues to advocate for a Sandhill Crane hunting season in Ontario. We do this through the Ontario Waterfowl Advisory Committee (OWAC), which is a committee lead by Canadian Wildlife Services to discuss waterfowl issues in the province. We have ensured that a discussion regarding a Sandhill Crane hunting season is on the agenda at each OWAC meeting. Currently, the major barrier to enacting a Sandhill Crane hunt in Ontario is that the international harvest guidelines require a permit system or similar method for limiting harvest. We have gotten CWS to commit to looking into the possibility of a federally governed permit system for Sandhill Cranes.



WILD TURKEYS

Wild turkeys remained top of mind throughout the year and was discussed at each SGAC meeting with respect to expanding hunting opportunities to reflect increased prevalence of wild turkey in some WMUs, and the need to review the Ontario Wild Turkey Management Plan.

- OFAH supported ERO proposal 019-1985 to open fall hunting seasons for wild turkey in WMUs 72 and 95 beginning in 2020. The decision posted in September 2020 approved a fall hunting season in WMU 72;
- Increasing numbers of wild turkey on Manitoulin Island have prompted discussion of proposing a hunting season;
- For the past 14 years, the Wild Turkey Management Plan has determined hunting seasons and management strategies; however, it is outdated and in need of review. We are currently pursuing the possibility to review the plan.



CORMORANTS

In 2020 the MNRF opened a cormorant hunting season to address the overabundance of cormorants in the province. The hunt runs from September 15 to December 31, allowing for 15 birds to be shot a day. The SGAC discussed the benefits and issues surrounding this hunting season and staff dealt with media to ensure accurate information was being reported.



FALCONRY

In 2019 the SGAC reviewed and supported a proposal to expand opportunities for falconers in Ontario. The OFAH along with member organization the Ontario Hawking Club (OHC) submitted a proposal requesting MNR to expand the live capture of wild raptors for falconry. In 2020, the MNR posted a proposal on the Environmental Registry to meet some of the requests we posed. The proposed changes that were finalized in March 2021 reflected many elements requested jointly by the OFAH and the OHC. In addition to opportunities that reflect the complete art of falconry, capturing of selected raptors is now included in regulation under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, providing greater assurance that this form of small game hunting will continue in Ontario. SGAC Chair Maya Basdeo, also a falconer, wrote an article for the OFAH Insider about the decision.



MENU
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Falconry, in its entirety, has finally arrived in Ontario!

MARCH 2, 2021 - THOUGHTS - 3 COMMENTS - POSTED BY MAYA BASDEO

2020

INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

LIAISON ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT



ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS



INDIGENOUS RELATIONS LIAISON COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR -- DAN ELLIOTT (AYLMER)

VICE CHAIR -- MAYA BASDEO (ANCASTER)

MEMBERS

Ed Giffin (Kingston)

Stephen Huntley (Beeton)

Rick Moore (Keewatin)

Matt DeMille (Staff Liaison)

WALPOLE ISLAND FIRST NATION COMMERCIAL FISHERY

The newly elected Chief of Walpole Island First Nation put the provincial government on notice that his community now plans to establish a commercial fishing industry on Lake St. Clair and surrounding waters. The committee discussed this statement, the concurrent controversy surrounding the treaty rights of Mi'kmaq First Nation communities to fish for lobster in Nova Scotia, and what implications emerging First Nation commercial fishery claims would have on fishery and resource allocations.



INDIGENOUS MOOSE HARVEST

Member concerns about Indigenous moose harvest was discussed by the IRLC. This topic, like any Indigenous fish and wildlife harvesting, is complex and can be very contentious, so it will require future discussion and engagement of the other OFAH Advisory Committees and the Board of Directors. The IRLC is considering the development of a guiding document for these discussions that will overview the legal context, misconceptions, and other important considerations as it relates to common concerns expressed about Indigenous harvest policies and enforcement.



INDIGENOUS “LAND BACK” MOVEMENT

Land Back is more than a slogan for a resurgent Indigenous movement. Instead of negotiating land surrenders in exchange for one-off payments and promises, this movement aims to put unceded land back under Indigenous control. The movement is based on the belief that past treaties signed by both Indigenous leaders and government have not been upheld by government (i.e. not met its fiduciary responsibility). Many lands granted to Indigenous communities have since been developed without consultation or compensation and Indigenous communities are looking to take back what was originally granted in treaties and unceded lands as well. The committee discussed how this movement could intersect with OFAH interests as it relates to lands and other resources (fish and wildlife) that are interwoven within these discussions.



OFAH/SHAWANAGA FIRST NATION DISCUSSIONS

The committee discussed ideas and thoughts about how the OFAH could work collaboratively with the Shawanaga First Nation. The community raises and releases Walleye fry in their hatchery north of Parry Sound and are investigating options to raise funds to improve local fisheries further through enhanced hatchery operations and other fishery management work.



ALGONQUIN LAND CLAIM NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

The Government of Ontario prepared and consulted on the “Supplemental Report of the Draft Environmental Evaluation Report: Proposed Settlement Lands” because negotiations resulted in changes to the proposed Settlement Lands included with the Algonquin Land Claim. The committee discussed the concerns with the new map details being diminished since 2012, and the impacts land transfers have on anglers, hunters, trappers. OFAH asked MNR for detailed descriptive plans for all land parcels that were prepared to support the consultation process to assess potential impacts on things like existing access points to large tracts of Crown land. The OFAH is pursuing public and member concerns and submitted official comments through the consultation process.



EXEMPTIONS TO FIREARMS BAN FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The committee discussed the federal government's exemption for Indigenous peoples to allow them to continue to use firearms (during the amnesty period) declared prohibited by Order in Council in May 2020. Non-Indigenous Canadians were not permitted to use or transport the newly prohibited firearms during the amnesty. Indigenous people, particularly in the far North, have used these firearms for hunting due to their accessibility, reliability and ease of handling.



2020

FIREARMS/RECREATIONAL SHOOTING/HUNTER EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT



ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS



FIREARMS/ RECREATIONAL SHOOTING/ HUNTER EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR -- BILL BLACKWELL (PORT ELGIN)

VICE CHAIR -- DAN ELLIOTT (AYLMER)

MEMBERS

Chris Bonner-Vickers (Fort Frances)

Carmen Woodcock (Thunder Bay)

Ed Giffin (Kingston)

Steve Laird (Uxbridge)

Wayne Forgrave (Midhurst)

Spyros Chrysochou (Hastings)

Tammy Gunter (Staff Liaison)

Brian McRae (Staff Liaison)

FIREARMS PROHIBITIONS

Following the federal government announcement on May 1, 2020 that banned the purchase, sale, transport, import and use of 1,500 models, variants or modified versions of firearms in Canada, the OFAH firearms committee spent a great deal of time discussing the ramifications of the Order in Council (OIC), potential impacts on our members and subsequently the numerous concerns being voiced by our members. It was evident that there are very strong opinions from both sides of the firearms community, which reiterated the need for OFAH to concentrate on policy, rather than advocating for one firearm over another.



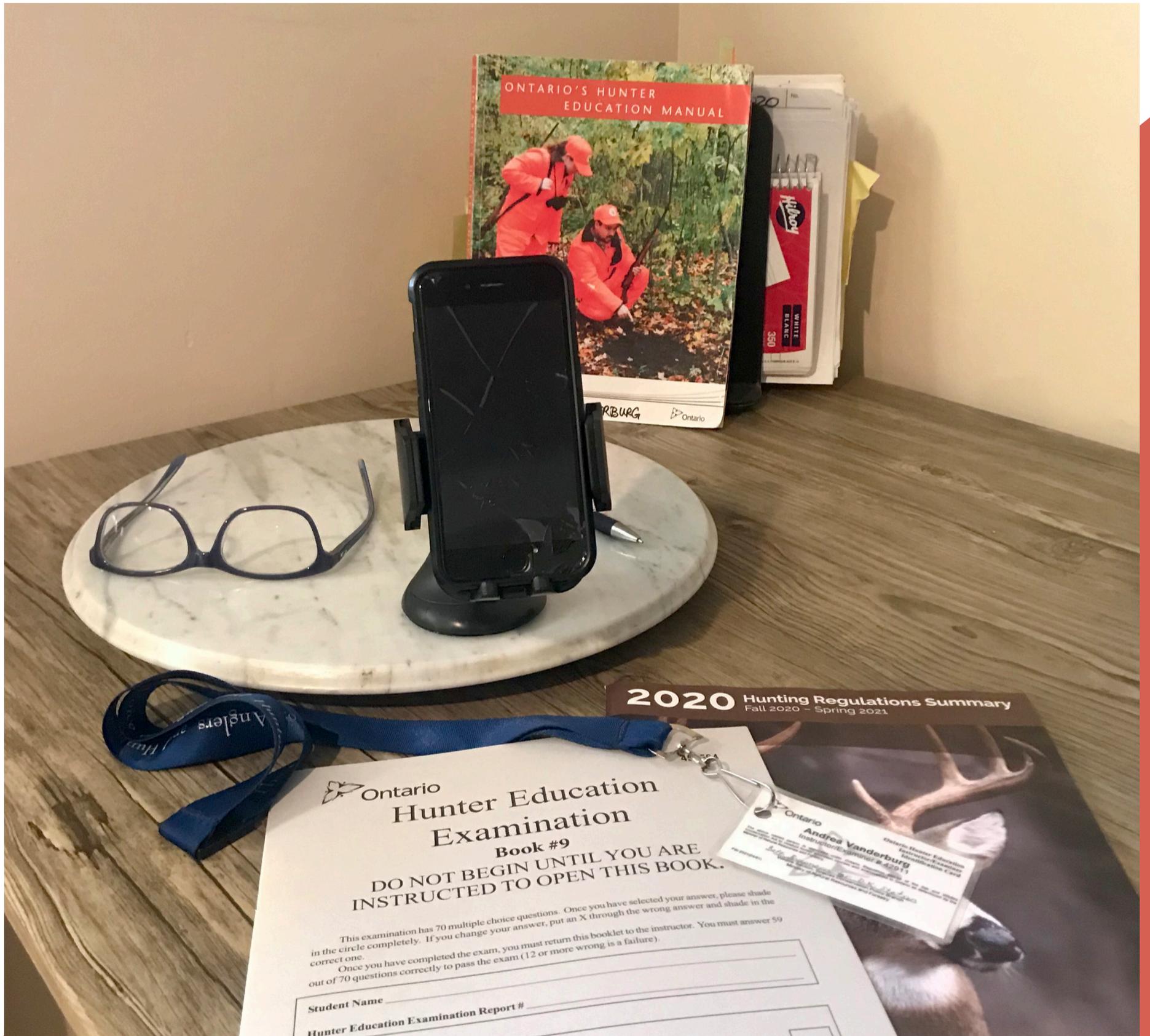
PAL BACKLOG

With the slow down of many government departments during the COVID-19 pandemic, many firearms owners who had applied to renew or acquire a PAL were told that there was a huge backlog of applications and some may not have a PAL for the fall, even though they applied with time to spare under normal circumstances. This was of great concern to hunters who found themselves with PALs that were about to expire and for those just taking courses the chance of even getting one for the fall was slim. The committee discussed the numerous concerns expressed from members and the potential impacts of the backlog. These discussions resulted in the OFAH formally writing a letter to Minister Blair asking for an extension for those licence holders who currently have a PAL that will allow them to continue to hunt or go shooting until their renewed PAL arrives.



HUNTER EDUCATION

Ontario's hunter education program was also significantly impacted by COVID-19 in 2020. Throughout the year, the committee discussed at great lengths the impacts of the closures/restrictions, the ability for Ontario residents to utilize the Saskatchewan Online Hunter Education course (and the lack of Ontario specific content within that course), and the absence of and need for a 'made in Ontario' online hunter education course.



MUNICIPAL ISSUES

Throughout 2020, the committee discussed the impacts being felt by members dealing with municipal restrictions, whether through discharge of firearms by-laws or Sunday gun hunting. Although the pandemic likely slowed down the process of local councils dealing with these topics, the committee did discuss the discharge of firearm by-law reviews occurring in the Town of Huntsville, North Kawartha Township, and the Town of Grimsby, as well as Sunday gun hunting opportunities in the Town of Uxbridge and the approvals in Lambton Shores, the Town of Plympton-Wyoming, and the Municipality of West Perth.

