



Advocacy



Government Affairs & Policy provides support for a wide range of OFAH programs, policies and departments at the local, provincial and federal level. This includes appearing before municipal councils, provincial and federal standing committees; membership on key advisory groups; working with clubs, zones, provincial, national and international partners in the outdoor community; and providing advice to OFAH members on a variety of issues.

Federal Firearms Legislation – Bill C-391

As a result of meetings with the Prime Minister's staff, MP Candice Hoepfner and MP Garry Breitkreuz, the OFAH worked with Dr. Gary Mauser, Simon Fraser University and senior staff in the Minister's office in early 2010 to develop a comprehensive response to Members of Parliament regarding misinformation being distributed on the issue of the long gun registry.

In March, as part of the National Outdoor Network, the OFAH sent a copy of that rebuttal to every MP across Canada, with each affiliate being responsible for the Members of Parliament in their respective jurisdictions.

Hearings on Bill C-391 took place on May 13, 25, 26 and 27, for two hours per day. On May 26, 2010, the OFAH appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in support of the bill. Also appearing that day was Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair, Priscilla de Villiers, founder of Victims against Violence and Sergeant Murray Grismer, Major Crimes Unit, Saskatoon Police Service. Also appearing in support of the bill over the three days of hearings was the Quebec Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Canadian Shooting Sports Association (CSSA), Chief of Police from Calgary, several individual police officers, and Dr. Gary Mauser, Simon Fraser University.

In addition to Chief Blair and Ms. de Villiers, those opposing included the Coalition for Gun Control and the Quebec Justice Minister.

Clause by clause occurred on June 1 and 3 and the bill was reported back to the House. During this time, Liberal critic Mark Holland, MP Pickering-Ajax, introduced a motion asking the Committee and House to stop proceedings on the bill on the grounds that it would "dismantle a tool that promotes and enhances public security and the safety of Canadian police officers." With the

opposition having a majority on the Committee, the motion passed by a vote of 7 to 6. Although the bill was referred back to the House for Third Reading, a debate on the motion, which occurred on September 21st and 22nd preceded a vote on the bill.

Throughout the summer and early fall, members of the National Outdoor Network across the country, and OFAH zones, clubs and members across Ontario, continued to pressure opposition MPs in their area to either continue supporting the bill, or to convince opposition members to support the bill when it returned for Third Reading and vote against the Holland motion. Candice Hoepfner spent the summer attending events in many of the ridings across the country represented by opposition members who supported the bill at Second Reading. In Ontario, several OFAH member clubs in northern Ontario hosted public meetings in opposition ridings, where Ms. Hoepfner appeared and spoke.

Leading up to the debate in the House, the eight Liberal members who supported the bill at Second Reading were told to change their vote by their leader and support the motion to kill the bill. The 12 NDPs who supported the bill at Second reading were also pressured, but not ordered, to change their vote. With Liberals being forced to vote in favor of the motion, all 12 NDP members were needed to vote against the motion to defeat it.



Throughout the summer, the OFAH appeared on many media panel discussions to debate the merits of the bill, and led a concerted effort to shore up support among NDP members. Until the last minute, it appeared that enough opposition votes would be in place to defeat the motion, but a sudden defection by the NDP member for Sackville, Nova Scotia tipped the scales. As a result, with only 6 of the 12 original NDP members continuing to support the bill, (including the two Thunder Bay MPs) Mark Holland's motion to abandon Bill C-391 was passed by a vote of 153 – 151. This was not accidental. Quite clearly, the NDP, without 'ordering' their members to vote in a particular direction, made sure that enough pressure was exerted to ensure that the motion would be passed, without having to publicly acknowledge that they had 'whipped' the vote.

Parliamentary rules prohibit the government from introducing another bill to scrap the long gun registry during this Parliament. The government has committed that they will reintroduce a new bill after the next election, and that scrapping of the long gun registry will continue to be part of their national platform.

Municipal Sunday Gun Hunting and Discharge Bylaws

Kingston City Council held public meetings on Sunday gun hunting where the OFAH was well represented with staff from head office, the zone, local clubs and individual members. After much delay, Council approved Sunday gun hunting by a vote of 10 to 1 in March. This was used as leverage to pursue Sunday gun hunting in Loyalist Township and South Frontenac before the fall municipal election.

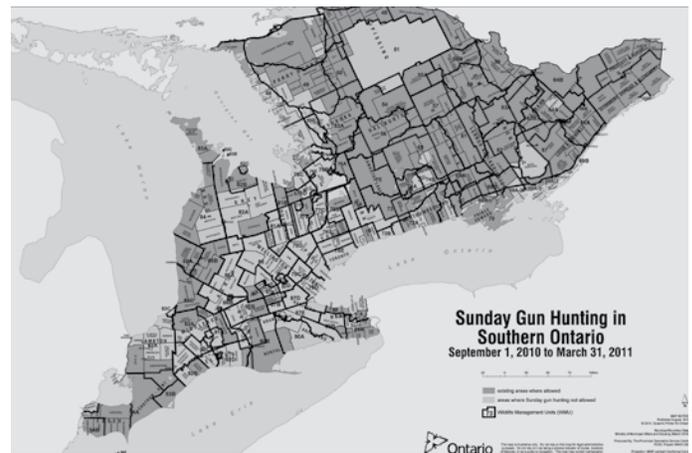
The Township of Muskoka Lakes passed an updated discharge bylaw and have since been inundated with complaints from local firearms owners. The township's CAO contacted the OFAH for assistance in reviewing the bylaw, but nothing of substance occurred in 2010.

In late 2009, the OFAH was notified by the Town of Halton Hills of pending changes to their local no discharge bylaw. We wrote to the Mayor and Council to indicate our concern over the proposed changes. Council scheduled a public meeting to discuss the proposed changes in December, with the OFAH making a deputation. Local OFAH clubs and members were also notified; however, given the extensive pressure that was brought to bear by firearms owners in the area, Council cancelled the meeting and announced that the status quo would continue; a clear victory for area hunters and recreational sport shooters.

In November of 2009, the Township of Dutton Dunwich held a public meeting of Council to discuss Sunday gun hunting. We provided information and updated maps to local hunters, who made presentations to Council, and we emailed 500 OFAH members in the London, St. Thomas, and Strathroy area, urging them to attend and make their support known. In March, Council voted in favor of Sunday gun hunting.

For several months, Wilmot Township undertook consultations around the issue of Sunday gun hunting. In March, they voted in support of Sunday gun hunting, in large part due to the excellent work of OFAH Zone J.

In early 2010, the Town of Pickering announced that they would be making changes to their no discharge bylaw. We contacted municipal staff and were promised an opportunity to comment on the draft bylaw. The OFAH worked with the Pickering Rod &



Gun Club, local hunters, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and the MNR in the development of a response to the draft bylaw, which was due March 21, 2010. The proposed changes are not supported by the OFAH, the MNR and others, particularly since they are clearly in response to concerns expressed by only one Councillor, and one nonresident antihunter. The OFAH, the Pickering Rod & Gun Club and others appeared before Council on May 10, 2010. The item was sent back for further work at the staff level, and did not reappear during 2010.

The Township of Zorra has indicated that they intend to amend their noise bylaw, which dates to 1987. This is apparently based upon complaints from a local resident opposed to hunting, and opposed to the 'noise' created by the Tavistock Rod & Gun Club.

The current bylaw already includes a clause under the heading of 'unusual noises, or noises likely to disturb any other inhabitant' that refers to the discharge of any gun or other firearm, provided that this does not apply to peace officers in the performance of their duties. The OFAH, through its Zone J Chair, has continued to provide input in support of the club's position. It would appear that either the local resident or the Council itself may pursue this in court.

The Town of Springwater and other local municipalities were contacted in 2010 by the City of Barrie asking them to consider no discharge bylaws; amendments to current no discharge bylaws or noise bylaws to focus on firearms related activities. This appeared to be targeting the Barrie District Hunter & Angler Club (an OFAH member clubs) and the Barrie Rod and Gun Club (a non-OFAH club). On June 16, 2010, OFAH, CSSA, the two local gun clubs and other stakeholders appeared at a well-attended public meeting before Council, to object to the proposed changes and propose alternatives that would not negatively impact on the club or local hunters and recreational shooters. The municipal solicitor admitted that the bylaw contained several errors, and it was withdrawn for amendment and reintroduction at a future date. The bylaw did not reappear before Council prior to last fall's municipal election.

The bylaws are particularly alarming for two reasons: the two bylaws appear contradictory – while the discharge bylaw reduces the ability to use firearms for hunting or recreational shooting considerably, the noise bylaw prohibits noise caused by the discharge of a firearm; and the bylaw, unlike those in other municipalities, would be a blanket bylaw, not just applying to the residential areas, but to the entire municipality regardless of location.

The Town of Uxbridge intends to update its no discharge bylaw, and has asked the OFAH, the Pickering Rod and Gun Club, the MNR, and others to review and comment.

The City of Thunder Bay has been holding discussions with the OFAH, the MNR, and Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) regarding an OFAH request to allow for the expansion of the area for bowhunting only within the city limits. The City of Thunder Bay includes an extensive amount of land within the municipal boundaries that is currently not zoned for future development, but where hunting is currently not allowed and should be. OFAH Zone B has spent months working on this issue, and has spearheaded the push for additional hunting opportunities. Several meetings, conversations, and letters have been exchanged with the Chief of TBPS, and he has generally agreed to the expansion of the area for bowhunting, with certain conditions that are still under discussion. Once all of the issues have been resolved to the satisfaction of the Chief, hopefully City Council will be in a position to formally ratify the new boundaries, and provide initially for additional bowhunting opportunities.

The County of Brant proposed changes to its discharge bylaws in the fall of 2010. The staff report was provided to OFAH which proposed extensive changes to the draft bylaw, which was poorly worded and did not appear to understand the concepts of hunting. As a result, a new draft bylaw was circulated, with some of the OFAH requested amendments included, but other changes were not made. A public meeting was slated to take place on December 13, 2010, but was delayed at the OFAH's request.

Once new municipal councils have had an opportunity to be sworn in and undertake new business, the three remaining councils in eastern Ontario where Sunday gun hunting has not been approved will be approached to revisit the issue..

National Outdoors Caucus

The National Outdoors Caucus met on March 31, 2010 to discuss a number of 'go-forward' positions on issues previously identified by the outdoor community. The OFAH made a presentation on Bill C-465, The National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day Act, which seeks to recognize the contribution that hunting, trapping and fishing have made to our national heritage, and to designate the third Saturday in September as a day to recognize these activities. OFAH was also asked to speak on invasive species, (National Strategy and the need for additional funding to conduct risk assessments), and to Bill C-391, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and Firearms Act (repeal of long gun registry).

Algonquin Land Claim/Fisheries/Harvest Allocation Focus Groups

At the December 2009 meeting of the Committee of External Advisors for the Algonquin Land Claim, of which the OFAH is a member, three focus groups were established that would examine in-depth specific proposals associated with the claim that would impact on land use, fisheries (with particular focus on Algonquin Park), and harvest allocations. OFAH is represented on the latter two. Membership on the land use focus group is composed almost exclusively of representatives from local municipalities within the claim area. The fisheries focus group met in January 2010, and a meeting of both the fisheries and harvest allocation focus groups took place in Bancroft early in March 2010. OFAH offered significant input into the draft proposals put before the focus

groups, and at the time, anticipated that several more meetings would be held as the process unfolds.

The Committee of External Advisors, which has been paired with the Municipal Advisory Group (composed of affected municipalities in the claim area), will meet again on April 8 in Pembroke. This was intended to be the last joint meeting of these advisory groups, with them being split to hold meetings on their own, related to the issues impacting separately on each. Subsequent events have proven that this is not the case.

There have been no meetings of the Fisheries or Harvest Allocation focus groups since the March 2010 meeting in Bancroft. A report on the April meeting of the Committee of External Advisors and Municipal Advisory Group was submitted to the OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee at the April Board meeting. This resulted in several "go-forward" items for staff, which included:

- What percentage of Algonquin must ratify the agreement for it to be binding;
- An update package of all current land claims in Ontario;
- Letters to the provincial and federal Ministers responsible for aboriginal affairs regarding funding for nonaboriginal groups to participate in the process; and
- Meeting with the provincial Ministers regarding allocation, based upon Sparrow.

A report on progress with these items and an update from the September meeting of the two main advisories bodies was presented to the OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee at the September Board meeting.

The Province of Ontario made it clear that they wanted an Agreement in Principle (AIP) on the land claim in place by no later than May, 2011 and was pushing ahead with an extremely ambitious agenda. The OFAH was concerned that we, and others, would be marginalized with regard to nonaboriginal interests in the claim area.

In order to head off a premature AIP, the OFAH met with the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and the provincial Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in November. The federal government has already indicated that they do not agree with the province's timeline, and appear sympathetic to our requests for a slowdown in the process. The provincial Minister of Aboriginal Affairs was presented with extensive documentation at the November meeting, outlining the OFAH's position on fair sharing, cooperative management of resources, fisheries, access and other issues. The Minister committed to a follow up meeting. The September meeting of the Committee of External Advisors in Pembroke produced little of consequence.

The OFAH continued to meet with MNR staff from the Aboriginal claims section and the provincial and federal negotiators throughout the year, and has developed a comprehensive action plan around the land claim.

MNR/Saugeen/Cape Croker Commercial Fishing Agreement

The commercial fishing agreement between the province, the Chippewas of Nawash (Cape Croker) Unceded First Nation, and the Saugeen First Nation expired in 2010. Given the concerns raised by the OFAH, Sydenham Sportsmen's Association, Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association, and the Lake Huron Fishing Club over the previous agreement, the OFAH secured a commitment from the former Minister of Natural Resources to

seek public input related to the renewal of the agreement. However, since that time, little has occurred, and no formal consultation has been scheduled, although MNR staff met with local clubs in August to provide a brief update on the progress of negotiations. No information about the finalization of any agreement had been forthcoming by the end of 2010.

Windpower Development



The increased incentives afforded to renewable energy projects through the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act* has resulted in a major push to implement the policy and regulations needed to facilitate windpower development. In 2010, the OFAH received many calls from individuals and organizations expressing concern with windpower development throughout the province. OFAH staff met with Ontario's energy minister, as well as staff from the MNR's Renewable Energy program to discuss the potential impacts of existing and proposed renewable energy policies on fish and wildlife values in Ontario. In addition, we reviewed and provided comments for a number of windpower-related EBR postings related to windpower policies and regulations.

The OFAH provided comments to an EBR posting by the MOE regarding the Renewable Energy Approval (REA) Requirements for offshore windpower development. The new REA system is a streamlined process that has resulted from increased pressure for the development of 'green energy.' The OFAH is concerned that the new accelerated process will prioritize mitigation measures without adequate assessment or concern for fish and wildlife values. One major concern is that the proposed REA requirements only focus on site-specific impacts and do not adequately address the cumulative effects of offshore wind development. We believe that this is especially important, given that the MOE has proposed a 5km shoreline exclusion zone that will concentrate offshore development beyond the current economic viability restrictions of construction (water depth) and energy production (wind speeds).

The OFAH recommended that REA requirements include an assessment of how fishery quality, as well as changes to the access and use of prime fishing areas could impact socioeconomic values. Additionally, we made a number of recommendations for specific considerations to be included in impact assessment studies for fish and wildlife species, particularly for migratory waterfowl.

The OFAH also provided comments to an EBR posting by the MNR regarding the Crown Land Use Application for offshore wind development. First and foremost, the OFAH recommended that Crown land access to natural resources through activities such as hunting and fishing must be given specific consideration due to

their relative socioeconomic importance. The OFAH supported the use of specific areas (Point Pelee and Long Point in Lake Erie) as a coarse-filter, but also recommended that a supplemental criteria-based approach is necessary to provide a more rigorous and standardized restriction of Crown land for offshore wind development. The OFAH recommended that the Crown Land Use Application process should incorporate geographical limitations on the number, proximity and orientation of wind turbines to minimize the potential for cumulative effects. We also suggested that an explicit set of criteria should be developed and included in the application process to determine if and how potential impacts associated with offshore wind facilities will be mitigated.

The goal of this posting was for the MNR to receive input on where and how Crown land should be unavailable for offshore wind development. The ultimate goal is to use this information during the development of a draft policy procedure and direction for offshore wind development. The OFAH will continue to monitor the development of this policy and provide input at every available opportunity.

Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) continues to spread in Northeast North America. Prevention is clearly the only effective strategy for keeping CWD out of Ontario.

In early 2010, the MNR took additional steps to prevent the spread of CWD to Ontario through activities associated with hunting. These steps included the following:

Prohibiting use of products that contain deer urine, blood, glands for the purpose of hunting (EBR 011-7724)

On the basis of new scientific evidence demonstrating that CWD can be spread through deer urine and other body fluids collected from farmed deer and used in urine-based attractants, the OFAH expressed support for prohibiting the use of deer urine based attractants in hunting. We do not, however, agree with prohibiting the use of Ontario hunter harvested tarsal glands in hunting, which the Ministry included in the regulation.

The OFAH also encouraged the Province of Ontario to take further steps to prohibit the importation and retail of deer urine-based attractants, and also to give retailers a full year to adapt to the new proposed regulation.

Prohibiting possession of specific moose and caribou parts harvested in other jurisdictions (EBR 011-7726)

On the basis of new scientific evidence that moose and caribou are also susceptible to CWD, and potential vectors for transmission, the OFAH supports adding moose and caribou to the regulation that previously applied to the importation of white-tails and elk carcasses harvested by hunters in other jurisdictions. Against O.F.A.H advice, the new regulation applies to caribou harvested anywhere outside Ontario, including Quebec, even though there is no reason to believe that eastern hunted caribou populations would have come into any contact with CWD.

Prohibiting importation of live captive deer, elk, moose or caribou, unless authorized, to help minimize the risk of entry of CWD into Ontario (EBR 011-8244)

The OFAH supports the new MNR regulations prohibiting the importation of live captive deer, elk, moose or caribou. They are a significant step in controlling the potential importation and spread of CWD in farmed cervids, however our over-arching advice to

the province is that this does not go far enough. Importation of any potential cervid CWD vector should be prohibited and the captive breeding (game farming) phased out.

In July, the OFAH met with staff from the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF) to discuss collaboration around the issue of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Ontario and beyond. As a result, a number of action items were developed, which are being split between the two organizations. Another meeting is planned to discuss next steps. The OFAH also sought to meet with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), but was not able to do so in 2010.

Freedom of Information Requests

The OFAH filed several Freedom of Information (FOI) requests with the MNR in 2010, prompted by less than satisfactory responses to requests for information through the normal channels. These requests included:

- the Bearwise report, public comments, questions asked, how they were developed, and associated files;
- information on the printing firm, quotes received from all prospective bidders for the contract, and the amount of ad revenue generated by the publication of the 2010 Hunting Regulations Summary; and
- the 2000-2001 cormorant study authored by Dr. John Casselman on eating habits and damage caused to plants and fish populations.

Pending the receipt of the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 versions of the Special Purpose Account Annual Report, the OFAH will file an FOI requesting these reports. As a result of a question asked in the legislature earlier in 2010, the reports for 1999-2000 through to 2007-2008 were finally filed with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

U.S. Wildlife and Hunting Conservation Council

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior appointed eight senior members of various prominent conservation organizations to serve on a newly created Wildlife and Hunting Conservation Council. This included representatives from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, the Wildlife Management Institute and the Boone and Crockett Club.

The OFAH has written to Peterborough MP Dean del Mastro, to suggest that the government create a similar body in Canada, to be known as the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Council; this request was subsequently relayed to the Prime Minister. The mandate of the Council would be similar to that of the U.S. Council, which is considered an official advisory body under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). It would advise the government on fish and wildlife issues, and the promotion of Canada's fishing and hunting heritage for future generations.

Federal Firearms Legislation – Bill C-580

On October 8, Charlie Angus, the NDP Member for Timmins-James Bay, introduced Bill C-580, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Firearms Act and the Contraventions Act (long guns)*.

Mr. Angus, one of the NDP members who flipped their vote on Bill C-391, introduced the bill to fulfill a commitment by NDP Leader, Jack Layton, to introduce a bill that would not scrap the long gun registry, but which would supposedly “decriminalize”

the failure to register a nonrestricted long gun.

Essentially, the bill proposes to eliminate the fee for registration and licensing (which was already done by the current government), and to eliminate the first-time offense of possession of a firearm (nonrestricted) without having registered that firearm under the Criminal Code. This would create a summary offense instead of a criminal code charge (which already exists, but is seldom used by police).

The OFAH does not support Bill C-580, which clearly does not address the need to scrap the long gun registry, and provides little, if any, relief from the system that has plagued firearms owners for over a decade. Questions have been raised about the legality of the bill, and whether the legislation is even constitutional.

Bill C-465 – An Act Respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day

Bill C-465 was introduced by Conservative MP Rick Norlock, Northumberland-Quinte West. After receiving Second Reading earlier in 2010, the bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, which met in October, 2010. Witnesses included the OFAH, the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Delta Waterfowl, Ducks Unlimited, and the Credit River Anglers Association.

The bill was amended slightly and sent back to the House of Commons for Third Reading, which it received. The bill was then sent to the Senate.

OSPCA Resolution/Amendments to Provincial Animal Welfare Act

On June 1, 2010, Frank Klees, Conservative MPP Newmarket-Aurora, tabled a resolution in the Legislature seeking to bring the OSPCA under provincial oversight, something the OFAH and others encouraged the government to do during the debate around Bill 50, Amendments to the Provincial Welfare Act, 2008. The resolution was debated and voted on November 18, 2010.

When Bill 50 was before the Legislature, the OFAH appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice Policy representing ourselves, Delta Waterfowl, the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association, and Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre. At that time, the OFAH recommended that the bill be amended to provide for more oversight by the government of the actions, training and conduct of the OSPCA. Bill 50 gave the OSPCA considerable additional powers, including those of warrantless search, seizure and the laying of charges. What was missing was any form of governmental oversight or control of the Association. Equally disturbing was the fact that a registered charity, which could raise money for its work, would also be the enforcer of animal cruelty laws in Ontario.

The government ignored the recommendations made by the OFAH, Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), Ontario Farm Animal Council (OFAC) and others, insisting that the OSPCA was an “arms length” agency, and that the government had no authority to oversee its activities, despite the fact that we presented a number of other jurisdictions in Canada where this oversight by government existed and was working well.

Mr. Klees’ resolution sought to reopen the issue and force the government to introduce controls over the OSPCA, in light of recent high profile mistakes by the Society.

Fifty-five members of the Legislature read petitions into the record in support of the resolution, and the OFAH issued a press release in support of the resolution, but the government, with few notable exceptions among its members, voted as a block to defeat the resolution.

Hatchery Fees Paid by Volunteer Organizations

For several years, the OFAH has been pursuing the issue of fees assessed against volunteer fish hatcheries under the Ministry of Environment Certificate of Approval process. According to Ministry criteria, these hatcheries, by virtue of the high concentration of nutrients in this type of “waste water,” are being classified the same as industrial polluters, which has resulted in their being charged exorbitant fees for the privilege of operating.

The OFAH has pursued this issue with a succession of Ministers of the Environment, with no success. To try to resolve this matter once and for all, the OFAH has requested a meeting with the Minister of Environment. The Minister of Natural Resources and senior MNR staff are engaged in support of OFAH’s position.

Amendments to Reg. 316/03 of Highway Traffic Act regarding ATV Use

For some years, the OFAH has been trying to correct an oversight that occurred in 2003 when the province last amended the *Highway Traffic Act* with respect to the use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATV’s) on certain provincial highways.

At the time, the MNR advised the Ministry of Transportation (MOT) that there was no need to include Crown and forest access roads in the regulation; however, this was found to be incorrect. The OPP advised the OFAH that under the Act, access roads are considered to be highways, and without being designated as such under the amendments, cannot be used by ATV riders without the possibility of being charged. For several years, the OPP has looked the other way while the OFAH has worked with a succession of ministers, at the MNR and the MTO, to try to resolve this “simple” issue by way of an amendment at Cabinet. Earlier this year, the issue was raised with Minister Jeffrey. Peterborough MPP Jeff Leal also wrote to Minister Jeffrey about this, asking for her assistance in resolving the issue. Despite the Minister’s response that the MTO and not the MNR has the authority to resolve the issue, the Minister’s office and senior MNR staff have become more engaged in seeking a resolution. A letter requesting a meeting with Transportation Minister, Kathleen Wynne, was also sent, but no response was received before year’s end.

National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress (NFWCC)

The OFAH, in cooperation with Shane Mahoney and a number of major stakeholders across Canada and the US is the lead organization behind the creation and hosting of a May 2012 National Fish and Wildlife Congress in Ottawa. “Hold these Dates” cards have been circulated on both sides of the border, including at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Minneapolis, which distributed 600 of these cards to delegates at their December 2010 conference. The Wildlife Institute, in addition to being a major sponsor of the NFWCC, is using its 3,000 contacts to spread the word, as is the U.S. Fish & Wildlife

Agencies based in Washington DC. The Canadian Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Wildlife Habitat Canada and other Canadian partners are working with contacts in both Canada and US to raise awareness of this upcoming event.

Ten core sponsors have committed to full sponsorships at \$25,000. Several others have committed smaller amounts, and letters to dozens of other potential sponsors, including the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canadian Wildlife Service (Environment Canada) and other government agencies have been sent. Talks are ongoing with potential private and public sector nongovernment partners. Shane Mahoney is working with the National Wild Turkey Federation and other major outdoor groups in the US to bring them on board as sponsors, and late in the year, Boone and Crockett, a world renowned hunting and conservation organization agreed to join the congress as a core sponsor.

A Congress website (www.nfwcc.com) is up and running. A Steering Committee has been struck and has already met. Topics for the agenda are being prepared for consideration of the Committee, and a Technical Committee will be established in the new year. The Congress promises to attract 700 – 900 biologists, scientists, conservationists, MPs, MPPs, local, provincial, and national agencies and outdoor stakeholders. This national conference will look at the future conservation of our natural resources; government policies and programs that impact on natural resources; hunting and fishing; and increased cooperation between governments and the outdoor community in support of sustainable use on both sides of the border.

National Firearms Summit

The OFAH received an invitation to attend the National Firearms Summit in December in Vancouver, to be hosted by the National Firearms Association. The OFAH declined the invitation to attend on the following grounds:

- The NFA promotes conceal carry and the use of firearms for self-defense;
- The NFA was notably absent from the effort to support Bill C-391;
- The agenda for the summit contained some issues and speakers of serious concern to us (eg. ‘The role of firearms and personal protection’ and speaker Alan Gottlieb from the Second Amendment Foundation);
- The NFA has been largely absent in major issues affecting the firearms community; and
- The timing, particularly for a summit of this type, with the issues they have identified, is highly inappropriate and would serve to enhance the type of anti-firearms rhetoric that emerged during the debate on Bill C-391.

The Canadian Shooting Sports Association (CSSA) declined to respond to the invitation until they heard what the OFAH was doing. Once we declined, so did the CSSA. A random survey by the OFAH indicated that our affiliates in Quebec, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan were not attending, nor were the Hunting for Tomorrow Foundation or the Fur Institute, all for similar reasons. On November 7th, the NFA announced that the summit was cancelled.



Communications

The OFAH uses a wide range of media tools to reach a broad audience with positive hunting, fishing and conservation messaging. We share the latest news and views with the outdoor community through media releases, PSAs and print materials, the Internet, Ontario OUT OF DOORS magazine and Angler & Hunter Television show. Federation members and member clubs also play an important role as OFAH ambassadors in their communities.

Communications

Angler & Hunter HOTLINE

Hunting, fishing, conservation, firearms issues, fish and wildlife management, hunter education, OFAH member club and zone news—it's all in the pages of *Angler & Hunter HOTLINE*. OFAH members receive the 16-page insert with every issue of the industry-leading *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine.



Media Releases

The OFAH distributed 50 media releases across the newswire in 2010, as part of its mandate to promote hunting and fishing and the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources. Our efforts attracted coverage from local, regional and even national television, radio, print and online media. In addition, we sent another 30 locally-based releases via email to targeted media sources.

Commanding national media attention for a good part of the year was the long gun registry and MP Candice Hoepfner's Bill C-391, which, was narrowly defeated in the fall. Asian carp, coyote hunting incentives, and escalating human/bear conflicts also drew high online reader interest.

Once again, the OFAH partnered with a variety of organizations on communications efforts, including the Ontario Conservation Officers Association and Toronto Region Conservation Authority. These efforts provide mutual benefits to the participants through the expanded reach that is achieved.

In February, the OFAH provided communications support for the first annual Bridgenorth Winter Panfish Festival, which was held on Chemong Lake in the Kawarthas in celebration of the first winter fishing season in FMZ 17 in almost 80 years. The event coincided with Ontario Family Fishing Weekend and was sponsored by the OFAH TackleShare program, with OFAH communications providing advance and onsite promotional services. Attendance was estimated at between 600 and 1,000 people, and was well covered by the media. We have committed to participate in the festival for at least one more year.

Summer students working with the Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP) attracted considerable media attention for their cause during the busy summer season. The students received media training at OFAH head office during their orientation to prepare them for media inquiries, and the majority did use their training to represent their program and host organizations very well. More than 100 stories were produced via TV, radio and in newspapers (print and online versions) in more than 20 communities across Ontario. This is invaluable exposure for both the Invading Species Awareness Program and the OFAH.

Public Service Announcements

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) provide nonprofit organizations such as the OFAH with free radio, TV and print exposure. With the recent downturn in the media industry, free ad space has become somewhat less available, however, the OFAH was able to obtain considerable TV and radio play for ice safety, boating safety, responsible hunting, and ISAP messaging during 2010, which we would not otherwise have been able to purchase. In 2010, we produced a 30 second TV PSA on safe firearms handling, in cooperation with the Ontario Chief Firearms Office.

Motivational DVD

Dr. Randall Eaton was a featured speaker at the 82nd OFAH Fish & Wildlife Conference. In order to share his powerful message on the importance of hunting with a larger audience, the OFAH made DVD copies of his presentation available for a nominal fee. The DVD provides an economical feature for club meetings and community events.

Internet Presence

OFAH Internet activity continued to grow in 2010. The main OFAH site received a minor update and we expanded our

social networking efforts further through YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. These venues provide highly timely and flexible communications opportunities and enable us to reach a younger audience using their preferred communications formats.

OFAH web staff also manage the *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* website (www.ontariooutofdoors.com) and its very busy forum, with the assistance of hard working volunteer moderators. The forum enables registered users to exchange ideas about all things related to fishing and hunting.

The OFAH was proud to be chosen to promote hunting and fishing within the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation's Northern Ontario tourism website (www.northernontario.travel) for a second year. Member and nonmember anglers and hunters are invited to share their memorable experiences, photos, and testimonials of northern Ontario outdoors experiences by contacting the OFAH web team.

Several OFAH program websites were updated over the course of 2010, including the Ontario Family Fishing Weekend website (www.familyfishingweekend.com) and the OFAH TackleShare program (www.tackleshare.com).

OFAH zone websites were moved to a new template format in 2010 and are now partially administered by zone executive volunteers, who are able to populate the sites with upcoming meetings, events, photos and more. OFAH Zones C, F, G, H, and J each host a website and have launched under the new format. All zones are invited to host a website under the www.ofah.org domain at no cost.

Communications Outreach

The OFAH recognizes the importance of supporting cultural diversity in attracting new enthusiasts to fishing and hunting. In 2010, we reached out to engage new Canadian citizens by working in partnership with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC), an initiative of former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson. In October, OFAH staff and volunteers welcomed 75 enthusiastic and appreciative guests, including many children, for a full day of outdoor related activities at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre. Guests enjoyed tours of the centre, fishing at the onsite Shimano pond, virtual laser shot, a movie in the amphitheatre and a complimentary BBQ. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and the ICC has expressed interest in working with us on future initiatives.

Ontario OUT OF DOORS

**Ontario
OUT OF
DOORS**

2010 was a very successful year for the OFAH-owned *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine. Despite a difficult climate for the publishing industry, we increased advertising sales and subscriber numbers, while maintaining the same unbeatable publication.

Ontario OUT OF DOORS subscriber growth is an important part of the overall OFAH business model. Subscribers add value to our organization in many ways, not the least of which is an expanded audience for the entire outdoors industry that relies heavily on our publication.



In 2010, our subscription renewal rates surpassed magazine industry standards. The OFAH was not afraid to test a variety of product incentives and discount offers that helped shape our marketing plans.

In addition to our subscription marketing successes, 2010 marked the start of a province-wide branding campaign.

Named "THIS IS *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* COUNTRY," loyal readers and potential readers were exposed to our organization's name brand magazine in communities throughout Ontario. The branding campaign got underway in late 2010, with various forms of outdoor advertising that pinpointed specific outdoor destinations such as Lake Simcoe, Peterborough and the Ottawa Valley.



Angler & Hunter Television



From the edge of the water to the edge of the trails, *Angler & Hunter Television* Host Cam Brownson led viewers on exciting hunting and fishing exploits throughout 2010. He also featured the OFAH's great conservation work.

The show built 16 episodes which were featured on Global National and stations in almost every province across the country, as well as on pay per view on WILD TV. *Angler & Hunter Television* was also available across Canada on Bell ExpressVu and Star Choice satellite systems. Visit www.ahtv.com for a current list of local air times and information on the shows.

Each original episode was repeated twice during the year, allowing viewers lots of opportunity to catch all of the action. Fans of the show can also purchase the 17th action-packed season in a DVD boxed set through the OFAH store, or online at www.shopofah.org

Angler & Hunter Television was proudly sponsored by Mercury Marine, Lund Boats, Browning Canada, Winchester Ammunition, Yamaha ATV's, Shimano Canada and the OFAH, with support from Berkley, Excalibur Crossbow, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, Minn Kota, Humminbird Electronics, G.Loomis, Burris Optics, J.J. Stewart Motors, DT Power Sports, Steiner Optics and Cannon Downriggers.

