



## Let's welcome back an old friend in a new role

### Rob Hare

President

There is a saying that goes, "there is nothing more constant than change," and the O.F.A.H. is no exception to that truth. We are always striving to improve our conservation programs and the services we provide to O.F.A.H. members and clubs. We are proud of our history, but we know that we can't ever rest on our laurels. On behalf of your Board of Directors, I am pleased to share an important change.

After an extensive recruitment process, we welcomed a new member to the management team in October. Angelo Lombardo has accepted the position of Executive Manager, which he will hold while preparing to take over the role of Executive Director. The move will ensure a smooth transition for Angelo and the Federation when Mike Reader retires in late March, 2012, just over a year from now. Mike has served the O.F.A.H. superbly for over 20 years, the last ten as Executive Director, but about a year ago, Mike let the Executive and Board know that the time had come for him to leave the O.F.A.H. in order to enjoy more time with his family and the outdoor pursuits that he loves so much.



Your Board is delighted that Angelo has come on board, and I imagine that many of you are already aware of how lucky we are to have him. Angelo is well known to the fishing and hunting industry through his former role as District Business Manager with the Brunswick Corporation (more familiar to some of us as Lund Boats). For the past decade, Angelo has been managing a multi-million dollar budget with responsibility for all of Ontario. Long time members may recall that prior to his years at Brunswick, Angelo worked as the O.F.A.H. Special Events Representative, and through Lund, has continued to be involved with the O.F.A.H. Conservation Lottery and Angler & Hunter Television in a sponsorship role.

Angelo will be working closely with Mike and the management team over the coming months to get up to speed on all the many aspects of the Federation, while taking on some projects of his own. As a passionate angler and hunter, Angelo has a thorough understanding of the benefits and challenges of hunting and fishing today, which is an invaluable foundation for a job that entails representing outdoors enthusiasts to all levels of government, and a wide variety of public and private organizations and partners. I'm looking forward to working with Angelo as he brings his own unique strengths and his great sense of humor to the challenging role.

Angelo has told me that he considers it is a privilege to be working for the Federation again. He commented that even though much has changed over the past decade, the people that represent the organization are as committed and passionate as ever. Well said, Angelo!

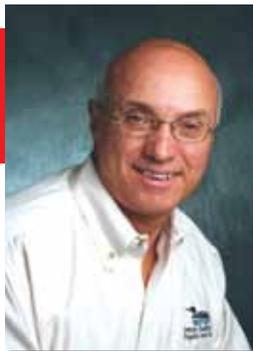
Already Angelo is accompanying Mike on engagements across the province. Soon, many of us will be gathered for our annual conference in Mississauga. I hope you will take the opportunity to introduce yourself, or to reconnect, with Angelo, who is looking forward to meeting and hearing from as many O.F.A.H. members as possible. Staff and volunteers alike, we count on your comments and feedback to help us serve you even better.

Once again, I extend my warmest O.F.A.H. welcome to Angelo and his family, and to all O.F.A.H. members and supporters, Merry Christmas and all the very best in 2011.

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## Algonquin land claim - what's the rush?

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

The Ontario government has instructed their negotiating team to work towards the signing of an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) on the Algonquin land claim by spring 2011, despite the fact that no public consultation has occurred, nor seems likely to occur before the signing. Even stakeholders like the O.F.A.H. who have been involved through the Committee of External Advisors will have no idea of what is contained in the AIP until after it is signed. Since the claim has been in existence for almost twenty years, and serious negotiations only started in 2009, the question to the province is why the rush?

The Algonquin land claim, the only comprehensive land claim in Ontario, encompasses a massive area of 14,000 square miles, or 36,000 kilometers in eastern Ontario. Included in the claim area are 35 provincial parks, 18 operational and 17 non-operational. Living within the claim area are 7,000 to 10,000 Algonquin who will benefit from the AIP and eventual Treaty that it will help to create. Their negotiators are engaged in ongoing talks with the province, with the aim of having the details of an AIP worked out by no later than next June.

However, for the 1.4 million non-aboriginals who live and work in the claim area, the 150,000 licensed hunters, those with crown land leases, recreational camps or cottages on local lakes, municipalities, tourists and others who will be affected in some way by what the Treaty contains, who speaks for them?

In the interests of doing what's right, and in the interests of fairness, it is critically important that the government take a step back and take the necessary time to engage in a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process that provides the public with a chance to be informed, and more importantly, a chance to be heard BEFORE an AIP is signed.

There is little point in debating whether or not the claim itself is valid, that ship sailed long ago. What is important is that during the negotiation process, that the views, concerns and issues raised by non-aboriginals be considered. Issues like conservation of the resource; fair sharing of these resources between aboriginal and non-aboriginal; and the ability of residents in the claim area to access parks, lakes and other traditional areas for outdoor activities. If the government truly represents all residents of Ontario, and they are custodians of Crown lands on behalf of all Ontarians, it is incumbent on the government to take the time to inform, to listen, and to act in the interests of all affected by the claim.

On a positive note, in early March we will be launching Angler & Hunter Radio, a great extension to our already broad communications reach. This exciting new show will broadcast on Saturdays and Sundays from Windsor to the Ottawa Valley, and to Thunder Bay in the north. I hope you'll give it a listen. I promise you it will keep Ontario listeners up to date on current outdoors news and issues such as the Algonquin land claim, the upcoming elk hunt, and much more.

I thank each and every O.F.A.H. member, volunteer, partner and supporter for your invaluable loyalty and commitment in 2010, and wish you the very best as we move into the New Year. Happy holidays!



## O.F.A.H. on board with Lake Simcoe efforts

### Rob Hare

President

I've been connected to Lake Simcoe all my life. Growing up in Keswick, on the south eastern shore, the lake has had a huge influence on my passion for fishing and the outdoors, and I imagine there are countless people just like me, who love the water because they grew up on Lake Simcoe. With 232 kilometers of shoreline, it's the largest lake on the Trent Severn Waterway and the fourth largest lake wholly situated in Ontario. It generates hundreds of millions of dollars for the economy through tourism, provides drinking water to eight municipalities, and supports an abundance of fish and wildlife.

All this bounty, however, comes at a cost. There is a real environmental impact from the homes, farms and industry that use Lake Simcoe. Aging and faulty septic systems, shoreline erosion, agricultural and other runoff, pollution, invasive species - even the activities of anglers, boaters, and snowmobilers - all put enormous stress on the lake. Thankfully, over the past several years municipal, provincial and federal governments have made substantial funding available to help clean up Lake Simcoe, and are partnering with organizations, including the O.F.A.H., conservation authorities, businesses, and other groups to put restoration and conservation projects in play.

Your Federation is helping in several ways. O.F.A.H. staff and members are offering their expertise through the Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee. The O.F.A.H./MNR Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP) is actively pitching in, as is the O.F.A.H.-hosted Community Stream Steward Program (CSSP). Then there is the O.F.A.H. member Beaverton and District Conservation Club and the Pefferlaw Anglers, who each operate hugely successful hatcheries to stock Lake Simcoe with walleye. For the first time this past spring, the Beaverton Club was able to show the MNR that walleye are returning to the Beaver River. O.F.A.H. Zone G, Muskies Canada, and a number of other partners are releasing muskie fall fingerlings (500 per year) into selected sites around the lake, with promising signs that the muskie may be spawning. Many of our clubs participate in Project Purple, and various clean ups, and sit on stewardship committees and Regional Forest Advisory teams, all of which impact water quality.

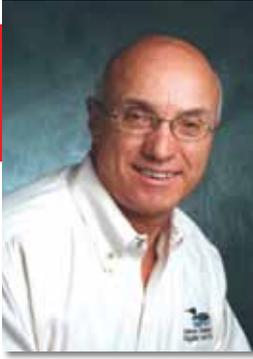
This fall, the CSSP was recognized by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) with a water conservation award for its efforts in the Bluff's Creek Assessment and Rehabilitation Program. Other initiatives include monitoring, bank stabilization, planting, debris removal, cattle fencing and alternate watering, and training workshops. CSSP has worked with landowners, co-op students, and several MNR stewardship rangers groups to complete projects in Orillia, Uxbridge, Pefferlaw, Innisfil, Leaksdale, and Brechin, and they have four new projects in the works.

The ISAP is also active on and around the lake. With assistance from Environment Canada's Lake Simcoe Clean Up Fund, and in partnership with the MNR, LSRCA, and others, we developed and piloted a state of the art, on-line tracking system for aquatic and terrestrial invasive species for Lake Simcoe, which will eventually go province-wide. Now anyone can report sightings of invasive species. To help build the system's database, the ISAP has been coordinating region-wide invasive plant road rallies in the Simcoe Basin. Volunteers are helping track the spread of invasive plants and the information collected is being shared with municipalities to help them prevent the accidental spread by road maintenance activities.

If you're one of 11,000 drivers who travel Highway 48 daily, you may have seen the "Stop Invasive Species" Highway signage which was produced in partnership with Ontario Wildlife Foundation, York Environmental Stewardship and the MNR. You may also have heard the ISAP public service announcements about the proper disposal of live bait that got lots of play throughout the region last winter. "Don't dump your bait" signs will be posted this winter along the lake's busy ice highway, and ISAP staff will be on the lake sharing information with anglers. Next spring and summer, staff will be visiting key boat launches and marinas within the basin to engage boaters in taking preventative measures to keep new invasive species out of the lake.

This past summer, some of the infamous "Hit Squad" (Invasive Species summer students) were based in Aurora, Orillia and Alliston. They attended community events, gave presentations and visited outdoor retailers to share information.

It gives me great pride to see and hear about the incredible work O.F.A.H. staff, clubs and individuals are doing across the province, but on a personal level, I am especially grateful for the efforts that are being made to restore Lake Simcoe to its full glory.



## It's not over for the long gun owner

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

Since the defeat of Bill C-391, the private member's bill that would have scrapped the long gun registry, I've heard a lot of flip flop jokes. There is nothing funny however, about the actions of six NDP MPs who disregarded the wishes of their constituents, (and according to at least 22 survey polls, the wishes of the majority of Canadians), and at the eleventh hour, flipped their vote from anti registry to pro registry.

The long gun registry is a long standing issue for firearms owners in this country, and certainly, it has been a major issue for your Federation since it was introduced by the Liberal government in 1995. Innocent lives had been taken by a madman and we all wanted something to be done. Yet, in their haste to assuage the grief and outrage of a nation, the government of the day chose to create a registry that tracks the law abiding – farmers, hunters, and target sports shooters instead of the violent criminal. We've been living with it ever since, and we've seen that, as we predicted, it has failed to live up to its promise.

Had the registry accomplished what it was designed to do, the shootings at Dawson College in 2006 would not have happened because the guns used in that tragedy were registered. Sadly, none of us is safer for the advent of the long gun registry, despite the money spent, and the anti-gun coalition's claims to the contrary. In fact, despite all the arguments by pro registry supporters, there is no definitive/factual evidence to demonstrate that the long gun registry has saved lives.

I understand a devastated parent wanting something to be done to curb gun crime, but our politicians can and must do better than the long gun registry.

Last November, in support of their constituents' wishes, twelve NDP MPs voted to repeal the long gun registry at Second Reading of Bill C-391 in Parliament, some even made strong public statements. Last month, six NDP MPs, five of whom hail from Northern Ontario, were free to vote with their constituents and chose not to do so. As a consequence of their actions, the long gun registry will stay in place - for now.

Your Federation has worked tirelessly over the past year and a half to support Conservative MP Candice Hoepfner's private members bill which would have scrapped the long gun registry. We launched an online petition that garnered 46,000 signatures and was presented in Parliament. (Thank you to the many O.F.A.H. members that took the time to gather pages of printed signatures as well.) We issued many media releases and championed the fight on a dozen TV and radio appearances. We wrote letters, and met repeatedly with politicians and other stakeholders. Several of our O.F.A.H. member clubs also pitched in to host town hall meetings in key NDP ridings in the final days. It was a lot, but it wasn't quite enough.

So, now what? Now your Federation stands by its commitment to you and to legal, law abiding firearms owners across the province. The O.F.A.H. is opposed to the long gun registry, a position that hasn't changed in fifteen years because in all that time, the registry hasn't been proven to work. We believe there are better ways to achieve greater public safety, fiscal responsibility and accountability, such as creating a prohibited offenders registry, more "Guns and Gangs" task forces, and improved border security to stop the flow of illegal firearms (mostly handguns) into Canada from the United States.

Whether it takes months or years, we will continue to fight for alternatives to the long gun registry. The sooner it's scrapped, the sooner we can put our energies to work creating legislation that works.

*For an indepth look at what happened with the long gun registry and what is next, read our Q & A with Greg Farrant O.F.A.H. Manager, Government Affairs and Policy, on page 5.*

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## CWD: a ticking time bomb for Ontario wildlife

### Rob Hare

President

For years now your Federation has pressed the government of Ontario to take definitive action to prevent Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) from entering Ontario. CWD is a fatal brain disease that attacks cervids, such as white-tailed deer, elk, mule deer, moose and potentially woodland caribou, and has already wreaked havoc on populations in Saskatchewan, Alberta and fifteen US states. Despite independent research showing that game farms are by far the most likely source of the disease, the provincial and federal ministries of agriculture have yet to create and enforce stringent regulations governing these operations, or even better, to implement a complete ban of farmed deer and elk with compensation for operators.

The O.F.A.H. supports regulation that has the ability to limit the introduction of CWD into the wild population. The Ministry of Natural Resources recently developed a regulation to prohibit the use of natural attractants, which are derived from game farm animals, largely raised in the US. Their original intention was to implement the regulation this year, despite O.F.A.H. concerns that retailers would not have an opportunity to access alternative products and be left with unsellable stock. An unforeseen delay in implementing the regulation has provided retailers with the necessary lead time that O.F.A.H. argued for in the first place, with the ban to likely take effect in 2011. Newer synthetic products that pose no risk to wildlife will replace natural attractants, which is something we support, as well as the continued ability to use the tarsal gland from a personally harvested deer.

The O.F.A.H. and Canadian Wildlife Federation recently met to coordinate efforts around CWD. Staff from both organizations will be working together in the months ahead to bring this issue to the attention of federal and provincial ministers to press for the elimination of game farms for deer and elk.

Since the 1990's, the O.F.A.H. has been urging the provincial government to take action to prevent the introduction of CWD into Ontario, with few tangible results. We have repeatedly pressed the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to phase out game farms in this province, with full compensation for those farmers affected. As an interim measure only, we continue to advocate for double fencing around game farm perimeters to limit escape and prevent nose-to-nose contact, both of which can potentially spread the disease to wild populations. Neither measure has yet to be acted upon, despite the progression of the disease to new US states every year.

If governments care about our valuable wildlife populations, they need to step up and take action to address the threat posed by this disease, and the devastation it could wreak on our deer, elk and moose populations. Agriculture Minister Carol Mitchell and the provincial government will have much to answer for if CWD is found in Ontario on their watch. (It should be noted that the minister refused our request for a meeting.) How will they defend their failure to act when the primary vectors of the disease are known and have been for some time, preventative measures have been identified, and the consequences of CWD in Ontario are readily apparent from both an ecological and economic standpoint? The lives of tens of thousands of animals are at stake. Not only is the disease highly contagious and always fatal, but other means used to try to control the spread of the disease in affected jurisdictions have failed.

The recently passed Animal Health Act provides the basis for change, if the province chooses to use it.

To their credit, past MNR Minister David Ramsay prohibited "high fence hunting" on game farms and did his very best to get the attention of his counterpart in agriculture, Minister Leona Dombrowsky on this matter. Current MNR Minister Linda Jeffrey is poised to ban the use of natural attractants, a positive step, but we hope that she will also do her best to engage Minister Mitchell into acting on CWD. Although on the whole MNR staff may have done as much as they can to protect our wildlife within the limits of their jurisdiction, they failed to respond appropriately to the escape of farmed red deer in the North Bay area two years ago. CWD is a problem that can only be solved by eliminating game farms for deer and elk. The provincial government has done a lot of talking about protecting Ontario's biodiversity, but so far has only implemented band aid solutions.

On page 10, you'll find information about the MNR's 2010 CWD monitoring program. I urge all deer hunters in the designated Wildlife Management Areas to participate fully in the program, which involves providing a sample of harvested deer for testing. In the meantime, don't miss an opportunity to educate your local MPP about this issue.



## Partners make it possible

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

Summers around head office are always busy, and this one has been no exception. Unlike many businesses that slow down over the hottest months, we ramp it up. From early June to late August, the office is bursting with eager, hard working summer students who put in long hours counting Atlantic salmon, planting trees, monitoring invasive species, leading youngsters in outdoor camps and giving tours of our new O.F.A.H./Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre. Thankfully, their wages are subsidized through government grants and the generosity of project partners. On our own, we simply couldn't afford to staff so many seasonal positions, and that would be a great loss. In addition to helping the cause of conservation, these young people are gaining invaluable on-the-job experience, and as they are most certainly our future fish and wildlife managers, we all benefit.

Each and every one of our partners has my sincere respect and appreciation for supporting O.F.A.H. programs and projects. In today's society, which is increasingly disconnected from the outdoors and even further removed from the natural food chain, it isn't always easy to sponsor an organization that promotes hunting and fishing. I would like to recognize each and every one of our supporters, but I haven't the print space or the memory to capture them all. Instead, I encourage you to make note of the numerous sponsors mentioned throughout each issue of *HOTLINE*, in media releases and various publications, on our websites ([www.ofah.org](http://www.ofah.org), [www.bringbackthesalmon.ca](http://www.bringbackthesalmon.ca), [www.invadingspecies.com](http://www.invadingspecies.com), [www.hfhc.ca](http://www.hfhc.ca), [www.ahtv.com](http://www.ahtv.com) and others), on *Angler & Hunter Television*, on our vehicles, at our Heritage Centre, and at the many O.F.A.H. displays and exhibits at events held throughout the year across the province. Our partners number in the hundreds, and each and every one makes a valuable contribution to our conservation efforts.

I simply must name our oldest and closest partner—the Ministry of Natural Resources. From our earliest days, 83 years ago, we have worked with the dedicated staff of the ministry (and its predecessors) to bring about important fish and wildlife policy and management improvements to this resource-rich province. On countless initiatives, we have supported, and been supported by, the province. Yes, over the years there have been issues on which we haven't seen eye to eye, and yes, I imagine there will be more in the future, but on balance the staff from both organizations have shared far more achievements than differences. I fully expect that we'll continue to work together to move the conservation yardsticks forward in the years to come.

Of course, no partner is more valuable than our O.F.A.H. members. Time and time again individuals, member clubs, and O.F.A.H. zones have stepped up to support our education, outreach and conservation work, and we are always mindful of how these dollars are spent. That said, we couldn't deliver the number or the scope of programs that we do without the funding support of outside sources. Various levels of government, nonprofit environmental organizations, philanthropic foundations, the outdoor industry and even unrelated businesses (including a more than one million dollar contribution from an Australian vintner) help ensure that important projects and programs get the backing they need.

Whether we're the lead partner or playing a supporting role, your Federation is proud to help further our mandate of fish and wildlife conservation. There will never be enough time, money, or capacity to address each and every conservation issue this province faces, but we will continue to partner with others who have similar goals and resolve to conserve and enhance our natural resources.

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## Fishing is making a comeback!

### Rob Hare

President

Maybe I am just imagining it, but it seems to me that fishing is showing up more and more in mainstream media these days. I've seen TV ads with anglers fly fishing in streams, families fishing off docks, and solitary souls happily anchored in the middle of their favorite lake. I couldn't tell you what they're selling - for me it's all about the fact that something I love to do is finally being pitched as a great outdoor activity. It's about time fishing made a comeback.

Hopefully, the ads I'm noticing are reflecting a general increased interest in recreational fishing. If more people take up fishing, they'll be connected with our lakes and rivers, and hopefully they'll become invested in the health of our waterways, and by extension our natural resources. We need to welcome these prospective anglers and do everything we can to help reverse the past decade's decline in Canadians who fish.

This summer has been a particularly good one for providing newcomers with opportunities to give fishing a try, or to welcome those who have strayed. After years of requests by the Ontario Family Fishing Weekend (OFFW) Committee, the province agreed to extend the OFFW initiative to nine days, and align it with National Fishing Week, July 3-11. This makes good sense, from a logistical and promotional perspective. Why not allow the marketing efforts of each of the campaigns to work double duty? The Canadian Sportfishing Industry Foundation does a great job promoting National Fishing Week across the country, and the OFFW steering committee, which is headed by O.F.A.H. staff, also works hard to get the word out.

For nine days, which included two weekends, anglers didn't need a license to venture out. Canadian residents could pick up a rod and reel and try their luck in any body of water in Ontario where fishing is allowed. Making it even easier were the more than 80 official OFFW events, held from Algonquin Park to Wheatley Harbour. I know that many hard working O.F.A.H. member clubs and individuals were involved in these events in their communities. Thank you all for a job well done. You provided thousands of kids and their families with the chance to do something fun and wholesome, and you may well have sparked the interest of a future avid angler.

As you'll read on page seven, the long-running O.F.A.H. TackleShare program is proud to welcome Ontario Power Generation (OPG) as its lead sponsor. What fantastic news for this rod and reel loaner program that stretches out across the province with a simple concept - take away the barriers to fishing by lending kids and adult novices the gear they need to give fishing a try. We are excited about OPG's support, and believe that their "stay clear stay safe" message works well with our conservation focus. More than 40 provincial parks are participating as loaner sites, so be sure to look for O.F.A.H. TackleShare signage if you visit a park on your travels this summer. There are lots of other loaner sites as well, so check out the TackleShare website ([www.tackleshare.com](http://www.tackleshare.com)) to find a participating library or community club near you.

For those of you already aware of the al"lure" of fishing, don't forget to submit your eligible entries to the Ontario Angler Awards website.

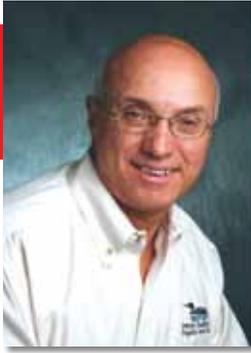
Whether you take part in O.F.A.H. activities, or just cast a line off the dock, I hope you'll take the opportunity to get a little fishing in this summer. It doesn't matter how big or small the catch; fishing connects us to the outdoors and to our natural bounty, and that is a great thing.

Friends, if you're in the neighborhood this month, don't bother dropping by the house. I've gone fishing.

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## Successes offset by tax grab

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

I've been an O.F.A.H. member for a long time, and an avid angler and hunter pretty much my entire life. I believe that hunting and fishing are a privilege. I understand that if we want to be able to continue fishing and hunting, and hope to pass those traditions on to our grandchildren, we must collectively respect our resources and practice wise management. I fully support provincial licensing fees and willingly pay for my tags as my contribution to fish and wildlife management, but I take great exception to the application of an additional eight per cent tax to Outdoor cards and fishing and hunting licenses simply to feed the general tax coffers.

Since 1995, revenue generated by provincial hunting and fishing licenses has gone exclusively to the Special Purpose Account (SPA) for fish and wildlife management. In fact, for too many years now, the funds from the SPA has paid for more than two thirds of that program's budget, instead of the equal sharing formula that was supposed to apply when the SPA was created. (The provincial Environmental Commissioner raised this inequity in his 2007 audit of the MNR.) Given the level of our contributions, the provincial government has wisely exempted licenses from the provincial retail tax—until now. Enter the HST and a hefty new tax that will provide no added benefit to the already underfunded management of our natural resources.

Drivers licenses are exempt, but hunters and anglers supporting crucial wildlife management must pay. Campsites are also now taxed. Our repeated attempts to get satisfactory answers for these highly questionable decisions have not been successful. Maybe your MPP will answer to you. Ask them why hunting and fishing licenses aren't exempt, and why the millions collected under the HST can't be directed to the Special Purpose Account when the federal government returns the funds through transfer payments to the province?

Taxes aside, there is good news on the elk restoration front. On June 25, the Ministry of Natural Resources posted the province's elk management plan (which I have often written about in this column) on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry and it looks good. After much debate over what, in our opinion, was a misguided regulation to allow kill permits, we believe that together we have arrived at a workable solution. Discussions will continue in the coming months with the goal of a 2011 hunt, beginning in the North Hastings-Bancroft area where the elk have thrived and are causing isolated problems for farmers there.

Earlier this summer I visited Quebec to attend the annual meeting of our conservation affiliate, the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF). You should take great pride, as I do, in the fact that several individuals nominated by the O.F.A.H. for CWF national awards were chosen from among entries submitted from across the country. Phil Morlock of Shimano, a long-time friend of the Federation and Chair of the Outdoor Caucus Association of Canada, received the Roderick Haig-Brown Award for his contributions to the sport of angling and wise use of Canada's recreational fisheries. Two of our youngest members, Mike Evers Jr. of Innisfil and Tori Edwards of Victoria near Georgian Bay, were jointly honored with the Youth Conservation Award for their dedication to conservation.

Clear across the country in Whitehorse, Yukon, outdoor writers received National Communications Awards for several articles that appeared in our magazine, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS (OOD)*. The awards were presented during the annual conference of the Outdoor Writers of Canada in June. Magazine Column, Feature Fishing, Feature Hunting, and Feature Other all went to writers for work published in *OOD*. I know that you join me in congratulating John Kerr and his team for consistently setting the bar high and delivering an outstanding outdoors magazine.

August is approaching quickly, and the long hot days of fishing will soon give way to early morning waterfowl hunts and making plans for the annual deer or moose hunt. These are time-honored, treasured pastimes that we look forward to every year, and that with wise management and careful stewardship of our natural resources, we can enjoy for many years to come. Judging by the accolades O.F.A.H. members are receiving at the national level, our ongoing commitment to conservation is strong, and we consider it an honor to act as the voice of anglers and hunters.



## Let's get back to focusing on fish and wildlife

### Rob Hare

President

I have been a member of the O.F.A.H. for more than twenty years now, and during that time, I've seen lots of highs and lows in our dealings with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). Since the Ministry's realignment six months ago, and the appointment of a new minister, our relationship might be characterized as in a state of flux.

When the MNR introduced a new organizational chart, we made no secret of the fact that we were concerned by the loss of the Fish and Wildlife branch as we knew it, the part of the Ministry that anglers and hunters most identified with. We were assured, however, that the changes would be minor and would improve the delivery of services. So, in the spirit of cooperation, and in view of our many shared programs and partnerships, we decided to give the MNR time to prove that the changes would be as positive as promised. Unfortunately, we're still waiting.

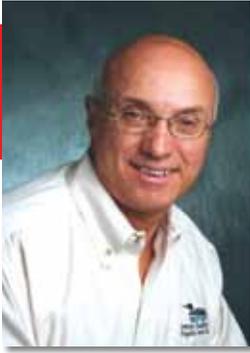
As the province's largest conservation-based organization and the voice of Ontario's anglers and hunters, the wise management of our fish and wildlife, forests and parks, and our access to those resources are our top priorities. Given the fact that fishing and hunting licenses and fees pay for two-thirds of fish and wildlife programs through the Special Purpose Account (SPA), and that we volunteer tens of thousands of hours to conservation projects every year, we deserve to be at the table on a wide range of resource-related issues. Our fish and wildlife staff are highly qualified to provide knowledgeable, informed opinion, and our advisory committees are field experienced and committed to conservation. The Ministry has been, and continues to be, well-served by our participation on many initiatives, and if we don't see eye to eye on every issue, we'll stick with it until we can find some common ground.

I understand that Minister Jeffrey has a broad portfolio, and that she and her staff must divide their time over a number of matters. That said, she has now spent the better part of her first six months in office dealing with two pieces of legislation, the first being the Far North Act, (which we were not invited to participate in as a stakeholder, but will continue to monitor in the interests of our members) and the second, the *Species At Risk Act* (SARA). To my mind, far too much of the MNR's human and financial resources have been dedicated to SARA, at a real cost to the Ministry's other programs, which have been compromised to balance the budget. What is even more frustrating is that the provincial legislation was not even necessary, given that we already have the federal Endangered Species Act. From the outset of the draft legislation, the O.F.A.H. argued that a provincial act would be redundant and would conflict with the federal act, and sure enough, we are already seeing that play out. The two levels of government have implemented contradictory regulations for species such as lake sturgeon and snapping turtle. I really hope that we can engage the Minister on this and other outstanding issues over the coming months.

On a positive note, I was delighted to attend the stocking of the two millionth Atlantic salmon into the Credit River at Belfountain in May, and was thrilled to hear Minister Jeffrey announce the rebuild of Normandale near Simcoe. I read it as a renewal of the Ministry's commitment to the province's fish culture program, something the O.F.A.H. has been pushing for, and a significant financial investment by the province. A modern facility at Normandale will provide great benefits to our shared initiative, the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, which is arguably the most ambitious biodiversity project happening in this province today. Who can top the restoration of a species that has been locally extinct for over a hundred years?

Another positive announcement in the fisheries section is the extension of the summer Ontario Family Fishing Weekend to nine full days beginning this year. From July 3 through 11, Canadian citizens are free to fish without a license, which makes it a great time to take your spouse, a friend or neighbour out during one of the two available weekends, or even for an hour after work. If you belong to a club, or have a willing group, consider hosting an event in your community. I help out with the winter Pefferlaw OFFW event and it is truly one of the highlights of my year.

The O.F.A.H. represents 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters, and 670 member clubs, all of whom are passionate about the outdoors, about our natural resources and about their opportunities to spend time outside. I urge the Minister to see us as valuable and hardworking allies who are ready and willing to tackle the challenges that face us in the future.



## The truth about the long gun registry

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

Your Federation works hard on issues that threaten our heritage rights to fish and hunt. We aren't afraid to fight for what we believe is the right course of action, and we don't shy away from calling it like it is when it comes to bad policy or ineffective legislation. In the case of the long gun registry, we have done just that for more than a decade. We've repeatedly appealed to lawmakers, law enforcement agencies and politicians to reconsider their indefensible support of the ineffective and wasteful registry that has never been proven to save lives. Instead of the misinformation so often heard from the other side, we have provided *facts* to prove that there are far better ways to improve public safety and fight crime.

On May 26, we had the opportunity to present our case to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in support of Bill C-391, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (repeal of long-gun registry)* authored by Manitoba M.P. Candice Hoepfner. Here are just a few of the facts we shared with the Standing Committee:

- A report co-authored by the Coalition for Gun Control states that two-thirds of the firearms in Canada, mostly handguns, are smuggled in from the US. In fact, the Vancouver Police Service has suggested that 97 percent of the firearms they encounter have been smuggled in to the country and do not reside in any database. Illegally obtained firearms will never be registered, nor will they be traceable until used in a crime, and they won't show up when a police officer checks the Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line (CFRO).
- The Firearms Act *does not require* that firearms be stored at the same address to which they have been registered. This is problematic for officers who rely on the registry when answering a call, and receive a report of "no firearms present." This would have been the case in Mayerthorpe, where four officers were tragically killed by a man who used three nonregistered and one borrowed registered firearm. Equally, in the case of Dawson College, all the firearms used by the criminal were registered but that did not prevent the appalling shooting.
- Police in several American states have found that a prohibited offenders registry (much like our sex offenders registry), has had more impact on reducing gun crime than chasing all firearms owners for paper infractions. With 400,000 similar offenders in Canada, including those on probation, a prohibited offenders registry that tracks those most likely to commit a gun crime is a better use of our financial resources.
- The suggestion that police consult the long gun registry 10,000 times a day is highly misleading. That number reflects *all hits* to the entire CFRO, including name, address and phone number checks and license verifications. Actual firearms registrations checks total no more than two dozen a day nationwide, according to information contained in the November, 2009 Report of the Firearms Commissioner. In 2003, registry specific inquiries represented 8.2 percent and by 2008 they accounted for only 2.4 percent of all inquiries.
- Claims that the registry has resulted in reductions in murders and suicides are not accurate. Mandatory long gun registration was introduced in 2003, yet spousal murders of all types had been decreasing since the 1970's. Homicide rates declined from the mid-1970's to 2002, then Statistics Canada reported that, despite the presence of the long gun registry, homicides with a firearm have escalated by 24 percent since 2002, reflecting the use of handguns and related gang activity.

The Standing Committee held three days of hearings, before deliberating on possible proposed changes to the bill. Despite having all of the information I've outlined here and much more, the Committee narrowly chose to send the bill back to the House of Commons with a negative recommendation. In other words, they refused to respect the wishes of the Canadian people to bring the bill back unamended and instead called for it to be dropped all together. This play, orchestrated by Liberal M.P. Mark Holland, Ajax-Pickering, and NDP M.P. Joe Comartin, Windsor-Tecumseh, was engineered to undermine a free and democratic vote on the Bill in the House of Commons. At the time of this writing, the outcome of the upcoming vote by our elected members of parliament is not known. Stay tuned.

*Video coverage of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security regarding Bill C-391 was posted on the CPAC website as we went to press.*

*To view the O.F.A.H. presentation by Greg Farrant, Manager of Government Affairs and Policy on May 26, go to [www.cpac.ca](http://www.cpac.ca) and type "committee" in the search box of the "Video-on-Demand" section.*

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## Atlantic salmon program reaching another milestone

### Rob Hare

President

On May 20th, we celebrated another major milestone in our effort to bring Atlantic salmon back to Lake Ontario. The Honourable Linda Jeffrey, Minister of Natural Resources accepted the invitation to release the ceremonial two millionth Atlantic salmon into the Credit River, and she was joined by many partners and supporters of the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program (LOASRP), including a group of enthusiastic school children.

If all goes according to plan, that ceremonial fish, along with more than 500,000 fry released this spring, will spend a year in the river before making their way to Lake Ontario to grow and mature. Eventually, the adult fish will return to the site of their release to spawn, and their young will start the cycle again. Over time, the goal is to create a self-sustaining population of Atlantic salmon in Lake Ontario and its tributaries. Spawning salmon have already been observed, an excellent indication that the effort is succeeding.

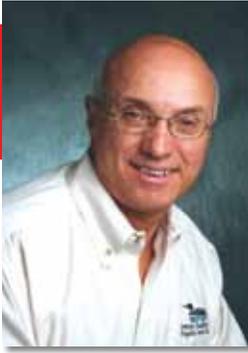
Since 2006, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (O.F.A.H.), the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and more than 50 partners have been working to stock Atlantic salmon into three primary Lake Ontario tributaries; the Credit River, Duffins Creek and Cobourg Brook. The LOASRP is one of the largest fresh water conservation efforts in North America, with sponsors that have made news headlines for their environmental leadership. Australia's Banrock Station Wines, has contributed an amazing \$250,000 to the program annually, \$1.25 million dollars over five years. It is their largest environmental commitment outside Australia. Closer to home, the LCBO has contributed \$50,000 annually over five years.

The Fish For Ever Foundation (formerly Fishing Forever) has sponsored Fleming College to enable students in the fish and wildlife program to raise hundreds of thousands of Atlantic salmon at the college's hatchery in Lindsay. The Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association has also provided important industry support. Several Conservation Authorities have provided valuable in-kind support, and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority Foundation recently allocated part of the proceeds of a major Earth Day fundraising event in Pickering to the Atlantic salmon program. We couldn't ask for better partners.

Come 2011, the first phase of this 20-year initiative will conclude and we'll move into Phase two, which will bring exciting additions to the program. The province has committed to begin a significant rebuild of the Normandale Fish Culture Station, which will enhance its capability to provide Atlantic salmon production stock. New tributaries will be added, increasing not only the opportunity to stock salmon, but also the chance to engage the public in this historic conservation effort. The classroom hatchery program has the potential to reach thousands more children, and give them a better understanding of how they can help improve their environment.

It will take several more years of production, stocking, research and monitoring before the Atlantic salmon populations we are stocking today will be ready to take over on their own, but already, the program is showing impressive, measurable success.

The United Nations has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity. It seems fitting that we make every effort to bring Atlantic salmon, once a common sight in Lake Ontario and its tributaries, back to our waters for this and future generations to enjoy.



## Long gun registry on last legs?

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

Throughout May, the O.F.A.H. and others are appearing before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Bill C-391, an act to repeal the long gun registry. The Committee began hearing from witnesses on May 4, 2010, and will conclude that portion of the debate on May 27, 2010. In total, 33 witnesses will appear, roughly half in favor of the bill, the others opposed to the legislation.

To date, the Committee hearings have been extremely volatile, with opposition members on the Committee, none of whom voted in favor of the bill last fall, attempting to hijack the process, or at the very least, making things difficult for witnesses, including the bill's sponsor, Manitoba MP Candice Hoepfner. Witnesses still to be heard from include Greg Farrant, O.F.A.H. Manager, Government Relations, Canadian Shooting Sports Association, academic firearms expert Dr. Gary Mauser, and the Saskatchewan Federation of Police Officers, all who support the bill, and the Coalition for Gun Control and the Canadians Association of Chiefs of Police who oppose the bill.

Further complicating the hearings on the bill are recent decisions by Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff. Mr. Ignatieff has announced what he believes is a 'compromise', that among other things, would see the registry continue, but failure to register would no longer be a criminal offense. He claims that this would remove the main opposition to the registry by legal, law abiding firearms owners, and satisfy the concerns of rural Canada. Not only is the suggested compromise unacceptable to the O.F.A.H. and the majority of firearms owner in Canada, it has been found to be unconstitutional. So much for compromise.

The second step taken by Mr. Ignatieff was to announce that all members of the Liberal caucus will be expected to vote against the bill on Third Reading. In other words, the eight Liberal MP's who supported the bill last fall, are being told to vote with the party against the bill, or else. The loss of those eight votes, while problematic, will not give the opposition enough votes to kill the bill, as long as NDP leader Jack Layton sticks to his promise of allowing a free vote for his members.

It's fascinating to hear the argument from opposition members in committee that because the registry only costs taxpayers a few million a year now, as opposed to the almost \$2 billion in cumulative costs by 2012, it would be foolish to scrap it. How is that a measurable indicator of its success? The Auditor General of Canada found that the system neither saves lives nor enhances public safety. What sense does it make to continue using taxpayers money to prop up a failed system, no matter what the cost?

Despite the recent media attention afforded Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair in his rants against Bill C-391, many front line officers across Canada tell us that the registry doesn't work, and that they would not trust their lives to it, despite what Blair says. The registry is riddled with inconsistencies and errors, and any officer who believes the information provided to them from the long gun registry is placing their life at risk.

The O.F.A.H. supports licensing of individuals to own a firearm, mandatory firearms safety training, safe storage and transportation regulations, with the ability to refuse or revoke licenses if and when appropriate. Our fight is, and always has been, solely with the long gun registry that requires each long gun to be registered whenever it is purchased or traded. It is merely a list, which is riddled with errors and inconsistencies, and does nothing to protect the public. It targets law abiding citizens instead of lawbreakers and does nothing to help track the over 400,000 individuals who are prohibited from owning a firearm by virtue of past crimes and convictions.

A decade into this fight, one of the strongest critics of Bill C-391, the Coalition for Gun Control, continues to demonstrate that they still don't know the difference between licensing and registration, as evidenced in a recent article in the Hill Times where they suggested that the REGISTRATION system was responsible for refusing or revoking 23,000 licenses. The Coalition's fundamental misunderstanding is disturbing, given their continued support for a badly flawed system they don't even comprehend.

At press time, it is unclear when the bill will return to the House of Commons for Third Reading. If all goes well, it will be voted on in late June, but more likely, the opposition parties will stall the vote until early this fall. It is critical that if you support Bill C-391 that you contact your local MP, no matter which party they represent, and let them know that you expect them to vote their conscience and support the bill. The vote, whenever it occurs, will be close. After over a decade of fighting to rid ourselves of this noose around the necks of legal, law abiding firearms owners, hunters, farmers and recreational sport shooters, it is imperative that we not give up the fight with the finish line in sight.



## Proud time to be an O.F.A.H. member

### Rob Hare

President

More than 400 members attended the 82nd O.F.A.H. Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference this year, a great turnout for a terrific event. I came away with a better understanding of important issues, such as the Algonquin land claim negotiation, the listing of sturgeon as a species at risk, and the impact on anglers and hunters of the new organizational structure of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).

Candice Hoepfner, MP for Portage-Lisgar, Manitoba and author of Bill C-391, an act to repeal the long gun registry, was an engaging keynote speaker, as she walked us through the crucial next steps for her bill, which if passed, would finally relieve legal, law abiding firearms owners across Canada of the costly, inefficient and burdensome long gun registry. Firearms owners need to make sure that our MP's know that we support this bill and that we expect our political representatives to do the same.

It is a long-standing tradition to have the Minister of Natural Resources attend the conference to give a presentation, do a Question and Answer session, and present the MNR Youth Conservation Award. Linda Jeffrey, the new Minister, agreed to two of the three, but begged off the Q and A this year, with a commitment to return and answer questions next year. While she offered no new programs or financial support in her speech, Ms. Jeffrey did confirm that an Environmental Assessment for wild turkey will begin on Manitoulin in the coming months and that her ministry is aware that "moose hunters don't want to grow old waiting for a tag." Unfortunately, she also referenced the fact that farmers will shortly have an opportunity to apply for elk kill permits, an overreaction on the part of the Ministry that undercuts the elk restoration program that the O.F.A.H. and many others have worked long and hard to achieve. She also confirmed that the new Harmonized Sales Tax will, in fact, apply to outdoor licenses, (which means a price increase come July), but said that despite the extra tax, "the revenue from licences will continue to be directed into the Special Purpose Account".

Dr. Randall Eaton's talk, A Celebration of Hunting, was definitely a highlight for me, and judging by the warm reception he received, for everyone else in the room. Dr. Eaton's insights into the role of hunting as a right of male adolescent passage were powerful, as were his ideas for promoting hunting in an increasingly nonhunting culture, and his views on how we can increase recruitment. We will be looking to build on some of his ideas in the future.

I took in the Toronto Sportsmen's Show on Saturday afternoon, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Attendance figures have proven that the move to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre was the right one. The larger venue offers real potential to grow, and your Federation experienced that this year, with record membership sales at the show. In both the O.F.A.H. fishing and hunting hall booths, staff were kept busy meeting a large crowd of interested anglers and hunters, many of whom took the opportunity to join the O.F.A.H. while enjoying the show.

As information-packed as the conference was, it covered only a small fraction of the work your O.F.A.H. Board of Directors, zones, advisory committees, member clubs, individuals, and head office staff were involved in during 2009. The O.F.A.H. 2009 Annual Report provides an in-depth summary of all the programs and projects your federation is involved in on your behalf, and is now available online at [www.ofah.org/report](http://www.ofah.org/report). You can choose to view the full report, or just one section. Feel free to share the URL with others too.

I want to finish with a few words about the new O.F.A.H./Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre, which is truly incredible. It is equal parts entertaining and educational, and 100 percent inspiring, not only to anglers and hunters, but to anyone with an appreciation for our natural resources. Important fish and wildlife conservation messages are going to be shared through this venue for years to come, which is good news for outdoors enthusiasts. If you do nothing else this summer, I urge you to plan a visit to the centre, and bring along your children, grandchildren, friends, and club associates. You'll be glad you did.



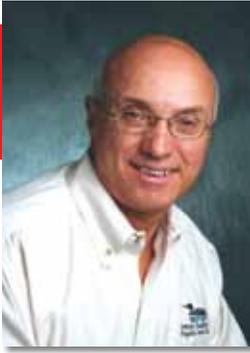
The O.F.A.H. 2009 Annual Report is available at [www.ofah.org/report](http://www.ofah.org/report)

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## FMZ 17 regulations can work for all

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

In January 2010, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) introduced new Fisheries Management Zone 17 (FMZ) regulations, which for the first time in eighty years provides for an all year fishery in the Kawarthas for yellow perch, black crappie, northern pike, and sunfish. Sport fishing licence holders are able to catch and possess a limit of 300 sunfish, 30 of which may be greater than 18cm (7.1 inches). Conservation license holders have a possession limit of 15 sunfish, any size.

The change came about after extensive input, most notably from the FMZ 17 Advisory Council, one of three pilot councils formed in 2008, as part of the new provincial Ecological Framework for Fisheries Management. The council is comprised of several stakeholder groups, including the O.F.A.H., which is highly supportive of the changes. The overharvest of larger sunfish can contribute to the stunted growth of populations, due to the opportunity for smaller sunfish to spawn, and therefore, devote more energy to spawning rather than growth. Managing for quality-sized sunfish means incorporating regulations to protect a number of larger sunfish from being harvested. We also support the harvest limit of 300 sunfish per angler, as it regulates sunfish populations.

The O.F.A.H. supports the creation of a year round fishery for these species because it allows for greater angler opportunities and will contribute to the recruitment of new anglers. In many ways, ice fishing is not only easily accessible, but may require less financial investment on the part of the beginning angler. Winter fishing also makes a great family activity and will provide additional economic return for local bait shops and tackle stores, at a time of year when business is traditionally slower in many cottage and tourist areas of the province. In fact, the benefit to local businesses and area residents was one of the key factors behind the Ministry's decision to move to year round fishing in the zone.

Unfortunately, a small group of tourist operators in the Kawarthas have suggested that the recent regulation change to FMZ 17 will cause a decline in U.S. tourists on lakes within FMZ 17, and on Rice Lake in particular. At the heart of their disagreement with the change is the new possession limit of 300 sunfish per angler, which they believe will jeopardize the fishery and hurt their business during the summer months. They have suggested instead that the limit be raised to 500 with the fishery restricted to six months a year, an idea founded not on science, but on self-interest.

Based on statistics from the 2005 Survey of Recreational Fishing in Canada produced by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, there were 1.4 million licenced anglers in Ontario (not including those under 16 and over 65 who are not required to be licenced). Of these, two thirds were Ontario residents, the rest from out of province or from the United States. Licence fees alone contributed almost \$39 million to the province's Special Purpose Account (SPA). Rice Lake is the sixth largest fishery in the province, and the Kawartha Lakes region is second only to Lake Huron in terms of popularity for recreational fishing. With the addition of year round fishing in the Kawarthas, these numbers are expected to grow significantly. The economic benefit to local businesses is also significant, with the Rice Lake fishery worth at least \$50 million.

The creation of a year round fishery in the Kawarthas was a long time coming, and was the result of extensive hearings through the FMZ council. It also recognizes a new brand of tourism, which attracts as many Ontarians to the area as it does those from out of province. Depending solely on the influx of American anglers, particularly at a time of economic uncertainty, ignores the huge potential of the market here at home. Witness the success of the Bridgenorth Winter Panfish Festival on Chemong Lake this past January, which attracted 1,000 participants during Ontario Family Fishing Weekend, 600 of these being children experiencing ice fishing for the first time. What better way to bring families together, to enjoy time in the great outdoors, and introduce a new generation to the joys of fishing.

Aside from Lake Simcoe, Rice Lake is one of the area's most notable destinations for anglers, and the ability to fish year round will, in our view, enhance this reputation and bring more business to the area. Over time, we hope that the small number of tourist operators on Rice Lake who are seeking to derail this great new opportunity will come to see it not as a detriment, but as an important recreational and economic benefit for all.



## Keeping the invaders at bay

### Rob Hare

President

Asian carp have been getting a lot of press lately. These invasive species (actually bighead and silver carp, but referred to collectively as Asian carp) are making media headlines in the US and Canada, because their migration into Lake Michigan could spell disaster for the fisheries resources of the Great Lakes.

Our invading species biologist tells me that Asian carp were brought over from China in the 1970's to the southern US. Flooding in the early 1990's allowed the fish to escape into the Mississippi River and since then, the carp have been migrating northward, with devastating consequences to native fish along much of the way. Our best, and likely only defence, is to prevent Asian carp from ever making its way into Lake Michigan.

Last fall, our O.F.A.H./MNR Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP) manager was invited to join the Canadian team (led by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada with Ministry of Natural Resources participation) that headed to Chicago to help with the international Asian Carp response effort. Over 40 agencies, and 400 people were involved in preventing Asian carp from advancing, while the electric barrier in the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal that keeps invasives out of Lake Michigan, was down for essential maintenance. It remains to be seen whether legal actions, now underway by Michigan, several US states, and the province of Ontario, will be successful in getting the canal closed permanently, which would cut off the primary route enabling carp and other invasive species, to reach the Great Lakes from the Mississippi drainage basin.

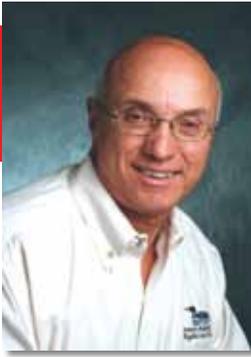
Of course, Asian carp aren't our only problem. We're at risk from other known and unknown invasive species – aquatic as well as terrestrial – and every invader has the potential to be an ecological and economic disaster. Governments are spending billions of dollars annually just to control the spread of those species that have already become established.

It isn't all doom and gloom. The O.F.A.H./MNR Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP) is leading a highly successful campaign to raise awareness about invasive species in Ontario. It was one of the first public education initiatives on the scene, more than 20 years ago, in response to the discovery of the invasive zebra mussel in the Great Lakes. At that time, few Canadians had ever heard of invasive species, and little if anything was being done to prevent their entry into Canadian lands and waters. The O.F.A.H., however, was quick to identify this new threat to our natural resources, and formed a partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to launch a public education and awareness program.

What started as a small outreach and education initiative now reaches five million Ontarians annually, through its Invading Species Hotline, well-visited interactive website and online tracking system, hundreds of Invading Species Watch lake volunteers, invasive species "Hit Squad" of summer students working province wide, plus educational materials, public service announcements, media stories and more.

The world is getting smaller and goods now travel to us from virtually every corner of the world. Unfortunately, many species of plants, animals and fish are able to hitch hike with incoming shipments and without natural predators, these guests settle in and put our native species at huge risk by out competing for food and habitat.

Our natural biodiversity is at stake, and with it, a way of life that outdoors enthusiasts are particularly passionate about. Programs like ISAP must continue to be supported and expanded if we want to keep invasive species where they belong - out of Ontario's lands and waters.



## Celebrating our proud heritage

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

For the past two years, a scene has been unfolding outside my office. Construction crews have been onsite daily, building the long-awaited heritage centre next door to the O.F.A.H. Head Office and Conservation Centre. Their work is finished. Where there was a construction site, there now stands the beautiful O.F.A.H./Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre—the perfect stage for the story of our outdoor traditions.

This month, we proudly throw open the doors and welcome all to see the result of our collective dream, one that began 20 years ago. It wasn't an easy project for a nonprofit organization to undertake; it took many people to keep the vision alive, including lifetime O.F.A.H. member David Wilson, who generously bequeathed the land on which the centre now stands. Your Board of Directors, zones, many clubs and others have contributed. There is one man though, more than anyone, who is responsible for making our dream a reality.

A passionate hunter, philanthropist and O.F.A.H. member, Mario Cortellucci recognized the value of creating a centre where we could celebrate the important role that Europeans and indigenous peoples have played in opening up this great country, and to educate visitors about our passion for fishing and hunting. To support this ideal, Mr. Cortellucci made a monumental commitment to the O.F.A.H., and to the outdoor community in general, by donating two million dollars to the construction of the building. We are thankful for his vision and generosity, and are proud to name the centre in his honor.

Others have played a key role in the completion of the centre. People such as Don McVittie who has sponsored many of the wildlife displays; O.F.A.H. zones, clubs and individuals have contributed much needed financial resources to help complete the displays. Corporations have also come forward, including the Toronto Sportsmen's Show and Shimano.

Speaking for everyone who has been involved in this process, we are excited to finally share this wonderful centre with you, and we hope that you will be as proud as we are of what has been accomplished. As with all ambitious projects, however, it is still very much a work in progress. The bones are there in this fine facility, but there is more we want to do.

Since one of the key objectives of the heritage centre is to educate visitors about the important role that anglers and hunters have played in fish and wildlife conservation in North America, we are developing content that ties in with the provincial school curriculum. We hope to incorporate the centre with the proven O.F.A.H. Get Outdoors youth program, and we are planning to expand the Centre beyond the walls, by developing Internet materials and classroom loaner kits. Our goal is to offer schools across the province a great learning opportunity, even if they aren't able to physically visit the centre. The possibilities are endless and we are eager to get started, but I am getting ahead of myself.

Beginning April 10, we invite you to come and experience the heritage centre - your centre. Take in the spectacular Shimano sport fish aquarium, watch a short film in the state-of-the-art Toronto Sportsmen's Show Amphitheatre, and interact with the wildlife and ecosystem dioramas. Visit the "cabin," where the early tools of our outdoor traditions are assembled, and much more.

The O.F.A.H./Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre is an exceptional opportunity to educate Canadians about the contributions that anglers and hunters have made, and continue to make, in conserving our valuable natural resources. Our story needed to be told, and now it will be. Thank you, and enjoy.

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## Old favorites, new additions to this year's conference

### Rob Hare

President

I always look forward to attending our annual conference. It's a chance to reconnect with people that I only see once a year, and to meet new some new people who love the outdoors as much as I do.

It's great to talk to delegates who have not attended conference before—they are usually blown out of the water by the scope of O.F.A.H. involvement in fish and wildlife conservation, and by the effectiveness of our advocacy for hunting and fishing traditions.

I learn a lot from the informal conversations that happen in the hall during breaks, over dinner, and in the hospitality suite. Every year I come away with some new ideas to take to my local club, and I hope that our club has occasionally returned the favor.

Conference is also an opportunity to discuss ideas and issues with staff from the Ministry of Natural Resources. Even though we're sometimes at odds about how best to manage our fish and wildlife, I believe that they share our passion and commitment, and I appreciate that from the Minister on down, they take the time to attend and to give presentations.

I have noticed that more and more representatives from outdoor organizations across the country have begun attending our conference, including the Canadian Wildlife Federation and our provincial affiliates. This gives us the invaluable opportunity to network, and it gives me the chance to showcase for them just what the O.F.A.H. accomplishes on behalf of its members.

The real "meat" of conference though, is the always impressive line up of speakers, and this year's agenda is no exception. On Friday morning, the new Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable Linda Jeffrey, will speak to delegates, followed by a question and answer period, in which O.F.A.H. members have the opportunity to question the minister on issues of concern to them. Friday afternoon our Executive Director, Mike Reader will deliver his always impressive "Year in Review." Mike's summary of head office activities provides real insight into the incredible breadth of projects and issues the O.F.A.H. is tackling on our behalf, and is a must-attend event, in my opinion. Be sure to take away an O.F.A.H. Annual Report as well. At almost 100 pages, it provides a summary of the year's accomplishments and challenges. Members, look for it online too.

On Saturday morning, noted author and hunting advocate, Randall Eaton will talk about the importance of hunting in raising our sons to be "men of heart." As someone who hopes to pass on my love of hunting to my grandson Ayden, I am eager to hear Dr. Eaton's insights. At the gala on Saturday, the keynote speaker is none other than MP Candice Hoepfner, the woman who introduced the private member's bill to scrap the long gun registry. With the bill through Second Reading, Ms. Hoepfner has taken this cause further than anyone before her, and I am eager to hear her speak about what comes next.

New to conference this year are "rapid fire" sessions. Speakers will have just fifteen minutes to bring us up to date on the highlights of their project, program, cause or issue. What a terrific addition to an always interesting agenda.

The Toronto Sportsmen's Show promises to be bigger and better than ever at its new home, the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. I know I'll be impressed by what the outdoors industry has produced to increase our odds in the field and on the water, and I'm hoping to catch several of the sessions scheduled for the O.F.A.H. Hunting Hall Stage in the Ontario OUT OF DOORS Hunting Hall. It doesn't get any better than a line up of the top experts sharing their insider tips and tricks on how to get the most out of our time in the outdoors.

Conference gets me excited about what I do for conservation, and what others are doing. There is no other event, that I know of, that draws upwards of 500 people, offers informative presentations, provides great food and entertainment, celebrates conservation and those who are most committed to restoring, protecting and managing our natural resources.

I can't wait to get to conference. If you see me in the corridors, on the bus, in the dining hall, or at the Toronto Sportsmen's Show, please stop and say hello. I need some ideas to take back to my club.



## Sweeping changes at MNR

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

In my column last month, I included a brief update about the sweeping organizational changes just announced by the Ministry of Natural Resources. We knew very little about the move at that time, except that it would almost certainly impact the delivery of fish and wildlife policy and programming, and at some level, anglers and hunters. In the very next week, there was a cabinet shuffle, and Linda Jeffrey, MPP for Brampton-Springdale was appointed our new Minister of Natural Resources. This is the Minister's first cabinet position, although she has held her riding since 2003 and is well versed in the legislative process. On behalf of our members, we have extended congratulations to Minister Jeffrey, via a phone call and in correspondence, and have assured her that we are a strong ally when it comes to the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources and the protection of hunting and fishing traditions.

A few weeks in, we're better briefed on the "realignment," as the MNR calls it, but like you, we are anxious to see how the new business model will work in the real world. Some of the changes appear to make sense, while others could be detrimental.

Here's how the new structure looks: one deputy minister will oversee five divisions, two of which got pieces of the former Fish and Wildlife Branch: Provincial Services and Policy. Under Provincial Services, a new section called Fish and Wildlife Services contains several fisheries efforts, and Marketing and Client Services, that will handle licensing, but also becomes the unlikely home of the province's hunter education program and wild turkey education courses.

Gone in the realignment is the Natural Resources Management Division, which housed the Fish and Wildlife Branch. At this point, that is a concern. It was the branch that angler and hunters most related to, and its splintering raises the possibility that outdoor issues will become marginalized. I can assure that we are watching, and will be responding strongly, should there be any sign of this happening.

The creation of a Policy Division may yield positive results. Bringing all policy makers together under one "roof," accountable to one director, may make sense. Fish and Wildlife policy falls under the Biodiversity branch, which, given the successful track record of O.F.A.H./MNR partnerships in such biodiversity-driven initiatives as the Invading Species Awareness Program and Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, could be a positive move.

The MNR has been hit with multiple changes over a short period of time. Just months ago, forestry, which represented a large proportion of the MNR, was moved over to Northern Mines and Development. The appointment of a new minister always brings a period of fluctuation, and the realignment will take time to implement. Combined, these changes mean a major shake up for the MNR. As the ministry's largest stakeholder and an important partner, we are heavily invested in how this will all play out for anglers and hunters.

For now, your federation is reserving judgment. We respect the government's right to make changes in order to improve its delivery, for the benefit of taxpayers and more importantly, for our natural resources. We know that Minister Jeffrey will need some time to get up to speed on the many issues and concerns in her portfolio. We also know that anglers and hunters are the backbone of our fish and wildlife conservation efforts in this province, both financially and through their significant volunteer contributions.

As the dust settles at the MNR, your Federation will be making sure that no one loses sight of our rightful place in the policy development and management of our fish and wildlife.

**Angler & Hunter HOTLINE** is produced exclusively for members of the ON Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

It is available ten times per year. Please direct inquiries to:

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## Your membership matters

### Rob Hare

President

Outside of family, there is nothing more important to me than spending time in the outdoors. It's how I recharge my batteries. My passion for the outdoors is the reason I joined the O.F.A.H. so many years ago, and it's why I'm still a committed volunteer. As O.F.A.H. president, I get to meet hundreds of O.F.A.H. members over the course of the year. It isn't long before we're talking about the latest fishing or hunting issue and what our Federation is doing about it. It's a strong bond we share, and I don't know where the outdoor community would be without the O.F.A.H.

Despite the tough economy in 2009, O.F.A.H. membership numbers defied the odds and hit a historic high. I'm sure this is due in part because members know that there is strength in numbers. All anglers and hunters benefit from a strong Federation, and in my opinion, no other outdoors organization accomplishes as much as we do. When it comes to standing up for our heritage traditions, and the wise management of our natural resources, the O.F.A.H. truly is the VOICE of anglers and hunters.

The fact that we speak for 100,000 outdoor enthusiasts enables the O.F.A.H. to be at the table for fish and wildlife policy and management decisions at all levels of government, supported by the Federation's professional resources, including biologists and government relations experts. We fight to ensure that the conservation of our natural resources gets the money and manpower it deserves, and we're fierce advocates of our traditional hunting and fishing rights.

As a membership based organization, we're keenly aware of how important it is to spend our money wisely, where it will do the most good for conservation. It helps that as a nonprofit charitable organization we can often attract matching contributions through grants, enabling us to make the most of every donation. It's donations that enable us to run many O.F.A.H. conservation programs, including the O.F.A.H./MNR Invading Species Awareness Program, Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, O.F.A.H./Toronto Sportsmen's Show Ringwood Hatchery, Community Stream Stewardship Program, Ontario Invasive Plant Council, walleye enhancement, the O.F.A.H. Get Outdoors youth program and WOW (Women's Outdoor Weekend), and the list goes on.

There are personal benefits to O.F.A.H. membership too, like the \$3 million dollars liability insurance coverage for a hunting and fishing related accident claim, should I ever need it. Just knowing that it's there gives me great peace of mind. I also look forward to receiving *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine regularly in my mailbox, with the members-only *HOTLINE* section that highlights Federation activities and issues of importance to our members. Knowing the best outdoor publication out there (in my view) is Federation owned, gives me a real sense of pride. I also enjoy using my O.F.A.H. discounts at Marks Work Wearhouse, Pioneer Petroleum stations, the Brick and other retailers that support the O.F.A.H. and I make an effort to show my appreciation to those corporations that put their money where it makes a real difference - the conservation of our natural resources.

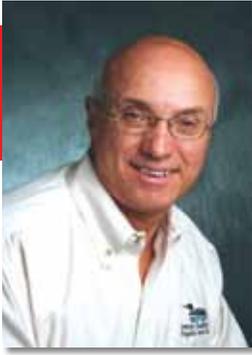
Your ongoing loyalty to the Federation and to conservation is the reason we continue to be so effective, even in these difficult times. I know I speak for the Board of Directors and staff when I tell you that we don't take your loyalty lightly. We share your passion for the outdoors and feel privileged to work on your behalf.

In the coming months, I hope you'll make the decision to continue to support your Federation. Consider asking a friend to join too. O.F.A.H. membership does matter.

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## Some old, some new challenges for 2010

### Mike Reader

Executive Director

### UPDATE:

As *HOTLINE* went to press, we were informed that the Ministry of Natural Resources will undergo unprecedented organizational changes. No further details were available, but watch the March issue for a complete breakdown of what lies in store for the Ministry.

Every new year should start with a clean slate. It gives us renewed energy and a fresh sense of purpose. Unfortunately, not every issue can be resolved by year end, and 2009 was no exception.

In December, we warned that the Liberal government's new Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) might be applied to Outdoor cards and fishing and hunting licenses. We've repeatedly voiced our concerns about this to Minister Cansfield, but her response continues to be vague, and at press time, we are still awaiting clarity on whether the outdoor fees will be exempt from the new HST. Outdoor cards and licenses have always been PST exempt, but as we interpret the notice in the 2010 Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary, anglers and hunters may be hit with an 8% increase in fees come July. We don't want to see outdoors enthusiasts burdened with any new taxes, but at the very least, we want the Minister's assurance that the new provincial portion of the HST will be allocated back to the Special Purpose Account for the fish and wildlife program. Anything less will be considered a tax grab on the backs of anglers and hunters.

Ongoing challenges aside, 2010 is shaping up well.

January 1 brought winter fishing to the Kawartha, Durham and Northumberland regions, and residents, including me, are taking advantage of the chance to ice fish near home. It's been more than 80 years since there was a winter season in the area, and I take my toque off to the many who made it possible. The O.F.A.H. has been pushing for this for several years now, but change is always a process, and this process was brought along by the Advisory Council of Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) 17. The council provided valuable local input to the new regulations, and is to be highly commended for assisting the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) in bringing this terrific recreational and economic opportunity to the region. The new FMZ 17 management plan also brings changes to walleye, sunfish and muskie regulations to balance angler demand with the protection of these stocks for the future.

Late in 2009, the MNR introduced its elk management plan, which includes the opportunity for a controlled harvest, particularly in the Bancroft North Hastings area. This would help resolve nuisance elk issues in isolated areas, and would eliminate any need for a kill permit to be issued. Hopefully, we'll see the plan approved and implemented in time for the first elk season of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the absence of a hunt in 2010, we are looking for the Minister's assurance that no kill permits will be issued. To waste even one of these magnificent animals flies in the face of the huge effort that the MNR, the O.F.A.H. and so many others have undertaken to restore them to the province.

This may be the year we see the end of the long gun registry. After a decade of fighting this wasteful and misguided legislation, Candice Hoepfner's private member's Bill C-391 will move to committee in March when Parliament resumes. There is still a long way to go, but I am cautiously optimistic that 2010 will be the year we see the registry finally scrapped, paving the way for more effective measures to protect public safety.

In the coming months, your Federation will be urging governments at all levels to take decisive action to prevent the devastating invasion of Asian carp into our Great Lakes. We'll be consulting with the MNR on a provincial review of small game regulations, policies and programs. In Manitoulin, we'll be monitoring as an environmental assessment gets underway, part of the process of a promised release of wild turkeys and pheasants there. Moose hunters across the province can expect to be consulted by the MNR on an improved moose tag allocation system, as well as possible changes to wildlife management unit populations objectives. The O.F.A.H. will be working to ensure that the MNR's Enhanced Black Bear Management Strategy is implemented this year, and includes opportunities for hunter involvement in the new area-specific black bear population objectives. We'll be working on dozens of other concerns, like these, on behalf of our members and the broader angling and hunting community.

I am looking forward to all that lies ahead in 2010, and ask that you continue to work with us, your fellow O.F.A.H. members, clubs, zones and Board of Directors and staff, to provide essential support for the conservation of our precious fish and wildlife. Collectively, we are the voice of anglers and hunters.

# O.F.A.H. Media Programs



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For enhanced hunting and fishing opportunities  
For fair sharing of fish and wildlife resources  
For scrapping the long gun registry  
For effective cormorant control programs  
For species conservation and enhancement  
For new Sunday gun hunting opportunities  
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For fighting inappropriate "discharge of firearms" bylaws  
For improved moose and deer tag allocation  
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