

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

ANNUAL REPORT 2011



The VOICE of Anglers & Hunters

*Fisheries & Wildlife Management • Membership • Education & Outreach •
Government Relations & Communications • OFAH Zone Reports • Advisory
Committee Reports • 2011 Financial Statement • HOTLINE Editorials*



Our Mission:

As the VOICE of anglers and hunters, and as a leader in fish and wildlife conservation in the Province of Ontario, the OFAH will:

- strive to ensure the protection of our hunting and fishing heritage and the enhancement of hunting and fishing opportunities;
- encourage safe and responsible participation; and
- champion the conservation of Ontario's fish and wildlife resources, which so enrich our lives.





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Annual Report Notice:

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Messages from the President and Executive Director



Like those who came before me, I am very proud to have served this year as President of the OFAH. Winding down our 84th year as Ontario's leading fish and wildlife conservation organization, we play an ever-increasingly vital role in protecting our fish, wildlife and other natural resources, so that all Ontarians can share in their enjoyment. This is only possible because we have strong and insightful leadership, dedicated staff, and most of all, clubs and members that champion and support our ideals and goals.

We have accomplished a great deal this past year. The release of the three millionth Atlantic Salmon this past spring and our first elk hunt in over a hundred years are just two of our great accomplishments. Our new venture *Angler & Hunter Radio*, along with *Angler & Hunter Television* and *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine, are important communications tools for keeping you, our members, informed and up to date on the hot topics and issues.

Despite all that we have done and continue to do as an organization, we will never have the luxury of just sitting back and enjoying the view. In our ever-changing world where the demand on our natural resources is so high, and the budget to manage it is decreasing, the OFAH continues to remind our governments of their mandate and responsibility to all Ontarians, to help find ways to ensure the monetary resources are there to do so, and are responsibly managed.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and all of our staff, I would like to thank you for standing up as an OFAH member in 2011. I hope that after reading about all that we have done over the course of the year, you will have a renewed sense of pride in your Federation. I hope you will share this report, which summarizes our accomplishments and successes, with your friends who are not already OFAH members, and ask them to consider joining us. With strength in numbers our voices are heard, and with greater strength we will be listened to and taken seriously. Please help us to make your Federation bigger and stronger.

Bill Blackwell
OFAH President



Since 1928, our members have counted on us to push for better legislation, take on new fish and wildlife conservation initiatives and promote our hunting and fishing heritage, and we were proud to carry on that tradition in 2011.

For more than a decade we have been tireless in our persistence to see the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry scrapped, and thanks to the Harper government, we are almost there.

Despite the provincial election "pause" of several months, we were able to achieve the first Ontario elk hunt this century and to bring in new regulations to allow wild raptors to be used in hunting, both long awaited goals. We also saw gains in the number of communities supporting Sunday gun hunting. In the five years since the OFAH-driven initiative was introduced, more than 150 municipalities have voted to embrace Sunday hunting locally. What a terrific advantage this is for those whose recreational time is limited.

As your President mentioned, we were pleased to launch *Angler & Hunter Radio* this year as another means of sharing our outdoors traditions and conservation insights with fellow enthusiasts, and equally importantly, those who don't hunt or fish.

Partnerships are crucial to maintaining the many conservation, education and outreach programs we run, and we are fortunate to work with many corporations, organizations, conservation authorities and individuals who each contribute to our common goals. We were very pleased to welcome Ontario Power Generation (OPG) to the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program in 2011, and were proud to work with OPG, LCBO, Banrock Station Wines, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and the City of Mississauga as we entered the second phase of our historic effort to Bring Back the Salmon. Our OFAH Affinity Partners and Sustaining Members also provided crucial resources to help us restore shorelines, deliver outreach programs and educate school children about conserving our precious natural resources.

After 25 years of proud service to this Federation, I will be retiring in March 2012. I am looking forward to reconnecting with family and friends, and spending more time on the water and in the field. I thank you most sincerely for your support through our achievements and challenges, and wish my successor, Angelo Lombardo, the very best. Your Board of Directors has made an excellent choice in Angelo, and I am excited to see him take this Federation to new heights in the coming years.

Mike Reader
OFAH Executive Director

OFAH Board of Directors



** denotes Director*

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OFAH Board of Directors continued...

OFAH Board of Directors (continued)



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OFAH Head Office Staff (continued)



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Individual Membership Clerk
Membership Processing Clerk
Membership Processing Clerk
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Fisheries Management

Ontario fisheries support recreation, tourism and associated industries. Working in partnership with all levels of government, nongovernment organizations and OFAH member clubs and individuals, the OFAH strives to sustain and grow our vital fisheries for the benefit of all.

Fisheries Management Zone Advisory Councils

The OFAH has supported the development of Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) Advisory Councils, whose function is to provide advice to MNR staff in fisheries management decisions. We value the opportunity for our representatives to continue to provide input into this process. FMZ Advisory Councils are currently established and operating in FMZ's 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19 and 20.

There are still several FMZ advisory councils expected to form, including 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 east subcommittee, 15, and 16. The establishment of Advisory Councils in the Far North (FMZ 1, 2, and 3) has been deferred until the MNR can determine the "appropriate scale of planning" in these northern zones. As for the remaining inland zones, the MNR is unable to confirm a timeline for their roll-out, as the planning processes are still ongoing.

Coaster Brook Trout Workshop (FMZ 9 – Lake Superior)

The Upper Great Lakes Management Unit - Lake Superior, held a two-day workshop in March in Thunder Bay with FMZ 9 Advisory Council members, as well as members from the original Coaster Brook Trout Lake Wide Committee in attendance. The workshop was part of MNR's commitment to complete a five-year review, addressing the lack of knowledge associated with Coaster Brook Trout ecology and the fishery.

A series of presentations were provided to discuss the status of Brook Trout populations. Angler observations revealed a strong indication that the population is growing and expanding into new areas, which would be considered "marginal" habitat. The MNR agreed that more work needs to be done.

Although many of our original concerns were represented in what was discussed, our position remains the same. We did not support the size limit changes (20" to 22") and were not in favor of Lake Nipigon and the Nipigon River being included in the regulation changes. In our opinion, the regulations were too conservative

to manage the species without the appropriate science to deem it necessary. OFAH Zone B provided a written submission to the Upper Great Lakes Management Unit – Lake Superior reiterating our concerns, as well as suggestions for areas where further research is needed.

Put-Grow-Take Walleye Management (Pilot) - FMZ 17

As part of a pilot put-grow-take (PGT) Walleye stocking program, the MNR stocked 28,000 Walleye fall fingerlings into Crowe Lake and Little Lake this year. The program was aimed at diverting angling pressure from lakes with self-sustaining Walleye populations, while enhancing angler opportunities in FMZ 17.

The FMZ 17 Advisory Council, which includes OFAH representation, was actively engaged in the screening criteria and ranking process for choosing these lakes. The criteria and ranking system considered certain social and ecological factors. There was general consensus for Crowe Lake and Little Lake based on their overall ranking (i.e. high social value and angler opportunities).



Lake Ontario Trout and Salmon Symposium (FMZ 20 - Lake Ontario)

In April, the MNR and FMZ 20 Advisory Council hosted the Lake Ontario Trout and Salmon Symposium in Port Credit. Over 300 were in attendance for the presentations on the state of Lake Ontario's ecosystem and fisheries, restoration efforts in the watershed, and fishing tips. The OFAH gave an overview of Bring Back the Salmon (also known as the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program) and exhibited a display. The Invading Species Awareness Program, Community Stream

Steward Program, clubs, nongovernment organizations and government agencies also hosted displays. Minister Jeffrey gave a welcoming address, and the local MPP attended as well.

Ringwood Fish Culture Station



The OFAH/MNR Memorandum of Understanding for the operation of Ringwood expired on September 28, 2011. We fulfilled all of our obligations associated with the

agreement, that saw us successfully raise all of Lake Ontario's Chinook Salmon for stocking over the last five years.

Many thanks to our hatchery coordinator and the dedicated volunteers from the OFAH host club, Metro East Anglers (MEA). The hatchery had great support this spring from MEA and OFAH volunteers, as well as others. Approximately 580,904 Chinook Salmon were stocked in various tributaries from St. Catharines to Wellington.

On behalf of the MEA, we asked the MNR if it would be possible to keep MEA's volunteer hatchery activities continuing after our departure, so we were pleased that the MEA entered into a 13-month agreement to operate the hatchery and the Coho Salmon stocking program. In the fall, the MNR and MEA stocked 68,000 Coho fall fingerlings into the Credit River.

Halton Fisheries Management Plan

In partnership with the MNR and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Conservation Halton is developing a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) which will encompass the watersheds of the Conservation Halton jurisdiction (FMZ 16). The process will be guided by a Technical Steering Committee and a Community Advisory Committee (CAC), and the OFAH is represented on both.

In February 2011, Conservation Halton hosted a facilitated stakeholder workshop to introduce the CAC to the FMP process and to outline their roles and responsibilities. CAC members were asked to identify their issues, areas of specific concern and interests. Participants also identified priorities for action. The workshop was well represented by OFAH Zone J.

It is expected that the CAC will meet every two months throughout the development of the FMP, and approximately five times a year during the plan's implementation.

Recovery Strategy for American Eel

The American Eel is an integral part of Lake Ontario's biodiversity, and was once abundant throughout the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario tributaries. Unfortunately, eels have been declining since the 1980's due to a variety of threats, including habitat loss and fragmentation, man-made barriers (e.g. dams) which impede movement upstream, and hydroelectric turbines that kill or injure adult eels during their downstream migration to spawn.

The American Eel is listed as "endangered" under Ontario's *Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA)*, which prompted the development of an Ontario Recovery Strategy. Under Canada's *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*, the American Eel is designated as "special concern."

We reviewed the Draft Recovery Strategy, and were pleased with most aspects of the strategy; however, the associated compendium which was also provided to us, contained additional scientific information that was absent from the strategy. We

recommended that the compendium be included in the strategy itself. Specifically, at minimum, sections one through four. We submitted our response to EBR Registry #011-1606 in February.

Disposition of American Eel – MNR Public Notices for Existing Hydroelectric Stations

There have been several localized public notices with respect to the disposition of American Eel for individual hydroelectric facilities on the Gananoque, Ottawa and Mississippi Rivers, inviting the public to comment through the Class EA for MNR Resources Stewardship and Facility Development Projects. The disposition of American Eel is facilitated by the Waterpower Agreements under Ontario Regulation 242/08 of the ESA. We provided comments/recommendations for five of the public notices, and while we appreciated the opportunity to do so, we were disappointed with the lack of wider public notice (e.g. use of the EBR). It is our opinion that these notices were not adequately communicated, which brings to question the effectiveness of the MNR's consultation process on these matters.

Unfortunately, most of these agreements and their associated five-year implementation plans are being signed prior to the finalization of the Recovery Strategy for American Eel. Furthermore, it appears that the agreements show little alignment with the Draft Recovery Strategy. For example, the strategy recommends that planned mitigation of upstream and downstream passage be provided by hydroelectric facilities on all key watersheds; whereas, the proposed mitigations for American Eel are fairly ambiguous using terms such as "temporary eel ladders" and "consider." It is not clear whether the MNR is committed to the safe passage for American Eel.

Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem

The current Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA) signed on June 25, 2007 was extended until March 31, 2011 to accommodate the process to amend the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA); however, negotiations to amend the latter are still ongoing. The governments of Ontario and Canada are considering a further extension of the term of COA through to June 24, 2012 (EBR Registry #011-1929).

We supported the governments in seeking a further extension to the current agreement to ensure that COA-related partnerships and efforts to restore the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem are maintained while the GLWQA is being amended. We have had numerous long-standing partnerships with the government of Ontario which have delivered on COA priorities, such as aquatic invasive species prevention and native species restoration (e.g. Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon).

While we appreciate and support this extension process, the governments are also proposing amendments to the GLWQA to update and refresh certain specific commitments under the current agreement (e.g. nearshore framework, harmful pollutants, spills prevention and response), but these are not the only priorities, and other existing priorities (e.g. native species restoration, invasive species) must be maintained.

With respect to the proposed amendments under the nearshore framework, we also recommended a review or development of an open water (offshore) framework to be completed. An OFAH response to EBR Registry #011-1929 was submitted in February.

Waterpower/Hydroelectric Generating Stations

Given the history of hydroelectric development on rivers where fisheries values have not been adequately protected, we have made several submissions to the MNR regarding waterpower/hydroelectric facilities.

Proposed Mitigations for Waterpower Agreements under Ontario Regulation 242/08 under the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA)

The waterpower agreement process outlined in Regulation 242/08 of the ESA requires hydroelectric generating stations to enter into an agreement with the Minister of Natural Resources. Hydroelectric generating stations have three years from the date the species is listed “threatened” or “endangered.” The agreements are supposed to provide a description of how mitigation and monitoring are to be implemented in order to meet the objective of “not jeopardizing the recovery and survival” of species at risk.

We agree that the waterpower agreement process outlined in Regulation 242/08 is one means of ensuring mitigation, and in general, there is support for the intent of this regulation. However, it is our opinion that the supporting information provided by the MNR to critically evaluate these agreements was inadequate, and there seem to be considerable differences (e.g. inconsistency) with respect to the language used across the agreements.

We expressed concern with the MNR’s lack of specific detail in the description of implementation (e.g. mitigation, monitoring). In the absence of any details, it was very difficult for us to critically evaluate whether the process is justifiable. Overall, the link between the agreements and certain important guiding government legislation and policy (e.g. Lake and Rivers Improvement Act, Fisheries Act), was not evident.

Furthermore, we do not agree with the proposed 30-year agreements without first amending the proposed mitigations and agreements to:

- include mandatory safe upstream and downstream passage;
- describe how adaptive management approaches will be implemented;
- integrate specific targets for reductions in turbine mortality;
- incorporate effectiveness monitoring programs associated with all mitigation; and
- address cumulative effects.



Lake Erie Angler Diary Program

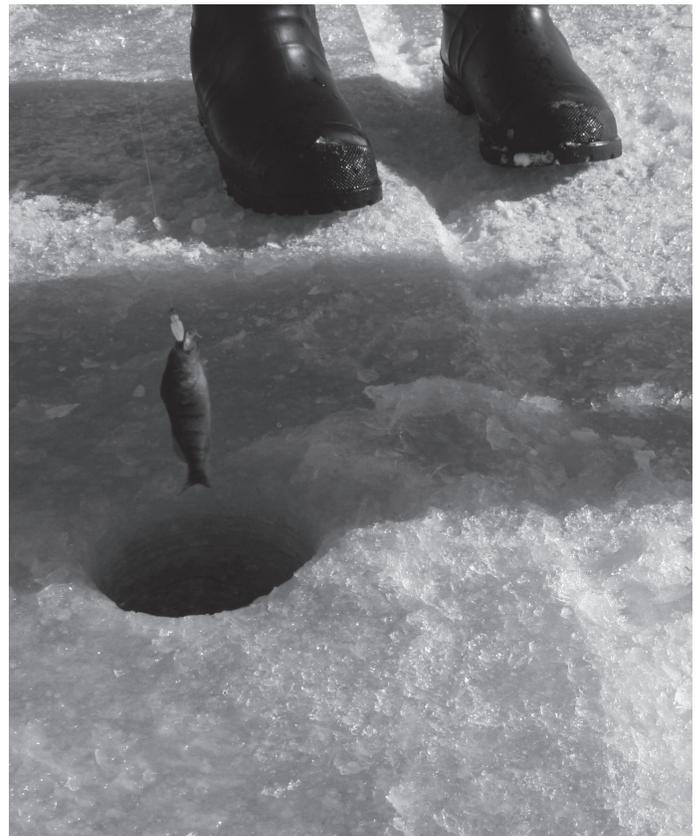
We were contacted by the Lake Erie Management Unit in the spring to discuss the status of their Lake Erie Angler Diary Program. The program, which at one time had up to 400 participants (Lakes Erie and St. Clair), in more recent years has declined to about 80 participants. The diary information is an important assessment tool, and the Lake Erie Management Unit would like to see participation increase again.

Recognizing the importance of this program, we agreed to assist with promoting the diary this summer through our magazine (Hotline), radio program, and OFAH website. We also provided 200 hats to assist with the MNR’s initiative, providing participants with an incentive for submitting their diaries. OFAH support for the program was acknowledged on the back of the hats.

Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group

The Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group LEPMAG is a partnership between the Lake Erie Committee (Michigan Department of Natural Resources, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ontario MNR, and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission) and Lake Erie fisheries stakeholders, which includes OFAH representation. The group was formed early in the year as the result of an effort to increase stakeholder involvement in the development of management plans for Lake Erie Walleye and Yellow Perch.

The LEPMAG met through a series of workshops this year, that were designed to identify some common fisheries management objectives among the stakeholders, and potential management options. Next steps include discussion of alternative assessment strategies as well as developing a model for Lake Erie Walleye.



Bring Back the Salmon

Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program

Partnership Development



In 2011, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) became the lead sponsor of Bring Back the Salmon (BBTS), which is also known as the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program. An event celebrating the launch of BBTS Phase II (2011-2016) was held in mid-May. The LCBO continues to support the program at \$50,000/year through Phase II and Banrock Station Wines contributed another \$50,000 for 2011/12 and discussions were continuing to try to arrange a longer-term commitment from Banrock Station.

Toronto Tourism/City of Mississauga also contributed \$50,000 in 2011/12 for fish production and habitat restoration on the Credit River. A grant of \$50,000 for one year was received from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (TDFEF) for habitat projects in 2011, with an opportunity to secure a commitment for the next four years at \$50,000/year. In December, we were invited to apply for another year of habitat project funding from TDFEF. Smaller grants were also received from Jiffy Lube (\$2,500), TransCanada Pipelines (\$8,000), and Green Side Up Environmental (\$2,000). The Ontario Wildlife Foundation (OWF) funded 15 habitat restoration project signs at the sites of our 2011 restoration projects.

In late 2011, we received word that Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows is providing the program with a grant of \$10,000 in 2012.

BBTS continues to evolve strong working relationships with our partners at Transport Canada, the Toronto Zoo, Ontario Streams, and four conservation authorities (Toronto and Region, Credit Valley, Ganaraska and Halton), as well as the provincial government through the MNR, Canada-Ontario Agreement, and Community Fish and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP).

Fish Production and Stocking

In the fall of 2010, over three million green eggs were collected from the LaHave River and Sebago Lake broodstock strains for 2011 production stocking.

In March and April, just under 100,000 yearlings from the Normandale Fish Culture Station (FCS) and Fleming College were stocked into our three Phase I target tributaries, completing Phase I fish production and stocking. High school students from Cobourg and Peterborough stocked 1,000 of these from Fleming College at the fifth annual Earth Day clean-up of Cobourg Brook.

In May and June, approximately 550,000 fry were stocked from Normandale FCS, Harwood FCS and Fleming College. Earlier 50,000 were also stocked by the Belfountain Hatchery and Islington Sportsmen's Club. As the largest of the four current target tributaries, the Credit River received approximately 40% of the fish, with the Humber River, Duffins Creek and Cobourg Brook splitting the remainder evenly.

This was the first year for stocking the Humber River with production fish. A launch event was held on May 30 at the Albion Hills Conservation Area, in partnership with the TRCA and the MNR. Local politicians, students, and media were present. Much of the Humber River stocking was assisted or led by staff from Ontario Streams.

Approximately 2,000 fry were stocked into Cobourg Brook by 13 journalists touring Lake Ontario with the Institutes for Journalism and Natural Resources (IJNR). The journalists had toured Harwood FCS earlier in the day and were wrapping up nine days on Lake Ontario.

In September, all strains of the three-year-old broodstock had their identification microchips (Passive Induced Transmitter tags) implanted. These are a key component to our research and assessment programs, which use genetic signatures to track the fish. In October and November, approximately 187,000 fall fingerlings were stocked from the Normandale Fish Culture Station (MNR) and Fleming College Hatchery. The majority of the fish were released into the Credit River and the remainder were split evenly between Duffins Creek and Cobourg Brook, with the Humber River receiving about 500 fall fingerlings from a surplus LaHave River broodline and about 490 yearlings from a Lac St. Jean backup broodline.

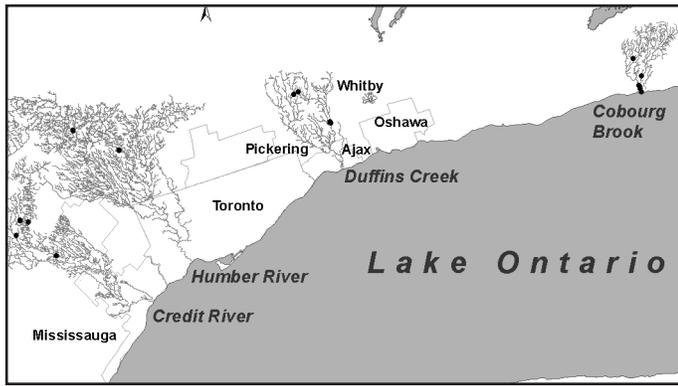
Approximately 2.95 million green eggs are expected from the LaHave River, Sebago Lake, and Lac St. Jean broodstock. This is the first year of full Lac St. Jean strain production. Some eggs, including the majority of the first Lac St. Jean production total will be reared as part of two PhD programs funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) at the University of Western Ontario and the University of Windsor, in partnership with the MNR. All facilities combined have a production target of 696,000 fry, 190,000 fall fingerlings, and 90,000 yearlings for the 2012-13 stocking cycle. Allocations for schools and smaller partner facilities (e.g. Credit River Anglers Association and Islington Sportsmen's Club) are also included.

Water Quality and Habitat Protection and Enhancement

The BBTS habitat restoration component completed 23 projects, while other partners, such as the MNR, conservation authorities, Ontario Streams, Credit River Anglers Association, and Trout Unlimited Canada completed another 13, typically larger, projects. In all, 36 projects were completed in 2011.

At the fifth annual Earth Day clean-up of Cobourg Brook, a group of Peterborough high school students and teachers planted 143 eastern white cedar trees and 70 red osier dogwood shrubs to stabilize the stream bank in the Cobourg Conservation Area. Another 100 high school students cleaned up 1,300 meters of urban shoreline.





2011 Habitat project sites (depicted by black dots)

In May, three TD Friends of the Environment Foundation volunteers and 25 high school students planted over 50 large trees and 115 shrubs in the Cobourg Conservation Area. With the help of Fleming College Ecosystem Management placement students, the Community Stream Steward Program and Northumberland Junior Farmers, we completed a large planting project of 1,490 trees and 199 shrubs. This planting was funded by the Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA). In June, BBTS staff, in partnership with the Community Stream Steward Program, completed a headwater shrub planting along the northwestern branch of Cobourg Brook.

In late November, a Peterborough area Scouts Canada group collected and planted 500 live willow shrub cuttings in Sinclair Park, part of the Cobourg Conservation Area. In total, Cobourg Brook projects involved 171 volunteers who contributed 394.5 hours of labor.

On Duffins Creek, BBTS worked closely with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to complete five habitat restoration projects. Work got underway in August with a bank stabilization project involving logs and root wads anchored to 33 meters of stream bank in the Greenwood Conservation Area on the Rodar property. The project was later completed with help from six Aurora District MNR Stewardship Rangers and a college volunteer, who planted 200 shrubs and completed a boulder placement project to provide instream habitat for Atlantic Salmon. Two live willow shrub staking projects in late November completed our 2011 work at the Rodar property.

Also on Duffins Creek, in the fall, BBTS worked on the Transport Canada Pickering Lands and with help from TRCA staff and a group of 45 high school students, we planted 850 trees and shrubs at a decommissioned pond site. As well, 100 Fleming College students planted over 850 trees and shrubs at a wetland creation site on the Pickering Lands. Volunteer contributions to 2011 Duffins Creek habitat restoration projects totalled 259 volunteers and 536 hours.

As part of the BBTS Hatchery Program release day at Silver Creek Conservation Area on the Credit River, 30 Brampton elementary school students planted a demonstration site with trees and shrubs. The project was funded by Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) in partnership with the Dufferin-Northern Peel Anglers and Hunters Association.

BBTS staff, with help from 50 high school students and staff from Credit Valley Conservation, planted 250 trees and shrubs at the Terra Cotta Conservation Area on the Credit River along the berm of a decommissioned pond. A second planting was

completed at McNab Park in Norval by OFAH and MNR staff. In November, local school groups completed two more planting projects, one at Forge Park in Terra Cotta and the other in the Terra Cotta Conservation Area. Credit River habitat restoration projects in 2011 involved 157 volunteers contributing 249.5 hours. We started work on the Humber River watershed in 2011 with the TRCA as our lead restoration partner on the ground. In September, with help from Aurora District MNR staff and the TRCA, we completed a large-scale bank stabilization project using large anchored logs and root wads on the Bolton Resource Management Land Tract. We planted trees and shrubs as well as live willow stakes later in November, and we planted along the riparian buffer corridor and shoreline at the Nashville Resource Management Land Tract. Humber River habitat restoration projects involved 52 volunteers contributing 81 hours.

In total we completed an impressive 23 projects with the help of 639 volunteers who contributed 1,261 volunteer hours planting 2,424 trees and 8,853 shrubs over 37,296m².

Research and Assessment

The BBTS science team met twice to review the summer and fall research/assessment efforts, as well as to review stocking practices and to plan for Phase II.

The OFAH did not receive any Species-at-Risk funding for smolt assessment, and replacement funding could not be arranged in time for the smolt run. The MNR and CVC, with COA funding, were able to assess smolts on the Credit River from April to June using the new rotary screw trap. Large numbers of Atlantic Salmon smolts were observed, including those marked last fall in the upper reaches of the river. The field crew was also able to make important observations of other species, including sport fish and invasive species, which validated the screw trap and its operation as a valuable tool for fisheries management on the river.

Once again, reports of significant angler catches of Atlantic Salmon from the south side of Lake Ontario began in April, including fish approaching 20 pounds in weight. Results to date for New York's open-water creel show high catch levels similar to 2009, although not quite up to 2010 totals. For the third straight year, wild Atlantic Salmon have been observed in New York's Salmon River. New York's creel program is also collecting data and tissue samples for genetic analysis for us, as are a subset of anglers in Ontario. Anecdotal reports of catches from the north side of Lake Ontario were also up this summer, including increased numbers off the Port Credit Pier and in the Credit River itself (estimated 300-500 fish). Some local anglers believe a small pier fishery has been created for Atlantic Salmon, based on an increased number of anglers seen on a daily basis in 2011 relative to past years.

Through the winter, the program partnership, led by the MNR and the Credit River Anglers Association, completed the reconstruction of a fishway at Norval. Full operation of the fishway began in late August, but we were able to leave the Streetsville fishway open during the summer (and after Chinook and Coho Salmon runs in the fall) and counted Atlantic Salmon at Norval, where temperatures are lower in the summer and the fish do not need to be moved overland to spawning habitat. In late July, three Atlantic Salmon adults were observed in the pools below the Norval dam.

Without Species-at-Risk Stewardship Fund grants, the MNR (Lake Ontario Management Unit and Aurora District) had to

take a lead role in assessing the Credit River, and supported the OFAH's adult assessment efforts on Cobourg Brook. On Cobourg Brook, a crew of two (with additional staff help as needed from the OFAH, Peterborough District MNR, Lake Ontario Management Unit and Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority), operated weirs on both branches, which was a first for the west branch. Numbers were similar to previous years. We received angler reports of several additional Atlantic Salmon pooling below the dam on the east branch, and one photo of a caught and released Atlantic from the Cobourg Conservation Area.

Observations made during the summer and fall suggest Atlantic Salmon are moving into the streams as early as June, much earlier than expected. We are looking at ways to get the crews out earlier in the summer for 2012 as assessment crews were not yet in place in 2011 and fish were missed as they moved upstream to find holding pools. In the fall, an MNR crew working with CVC electrofished the Credit River's spring stocking sites to assess in-stream survival and growth rates. They also marked the parr to assess survival to spring 2012, when the fish should be observed passing through the rotary screw trap being built into the river. They also caught and released two adult Atlantics spawning in the Forks of the Credit Provincial Park. Canada-Ontario Agreement funds acquired by the Lake Ontario Management Unit supported this work.

In November, we met with the MNR and Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority staff to discuss a fishway for Pratt's Dam on Cobourg Brook, which will make adult assessment and fish passage much easier.

Three NSERC-funded studies are underway, examining Atlantic Salmon genetics, behavioral traits and competition with other species. Late in 2011 we learned from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) that funding was available for a resistance board weir for adult assessment on Duffins Creek, which is a more efficient weir that can handle fall water levels. The grant comes with funding for a TRCA crew for three years.

Education and Outreach

In 2011, 40 classes and four outdoor education centres reared Atlantic Salmon in 2011 in classroom hatcheries under OFAH head office guidance, up from 34 units in 2010. The geographic range is again from Fort Erie to Kingston. An additional 11 units were administered by the Toronto Zoo, 10 at schools and one at the zoo itself, and McMaster University's Let's Talk Science node supervised another six. The MNR Aurora District and Ontario Streams oversaw another nine units. All of the units now have chiller units, thanks to contributions from the 2010 Species-at-Risk Stewardship Fund. This year saw the best success rates yet, typically 80-95%, and the fish were released by the students in May and June. The classroom hatchery program operated without funding for dedicated staff and the classroom stocking days were handled by the program coordinator and habitat technician.

While the classroom hatchery program as a whole was without dedicated funding, the Ontario Wildlife Foundation committed to cover staff travel over the winter and Pioneer Petroleum subsidized the school bus costs for eight classes that attended the third annual Bronte Creek release day.

The classroom hatchery program received recognition as a teaching tool in *Natural Curiosity*, a publication from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of



Toronto. The book is a resource for elementary teachers interested in enhanced environmental education, and is being distributed throughout the province and online at www.naturalcuriosity.ca.

Communications

BBTS gave 25 presentations to classes, as well as to audiences at the Pickering Environmental Leadership Forum, Pickering Environmental Volunteer Recruitment Expo, Lake Ontario Trout and Salmon Symposium, and several anglers' clubs. The MNR and Fleming College staff and academic researchers also presented on BBTS, including a presentation at the 6th World Recreational Fishing Conference in Berlin, given by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a BBTS partner.

BBTS attracted TV, print, online and radio media coverage in 2011. CHCH-TV, CITY-TV, CHEX-TV the *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *The Grid* magazine (formerly *The Eye Weekly*) and several other local and regional media sources. The Cobourg Earth Day event and journalism tour both received local coverage. The OFAH's own *Angler & Hunter Radio*, *HOTLINE* also featured BBTS initiatives.

A film crew from Chicago, working on a documentary for PBS on the Great Lakes (www.makingwavesdocumentary.com), attended two days of stocking in the spring, including a classroom hatchery event. When completed, the documentary will focus on native versus invasive species in the Great Lakes.

The program will once again be advertised in the provincial fishing regulations and posters have been developed for the program. A quarterly newsletter was distributed via email and was posted online on the program's redesigned website. Four OPG generating stations received BBTS displays and brochures for onsite use.

Throughout the year, BBTS staff connected with program stakeholders and the general public through social media, including Facebook and Twitter. www.facebook.com/ontariosalmon and twitter.com/ontariosalmon.

Community Stream Steward Program



The Community Stream Steward Program (CSSP) had another productive year, providing advice, support and project implementation on stream and wetland conservation initiatives across its program region.

In total, 75 site visits were conducted to provide landowners with face-to-face advice and support; staff attended 81 festivals, workshops, and events to promote the program and its activities; and 45 projects were completed which protect and enhance streams and wetlands through tree and shrub plantings, livestock exclusion, and bank stabilization.

Lake Simcoe Watershed

Three major bank stabilization projects were implemented along the Pefferlaw River, near the mouth of Lake Simcoe. Existing river banks at these sites included metal and wood break walls, eroding banks, and little bank vegetation. With support from Environment Canada's Lake Simcoe Clean-Up Fund, Ministry of Natural Resources (Lake Simcoe Community Stewardship Program and Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program), and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, these projects now feature gradually sloping banks and native shrubs, and will serve as demonstration sites of naturalized shorelines and promote their functionality and beauty to other residents of the river. In November, CSSP and Environment Canada staff conducted a tour of a number of projects that were completed around the lake.

Farm Stewardship

Farm stewardship projects, such as livestock fencing along streams and wetlands and stream crossings, were implemented throughout the fall with support from the Kawartha Farm Stewardship Collaborative (KFSC), a group of organizations that work together to provide project support through technical advice, project planning and financial incentives. KFSC members include representatives from the CSSP, local Environmental Farm Plan, conservation authorities, and other nonprofits. In total, over 40 projects were completed in 2011, with a value of over \$450,000. CSSP participated in 24 of these projects and provided funding to farmers through Wildlife Habitat Canada, CFWIP, Lake Simcoe Clean-Up Fund, and Ontario Wildlife Foundation. The Collaborative was recognized through the Minister of the Environment's Award for Environmental Excellence in the Community category.

Cold Creek Stewardship

In August, Environment Canada notified us that we had received funding through their EcoAction Community Funding Program. The two-year funding (2011 and 2012) allows us to implement educational workshops and restoration projects within targeted watersheds of Central Ontario. We began by targeting efforts on Cold Creek in Northumberland County, with the City of Kawartha Lakes and Durham Region projects planned for 2012.

In November, we held stream steward training within the watershed for 15 eager participants. They spent two days learning about stream ecology, flow, and restoration projects, including aspects of regulations and funding sources. These individuals returned to their communities with the tools necessary to steward their local waterways. Lower Trent Conservation, Ministry of Natural Resources (Species at Risk) and Northumberland Stewardship Council helped deliver the workshop.

Colborne Creek

In August, we hosted *Lend a Hand for Colborne Creek*, a community event which featured a bank stabilization project with fish habitat features at a new pedestrian bridge in Colborne. Our instream efforts enhanced fish habitat and stabilized the existing stream banks. This project partnership was led by CSSP and was supported by the Rotary Club of Colborne and MNR's CFWIP.



Program Promotion & Workshops

The CSSP website was updated in 2011 and is now a much more valuable resource to those volunteers and landowners who are looking for support and resources for stream stewardship. Project profiles showcase the types of projects completed by CSSP and the associated benefits to fish and wildlife. Bank stabilization, riparian buffer planting, farm stewardship, and turtle nesting sites are included in the profiles.

Our newsletter, *Streamside News*, was revived and distributed to landowners, partners, and volunteers for the first time since 2008. The newsletter highlights our efforts and should serve to reestablish contact with many volunteers and landowners.

CSSP staff gave a presentation to the Cold Creek Fly Fishers in Belleville, a club with an interest in both fishing and conservation. We had a booth at the Lindsay Woodlot Conference in February and the East Central Farm Show in March, events which together drew over 2,600 attendees. During the March break, staff provided stream ecology lessons to grade school students at the Uxbridge event *The Brook Never Sleeps*.

CSSP achievements were highlighted at *Connecting Land and Lake Conservation - A Lake Huron Workshop*, which was hosted by the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and Environment Canada.

We hosted two *Planting Trees for Wildlife* workshops in Udora and Little Britain respectively, which provided landowners with ideas and advice around increasing wildlife habitat in their backyards. We also hosted *A Landowner's Guide to Ponds* workshop in partnership with Kawartha Conservation, Scugog Connections and Victoria Stewardship Council. Wildlife Habitat Canada funded the workshop, which was well attended.

Funding

Program funding was challenging, with the provincial and federal elections causing many delays. The final 2011 budget included funding from Environment Canada's Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund, EcoAction, Science Horizons Internship Fund, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Ontario Wildlife Foundation, and Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) Fund. The program continues to operate without any long-term core funding or salary support.

Invading Species Awareness Program



ONTARIO'S
**INVADING
SPECIES**
AWARENESS PROGRAM

The Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP) has been a joint partnership initiative of the OFAH and the MNR since 1992, focusing on preventing invasive species introductions to Ontario's

forests and waters. In 2011, in collaboration with hundreds of community groups, nongovernment organizations, and all levels of government, the ISAP reached millions of Ontarians and engaged their participation in preventing the spread of invasive species. Hundreds of citizen scientists and professional field staff from numerous agencies participated in our monitoring and reporting programs. The ISAP made valuable contributions to early detection and rapid response initiatives for invasive species that are threatening Ontario's biodiversity, such as Asian Carp, Giant Hogweed, European Water Chestnut, and Water soldier. The ISAP made significant contributions to provincial, national, and international initiatives including the Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC), the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network, and the Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network.

Partnerships

In 2011, the OFAH and the MNR continued the successful joint delivery of the ISAP, with OFAH staff working collaboratively with staff from MNR's Biodiversity Branch, as well as numerous district offices across the province.

Federally, funding contributions were made by Environment Canada's Great Lakes Management and Reporting Section and Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Human Resources Development Canada's Summer Job Program.

Numerous additional organizations made valuable in-kind and financial contributions to the ISAP in 2011. These organizations included: Ontario Invasive Plant Council, OFAH zones and affiliated clubs, Community Fish and Wildlife Involvement Program, Ontario Streams, Federation of Ontario Cottager's Association, Thunder Bay Stewardship Council, Voyageur Provincial Park, Dorset Environmental Science Centre, Queen's University, York University, Manitoulin Area Stewardship Council, South Nation Conservation Authority, Lake of the Woods District Property Owner's Association, Kirkland Lake MNR, Plenty Canada, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Credit Valley Conservation Authority, Kids for Turtles Environmental Education, Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, Georgian Bay Stewardship Council, Pembroke MNR, Sault Ste. Marie MNR, Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, Couchiching Conservancy, Prince Edward County Stewardship Council, Peterborough Stewardship Council, University of Windsor, Wisconsin Sea Grant, and the Minnesota Sea Grant.

Communications

ISAP staff were successful in attracting media interest around invasive species in 2011. Their efforts resulted in over 80 media/promotional contacts with the program being profiled in newsprint/web (63), radio (15) and television (5), reaching

over three million people. Highlights of media included stories profiling the outreach efforts of members of the Invading Species Hit Squad, as well as our scheduled Invasive Plant Road Rallies. Regular articles were submitted for publication by the Invading Species Hit Squad, and were published in the Orillia Packet and Times, Lifestyles and the Alliston Herald.

Our efforts in the Lake Superior basin also received a considerable amount of media attention. The Lake Superior Invasive Species Outreach Coordinator was interviewed on CBC Radio in regard to aquatic invasive species. Shaw TV aired a segment on aquatic invasive species and how to help stop their spread, and Thunder Bay Television conducted an interview with ISAP staff about Rusty Crayfish. As well, Lake Superior-specific radio public service announcements have been aired on several local radio stations.

Program Outreach Overview

The ISAP conducted outreach to a broad audience in 2011, including anglers, hunters, recreational boaters, gardeners, ATV users, aquarium hobbyists, educational institutions, bait harvesters, technical professionals, and the general public. Staff attended more than 220 events, including the Toronto and Ottawa Sportsmen's Shows, Toronto International Boat Show, Outdoor Adventure Show, Canada Blooms, Landscape Ontario Congress, Spring Cottage Life Show, and the Central Canada Outdoor Show, reaching over 300,000 people. Numerous workshops and presentations were also delivered by ISAP staff, focusing on a variety of topics for bait harvesters, lake associations, garden clubs, landowner groups, tournament organizers, and angling clubs. These ventures were always collaborative in nature, working with hundreds of organizations, including stewardship councils, conservation authorities, nongovernment organizations, and community groups. As a result of these initiatives, over 320,000 educational materials were delivered provincewide, and ISAP staff fielded direct requests from over 365 people to the Invading Species Hotline.

Aquatic Invasive Species Workshops for Technical Professionals

The ISAP receives funding from Fisheries and Oceans Canada to deliver Aquatic Invasive Species Workshops for technical field professionals working across the province. In 2011, ISAP staff delivered 10 workshops, training over 300 technical professionals. Workshops were held in Lindsay (4), Peterborough, Aurora, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, and Timmins. Participants included natural resource college students, college professors/staff, field technicians and biologists, conservation officers, and natural resources administration staff. The workshops train participants in the identification of priority invasive species, such as Asian Carp, and demonstrate preservation of specimens, and reporting procedures.

Early Detection Network

ISAP staff are working to establish a volunteer-based invasive species Early Detection Network for Ontario by training citizen scientist volunteers and industry professionals across the province in invasive species identification, sampling/preserving, and reporting, in order to increase Ontario's capacity to respond to invasive species and better understand their distribution across Ontario. As well, the Early Detection Network will be educated on how to coordinate, or be involved in, activities to stem the spread



of invasive species and prevent the establishment of new invasive species in Ontario. In 2011, ISAP staff established a provincial technical committee to guide the development of materials, and to provide recommendations for citizen science organization contacts.

HACCP Workshops for Bait Harvesters

In 2011, ISAP staff worked with MNR staff to deliver 11 Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) courses remotely to new bait harvesters via online webinars.

Invading Species Hit Squad

The summer was extremely successful for the Invading Species Hit Squad. Following a two-day training workshop held at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre in Peterborough, our team of 21 summer staff working in partnership with ISAP staff, MNR district offices, stewardship councils, conservation authorities and nongovernmental organizations hit the ground running again, attending over 150 community events. Events included boat launch inspections, presentations, and interpretive programs in provincial parks. Over 250 bait retailers, tourist information centres, resorts, marinas, and garden centres were visited by members of the Hit Squad who shared educational materials with the clients of these businesses.

Invading Species Hit Squad staff were successful in attracting media interest for the invasive species issue, resulting in 52 media profiles in radio, television, and newspaper. Regular articles were submitted by students for publication in the Orillia Packet and Times and Lifestyles, the local newspaper for the Parry Sound area.

Aquarium, Landscape and Water Garden Outreach

Over the summer, a total of 99 garden centres were visited and surveyed, along with one pet store within the counties/regions of Middlesex, Oxford, Hamilton, Halton, Waterloo, Peel, Dufferin, Toronto, Durham and Kawartha Lakes. Over 2,600 educational materials were distributed as a result of this outreach. The results from the store visits have been compiled in a database of Ontario retailers, and to date, 924 inventories of pet stores and garden centres are present in this database. This project was conducted in partnership with Ontario Streams and Aurora District MNR, along with funding from Service Canada Summer Jobs Program. ISAP staff are contributing to the Horticulture Outreach Collaborative, a committee of the Ontario Invasive Plant Council. Key projects of this collaborative include the promotion of the *Grow Me Instead!!* alternatives guide for gardeners, as well as the development of a similar guide for northern Ontario.

Educational Materials

ISAP staff worked closely with MNR and OIPC staff to produce new educational materials, including a brochure on Asian Carp, the *Grow Me Instead!* guide for southern Ontario, and Water Soldier and Water Chestnut watch cards and fact sheets. Our grade six curriculum kit *Invasive Species! A Biodiversity Challenge* was reviewed by Curriculum Services Canada (CSC); and ISAP staff are currently working on incorporating CSC's feedback into the curriculum. Upon completion, ISAP staff will develop a strategic plan for promoting the new curriculum kit through teachers, university pre-service teachers' programs, and conferences, such as the Science Teachers' Association of Ontario's annual meeting and the Environmental Educators of Ontario's annual conference.

Compendium of Education and Outreach Initiatives & Factsheet Development

Through funding received from the Invasive Species Centre, ISAP staff are developing factsheets for key aquatic and terrestrial invasive species and upon completion, they will be translated into French and formatted for desktop publishing with the intended purpose to be posted and shared online. ISAP staff are also developing a compendium of education and outreach projects for invasive species, and will coordinate a review of the compendium by agencies involved with invasive species (both government and nongovernment). As with the fact sheets, the compendium will be formatted for desktop publishing with the intended purpose to be posted and shared online.

Highway and Boat Launch Signage

With permission from Canada Border Services, "Stop Invasive Species" signs were installed at the Pigeon River and Sault Ste. Marie border crossings. They have also allowed outreach materials to be placed at the border crossings. The Invading Species Hit Squad were able to post over 70 boat launch signs in locations across Ontario. Over 325 invasive species boat launch signs have been distributed this year.

Lake Simcoe Outreach

In partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources, the ISAP implemented the Community-Based Social Marketing project for Lake Simcoe in 2011. From May 14 – June 6, three boat launch locations on Lake Simcoe were staffed to engage the public in invasive species outreach. Baseline data was collected in the first week to better understand the boating and angling habits of people using the different boat launches, followed by hands-on demonstrations and direct public engagement through the use of boat wash equipment and bait disposal stations. The final week was used to monitor any changes in boating or angling behaviors. A series of on-ice outreach events promoting awareness of invasive species during the ice fishing season were delivered on Lake Simcoe in partnership with staff from the MNR Aurora District MNR office. Staff conducted on-ice surveys with anglers, and distributed educational materials (promotional ice fishing lures). Other outreach tools for the on-ice outreach included the production and installation of billboards for the "ice highway," and the dissemination of a radio public service announcement specifically directed at ice anglers.

Lake Superior Outreach

Education and outreach initiatives for Lake Superior and the North Shore were well received by the public and our partner organizations. Through the Lake Superior Invasive Species



Outreach Coordinator, the ISAP was represented at a number of community events, presentations and meetings, and significant progress was made in community and agency engagement. The Lake Superior Invasive Species Outreach Coordinator actively participated on the Emerald Ash Borer communications committee and in an EAB branch sampling course. Our outreach coordinator was invited to attend the Canadian Wildlife Society Annual General Meeting to discuss the subject of invasive species. The coordinator's position was funded by the OFAH and Environment Canada.

Invading Species Information Management

In 2011, ISAP staff handled more than 850 calls to the Invading Species Hotline. There were 485 sighting reports for a variety of invasive species and 365 requests for information, which resulted in the distribution of over 320,000 educational materials.

Giant Hogweed was frequently reported to the Invading Species Hotline, with 57 confirmed reports. Aquarium and water garden releases may have been the source for a Red-Eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) that was discovered by one of our summer students in the Payne River near Finch.

In 2011, the Invasives Tracking System received over 160 reports of potential invasive species; 112 of these reports were confirmed to be invasive species. ISAP staff continue to promote the Invasives Tracking System to government and nongovernment organizations interested in reporting invasive species.

Invading Species Watch

Interest in the Invading Species Watch program continues to be strong across the province. With the assistance of volunteers from lake associations, as well as our Invading Species Hit Squad, over 120 lakes were monitored across the province for the presence of Zebra Mussel veligers and Spiny Waterflea.

Invasive Species Road Rallies

In partnership with staff from the OIPC, ISAP staff coordinated three Invasive Species Road Rallies in 2011: on August 17 in Oro Medonte in partnership with Couchiching Conservancy; on August 25 in King Township in partnership with staff from the Aurora District MNR office; and on October 5 in Peterborough County in partnership with the Peterborough Stewardship Council. These road rallies resulted in the addition of hundreds of invasive plant sighting records to our Invading Species database.

Water Soldier Control

Efforts to control Water Soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*) in the Trent River continued in the summer of 2011. ISAP staff assisted the MNR in monitoring the Trent River between Healey Falls and Hastings, and in the manual removal of Water Soldier from the shallow invaded bays of the Trent River in mid-August.

In July, ISAP staff coordinated over 25 people in a volunteer monitoring day for Water Soldier on the Trent Severn Waterway between Healey Falls and Hastings. Volunteers were representatives from the OFAH, MNR, Trent University, Fleming College, Lower Trent Conservation, and the general public. This surveillance resulted in the detection of Water Soldier in new areas of the river, as well as the collection of information to provide more detail about the distribution of Water Soldier populations in the Trent River.

Water Chestnut Control

ISAP staff travelled to Voyageur Provincial Park in August to assist MNR and park staff with their Water Chestnut (*Trapa natans*) monitoring and control efforts. Staff manually removed small Water Chestnut populations, as well as assisted with the collection of plants that had been cut prior to their arrival.

Service Canada Summer Jobs Program

OFAH summer students racked up more than 8,700 hours of labor working in positions made possible through funding provided by the Canadian government and partnerships with local host organizations. College and university students were spread out across Ontario, and gained invaluable on-the-job experience in their chosen fields of study.

OFAH summer students contributed to OFAH programs in the following communities:

Invasive Species Awareness: Aurora, Chute a Blondeau, Dorset, Espanola, Finch, Kenora, Kirkland Lake, Lanark, Manotick, Mississauga, Orillia, Oshawa, Parry Sound, Pembroke, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie, Trenton and Utopia. **Bring Back the Salmon** (Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program): Peterborough. **Communications:** Peterborough. **Community Stream Steward Program:** Peterborough. **OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre:** Peterborough. **TackleShare:** Peterborough.





Wildlife Management

Moose Management

The MNR has launched a new moose website, www.ontario.ca/moose, which includes information on moose biology, MNR's Moose Management Program, related specific hunter and harvest information for the past five years, and information pertaining to the resident tag draw.

MNR's development of draft WMU-specific moose population objectives are underway (the number of moose desired in a particular area, including ecological and socio-economic factors). The OFAH has provided a summary of preliminary recommendations for new WMU moose population objectives.

Moose harvesting management strategies are also underway by the MNR (e.g. allowable harvests, harvest management) and consultations should begin in 2012.

The OFAH will continue to seek assurances from the MNR that the frequency and quality of Moose Aerial Inventories (three-year cycle for most WMU's) continue to ensure the best possible assessment data, and will advocate for sub-WMU moose management, since the Bancroft-Hastings elk hunt has demonstrated its feasibility.



Photo: Jim Markou

Bancroft-Hastings Elk Hunt

Draw

- 4,422 applicants with a fee of \$16.95 each, resulted in \$75,000 in revenue to the Special Purpose Account;
- 70 elk seals were available;
- 42 groups of four, seven groups of three, seven groups of two and 14 individuals were successful;
- 65 out of 70 successful draw applicants claimed their seal.

Harvest

- 20 elk (11 bulls, 9 cows) from 70 seals (24 bulls, 46 cows);
- 18 of the 20 harvested elk were brought to voluntary check stations;
- 64 of 65 mandatory reports were submitted (the information is being analyzed and will be summarized);
- the largest bull weighed 600 pounds and was estimated to be five years old;
- 75% of the elk harvested were taken from the two WMU's in which conflict with agriculture occur; and
- 50% of hunters hunted on private land in the hunt area, which was comprised of 50% Crown land and 50% private land.

Next Steps

- complete analyses of detailed harvest reporting;
- continue herd/population monitoring, assessment and research;
- a population survey is planned for early winter 2012, and new tracking collars will be put on additional elk; and
- decisions regarding harvest for the 2012 hunting season will be determined in the spring of 2012 after population assessment and full harvest assessment are completed.

Top Photo: Sabourin



Photo: Randy Therrien



Deer Management

We had hoped that MNR Southern Region would seek our input for the 2011 white-tailed deer antlerless tag allocations; however, our advice was not sought. We had been assured that the MNR Districts in the Southern Region were comfortable with the 2011 allocations, which did not change greatly from 2010 (with the exception of southeastern Ontario that saw roughly a 30-40% increase in tag allocations over 2010).

Elsewhere in the Southern Region, antlerless tag quotas were up 20-30% in central Ontario (WMU's 41, 45, 46, 48, 49, 53A); slightly up (approximately 15%) in WMU's 50, 55B; and down in 43A, 43B, 54, 56, 67, 76, 77 and 81.

In northwestern Ontario, antlerless quotas were decreased in WMU's 6 and 7B; and in northeastern Ontario, antlerless quotas increased in WMU's 28, 36, and 43A and 43B (Manitoulin Island).

We had expected more conservative allocations in 2011 following two consecutive years of significantly reduced harvest, and at least anecdotally reduced numbers of deer encountered by hunters. We have confidence in MNR District biologists' professional judgment, but we will be watching the harvest closely, hoping to have more input in the 2012 allocations than we did in 2011; and we will continue to advocate for improved deer density assessments.

Black Bear Management

We had expected MNR District offices to begin local stakeholder consultations regarding local WMU-specific black bear population estimates and draft objectives in association with the implementation of the Enhanced Black Bear Management Program; but we have had no indication that the districts have begun this important step toward enhanced black bear management. Dialogue with MNR Wildlife Policy Section continues on the topic of the development of a black bear camp license.

Woodland Caribou

Habitat Regulation for Woodland Caribou: Proposed Approach (OFAH Zones A, B and C)

In early 2011, the MNR posted a proposed approach for regulating woodland caribou habitat to the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry (EBR). The OFAH submitted a response that outlined our concerns with the proposed approach of regulating habitat throughout the entire continuous caribou zone (as delineated in the Caribou Conservation Plan). The OFAH agreed that woodland caribou habitat should not be regulated in the discontinuous zone and also strongly opposed the regulation of habitat throughout the entire continuous zone. We recommended that management should focus on the factors that are actually limiting woodland caribou herds and furthermore, that habitat

should only be regulated in areas where it is limiting woodland caribou productivity. The OFAH emphasized the importance of using direct wildlife management for alternative prey (moose and deer) and predators (wolves and black bears) where predation or disease is a limiting factor. This includes the recommendation for maintaining roads that are critical for wildlife management.

The OFAH also submitted a letter to the MNR's Caribou Conservation Section expressing our continued skepticism and concern about current provincial forest management strategies that direct silviculture regeneration toward more uniform conifer stands within the continuous caribou zone. The focus of the letter reiterated our previously stated concerns regarding the threat of invasive forest pests, particularly the mountain pine beetle. The recent conclusion that mountain pine beetle will arrive in Ontario in the next two to three decades underlines the contradiction – and fundamental flaw – of an Ontario forest management direction with the objective of creating, or restoring, large uniform conifer (jack pine) stands for future caribou habitat.

An Alternative Approach for Managing Woodland Caribou in Ontario (OFAH Zones A, B and C)

The OFAH has produced a document, The OFAH Alternative Approach to Managing Woodland Caribou (Boreal Population) in Ontario, which has been widely distributed to relevant bureaucratic and political decision makers, as well as other interested stakeholders. The OFAH has routinely expressed its concerns regarding the management of boreal caribou in Ontario. We have submitted numerous recommendations to the MNR and Environment Canada on how to manage woodland caribou in a manner that minimizes impacts to other traditional activities in northern Ontario. The OFAH Alternative Approach reiterates our long-standing concerns, discusses relevant scientific literature and makes sound, biologically-based recommendations that form a cohesive and comprehensive approach for managing woodland caribou in Ontario. OFAH recommendations are intended to outline strategic direction that will help to prioritize and focus woodland caribou management in a way that optimizes conservation and the multitude of benefits (ecological, economic and social) of other natural resource uses that sound wildlife management can bring.

Federal Recovery Strategy for Woodland Caribou (Boreal Population) in Canada

The OFAH is currently reviewing the Federal Recovery Strategy for Woodland Caribou (Boreal Population) in Canada and will submit its comments and concerns in early 2012.

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs' Agriculture-Wildlife Conflict Strategy

Proposed Wildlife Damage Compensation Program

In April, we responded to OMAFRA's proposed new and updated Wildlife Damage Compensation Program/Conflict Strategy (EBR #011-2677). This consultation follows former consultations with stakeholders through the Human-Wildlife Conflict Advisory Group and with the Agricultural Wildlife Conflict Advisory Committee. At its core, the proposal included expanding the list of livestock that would be eligible for compensation to include: sheep, cattle, horses, donkeys, mules, rabbits, hogs, goats, elk, poultry, deer, bison, fur-bearing animals, llamas, alpacas, ostriches, emus, and rheas. It proposed to update maximum

compensation payments, as current schedules are approximately 25 years old, and expand the list of wildlife. The program would compensate producers for livestock killed or injured by coyotes, wolves, bears, foxes, fishers, cougars, lynx, bobcat, ravens, eagles, hawks, crows, turkey vultures, weasels, raccoon, mink, or elk.

To summarize our response:

- we supported the proposed expanded list of eligible livestock (with the exception of farmed deer and elk);
- we supported the proposed expanded list of wildlife (i.e. cause of damage) with the exception of turkey vultures, suggesting that they include black vultures instead; and
- we supported and echoed the Ontario Federation of Agriculture's (OFA) recommendation that livestock guard dogs be added to the list of eligible livestock.

Announced Wildlife Damage Compensation Program

After the new Wildlife Damage Compensation Program was announced (June 30, 2011), to the surprise of OFAH representatives who had been involved, the program included several alarming species additions that were never part of the original stakeholder consultations, not part of the 2010 Wildlife Damage Discussion Paper, and not part of the EBR (#011-2677) consultation:

- "eligible livestock" includes our native grouse and ptarmigan species;
- "eligible livestock" includes both turkeys (expected) and "wild turkeys;" and
- "eligible livestock" includes lynx, fisher, marten and raccoon.

No one farms these species in Ontario. Their inclusion without disclosure is unacceptable for two major reasons: 1) they were not explicitly mentioned in the consultation; and 2) we are especially concerned about the potential negative impacts, such a "blurring" of the distinction between what is wild and what is farmed could have for wildlife conservation. We subsequently wrote to the Environment Commissioner of Ontario (ECO) to express our concerns, and to request that the ECO join us in convincing the Minister to make these necessary changes to the program as soon as possible.

Big Game Retrieval Using Leashed Dogs

There is nothing that prevents a hunter doing this with leashed dogs in moose WMU/seasons (dogs are allowed in most of these, but must be licensed). However, a large number of southern deer WMU's do not currently allow the use of dogs in hunting, and that has prevented the use of leashed tracking dogs.

We have been having very positive discussions with the MNR to change this situation.

Coyote Biology and Management

We have been very actively involved in coyote hunting and management issues throughout 2011. Though the OFAH is the strongest advocate for effective coyote hunting in the province, views among some houndsmen, trappers, producers and others can be polarizing.

We have been working to help defend community-based coyote hunting contests from the campaigns of several animal rights groups who claim that these contests are "illegal" under s.11 of the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

Proactively, we are working to help producers and trappers obtain new tools for predator control and management, such as enhanced coyote hunting, incentives for coyote hunting, and research into



Photo: Randy Therrien

the value of relaxing cable restraints (nonlethal snares) through a pilot project, which we are confident would demonstrate the value of these for targeting livestock predators in the April 15 to October 15 period.

Our intent to develop a coyote biology and management discussion paper to inform policy has been outpaced by current coyote issues in the media. Emerging case studies and new scientific information about coyote predation and management will be helpful, and will be included in a draft OFAH discussion paper.

Eastern Ontario Coyote/Predation Management Research Pilot

During stakeholder discussions intended to solicit support from producers, municipalities, fur managers, and hunters for a pilot research project to test the effectiveness of trappers using relaxing cable restraints (nonlethal snares) to manage livestock-killing coyotes in southeastern Ontario, OFAH staff and OFAH Zone F representatives have remained steadfast that our position (i.e. support for their use from April 15 to October 15) is the most reasonable middle-ground position.

The implementation of the producer-hoped-for pilot research project has been delayed due to current lack of stakeholder consensus (between trappers involved who want a year-round pilot, and the houndsmen involved who oppose any use of snares).

Falconry – Use of Wild Raptors Proposal

We have worked with the Provincial Falconry Advisory Committee and our member falconers in the Ontario Hawking Club for several years to get Ontario's falconry policy modernized. In May 2011, the Minister of Natural Resources obliged us with a formal EBR proposal to allow for the modest collection and use of common wild birds of prey by falconers who hunt with birds of prey (EBR #011-3058).

Once approved, the policy will allow Ontario's community of licensed falconers to collect and train up to 25 wild raptors



Photo: Martin Geleynse

(total) from five common species. This level of take is well within sustainable limits, and will have absolutely no potential impact on wild populations.

For falconers who hunt with birds of prey, the policy change is very welcome. It brings Ontario's hunting regulations in line with virtually every other North American jurisdiction, it provides falconers with superior birds and birds from species not available through breeders, and it preserves a traditional practice in falconry.

The policy includes a number of important principles:

- captured wild birds are for recreational use only – trade or commerce is prohibited;
- raptors taken from the wild will be identifiable by a permanent leg band; and
- conditions regarding reporting, location of collection, timing, release, etc., will apply.

Raptors would be collected either from nests or trapped on their first migration, using the trapping techniques of bird-banders.

In December, a decision was made to proceed with the proposal (EBR 011-3058) to allow the capture and use of wild raptors for use in falconry practices to hunt small game. The EBR response was significant and overwhelmingly positive (452 responses).

The final policy was amended to address some concerns raised about potential human/wildlife conflict associated with the release of raptors that have been kept for falconry; and thus allow for the "refusal of requests to release some birds used for falconry." In addition, an amendment was made to remove northern goshawk from the list of species allowed to be taken.

Ontario Youth Waterfowl Heritage Day

At the recommendation of the OFAH Board of Directors, we sent a letter to the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) recommending that they designate the Saturday or Sunday before the regular opening of the waterfowl hunt as Ontario Youth Waterfowl Heritage Day.

Waterfowler Heritage Day(s) are presently in effect in a number of provinces across Canada to enhance youth hunting opportunities, and we believe there are substantial benefits to initiating a Youth Waterfowl Heritage Day in the Province of Ontario.

Rationale

- Promotes Youth Hunting Heritage: Encourages the involvement of young people in waterfowl hunting to help ensure the future of hunting for generations to come;
- Recreational: The proposal would provide additional sustainable waterfowl hunting opportunities to young hunters in Ontario;
- Wetland Conservation: Young people introduced to waterfowl hunting at an early age will develop a greater understanding and appreciation of wetland conservation; and
- Safety: Helps ensure a safe and meaningful waterfowl hunting experience for new young hunters.

Ontario Waterfowl Advisory Committee

The Ontario Waterfowl Advisory Committee (OWAC), which includes representation from the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), the MNR, and the OFAH meets annually to discuss management issues relating to hunted species of migratory birds (e.g. waterfowl), and to assist with the development of recommendations to senior management of the CWS and the MNR.

In advance of the meeting in the fall, the CWS prepared and provided a concise assessment on the feasibility of reinstatement of a mourning dove hunting season in Ontario. The assessment



Photo: Dave Allen

not only concluded that a hunt is biologically feasible, it seems to be well supported by many Ontario residents.

Our submission for designating the Saturday or Sunday before the regular opening of the waterfowl hunt as Ontario Youth Waterfowl Heritage Day was also discussed, and there seemed to be general support for designating the Saturday prior to the regular opener.

Wild Turkey Harvest

We met with MNR staff in November to discuss the 2011 wild turkey spring and fall harvest results, mandatory harvest reporting, as well as monitoring and assessment. The MNR indicated that the number of fall wild turkey licence sales has been declining, but this has also been seen in many other United States jurisdictions with a fall season. Overall, the spring and fall wild turkey harvest totals are down again this year, which brings into question whether this is an issue with mandatory harvest reporting compliance or wild turkey biology. We are mutually concerned that mandatory harvest reporting compliance may not be what it used to be.

We will continue to work with the MNR to increase hunter awareness on the importance of harvest reporting through our various media outlets (e.g. *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, *Angler and Hunter HOTLINE*, *Angler and Hunter Radio*, etc.).

Biodiversity Strategy 2011

We contributed significantly to the development of Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy (OBS) 2005-2010, and since that time, have been an active participant on the Ontario Biodiversity Council, the body largely responsible for implementation of the 2005 Strategy.

Through our representation on the Ontario Biodiversity Council, we were involved in the process of renewing the 2011 Strategy and participated in a number of meetings, as well as stakeholder workshops, to solicit comments for updating the strategy. We also submitted written recommendations throughout the process.

In June, we received the final draft for review and endorsement; however, there were still certain aspects of the final draft with which we were not comfortable. We notified the Ontario Biodiversity Council indicating that we would not endorse the document until our concerns were addressed, which prompted a discussion between the OFAH and the Secretariat (MNR). In the interest of reaching a resolution to some of our concerns, specific changes were made to the final document.

There are still statements in the renewed strategy that we find to be, if not misleading, less helpful than they could be; however, we do support certain aspects of the 2011 Strategy. We expect that next steps will include an Ontario Government Response Statement, which will identify items for action within MNR's own biodiversity planning, and provide additional opportunity for public response to the strategy.

Ontario Invasive Plant Council



The OIPC was created in 2007 and is a coalition of government, nongovernment, first nations and academic institutions. The goal of the

OIPC is to enhance communication and partnerships, and increase invasive plant prevention, detection and management in Ontario. Before the inception of the OIPC there was no coordinated provincial response to deal with this issue. The OFAH has taken a lead role in assisting with the development of the OIPC by providing housing and administrative support for OIPC staff, as well as contributing a council board representative. Over the past year, the OIPC has completed the review and revision of its Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan, and has voted to become an incorporated legal entity in 2012.

OIPC Committees

The OIPC has always worked well to meet its objectives through its committees, each working within their area of expertise to move the goals of the council forward. These committees are Policy, Communications, Research/Control and Horticultural Outreach Collaborative. In 2011, a fundraising committee was developed to assist the OIPC in gaining long-term funding support to ensure the sustainability of the council.

Grow-Me-Instead Booklet

The very successful *Grow Me Instead!* (GMI) campaign includes a guide booklet for gardeners which showcases a number of invasive ornamental plants and provides suggestions of noninvasive plant alternatives. Five thousand (5,000) copies of the GMI booklet were printed in March 2011, and distributed at Canada Blooms and through partner organizations. The success of this guide demanded that two additional reprints be made. The first 10,000 copies were quickly delivered to partners for distribution and the second run of 20,000 copies was completed in December 2011. The OIPC also received funds through the Invasive Species Centre to broaden this campaign, and is working to create a northern Ontario edition of the guide.

Canned Landowner Workshops

In partnership with Credit Valley Conservation, the OFAH/MNR Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP) and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), OIPC developed a “canned” landowner workshop to assist landowners in creating invasive species management plans for their properties. Two workshops were held in 2011 in partnership with Victoria Stewardship Council, City of Kawartha Lakes Environmental Advisory Committee, MNR, ISAP, Northumberland County, Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority and Northumberland Stewardship Council.

Input on Provincial/Federal Documents

The OIPC responded to requests for input from the provincial and federal governments and provided comment on the renewed Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, Provincial Giant Hogweed Best Management Practices document, Invasive Alien Species Strategic Plan for Canada, and phytosanitary measures and risk management documents for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The OIPC was also invited to appear before the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable

Development to discuss the importance of a collaborative approach to controlling and managing invasive plants.

Best Management Practices Documents

The MNR contracted the OIPC and partners to lead the development of Best Management Practices (BMP) documents for understanding the biology, identification, and control of several invasive plant species. Following the completion of the Phragmites BMP, documents have also been developed for Giant Hogweed and Dog-strangling Vine, and a Buckthorn BMP is underway.

OIPC 5th Annual General Meeting and Invasive Plant Symposium

The 5th OIPC Annual General Meeting was held on October 13 and 14 at the Isaiah Tubbs Resort in Prince Edward County. The event was a resounding success and helped to enhance partnerships and increase knowledge of invasive plants in Ontario. This year’s event included four field tours, an evening social and a second day filled with speaker presentations and networking opportunities.

Funding

The OIPC Fundraising Committee secured over \$100,000 in core and project funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Invasive Species Centre, and Environment Canada’s Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program. The OIPC also received corporate donations from Hydro One and True North Specialty Products.

Social Media/ Newsletter

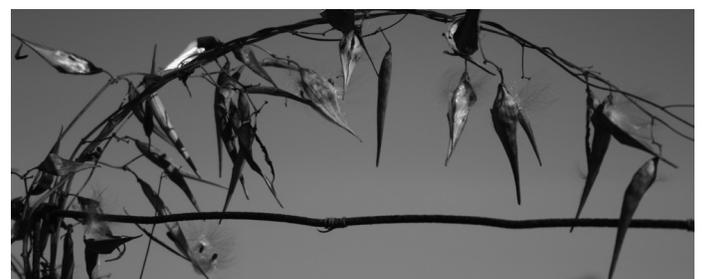
The OIPC continues to distribute monthly updates to a network of over 600 individuals who appreciate receiving information about invasive plant research, control projects, educational material, job postings, conferences, etc., that are being conducted across the province.

The OIPC website (www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca) provides users with up-to-date information including: downloadable educational materials, strategic documents, events calendar, links to other invasive plant sites, Board activity notes, and more. The OIPC also provides daily updates to followers through the OIPC Twitter page (www.twitter.com/OIPCI).

Partnerships

The OIPC partners regularly with over 100 stakeholders in order to develop and deliver the various programs mentioned above. The OIPC knows the importance of collaboration and is therefore proud to be a part of the National Invasive Species Council, which includes representatives from across Canada to deal with invasive species, as well as the Midwest Invasive Plant Network, a group formed by a number of Great Lakes States and Ontario to reduce the impact of invasive plant species in the midwest region.

The OIPC achieved many of its goals and objectives set out in its strategic plan, pursued new partnerships, and continued to move forward to its target of becoming a stronger, more sustainable organization.





Land Use Management & Access

Forest Management Planning

Mazinaw-Lanark Forest, draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan (OFAH Zone F)

The OFAH submitted a response to the EBR posting for the draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan for the Mazinaw-Lanark Forest. Our concerns were focused on the lack of recognition for hunting and fishing. As a result, an OFAH socioeconomic analysis for big game hunting activities in the forest was incorporated into the forest plan. We were also concerned with road management objectives (e.g. road decommissioning) and its potential to adversely impact the accessibility of fishing and hunting opportunities.

Martel Forest, draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan (OFAH Zone C)

The OFAH made a submission to the EBR posting of the draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan for the Martel Forest. The rationale, criteria and cost-benefit analysis of establishing Moose Emphasis Areas (MEA) was the focus of our response. In addition, we expressed strong opposition to using public access restrictions as a substitute for sound fish and wildlife management. The OFAH provided additional socioeconomic information on hunting in the Martel forest that was subsequently included in the final Plan.

Nagagami Forest, draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan (OFAH Zone C)

The OFAH made a submission to the EBR posting for the draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan for the Nagagami Forest and expressed our serious concern with the existing imbalance of road access. The current plan identified eight road use management strategies that restrict access to the Nagagami Forest, including five that directly reduce fishing and hunting opportunities. Current forest road access policies and guidelines are overly restrictive to the public and create an imbalance favoring remote tourism values. Furthermore, we expressed concern with the impact of caribou habitat management on other forest values, particularly moose productivity and Crown forest accessibility.

Lake Nipigon Forest, draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan (OFAH Zone B)

We submitted a response to the EBR posting for the draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan for the Lake Nipigon Forest. The Lake Nipigon Forest contains both continuous and discontinuous

caribou zones (as described in the Caribou Conservation Plan). As a result, many of our concerns focused on the impact of caribou habitat management on other forest values. Moose productivity, Crown forest accessibility, natural disturbance emulation patterns (e.g. clearcut sizes and residual forest patches) and the approach used to establish desired levels and targets for wildlife habitat were among our primary concerns.

Ottawa Valley Forest, draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan (OFAH Zone E)

The OFAH reviewed and submitted comments on the draft 2011 – 2021 Forest Management Plan for the Ottawa Valley Forest. We were primarily concerned with forest road use management strategies, mainly proposed access restrictions and the decommissioning of forest access roads. We were encouraged to see that the plan recognized geographic differences in the productive capacity of the landscape and were managing white-tailed deer and moose habitat according to these differences. In addition, the OFAH was pleased to see specific references to hunting as the rationale for habitat management decisions in the draft plan. We have continuously emphasized the importance of considering the ecological, social and economic importance of hunting and fishing in forest management planning throughout the province; however, it is a relative rarity in the forest management planning process for hunting and fishing to be considered beyond being mentioned as a recreational use of Crown forests.

Lakehead Forest, 2007 – 2017 Forest Management Plan (OFAH Zone B)

The OFAH submitted comments for the review of the proposed operations for the second term of the Forest Management Plan for the Lakehead Forest. Our submission was focused on an area that contains a cluster of naturally reproducing Brook Trout lakes within the Moose Lake Corridor. Timber harvest in the Moose Lake Corridor had originally been proposed for the first term of the plan (2007-2011), but Greenmantle Forest Inc. deferred operations until the second term to provide the Ministry of Natural Resources with time to provide the research and assessment information and/or professional advice on how to proceed. The deferral of operations was due in large part to inadequate direction on groundwater recharge areas (important for Brook Trout reproduction); however, concerns of Brook Trout overharvest and the introduction of invasive species have also been raised by no road/road restriction proponents. The OFAH

recommended that enforcement of existing regulations (e.g. fisheries) and current education programs (e.g. Invading Species Awareness Program) would be the most effective and appropriate mechanisms to protect Brook Trout values in the Moose Lake Corridor. We also recommended that any constructed road in the Moose Lake Corridor should remain open for public use.

Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource-based Tourism

The OFAH, represented by members of OFAH Zones A, B, C and D, participated in focus group sessions hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources in Sudbury and Dryden to review the Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource-based Tourism (Tourism Guide). Information collected from these focus group sessions and other information (forest audits, survey of practitioners, etc.) will be used to report to the Provincial Forest Technical Committee (PFTC) that will act as a review board and advise the MNR's Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Division on how to ensure that MNR's forest management guides are kept current with respect to scientific knowledge and management practices. Using input from the representatives and the OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee, we made a comprehensive submission that outlined the OFAH concerns with the existing Tourism Guide, as well as recommendations on how it could be improved.

Crown Land Use Planning

The Guide for Crown Land Use Planning (2010)

The OFAH submitted a response to the EBR posting for the Guide for Crown Land Use Planning (2010). This guide establishes standards and recommended practices for land use planning carried out by the Ministry of Natural Resources for Ontario's Crown land. This new guide primarily consolidated and updated existing policies and practices of Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy (LUS), as well as provided some new direction. We were concerned with the new policy direction for Enhanced Management Areas (EMA) presented in the guide, particularly Crown forest accessibility and changes related to renewable energy development in EMAs.

Crown Land Use Atlas Harmonization Project (OFAH Zone C)

Since 2006, the OFAH has participated in a land use planning exercise – the Crown Land Use Atlas Harmonization (CLUAH) project that is reviewing the existing land use management direction for all unregulated lands and waters in the MNR's Wawa District. In addition, the project intends to develop a major amendment to the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas that will consolidate the existing land use policies into clear and consistent management direction. Following a year-long hiatus, the project was reengaged in March, 2011 to develop additional option(s) for consideration. The Steering Committee and Working Group developed three additional management options that were posted to the EBR and presented during five public open houses in July 2011 for Phase III public consultation. The options are focused on the designation of two types of EMA – Recreation Access EMAs and Remote Access EMAs.

The OFAH submitted a comprehensive list of recommendations in response to the proposed management options of the EBR posting. The OFAH has long recognized the need for better

recreational land use planning for Ontario's Crown land and has actively worked with the MNR and other stakeholders since the beginning of the CLUAH process. We maintain our support for exercises like CLUAH that attempt to reduce resource user conflicts, but caution the MNR from endorsing a management option that will eventually polarize resource users even further.

We highlighted our concerns regarding the proposed management options and provided recommendations that would reduce the conflict and improve the quantity and quality of hunting and fishing opportunities in the Wawa District. Our comments and recommendations were posted on the OFAH website prior to the end of the EBR comment period for our members to review and use in their personal responses. The final approved management option (selected by the Minister of Natural Resources) was tentatively scheduled to be posted for public comment in the fall of 2011, but the provincial election stalled the project until 2012.

Renewable Energy Development/Natural Heritage Protection

Offshore Windpower Development

In early 2011, the Ontario Government announced that no renewable energy approvals for offshore projects had been issued and no development would proceed while further scientific research is conducted. Current offshore windpower project applications for the Feed-In-Tariff program have been suspended and no new applications are being accepted. The increased incentives afforded to renewable energy projects through the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act* had resulted in a major push to implement the policy and regulations needed to facilitate offshore windpower development. We continue to monitor this issue and advocate for further ecological impact assessments and additional research that will help to fill in existing knowledge gaps related to the impacts of offshore development on freshwater ecosystems.

Natural Heritage Assessment Guide

The OFAH submitted a response to an EBR posting for the Natural Heritage Assessment Guide for Renewable Energy Projects (NHA Guide). The OFAH considers the identification, evaluation and mitigation measures of natural heritage assessment requirements for the proposed NHA Guide to be inadequate. We recommended that the MNR strengthen the requirements for natural heritage assessment confirmation to reduce the current reliance on proponent-driven protection.

Kawartha Region Conservation Authority Watershed Planning and Regulations Policies Manual (OFAH Zone E)

The OFAH submitted comments and recommendations for the Watershed Planning and Regulations Policies Manual for the Kawartha Region Conservation Authority (KRCA). In response to our comments and recommendations, the KRCA added a section that outlines policies that specifically address Significant Wildlife Habitat (SWH). Although SWH has not been identified in the region, the new policies will assist with any SWH identified in the future.

The Kawarthas, Naturally Connected Project (OFAH Zone E)

The OFAH is represented on the Scenario Planning Team for "The Kawarthas, Naturally Connected" project. This project

brings together a diverse group of stakeholders to develop a Natural Heritage System for the Kawarthas. This process will help to create strategies that will focus, prioritize and coordinate conservation efforts on a landscape scale to ensure the long-term maintenance of ecological goods and services provided by healthy, functioning ecosystems. The results of the project will provide greater clarity on how natural heritage features (e.g. significant wildlife habitat, significant woodlands, etc.) are connected and where they are located on the landscape. The results will inform municipalities, conservation authorities and other organizations on the protection of natural heritage features in Ontario.

Parks and Protected Areas

Presqu'île Provincial Park (OFAH Zone F)

The OFAH submitted a letter to Presqu'île Provincial Park and requested an explanation of why active cormorant management did not occur in 2010, as was recommended in the Presqu'île Resource Management Implementation Plan for High Bluff and Gull Islands.

The Ministry of Environment (MOE) received 12 requests for individual environmental assessments. The requests were declined, but the projects within the plan were allowed to proceed with certain conditions, including a statement that culling will be the last method to be used, restrictions on where cormorant management could occur and specific direction to encourage ground nesting. Ontario Parks reissued the final approved Presqu'île Resource Management Implementation Plan with the amended conditions in May 2011.

The OFAH is concerned that these amendments will result in major alterations to cormorant management, which has the potential to have significant adverse ecological impacts, particularly for colonial nesting waterbirds and vegetative communities. A report on Tree-Nesting Colonial Waterbird and Vegetation Monitoring in Presqu'île Provincial Park was released in May 2011. This report shows that cormorant numbers are now similar to 2003 (prior to initial management efforts) and describes their devastating impacts on colonial nesting waterbirds and vegetative communities. We continue to seek answers on this issue and advocate for increased management of cormorants in Presqu'île Provincial Park and throughout Ontario.

Darlington Provincial Park, Controlled Waterfowl Hunt (OFAH Zone E)

OFAH Zone E administers the controlled waterfowl hunt at Darlington Provincial Park. In July 2011, OFAH Zone E submitted a proposal to increase the number of blind locations used for the hunt from seven to nine. The proposed blind locations would provide additional opportunities (up to four hunters per day), unique hunting opportunities (i.e. for diving ducks) and increased

benefits (i.e. revenue). The proposal intended to help maintain participation in the hunt further into the season, because diving ducks visit Darlington later in the fall than most dabbling ducks. The proposal was reviewed and rejected by Ontario Parks.

McLaughlin Bay (Darlington Provincial Park) Restoration Project (OFAH Zone E)

The steering committee for the McLaughlin Bay Restoration Project held multiple meetings between April and October 2011. This project has an overall goal of restoring habitat and improving water quality in McLaughlin Bay. The OFAH sits on the steering committee since McLaughlin Bay is the site of the OFAH-administered controlled waterfowl hunt at Darlington Provincial Park. This hunt represents one of the few remaining public hunting opportunities within the Greater Toronto Area and we want to ensure that project objectives and activities are consistent with maintaining or even enhancing the existing hunting and fishing opportunities in McLaughlin Bay.

Slate Islands Provincial Park (OFAH Zone B)

The OFAH recommended the maintenance of public fishing opportunities associated with the Slate Islands Provincial Park. We asked for quantification of socio-economic contributions of recreational fishing to local communities and recommended that park zoning exercises should not unjustifiably restrict existing fishing opportunities or access to them. The OFAH also recommended that park management planning should include specific population objectives for woodland caribou to ensure the sustainability of the herd and protect the vegetative communities that are impacted by their overabundance. We suggested that overabundant caribou herds on the Slate Islands could be translocated to supplement existing mainland herds, so long as it does not impact hunting and fishing opportunities.

Steel River Provincial Park (OFAH Zone B)

The OFAH recommended the maintenance and enhancement of public fishing and hunting opportunities associated with the Steel River Provincial Park. Furthermore, we recommended that park management planning must quantify the socioeconomic contributions of recreational fishing and hunting to local communities and that park zoning exercises should not unjustifiably restrict existing opportunities or access to them. We also asked questions related to Ontario Parks involvement with the waterpower projects on the Steel River because any future development on the Steel River has the potential to adversely impact the quality of hunting and fishing opportunities inside and outside of the Park. We received reconfirmation from the Honourable Linda Jeffrey, then Minister of Natural Resources, at the OFAH Annual Fish and Wildlife Conference in March 2011 that no waterpower development will occur on the Steel River.

Draft Framework for Canada's National Network of Marine Protected Areas

The OFAH submitted a letter outlining questions and concerns regarding the Draft Framework for Canada's National Network of Marine Protected Areas, particularly the inclusion of the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes already have a comprehensive suite of regulatory mechanisms in place to protect fish and wildlife values, including federal legislation (*Fisheries Act* – Ontario Fishing Regulations, *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, *Species at Risk Act*) and provincial legislation (*Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*, *Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act*, *Endangered Species Act*). We



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Printing and distribution of this bumper sticker was made possible by contributions for this purpose.



believe that Marine Protected Areas (MPA) are redundant in the Great Lakes and will not provide any added value to fish and wildlife conservation, considering they do not provide protection against some of the greatest threats facing the Great Lakes (e.g. invasive species).

National Marine Conservation Area - Lake Superior

The OFAH submitted another request to Parks Canada seeking representation on the Interim Management Advisory Board for the National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) - Lake Superior. Our request for membership has once again been declined as no new seats are being offered on the Interim Management Advisory Board. In a response statement to the OFAH, Parks Canada stated that “nothing in the interim management plan will be impacting the continuing jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario, Ministry of Natural Resources and/or Fisheries and Oceans Canada with regard to the regulation of fisheries or hunting activities in the Lake Superior NMCA.”

Kawartha Highlands Signature Site Park (OFAH Zone E)

In 2011, strategies to achieve management objectives have been implemented in the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site Park (KHSSP). In particular, the introduction of permitting fees for boat caches and motorized vehicle use has raised concerns with OFAH members who fish and hunt in the park. The OFAH strongly advocated for a reduction of the excessive and inappropriate fees that were introduced for boat caches, and has received a tentative agreement from the Ministry of Natural Resources (Ontario Parks) to reduce the fee from \$107.50/boat/year to \$20/boat/year. In addition to the unreasonable permit fees, the OFAH is concerned with who is being targeted – namely anglers and hunters who are not associated with private or tenured property within the park. We will continue to monitor the implementation of permitting fees for other activities (e.g. ATV use) to ensure that traditional hunting and fishing opportunities in the park are not compromised by excessive costs.

Strawberry Island (OFAH Zone D)

Strawberry Island (Manitoulin Island) was purchased by the Nature Conservancy of Canada in 2002 and was recently proposed to be designated as a nature reserve class provincial park. This raised concerns because the previous owners had permitted local residents to hunt on the island for almost 80 years. The OFAH submitted comments and recommendations regarding the EBR posting for Strawberry Island’s designation with particular focus on the loss of socio-economic and cultural benefits associated with hunting. In addition, we emphasized the potential for ecological impacts that are likely to occur in the absence of deer hunting, especially the sensitive vegetative communities for which the nature reserve designation is intended to protect. The OFAH also submitted a letter to the editor of a local newspaper, *The Recorder*, to raise the profile of this issue.

Aggregates

Melancthon Quarry (OFAH Zone H)

The OFAH has made two submissions in response to the application for an Aggregate Licence by the Highland Companies Melancthon Quarry. In April 2011, a submission was made to The Highland Companies (proponent) during the official objection period under the *Aggregate Resources Act* to outline our concerns associated with the potential impacts on valuable coldwater ecosystems and fisheries in the area. The Highland Companies now have two years to address the concerns that were received through the more than 2,000 submitted objections. In July 2011, the OFAH made another submission in response to the EBR posting for the same Aggregate Licence Application. This submission was part of a completely separate process that is intended to influence the decision-making process (by the Ministry of Natural Resources) regarding the approval of the Aggregate Licence Application. The two OFAH submissions shared very similar content. Our EBR submission was one of the more than 3,700 comments received by the MNR. In September 2011, the MNR and Ministry of Environment jointly brought forward a regulation that will make the Highland Companies subject to the full requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act.

Trails

Ontario Trans Canada Trails

The OFAH and Ontario Trans Canada Trails (OTCT) are exploring the potential for OFAH zones, member clubs and affiliated programs to assist in the development and implementation of enhancement projects on sections of OTCT throughout the province. Enhancements are intended to showcase the local activities of the clubs or programs through signage and/or demonstration sites on the trails, as well as through messaging on websites, brochures and other materials. Specific enhancement may actually include habitat restoration adjacent to the trail, awareness of hunting activities for nonhunting trail users and raising public awareness of invasive species. OFAH participation in the enhancement of these trails could provide considerable exposure for the OFAH and OFAH-affiliated activities.

Trail User Safety During Hunting Season Campaign (OFAH Zone H)

Huronian Trails and Greenways (HTG) received a Healthy Communities Fund Grant from the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport to develop a campaign that promotes hunting safety awareness for trail users in Simcoe County, specifically targeting nonhunters. We supported this initiative because of the importance of hunting in Simcoe County Forests and our commitment to the promotion of safe hunting as a valuable recreational activity. On behalf of the hunting community, the OFAH is ensuring that the messaging is accurate and promotes a positive public image of hunting. The goals of the campaign are to help make hunting information accessible to nonhunters (e.g. open seasons), dispel myths about the dangers of hunting for other trail users and describe the ecological and socio-economic benefits.

During the traditional deer hunt in 2011, the project distributed a local media release “Be Safe, Be Seen-safety tips for trail users during hunting season.” Future initiatives of this project include distribution of hunter orange bandanas to trail users, as well as the development and distribution of a promotional brochure.



Ontario Hunter Education Program

Ontario hunters have one of the best safety records anywhere. Mandatory hunter education was introduced in Ontario at the urging of the OFAH in 1960, and since then, more than a million people have been trained to think “safety first” when taking part in the hunt. Working under the direction of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the OFAH administers this important program.

Hunter Education by the Numbers

# of instructors.....	313
Courses run.....	1,850
One-stop courses.....	1,324
Stand-alone courses.....	526
Average # students per class.....	10.75
Average # courses per instructor.....	5.91
2011 students.....	18,505

Program Agreement

We are in the second year of a four-year agreement with the Province of Ontario (through the Ministry of Natural Resources [MNR]), which includes the administration of the Ontario Hunter Education Program (OHEP) and the Wild Turkey Hunter Education Program. There are many new aspects to this agreement, especially in the reporting of revenue and expenses.

Instructor Training

Although no instructor training occurred in 2011, we are working with the MNR to select individuals for training next year. Those chosen for training will need to reside in the geographic areas of the province identified as having a shortage of hunter education instructors. Currently, Toronto, Trenton/Belleville and Cornwall are areas of need for new instructors.

The Toronto area is a priority for new instructors, given its large population, number of inquiries and the distance students are driving to take a course.

We also have an aging instructor base and need to keep ahead of future retirees. Hopefully, we will soon be doing some more training in areas of need in the province where students are looking to take a course.

Assessment Audits

OHEP staff have been developing hunter education course audits as part of an ongoing effort to improve program delivery. The course audit consists of two parts: an instructor knowledge assessment and an anonymous student evaluation of the course delivery. For the student evaluation portion, an online survey program will be utilized which will take approximately five minutes to complete. The survey will provide meaningful data that will be a benefit to the program.

MNR approval was given in November to send out the Instructor “Knowledge Assessment” which has 55 open book questions that instructors have six weeks to complete. By year end, many had been returned for marking.

Hunter Education Conference

The 20th Annual OFAH Hunter Education Instructors Conference was held this past spring in Kitchener, and was a great success with 56 instructors in attendance. A range of speakers spoke on many topics including the MNR detector dog, elk lottery update, an overview of the new hunting regulations and Bill and Kathy Troubridge from Excalibur crossbow who spoke about crossbow hunting for wild turkeys. During the conference, the late Harold Nickel from Kenora, who contributed to his community and the province in many ways, was inducted into the Ontario Hunter Education Hall of Fame. Several years of service presentations were also made, from 10 years of service up to and including instructor Fred Bell’s 50 years of service plaque, which is quite a milestone.

Cross Training

We have met again with the Firearm Safety Education Service of Ontario (FSESO) regarding cross training instructors who are not dually certified. Currently, there are about 35 instructors who teach hunter education only.

Future meetings are planned with FSESO and the MNR to discuss training instructors in geographic areas of need. They have not committed to training all instructors, but are receptive to our input. We hope that at least half of the 35 instructors will be trained in the near future, which will help our programs. FSESO trained a number of new instructors in 2011, the majority of whom were already hunter education instructors.

Young Hunter Education Scholarship (YHES)



In 2011, the Young Hunter Education Scholarship (YHES) Fund again helped many youth take their hunter education course. Since its inception, we have received 544 applications, 428 scholarships have been awarded and 363 recipients have graduated. In total, the YHES fund has provided \$56,940 in scholarship support.

Many thanks go to individual donors as well as OFAH Zones F, H and J, the Grenville Fish & Game Club, National Wild Turkey Federation, the Wildlife Symposium in Perth and the Safari Club International Ontario Chapter and Ottawa Valley Chapter for their donations. Beginning in 2011, Safari Club International committed to donating \$5,000 per year for the next three years in support of Ontario's youth. Special thanks go to Len Dickinson and his continued fundraising efforts for this important initiative.

Young people between the ages of 12 and 17 can apply for financial assistance to help cover the cost of the hunter education course. YHES ensures that financial barriers do not prevent youth from pursuing their interest in becoming a hunter. Single family, low-income homes are the priority recipients, but other factors are also considered. It is worth noting that many instructors generously discount and even waive course fees for those in need.

Through YHES, clubs, groups and individuals can help ensure a bright future for hunting. Visit www.ohp.net to apply for assistance, to make a donation to YHES, or to learn more.

Ontario Wild Turkey Hunter Education

The Wild Turkey Hunter Education Program is delivered by the OFAH for the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). In 2011, the course curriculum and workflow was standardized and improved.

New DVD At-Home Study Course Released

After working with the MNR on the course curriculum, the new home study DVD was launched in April. The Wild Turkey Home Study was promoted on *Angler & Hunter TV*, *Angler & Hunter Radio* and in the *HOTLINE* section of *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*.

Students are able to order the DVD and watch it in the comfort of their home on a computer or television. When the student is ready to take the exam, they must make arrangements with a Hunter Education Instructor and take the receipt they were provided with at the time of purchase. The exam portion of the course will continue to be done under the direct supervision of a Hunter Education Instructor. As an added benefit, students completing their hunter education course can now take the Wild Turkey exam in the same session (subject to instructor participation). Currently over 230 instructors who have indicated they are willing to provide exam opportunities to these students.

Some nonresident students have taken advantage of the Skype option for testing, which has proven to be very convenient.

A lot of effort was put into the development and procedures around instructor testing. Thanks to all instructors who are providing testing to students.

The price of the DVD is \$35.00, the same as the seminar-taught version. After passing the examination, the student is given a copy of the exam form and can purchase a turkey licence at a licence issuer or a Service Ontario location. Between April 1 and year-end, DVD course sales surpassed 3,000 copies.



Other Program Improvements

An exam question which was consistently answered incorrectly was rewritten, and new exams were printed and distributed to all seminar instructors.

Our newly developed computer software program is making it possible to process online course registrations faster and more accurately than ever.

To address language barriers, we hired a bilingual (French and English speaking) Wild Turkey Instructor and had Italian speaking helpers placed strategically at seminar locations to give verbal examinations when required. Test failures decreased as a result of these efforts.

Wild Turkey Course Numbers

In 2011, we trained over 10,000 new wild turkey hunters during the spring sessions. All fall courses were cancelled due to lack of participation, however as expected, the DVDs have become a popular alternative.

The following is a summary of 2011 activity:

Students attending courses (January to April)	7,233
DVD purchases	3,127
2011 total students	10,360

New course venues were added this year, including Newmarket, Guelph and Huntsville. We also introduced evening courses in Peterborough, London and Uxbridge, which were popular. The Peterborough course at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre sold out, London had over 100 registrants, and the Uxbridge course was full. Seminars in Sundridge and New Liskeard were cancelled due to low student numbers.

Visit www.ofah.org/seminars for more information about the Wild Turkey Hunter Education course.



2010 Outreach and Education

With support from our sponsors, partners, members and member clubs, the OFAH hosts a wide range of outreach and education initiatives. We know that engaging youth, women, and families in traditional outdoor activities is the best way to continue our outdoor heritage and inspire tomorrow's conservationists.

OFAH | Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre



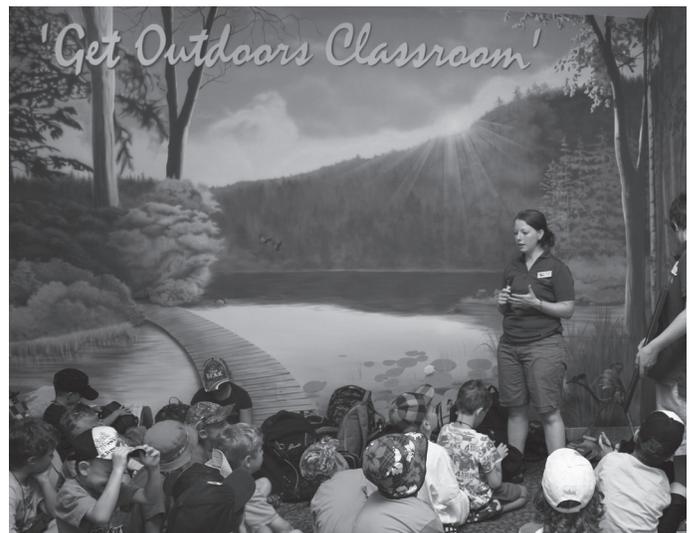
Since the grand opening in April 2010, the Heritage Centre has been a hub of activity for visitors of all ages. In addition to daily tours and special group bookings this past year,

the Heritage Centre also featured a summer speaker series, neighborhood nights, Saturday TackleShare program, and sales featuring OFAH merchandise.

The Centre benefited once again from the generosity of OFAH members who share our passion for celebrating the conservation contributions of anglers and hunters. The Heritage Centre is now the proud home of a world-class antique lure and decoy collection, thanks to OFAH Life Member, Andy Clements. OFAH Life Member Harold McCallum and his wife Pearl also made a lasting contribution to the Centre in 2011. Harold, who passed away late in the year, and Pearl have created a legacy that will be shared with thousands through their \$100,000 sponsorship of the centre's Ontario display.

All three Get Outdoors Summer Day Camp spots were filled this year, as 60 youth participated in activities at the Heritage Centre and offsite, at locations such as the Fleming College Atlantic Salmon Hatchery. Thanks to financial support from OFAH Zone E, the camp will continue to run for the next five summers.

With many strong connections between the Ontario curriculum and our conservation education programs, we had 1,998 students visit the Heritage Centre in 2011 to take part in field trips delivered by qualified education staff. The centre hosted a professional development day workshop for teachers from the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board and our high school programming is set to debut in the spring semester of 2012.



We continue to receive testimonials emphasizing the importance of our unique facility for students to learn about our hunting and fishing heritage. As one teacher writes "... this is one of the best class trips I've been on... it will now be an annual trip."

As the year ended, finishing touches were being put in place on the Stoeger Air Gun and Excalibur Archery ranges in the lower level of the Heritage Centre. Take a virtual tour of the Heritage Centre at www.hfhc.ca.

Shimano Fishing Pond



The Shimano Fishing Pond is part of the Heritage Centre. Summer staff and volunteers were very busy with weekly bookings from a variety of groups, including day cares, retirement homes and special care agencies.

The Shimano Pond was also the site of a special outreach event involving members of the New Canadians Centre in Peterborough. More than 75 guests representing 18 different countries of origin attended the one-day fishing event, and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. For many, it was their first time casting a line and trying out a truly Canadian tradition. Coleman Canada generously provided a camping prize package which the winners were thrilled to receive.

Ontario Family Fishing Events



Twice a year, during February and July, the province declares license-free fishing days aimed at encouraging families to try fishing. During these designated days, Canadian residents do not need to buy the otherwise mandatory fishing version Outdoors Card. Ontario Family Fishing Events are led by a steering committee which

includes representatives from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Canadian National Sportfishing Foundation, Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association, and the OFAH, which chairs the committee and administers the program.



Launched in 1994, the aim of the program is to break down barriers which prevent Canadian residents from taking the initiative to fish in Ontario. By taking part in the license-free days, children and their families discover the fun of fishing and develop an appreciation and respect for our natural resources.

Ontario Family Fishing Events are highly successful at combining license-free fishing periods with volunteer-led community fishing events, and as a result have been repeatedly expanded over their 18-year history. Ontario Family Fishing Events has grown from one weekend in July to a winter weekend encompassing the province's Family Day holiday and a nine-day summer period, including two weekends which coincide with National Fishing Week.

In 2011, event hosts included many OFAH clubs, community groups, service groups and other agencies. We provided promotion and event materials, such as posters, flyers, fishing booklets and participation certificates. We also provided a free draw for children, in which one young winner was randomly drawn from all coloring pages submitted to win a fishing package. Visit www.familyfishingweekend.com to learn more or follow the program on Facebook and Twitter.

OFAH TackleShare



OFAH TackleShare®

a decade, the OFAH has provided fishing gear free of charge to beginners who do not have their own equipment. OFAH

OFAH TackleShare is a province-wide program initiated by the OFAH in response to requests from people who were interested in fishing, but had no idea how to get started. For more than



TackleShare distributes gear to loaner sites, such as public libraries, Ontario Parks, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and other community locations. These locations in turn loan out the equipment to new anglers, similar to the way that library materials are loaned to readers. Thousands of children and families have borrowed gear and experienced the thrill of fishing through using OFAH TackleShare equipment.

OFAH Travelling TackleShare

In addition to the stationary loaner sites, TackleShare also offers Travelling TackleShare, a mobile component of the program. Travelling TackleShare delivers a free three-hour interactive workshop that teaches the public about fish identification, aquatic habitat and the threat of invasive species to freshwater ecosystems, as well as fishing techniques. Over 600 people participated in the workshop this summer, and the feedback was positive, with many wanting more education. The workshop concludes with an introduction to fishing techniques and the opportunity to go fishing onsite, using rods and reels provided by TackleShare.

For the second year in a row, Ontario Power Generation has been TackleShare's title sponsor, which enabled Travelling TackleShare to host eight events across the province, travelling over 10,000 kilometers during the summer. Lucky Strike, Walmart, KTL Canada, Shimano, Shakespeare, and Berkley, also provided significant support for this program. Visit www.tackleshare.com to learn more or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.





Women's Outdoor Weekend



For the past 17 years, the OFAH has been actively supporting women's growing interest in hunting, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits through our Women's Outdoor Weekend program. Many women have expressed interest in making the

outdoors a greater part of their personal and family lifestyle but did not know how to get started. The OFAH initiated the Women's Outdoor Weekend to break down this barrier and is the only provincial program of its kind to do so.

The three-day weekend has participants enjoying a series of activities such as archery, fly tying, fishing, target shooting, high ropes course, wood carving, game calling, wild game cooking, and outdoor survival. Every year, over 100 participants and volunteers converge on the Kinark Outdoor Centre near Minden for a full weekend in the outdoors. Cabin-style accommodation, delicious meals, and entertainment make for a memorable experience for all. Visit www.ofah.org/wow to learn more, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

OFAH Get Outdoors

Summer Leadership Camp



Once again, great kids, hardworking staff and amazing volunteers made the OFAH Get Outdoors Summer Leadership Camp the envy of all other conservation-minded organizations. This four-day adventure for OFAH youth members combined activities

which included leadership, conservation education, fishing, target



shooting, fly tying, archery, kayaking, canoeing, game calling, evening camp fires, night hikes and much more. No other summer camp delivers so much programming for such great value.

This year, 180 campers and volunteers celebrated the 10th anniversary of Get Outdoors camps, a huge leap from the 30 campers who registered for the very first camp. We appreciate all of the great volunteers who give up their vacation time to help OFAH staff with every aspect of the camp. Visit www.getoutdoors.org/camp to learn more, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Youth Leadership Conference

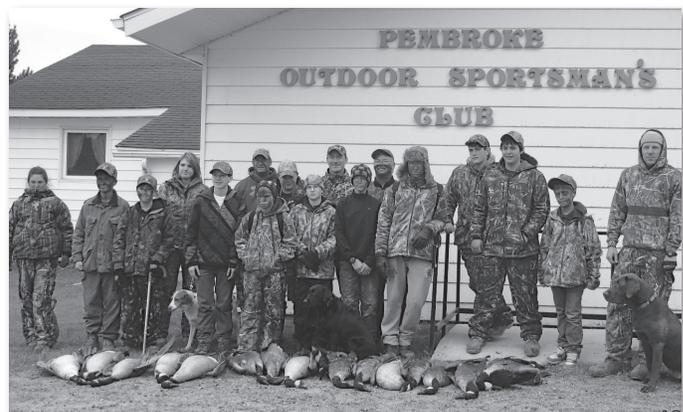
For nearly a decade, the OFAH Get Outdoors Program has welcomed youth to its Leadership Conference, held in conjunction with the OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference. In 2011, the youth conference welcomed an enthusiastic group of participants who packed in a full three days of activities. They took in the Toronto Sportsmen's Show, visited a hatchery, and learned how maple syrup is made. At the Islington Sportsmen's Club, they tried fly tying, archery, and target ranges (under supervision). Visit www.getoutdoors.org/conference, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



Youth Hunting

Modern-day lifestyles and landscapes have changed over the past 50 years. Today's youth do not have the hunting opportunities that their grandparents did, and spend increasingly more time interacting with electronics such as video games and hand-held communications devices. Our youth are at risk of being disconnected from nature.

In 2011, the OFAH began to work in partnership with the Elgin, Perth, and Middlesex Stewardship Councils to develop a youth hunting program throughout Ontario. The aim is to support and



encourage prospective young hunters who want to try hunting, but have no one to mentor them.

OFAH clubs who want to host a youth hunting event can order a kit that includes everything they need to successfully plan and implement one, including a DVD copy of Ontario Stewardship's Youth Hunting Day Planning Tool Kit.

This is a great opportunity to help youngsters get started. No matter how small a youth hunting event is, it can be an important event in a young person's life.

OFAH Wild Turkey Registry



In 2011, 138 people registered their birds in the OFAH Wild Turkey Registry. The top typical score was held by Richard Iles whose Chatham-Kent bird scored 75.60. The top atypical score was held by Rob Cameron for his Norfolk bird, at a whopping 95.88.

Wild Turkey Registry pins and certificates were sent to all 2011 participants in November. Thanks to Walmart for supporting this program in 2011.



Ontario Angler Awards



The OFAH Ontario Angler Awards (OAA) is a province-wide program that promotes and recognizes recreational fishing efforts by resident and nonresident anglers.

OAA entries are showcased online.

Thousands visit www.ontarioanglerawards.com annually, generating tremendous profile for the OFAH and program sponsors, including Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows, Shimano, G-Loomis, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, and the MNR.



OFAH Record Fish Registry

The OFAH Record Fish Registry is the official registry for recreational anglers who land the most remarkable fish in Ontario waters. The angler of each new record receives a beautifully hand-crafted, hand-painted, fiberglass replica of their fish created by internationally acclaimed Advanced Taxidermy and Wildlife Design. In 2011, Angelko Prepolec of Tecumseh landed a new Ontario Record Yellow Perch on Lake St. Clair weighing in at 2.45 pounds. Current record replicas are on display at the OFAH|Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre.

To learn more, visit www.ofah.org/fishresources



ANGLERS & HUNTERS

"The Voice of Anglers and Hunters"



OFAH Membership

Members are the lifeblood of the OFAH. The Federation was formed by conservation-minded anglers and hunters 83 years ago, and remains strong to this day through the loyalty and dedication of its members.

Membership Growth

2011 marks one of the most successful years in OFAH history, particularly in terms of membership retention and growth. This year, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters broke two membership records; a record set in March with 84,806 members and then in November with the highest ever OFAH membership record of 84,867. Congratulations to every single OFAH member involved in this stellar membership record that ultimately drives the success of all OFAH programs and initiatives.

As always, our success in membership retention and growth is the result of a solid team effort by OFAH members who work diligently to remind fellow anglers and hunters about the importance of an OFAH membership. Even the best featured membership promotions cannot compare to the powerful influence from one hunter to another when they ask, "are you an OFAH member?"

The power of testimony and pride in OFAH membership is our greatest membership sales tool. "One member at a time" is the grassroots recruitment approach that has made the OFAH the envy of membership-based organizations from across Canada and beyond. Many of the country's leading nonprofit professionals who share experiences through the Canadian Society of Association Executives confess absolute awe of the Federation's humble and unprecedented membership retention and growth rate. Clearly, the OFAH is successful not only because of our highly diligent member service-oriented staff and our strategic sponsor-supported membership campaigns; we are successful because our members intrinsically care about promoting their membership in an organization that represents their fishing and hunting way of life.

Member Services

Monthly Giving

Through the OFAH Monthly Giving Program, OFAH members keep their membership current and contribute to conservation in Ontario. In 2011, contributions from this program exceeded \$365,000. In addition to the convenience of automatically donating



a fixed amount monthly, all members in this program receive a tax receipt for the donation that exceeds their membership cost.

OFAH Life Members

Life members are among the most dedicated and loyal supporters of our fish and wildlife conservation work. This exceptional group grew again in 2011—we now have 533 Life Members.

OFAH Member Club Growth

As 2011 closed, the OFAH had over 670 OFAH member clubs. We regularly receive inquiries from new clubs about becoming affiliated with the OFAH, with most of the interest around the no-cost club liability insurance coverage that comes with an OFAH membership. *It is very important to all current and future clubs that they maintain 100% affiliation with the OFAH for their insurance coverage to be valid.*

Member Benefits

Brokerlink Insurance

Insurance with Brokerlink (Angler & Hunter Insurance) is a valuable added benefit to members of the OFAH. Thousands of OFAH members took advantage of great insurance rates on home, auto, ATV and snowmobile insurance needs during the year. In 2011, Brokerlink held two draws and gave away a Polaris ATV and a Lund boat package to two lucky OFAH members, simply for calling in for a "no obligation" quote on insurance.

The OFAH was extremely pleased to announce the launch of the OFAH/Brokerlink Fish and Wildlife Conservation Internship, which will be awarded for the first time in 2012. This five-month position will enable the successful candidate to gain practical work experience in the fish and wildlife field at the OFAH.

Mark's Work Wearhouse

We were excited to learn that the OFAH was rated as one of Mark's Work Wearhouse's top 30 affinity partners in 2011, thanks to the many OFAH members who use their Mark's discount card when shopping. Be sure to show your discount card on all purchases; even if the item is on sale, the OFAH will receive credit for that purchase. Mark's Work Wearhouse donates a percentage of the total merchandise sales from OFAH members back to the OFAH each year. Please continue to show your card with each and every purchase, and we will continue to see that annual growth. If you need a card, please call us and we will send you one right away.

AIL

AIL offers a \$4,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy to OFAH members, as well as additional policies, such as final expense planning and term life insurance. AIL also offers in-person appointments with AIL agents to select OFAH members following contact by mail.

BMO

We are always exploring new ways of promoting and recruiting new cardholders. The BMO Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters MasterCard is the perfect card for the outdoor enthusiast. Every time you use your BMO Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters MasterCard, a portion of that purchase goes directly back to the OFAH to support fish and wildlife conservation work, as well as to support angling and hunting in Ontario. Visit www.ofah.org for more details.

TSC Stores

The OFAH is extremely excited to announce the expansion of the TSC Stores partnership to include an annuity program, where TSC Stores will donate a percentage of all OFAH member sales back to the OFAH each year. Please make sure you show your discount card with each purchase, as the OFAH will be credited with the sale, no matter what you purchase. On top of that, TSC continues to offer all members a 15% discount on many products in the store as well as the TSC monthly special, which is only available to OFAH members. Be sure to check out the monthly special on our main webpage at www.ofah.org. If you need a card, please call us and we will send you one right away.

The Brick

OFAH members continue to enjoy savings of 10 to 40% on purchases at the Brick. Be sure to show your card with each purchase, as the OFAH is credited with all sales, even if the item is on sale. If you don't have a card, please let us know.

Manulife Financial

OFAH members continue to save on health and dental costs and have the opportunity to select from a variety of different coverage options offered through Manulife Financial. From health and dental plans to life insurance policies, Manulife Financial is eager to assist you with your needs. Manulife Financial donates a percentage of sales back to the OFAH each year.

Affinity Partner Recruitment

We are always on the lookout for quality affinity partners that can offer our members discounted prices on products and/or services that they regularly purchase. If you know of such a company, please pass the information on to us.

Great North Wildlife Affiliates (GNWA) - Public Liability Insurance

No changes were made to the individual coverage provided by the GNWA or the insurance rate of the policy for 2011. The GNWA consists of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

Great North Wildlife Affiliates (GNWA) - Club Liability Insurance

We were pleased to announce the additional \$2 million liability umbrella policy that is now available to our affiliated clubs. This coverage is for club liability and/or range coverage. As always, we are reminding our clubs that they must maintain 100% affiliation with the OFAH for their club coverage to be valid (every member of the club must be an OFAH member).

Sustaining Members

GOLD: AIL, Canada Allen Insurance Group, Bass Pro Shops, Big Foot Shoe Clinic, BoaterExam.com / HunterExam.com, BrokerLink, Cabela's, Cedar Valley Hunting Supply, Coleman Canada, DT Powersports, etfs, Excalibur Crossbow Inc., Fox 40 International Inc., Graywood Sporting Group Inc., Imagewear Johnson Outdoors Canada Inc., Le Baron Outdoor Products, Magnetic North Sporting Goods, Ontario Stewardship, Pure Fishing (Berkley), Realstar Hospitality, TSC Stores, Shimano Canada Limited, Stoeger Canada Ltd., Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Toronto Sportsmen's Show, Zeiss Sports Optics (Gentec International)

SILVER: Northern Ontario Aquaculture Association, The Brick

BRONZE: Commercial Press & Design Inc., Grant Custom Products, Idris Insurance Brokers Ltd., Long Point Region Conservation Authority, Long Point Waterfowl, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, Ontario Drive and Gear Ltd., Ruffed Grouse Bistro, The Vincent Press Ltd., W.I. Villager Ltd.

83rd OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference



The 83rd OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference welcomed over 500 delegates to the Delta Meadowvale Resort and Conference Centre in Mississauga in March. In addition to the annual general meeting, the three-day event featured speakers on a range of outdoor-related topics, award presentations, delicious food,

and great entertainment. The Honourable Linda Jeffrey, Minister of Natural Resources, gave the traditional Friday morning presentation. On Saturday, conference attendees took in the Toronto Sportsmen's Show and later enjoyed Ontario Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller's keynote address at the gala awards banquet.

New for 2011, the Friday speaker series was livestreamed over the Internet, and questions for Minister Jeffrey were accepted online as well as from audience members.

The OFAH Get Outdoors Youth Leadership Conference also welcomed an enthusiastic group of youth from 8 to 18 years of age for two days of activities and field trips.



Fundraising

OFAH members and member clubs help raise funds that make fish and wildlife conservation initiatives possible.

37th Annual OFAH Conservation Lottery

The OFAH Conservation Lottery is our largest fundraiser and a terrific way to support the OFAH and conservation. Once again, lottery winners took home fantastic prizes while supporting conservation efforts in their communities and beyond. The 37th lottery grand prize winners hailed from Sharbot Lake, Massey, Marathon, Toronto and Listowel. A complete list of winners was posted at www.ofah.org and was printed in the August *HOTLINE*. The line-up of prizes totaled almost \$300,000, thanks to Dodge (Chrysler Canada) our major vehicle sponsor, G3 who provided boats, and Yamaha who continued their sponsorship with ATV's and outboard motors.

Anyone selling more than five books of tickets was eligible to order *Scrapeline Buck* by Trevor Tennant. An impressive 1,850 members ordered this limited edition print and 245 members took advantage of the exceptional offer to have the print framed.

In April, the OFAH signed a new three-year agreement with Chrysler Canada. We are pleased and proud to have the continued support of Chrysler Canada and their excellent dealer base.

Thanks to all who helped sell over 413,000 tickets for the 37th lottery. Clubs don't need to apply for a license or pay a fee to sell OFAH lottery tickets and can receive \$6 for every book sold. What a great way to support the OFAH and conservation!



OFAH Ontario Wildlife Calendar and Christmas Cards

The 2012 OFAH Ontario Wildlife calendar was mailed in September and featured a total of 41 member photographs; eight of which were selected to appear as featured months. Donations for the 2012 Ontario Wildlife Calendar continued to pour in until year end, with an average donation of \$18. Christmas card sales generated approximately \$21,000.



Merchandise

Our members continue to show their dedication to the OFAH by purchasing merchandise and wearing OFAH branded apparel.

Nevada Lottery

2011 was the second year of a two-year licence, with 19 open and active locations. We saw sluggish sales of break open tickets, as did other charities in this sector of the charitable gaming industry. We will be meeting with our service providers to pursue options for increasing our ticket selling locations, and we have participated in meetings hosted by the Ontario Charitable Gaming Association. Provincially, the Association has been conducting research with players, retailers and charities, in order to produce a marketing plan for revitalizing sales. They have formulated some interesting ideas and we are hopeful that some positive changes will be in place within the next year.

Net proceeds from 2011 were used to support the OFAH/Ringwood Fish Culture Station. Our 2012 proceeds are earmarked for OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre educational programs.

Conservation Dinners

The OFAH Conservation Dinner Program brings outdoor enthusiasts together in an entertaining and energetic atmosphere, to celebrate conservation and raise critical funding for local and provincial fish and wildlife projects. In 2011, the OFAH assisted with five fundraising dinners that generated approximately \$96,000, of which 85 percent was returned to participating committees to support local conservation projects.



Government Affairs & Policy

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.

Algonquin Land Claim

The Algonquin Land Claim continued to occupy a great deal of our time and attention in 2011.

Despite public announcements at the Committee of External Advisors in January indicating that an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) would not be achievable in 2011, we received information that negotiations on several chapters of the AIP, including the harvest chapter, were continuing at the direction of the Premier, and that a tentative final draft of the harvesting chapter could soon be reached and the promised public workshops were not likely to occur.

The OFAH immediately wrote to the provincial Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to protest this action and request an update on what was currently being negotiated. A subsequent phone call from the Minister's staff denied the rumors and maintained that a public consultation process would be followed. However, the Minister responded that "once an AIP is reached and then ratified by all three parties, much effort will be required thereafter, including extensive public engagement, to infill the detail of what will be contained in a final settlement agreement." We wrote to the Minister in July, expressing our profound dissatisfaction over the process and the absence of public consultation before the AIP is signed and ratified, as promised previously by staff and the Chief Provincial Negotiator. The federal Minister continued to maintain that public consultation must occur before the AIP is signed.

In January, we met with senior MNR staff assigned to the land claim to receive an update on the file and pass along our concerns about the province's insistence on settling the AIP by spring 2011. At that time, we were informed that the province was backing away from its commitment to meet a spring deadline, and was now focused on achieving an AIP some time in 2012, which is good

news. It brings the province in line with the federal government's timeline, and provides a better opportunity for full consultation with affected parties.

In February, the Committee of External Advisors (CEA) met in Pembroke for an update on the land claim, and had it officially reaffirmed that the province had changed its timeline. The federal negotiator also reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to full consultation and their belief in fair sharing as the underpinning of any agreement. Indications at the time were that the CEA would be utilized more fully in the year ahead, as more comprehensive consultations occur; although neither government made it clear how they intend to consult.

The OFAH met with Brian Crane, Chief Negotiator for Ontario, who offered to facilitate a meeting between the OFAH, the Algonquin Principal Negotiator Bob Potts, and Chief Kirby Duckworth of the Algonquin. We also met for the second time with Chris Bentley, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and thanked him for his assistance in delaying the AIP, and left him with a series of questions that needed answering.

In March, we met with senior MNR staff for a comprehensive two-hour meeting on the claim. Several major issues were discussed and we left questions for them to answer.

The OFAH and the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association presented a joint briefing to the members of the federal Conservative Northern and Eastern Caucus in Ottawa. A similar briefing for Conservative MPP's at Queen's Park took place in April.

Throughout the summer and fall we met with several parties, including the full Algonquin Band Council, Chief Federal Negotiator/Chief Provincial Negotiator, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs Negotiations Branch, the Algonquin negotiator, and Committee of External Advisors.

In June, the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs appointed Ron Doering as the new federal chief negotiator on the Algonquin claim. Unlike previous chief negotiators, Mr. Doering, an Ottawa lawyer, is not a civil servant and reports directly to the Minister.

In late fall, there was significant change at the Committee of External Advisors (CEA) with the sudden retirement of the Chair of the CEA, and the Natural Resources Advisor to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The government also tendered the contract for the Chief Provincial Negotiator, and Brian Crane, who has been the Chief Provincial Negotiator since 1997, was required to reapply for his position. This is likely to be resolved in 2012.

In November, the OFAH was told that a draft of the harvest chapter of the AIP was ready. At the request of the federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, we anticipate that we will be consulted on the harvest chapter before the federal negotiator and Minister agree to sign off. We have been told that a significant amount of Crown land is included in discussions with the Algonquin, plus a significant amount of money. The lands under discussion are broken down into any smaller parcels throughout the claim area.

Both the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs continued to promise public meetings, but nothing had transpired before the end of the year. The OFAH pushed for the promised consultations in the new year.

The Government of Ontario appears to be resistant to including designated species in the AIP, even though many other AIP's contain very specific numbers for each species. Recent information indicates that the MNR wants to determine what the Algonquin want, and will then try to sell it to nonaboriginal stakeholders.

At year's end, there was no indication from the Ontario negotiator about what the public interests are and how these will be represented at the table. This may result in an accusation of bad faith being filed against the province during the EA process. There remains a serious need for detailed discussions to occur for the process to work. The federal government is pushing the province hard on these issues, but Ontario continues to remind them that natural resources are a provincial jurisdiction. This ignores the fact that unless the federal minister and chief federal negotiator are prepared to sign the AIP, there will be no deal.

According to the Chief Federal Negotiator Ron Doering, some of the materials produced by the OFAH in the past have been captured in the documents being discussed. The federal government also continues to insist that the OFAH and others be consulted before the process goes forward. Mr. Doering also informed us that the Appeal Court overturned the lower court ruling in favor of the Ardoch First Nation, and denied their request for funding to mount a challenge against the province, the claim process itself and the application by the MNR of the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

It is expected that the pace of negotiations will accelerate in 2012.

Bill C-19 An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (Ending the Long-gun Registry Act)

The firearms community was profoundly disappointed with the loss of Bill C-391 in late 2010, due to last minute defections of several opposition members who previously supported the bill.

With the election of a majority federal Conservative government on May 6, the expectations of the firearms community across the country increased. Several groups pressured the government to scrap all of C-68, while others issued a list of demands that stopped short of that position, but included a number of changes to the Firearms Act and Criminal Code beyond the scrapping of the long gun registry that was promised by the government during the election and contained in the Speech from the Throne.

The Outdoor Network held a conference call in May to discuss go-forward positions on the firearms file. The members of the network, including those whose demands far exceed what the government has committed to, agreed to funnel their requests through the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee (CFAC), of which the OFAH is a member, and to refrain from touting their cause through the media and other public channels.

In July, the CFAC held a conference call with Candice Hoepfner, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and National Security. Ms. Hoepfner, author of the previously defeated Bill C-391, was given the lead on developing government legislation to scrap the long gun registry.

A key addition to any new bill would be the destruction of the registry records. If not destroyed and accessed by a provincial government, it would be relatively easy and inexpensive for a provincial registry to be established. Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia indicated some interest in creating a provincial registry if the federal government moves forward with its plan to scrap the long gun registry. The destruction of the records would make the establishment of a provincial registry cost prohibitive (\$6 billion), and result in an incomplete registry that only accounts for a portion of the firearms in private hands across Canada.

On October 25, 2011 the federal Minister of Public Safety and National Security introduced Bill C-19, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (Ending the Long-gun Registry Act)*, legislation designed to scrap the long gun registry



STOP THE WASTEFUL LONG GUN REGISTRY

Printing and distribution of this bumper sticker was made possible by contributions for this purpose.



and provide for the destruction of all data associated with that system. The OFAH was asked to emcee the media announcement of the bill at a farm outside of Ottawa, along with the Minister of Public Safety, the Minister of Small Business, Candice Hooppner, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister and the local MP. Several stakeholder representatives, including one from the OFAH, spoke at the media launch, which was covered live by all national media, including Global, CBC and CTV.

The bill received Second Reading on November 1, and was sent to committee for hearings which occurred the second and third week of November. The OFAH appeared as a witness before the committee on November 15, and the bill was reported back to the House of Commons on November 30 with no amendments.

The government signaled its intention to move forward quickly with the bill once the House returned.

National Fish and Wildlife Advisory Panel

In November, the OFAH was invited to meet with the Director General of the Canadian Wildlife Service to provide input and advice to the government around the creation of the National Fish and Wildlife Advisory Panel. The initiative was originally proposed as the Wildlife and Hunting Panel, however we believe that our recommendation to move to include fish in the scope of the panel has been accepted.

The panel, which was announced by the Prime Minister during the last federal election campaign, was initiated by the OFAH. We are one of only two stakeholders consulted on the panel to date, and continue to be the organization most heavily involved in the creation of this body.

Bill C-261, An Act Respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day

Conservative MP Rick Norlock (Northumberland-Quinte) is the author of this bill, which has been introduced in the House on previous occasions. Bill C-465 was approved by the House of Commons in December 2010, but the dissolution of Parliament meant that all legislation died. Bill C-261 was introduced in June, 2011. This private members bill enjoyed all party support in the House and it is hoped the bill will pass and be given Royal Assent before the end of 2012.

Federal Animal Cruelty Legislation (Bills C-229 and C-230)

In anticipation of the federal election, the Humane Society and World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) sent surveys

to all MP's seeking support for MP Mark Holland's two private member's bills which had been sitting on the Order Paper for almost two years. Both bills sought to expand the fines and punishments for animal cruelty, similar to several Liberal government bills that we worked to defeat from 1998 to 2008. Holland's bills died once Parliament was dissolved and the election was called.

The OFAH supports increased fines and penalties for animal cruelty that do not impact on hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, or medical research. This balance was achieved through our work on Bill S-203 in 2008.

Federal Animal Cruelty Legislation (Bill 232)

On June 16, 2011, Peggy Nash, NDP MP Parkdale-High Park, introduced Bill C-232, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals)*. Although the bill omits much of the offensive language and requirements of previous Liberal and NDP private member's bills, it contains a number of clauses that cause us concern. Ms. Nash's bill is expected to come before the House of Commons for Second Reading debate some time in 2014. The animal use community is fully engaged on this legislation, and is prepared, as before, to fight for this bill, which the OFAH will oppose.

Explosives Act

The OFAH attended a meeting with senior staff at the Explosives Branch, Department of Natural Resources, to discuss changes to the *Explosives Act* impacting on ammunition.

The proposed amendments, which have since been enacted, will loosen the restrictions on hand loading regulations and stored materials, and are broadly supported in the firearms community. The OFAH sent the federal Minister of Natural Resources a letter of support, as did the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the British Columbia Wildlife Federation, and the Canadian Shooting Sports Association.

Meeting with Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Assistant Deputy Minister

In October, the OFAH met with the DFO Assistant Deputy Minister to discuss the National Alien Invasive Species Strategy, our role around invasive species, shortcomings in the act, suggestions for change, and the OFAH funding proposal for a National Invasive Species Outreach and Public Education Program. Since 2003, we have been pushing the federal government to fund a national program under the aegis of the OFAH, who would develop the material and coordinate the delivery of the program with our fish and wildlife affiliates across the country.

In 2003, 2005 and 2007, we submitted a budget to the federal government for the national program. In 2003 and 2005, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans recommended to Parliament that the program be funded for \$1.4 million per year for five years. In the 2010-2015 work plan, we requested funding of \$333,000 per year for five years in matching funding. None of these larger requests have been met, even though DFO is providing funding of \$30,000 per year for five years, and funding is being received from Environment Canada. It is hoped that this meeting will help to move the funding request forward and finally result in substantial dollars for the OFAH national program.

Meeting with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

Acting on a commitment made by the Minister's staff in May 2011, the Honourable Keith Ashfield, the newly appointed Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, met with the OFAH in October. Topics covered included the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, Sea Lamprey control, the OFAH national invasive species proposal, federal regulations on Asian Carp, fish passage, fish habitat protection, amendments to the Fisheries Act, the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA), and Canada's national framework of Marine Protected Areas.

The Minister made no commitments, but promised future meetings and consideration of our funding requests.

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs – Negotiations Workshop

In September, the OFAH, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Georgian Bay Association participated in a panel discussion at the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The audience included all senior staff in the Negotiations Branch of the Ministry who were seeking stakeholder feedback on the negotiation process itself, with particular concern for shortcomings or gaps. The OFAH addressed major themes including conservation and resource sustainability, fair sharing, harvest allocations, definition of conservation, enforcement, designated versus nondesignated species, access, public lands transfer and major court decisions.

Municipal Discharge Bylaws and Sunday Gun Hunting

In March, the **Township of Severn** approved Sunday gun hunting, which resulted after an OFAH-generated petition garnered over 500 signatures in the area. We also provided two presentations to Council.

The **County of Brant** continued to make changes to its proposed discharge bylaw. OFAH head office and OFAH Zone J had the opportunity to play a role in the process. Senior staff at the municipality worked in good faith to try to accommodate our concerns. While the discharge bylaw that emerged was not perfect, it is substantially changed from the one that was first presented to Council, contains language that we can accept, and will not impact in a meaningful way on the ability to hunt and discharge firearms in the County of Brant.

The **Townships of Loyalist, Brockton and Machar** all approved Sunday gun hunting and were added to the provincial list effective September 2011. We also created petitions for circulation in several municipalities southwest of Parry Sound, where it is anticipated that public meetings on adopting Sunday gun hunting will occur in the future.

In **Beckwith Township**, Council indicated that the issue was brought to them by local hunters too late to consider for the fall hunting season. They commissioned a poll for the fall and committed to making a decision either way on Sunday gun hunting before Christmas, however this did not occur. It is expected that the issue will come before Council in 2012.

Zorra Township Council initiated changes to their noise bylaw that could have a significant negative impact on the Tavistock Rod



& Gun Club, an OFAH member club with 186 members. Despite efforts by the club to reach a compromise with local neighbors and municipal officials, the threat of court action by the municipality remains a possibility. At the core of the dispute is the attempt by Council to apply provincial noise level standards to the club.

The **Municipality of Clarington** approved a new noise bylaw, which impacted two non-OFAH shooting clubs by imposing new curfews and decibel levels. At the request of the Orono Rod & Gun Club we wrote to Council outlining the club's long history in the area. To comply with the new bylaw, the Orono club has installed a new berm and noise baffles, which have reduced the sound considerably, and brought it in line with the new local standard.

The **Township of West Lincoln** was asked to revisit the issue of Sunday gun hunting in May, but voted against doing so at that time.

In the spring, members living in the area of La Salle approached us for assistance in achieving a bow hunt for deer. The municipality currently does not allow hunting with firearms, and only allows the use of bows and crossbows for target practice on private lands, despite having an increasing problem with an overabundance of deer. In July, the OFAH Zone J Chair spoke in support of the request, however Council rejected a bows only deer hunt on private land.

Prior to the last municipal elections, the **Township of Springwater** introduced two draft bylaws; one relating to the discharge of firearms and the second a draft noise bylaw. These documents were the focus of a large public meeting, at which the OFAH, the Canadian Shooting Sports Association (CSSA), and others spoke in opposition. Council agreed that the bylaws were flawed and would be withdrawn.

The new Springwater Council continued to look at the issue, and in spring 2011, released two new noise/discharge of firearms draft bylaws for public consideration and consultation. The OFAH sent support materials to the Barrie District Hunters and Anglers Conservation Club, an OFAH member club, and the OFAH Zone H Chair met with municipal officials. The discharge portion of the proposed bylaw was dropped, but Council continues to pursue changes to the noise bylaw.

In September 2011, the OFAH Zone J Chair appeared before **Southwest Oxford** Council to make a presentation on Sunday gun hunting. The Council subsequently approved a motion to accept Sunday gun hunting, which will be added to the regulations in time for the 2012 spring hunting season.

In September, the OFAH received information from the **Town of Penetanguishene** with respect to a review of their current discharge bylaw and proposed changes. Both the OFAH Zone H Chair and head office reviewed the proposed bylaw. We informed the town that we have no objections to the changes, given the exemptions in place for hunting and recreational sport shooting. However, the bylaw does include a buffer zone of 300 meters around public property, which we have recommended that they reduce significantly, or eliminate altogether. Failure to do so would cause some limitations on land abutting municipal property. Based on discussions with the Clerk, it is expected that they will reduce the buffer to no more than 100 meters, if not eliminate it entirely. The bylaw went before a public meeting in November.

Township of West Elgin – At a recent Council meeting, the Township has received deputations from the OFAH Zone J Chair, in support of Sunday gun hunting. The Council was to have the item on the agenda at their next meeting in November. A follow-up letter to Members of Council was sent, reminding them of the impact that deer/car collisions have on residents, the importance of hunting to the agricultural community with regard to predation, and the benefits of Sunday gun hunting in terms of wildlife population control. It is expected that Council will approve Sunday gun hunting.

City of Sarnia – In view of complaints to Council about “stray gunshots,” the municipality has decided to review its discharge bylaw, which was last amended in 2000.

The OFAH spoke to the Solicitor/Clerk, who informed us that a report went to Council along with a draft bylaw for consideration; however, that would not occur until a public meeting was held at the end of November. They sent the OFAH Zone J Chair and the OFAH copies of the report and the draft bylaw, and invited us to meet with them at our convenience to discuss our concerns. The Zone J Chair appeared at Council before the end of the year to outline OFAH concerns with the proposed bylaw changes, including Council’s attempt to exert authority over areas not within their legal jurisdiction. At year’s end, the municipality was reviewing all of the comments received by the public before proceeding in the new year.

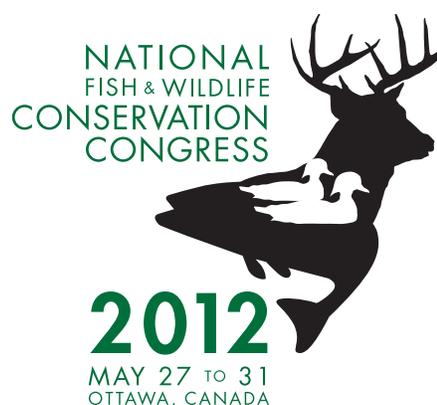
A number of other municipalities, including **Brant County, South West Oxford, Wellesley, Central Elgin and Brooke-Alvinston** are expected to vote on Sunday gun hunting in the near future.



New Bowhunting Opportunities in the North

For over two years, the OFAH, led by OFAH Zone B, was in discussions with the **City of Thunder Bay**, the Thunder Bay Police Service, and the MNR, regarding an expansion of bowhunting within city limits. Several tracts of land within the municipal boundaries are not occupied and offer additional hunting opportunities, which is important in the context of burgeoning deer populations and calls by the public for municipal action. The bylaw department is moving to ban the feeding of deer because this has a direct relation to car/deer collisions. The number of car/deer collisions has continued to increase, with upward of 847 deer/car collisions in the last year (including 42 human injuries), making Thunder Bay one of the top two areas in the province. Baiting will still be allowed from October 15 to December 15.

The **City of Kenora** implemented a trial hunt in the fall based on the Thunder Bay model.



National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress

The OFAH has taken a lead role in organizing the first ever National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress (NFWCC). This event will bring together leading fish and wildlife scientists, government leaders, federal, provincial, state and local fish and wildlife agencies, conservation organizations and anglers and hunters to participate in plenary sessions, workshops, discussions and debates about the future of fish and wildlife resources in North America.

Planning for the NFWCC, which will be held in Ottawa from May 27-31, 2012, continued throughout 2011.

The call for abstracts was issued in the spring and many submissions were received, from which a tentative program was developed and shared on the NFWCC website.

NFWCC has already attracted international sponsor and partner support, and new sponsors are anticipated in the coming months. Organizations across North American have agreed to host plenaries, workshops and present papers. The Prime Minister has been formally invited to give the keynote speech, and high ranking government and agency representatives from Canada and the U.S. have agreed to speak. For complete details, visit www.nfwcc.com.



Communications

The OFAH uses a wide range of media 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 and social media, Ontario OUT OF DOORS magazine, Angler & Hunter Radio and Angler & Hunter Television. Federation members and member clubs also play an important role as OFAH ambassadors in their communities.

In the News

In 2011, we issued more than 60 media releases, primarily through Marketwire, a newswire service. To further broaden our reach, we made use of our extensive web presence, including social media, which encompassed Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. We also provided an OFAH e-news service and an RSS feed to enable followers to automatically receive OFAH media releases and other updates electronically.

Unquestionably, our biggest 2011 news draw was OFAH support for scrapping the long gun registry. Our manager of government affairs and policy appeared on several politically themed television shows and the OFAH was quoted in radio and print media, including CBC, the Toronto Star, and other news sources.

The OFAH role in the restoration of Ontario elk, leading to the first hunt in the 21st century, also drew considerable interest from journalists.

Other programs that are led or supported by the OFAH also received communications support, including the Invading Species Awareness Program, Bring Back the Salmon, Community Stream Steward Program, Ontario Invasive Plant Council, Ontario Family Fishing Events and OFAH TackleShare. Program teams worked collaboratively to increase their public profile and showcase their efforts. Media releases, workshops, onsite event support and newsletters are examples of the efforts undertaken to promote these important conservation and outreach programs.

Angler & Hunter HOTLINE

If it is of interest or concern to OFAH members, chances are you can read about it in the members-only section of *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* (OOD) magazine. Advocacy issues, upcoming events,

OFAH member and member club news, and more is featured in this 16-page insert to OOD, the outdoors enthusiast's favorite magazine.

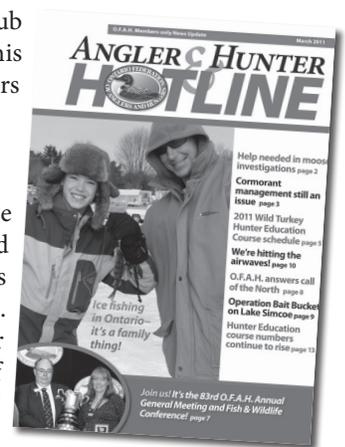
Internet Presence

Universally, the Internet has become an integral part of the way the world communicates, and the OFAH is keeping pace with that change. Over the course of the year, our web team handled nearly 1,000 staff requests for web service. The OFAH maintains 14 websites, several Facebook and Twitter accounts, YouTube channels, an RSS feed and an e-news service.

The OFAH corporate website underwent a complete design overhaul in 2011, although it did not go live before the end of the year. The new site features a user-friendly interface and more interactivity. Several other OFAH-hosted websites also got facelifts.

OFAH web staff also manage the busy *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* website (www.ontariooutofdoors.com) and forum (www.oodmag.com), with the assistance of hardworking volunteer forum moderators. The forum saw over 110,000 visitors exchange ideas related to fishing and hunting in 2011, and in total, generated over 1,283,000 visits and nearly 11,000,000 page views. Six OFAH zones (OFAH Zones C, E, F, G, H, and J) maintain zone websites provided at no cost on the OFAH domain ([www.ofah.org/zone"x](http://www.ofah.org/zone)) and Zone B is working toward launching their site. OFAH zone representatives administer the sites in order to keep zone members updated on upcoming meetings, events and local issues. The OFAH web team is eager to help the remaining zones establish their own website, with technical assistance available to zone "webmasters."

Throughout 2011, we were pleased to work with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership (OTMP) to promote hunting and fishing tourism in Northern Ontario through the OTMP website, www.northernontario.travel. This was our second year of managing the web content for the site, which featured stories and photos provided by writers well known in the outdoors industry. Travel adventures, itineraries and vacation ideas are included on



the site, with links to resorts, outfitters, accommodations and more. It is a must-visit site for those planning a northern outdoors getaway.

In collaboration with the Victoria Stewardship Council and the Ontario Stewardship Council, the OFAH produced the *Ontario Crop and Livestock Wildlife Damage Assessment Manual* which was well received, and was produced in print and online.

Public Service Announcements

OFAH Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are seen, heard and read across Ontario, thanks to the generosity of television, radio, and print sources. The OFAH was able to share its ice safety, boating safety, responsible hunting and firearms safety messaging with thousands of people, a reach that we could not have afforded, had we had to pay for the valuable air time and print space we received.



Visit www.ofah.org and stay connected on:



Ontario OUT OF DOORS

Ontario OUT OF DOORS

Ontario OUT OF DOORS enjoyed another highly successful year publishing one of the country's leading outdoor magazines.

Subscription numbers rose to match peak 2009 levels, providing a significant audience for the outdoors

industry, the promotion of our outdoor traditions, and the work of the OFAH.

Throughout the year the OOD team marketed the magazine with a variety of subscription offers that were enthusiastically received. "This is *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* country," the distinctive branding campaign that was launched in late 2010, continued to attract OOD subscribers with its billboards and tractor trailer that travelled hundreds of thousands of kilometers across Ontario.

Major new advertisers came onboard in 2011 to take advantage of the marketing reach of OOD. These included Canadian Tire, Valvoline, GM, Tinks and Lemigo to name a few.

Another expanding area of OOD reach was the online community forum, www.oodmag.com, which attracted well over a million hits in 2011. Discussions (threads) were as wide ranging as the long gun registry and fishing trips. Registration is instant and free and offers a whole new way to communicate with outdoor enthusiasts.



Angler & Hunter Television



2011 was a big year for *Angler & Hunter Television (AHTV)*. As filming for the 2012 season got underway, Mike Miller, a "new generation of angler and hunter," took over as host. In its 19th season, AHTV was proud to receive Wild TV's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award, the second consecutive year the show has been honored by the network.

Mike captured some exciting fishing and hunting adventures on tape, as well as some of the OFAH's great conservation efforts, including the three millionth Atlantic Salmon release and the first elk hunt season in over 100 years.

The 2012 broadcast season will include 15 episodes airing nationally on the Global television network, as well as on pay per view and the web with Wild TV. AHTV is also available via satellite on Bell ExpressVu and Shaw Direct. Visit www.ahtv.com



AHTV has a strong supporting list of sponsors that include Mercury Outboard, Lund Boats, Browning Canada, Winchester Ammunition, Yamaha ATV's, and Shimano Canada. AHTV will welcome Canadian Tire as the official outfitter and sponsor of the show for 2012. Supporting sponsors also make a big contribution and include Berkley, Excalibur Crossbow, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, Minn Kota, Humminbird, G.Loomis, Burris Optics, J.J. Stewart Motors/Dodge Trucks, DT Powersports, Steiner Optics, Cannon Downriggers and Lucky Strike.

Angler & Hunter Radio

We hit the airwaves in 2011 with *Angler & Hunter Radio (AH Radio)* – the only informative outdoor radio show in Ontario!

Over the 30-episode season, veteran broadcaster and Host, Tom Otto, explored extraordinary outdoor situations and interviewed high-ranking officials on timely issues affecting Ontario hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

The newest OFAH media tool, *AH Radio*, was launched in March and was broadcast on nine stations on Saturdays and Sundays from Windsor to the Ottawa Valley and north to Thunder Bay. The *AH Radio* network broadcast signal covered all of Southern Ontario and could be heard worldwide via the Internet through all participating station websites. Fans could also listen via www.ahradio.ca or download the episodes as podcasts.

2011 sponsors included: Yamaha, Stoeger, Berkley and *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*.



President's Report



As expected, this past year has proven to be busy and full of challenges for the OFAH Board of Directors and head office staff. I can not even begin to tell you everything that we have worked on, but it is all covered in each of the reports included in this annual report. I hope you will take the time to read the entire report, and share it with your family and friends.

We have many things to be proud of this year, one of which was the first modern day elk hunt in Ontario in over 100 years. Your Federation played a large part in restoring elk to our landscape, and we played an even bigger part in finally getting the MNR to create the long-awaited management plan and have a regulated hunt to reduce elk numbers in the Bancroft area. Although the number of animals harvested was not as high as the MNR would have liked to have seen, it is a beginning. In going forward, the OFAH will continue to work with the MNR to fine tune a management plan that will ensure both sustainable herd numbers and hunting opportunities for all Ontarians.

Also this past year, we have been able to have some meaningful and productive meetings with the Algonquin First Nation in the land claim area. We have been able to share our ideas about what we feel "fair sharing" of our natural resources means to us, along with voicing our concerns regarding the land claim and the impact it may have on our ability to fish and hunt in the claim area. We feel that we have been very open and honest with them, and likewise, they have been with us. We will continue dialogue, keeping in mind the needs of the Algonquin, as well as nonnative users of the resources in the land claim area.

In June, I took part in the release of the three millionth Atlantic Salmon, and had the opportunity to welcome Ontario Power Generation (OPG) onboard as a major sponsor so that we may continue with the program. We are indebted to Banrock Station Wines for their five years of support of the program, and look forward to our next five years with OPG.

This past June, I represented the OFAH at the Canadian Wildlife Federation's Annual General Meeting in Yellowknife, and then again in Ottawa for their fall meeting. It makes me very proud to be an OFAH member, when members from other affiliates say that they really enjoy our magazine, our television and radio shows, etcetera, and wish that they could do all that we do.

Of course, any discussion of the OFAH would not be complete without mentioning the federal long gun registry. Your Federation has never backed off on its commitment to do everything it could to see this flawed and wasteful piece of legislation go away. "Hats off" to our head office staff who have worked so long and hard with the Conservative government to achieve this. The end is in sight.

For the past few years, we have been planning a National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress, which will be held in Ottawa from May 27 to 31, 2012. It will be the first-ever gathering of fish and wildlife biologists, researchers, government leaders, policy makers, conservationists and conservation organizations in Canada, and promises to be a huge event. Again, OFAH head office have done a stellar job in securing sponsors and organizing the NFWCC, and I hope many of you will take the opportunity to attend this milestone event in Ottawa.

I would like to acknowledge all of the hard work by our head office staff. They are very devoted people who work extremely hard for the OFAH. It is amazing the number of different programs we run with great success, and it is because of our head office staff. I am sure that Executive Director Mike Reader would agree that many of our OFAH gains are due to the committed and dedicated people who work at head office. Mike took over as our Executive Director in February 2001, and we, as an organization, have moved the yardsticks significantly since then. Mike will retire in March of 2012 and he will be missed, but we wish him the best and look forward with great anticipation to working with our new Executive Director, Angelo Lombardo, as he takes our organization to newer and greater heights.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not thank all of the members of the Board of Directors for their support and diligence in making this one of the best-run conservation organizations anywhere. Our advisory committees are extremely efficient and thorough, we have once again arrived at a balanced budget for 2012, and we have worked on and solved many issues this past year. What the advisory committees have been working on can be viewed in each of their reports, and I encourage you to read them and see what they have dealt with this past year.

"Thank you" to everyone for their support this past year.


OFAH President

OFAH Zone A Annual Report



Chair – Bruce Hamilton

OFAH Zone A held three meetings throughout 2011. The annual meeting, held on January 22, was hosted by the Dryden District Conservation Club, and we were finally able to have a presentation on black bear. Dorothy Brunner, MNR's Acting Area Biologist for Dryden District, gave a very good outline of black bear management provincially, and then went into detail regarding the District's efforts in WMU's 5, 8, and 15A.

Our spring meeting took place on May 7, and was hosted by the Sioux Lookout Anglers and Hunters. Peter Addison, MNR's Aquatic Science Specialist in Thunder Bay District was on hand, and presented results of Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) 4's broad scale monitoring program. Some results even surprised them, such as the fact that fish counts in fly-in lakes were very similar to fish counts in drive-to lakes.

The summer/fall meeting, held on August 20, was hosted by the Ear Falls Hunters and Anglers, and featured two presentations. The first was by Nadine Thebeau, MNR's Area Biologist for Red Lake North District, who updated the delegates on the status of Lake Trout in Red Lake. Until recently, recruitment of Lake Trout has been very poor; however, they have now determined that manganese in some sediment may be a problem. Fortunately, netting over the last two years has shown a modest increase in younger fish.

The second presentation was by Leo Heyens, MNR's Area Supervisor for Kenora District, who spoke on the North Kenora Pilot Project Agreement. Once access roads were constructed for forest management, this agreement was created to protect fisheries in an area northwest of Kenora (Sydney Lake). Under the agreement within the area, conservation fishing license limits were imposed; however, access was never developed, so in the 2006 Fisheries Management Plan, the MNR acknowledged that they had erred and withdrew them for resident anglers. Now through the FMZ 4 Council, the MNR has asked to have tourism revert to regular sport fishing licenses also. There is no biological concern, so OFAH Zone A has no problem with either license option.

The draft Caribou Habitat Regulations are a topic of much controversy within the zone. On March 3, one of five stakeholder meetings throughout the province was held in Dryden. Because of the importance of this meeting, OFAH Zone A supported four members of its executive to attend, and each was accompanied by members from their area clubs. We very strongly expressed our displeasure with the fact that the caribou line has moved so much farther south than originally planned. This will have very negative socio-economic impacts on communities in or near the caribou area, which the MNR has not properly addressed.

On July 20, one of the two five-year review meetings of the Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource-based Tourism was also held in Dryden. OFAH Zone A 1st Vice Chair,

Jeremy Funk, and OFAH Director-at-Large, Neil Wiens attended on behalf of the OFAH.

The high price of gold on the world stock market has spurred a flurry of mine proposals within the zone. The Osisko Hammond Reef Gold (OHRG) Project in the Atikokan area is the most advanced. They have held a second open house to present and receive comments on their Individual Environment Assessment – Proposed Terms of Reference. The Atikokan Sportsmen's Conservation Club has applied for funding through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to retain professional advice on this project; OFAH Zone A signed as a cosponsor. There is concern with this project, because of the proximity of Marmion Lake.

A second proposed gold mine in the Sioux Narrows area will also need watching, because of nearby waterways. A third proposal north of Fort Frances is similar, while one west of Fort Frances may be less of a threat, as it is in an agricultural area.

In October, preliminary maps were received showing six small land parcels being considered in the Mitaanjigamiing (Stanjikoming) Treaty Land Entitlement Claim in the Fort Frances area; however, at this time very little is known about this claim. As we move forward with this file, we would like to thank the OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee and head office staff for their help.

OFAH Zone A received an OFAH Fish and Wildlife Fund request from Lisa Solomon, Biologist for Quetico Provincial Park entitled, "Changes in Moose Habitat Use and Activity in Quetico Provincial Park and Northern Minnesota." In partnership with three study areas in Minnesota, six more moose will be GPS radio collared in Quetico during January 2012 to complement the six which began the study in 2010. The object is to study habitat use as it relates to weather. OFAH Zone A contributed \$1,500 to the project, and the Dryden District Conservation Club and the Fort Frances Sportsmen's Club also donated \$1,500 to the project. The OFAH also very generously donated \$12,000 from the Provincial OFAH Fish and Wildlife Fund to the Quetico Foundation for this worthy project. The public can follow the project through Google Earth; however, data will be delayed by a few weeks to protect the moose.

The City of Kenora has seen escalating deer numbers lately, and associated problems, such as vehicle-deer collisions and predator increases. A successful bow hunt, with few complaints, was held within the city from October 1 to November 15, with a total of approximately 30 animals being harvested. The city council, MNR, OPP, and participating resident hunters are to be commended.

OFAH Zone B Annual Report



Chair – Debbie Rivard

FMZ Councils

In mid-March, a Coaster Brook Trout Workshop was held and members of FMZ 9, along with members from the original Coaster Brook Trout Committee, were invited to attend. Also attending the workshop were biologists from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wisconsin DNR, Michigan DNR, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and anglers involved in the Cooperative Angler Program. The workshop was a day-and-a-half long, and gave the MNR the opportunity to report back to the Coaster Brook Trout Committee with the results of data that was collected since the 22" slot size regulation came into effect in January 2005. The workshop was informative and well run; however, there are still gaps in the data that need to be addressed. The overall indications are that the population is growing and expanding into areas where they had not inhabited in recent history. A genetics study is currently being done using eggs and sperm from wild Brook Trout to look at Coaster behavior and growth, and also the genetic versus environmental influences on whether a Brook Trout becomes a Coaster, or stays as a resident. This study is a Great Lakes Fishery Commission project.

Throughout 2011, FMZ 9 has been given updates on the progress of the recommendation from the council regarding the Black Sturgeon River Dam. At this point in time, it is still going through Native consultation. A creel survey on the Black Sturgeon River at the highway was conducted in the spring to determine the subsistence harvest on Walleye. This creel was conducted by the Red Rock Indian Band, in cooperation with the MNR.

A fly-over monitoring study took place last winter over the Lake Trout lakes in FMZ 6 to try to determine use. After the monitoring took place, the MNR had no concerns of overharvest on these lakes by the one-month increase to the Lake Trout ice fishing season in FMZ 6.

Shows

Once again, the Central Canada Outdoor Show was a great success, with approximately 15,000 people attending. The OFAH booth was very busy with a record number of memberships being sold for this show. A Wild Turkey Hunter Education Course was also held in conjunction with the show, along with the Kid's Moose Calling Contest. Each day, the winners of the calling contests received an engraved plaque. We would like to thank OFAH head office for their support at this show, and to all of the volunteers from OFAH Zone B who helped at the booth.

OFAH Zone B also had a booth at the Trappers' Convention the weekend of March 5 and 6. This show is much smaller, but is good exposure for the zone. OFAH Zone B donated a print to the trappers for their silent auction table at the Saturday night dinner.

Bow Hunt in the City of Thunder Bay

On November 21, 2011, a proposal for a bylaw to ban the feeding of deer within city limits was presented to City Council. Feeding concentrates deer and encourages them to cross roads, which causes more vehicle-deer collisions, and by feeding deer, does come through the winter healthier, and have twins and triplets, instead of single fawns. At the same meeting, a report was delivered to City Council on how best to reduce the deer population within the city. City councilors voted in favor of the new bylaw that would prohibit the feeding of deer inside the city limits of Thunder Bay.

Also presented to City Council during the same evening was a proposal to introduce a bow hunt inside parts of the city. Glenn Rivard, OFAH 1st Vice President, who has been working with city police for two years on this issue, gave a deputation to council; councilors were then given the opportunity to question him on the proposal. After debating the issue, city councilors voted 10 to 3 in favor of a resolution to write a new bylaw to allow a bow hunt inside the city limits of Thunder Bay; this bylaw is now being written, with the plan to have it passed by May 2012. There will be time from May to September to educate the hunting and nonhunting public on the regulations surrounding the hunt. Glenn Rivard has been asked by the City of Thunder Bay to remain involved in the process.

Woodland Caribou

On March 4, 2011, a Caribou Conservation Plan Stakeholder Session was held in Thunder Bay, which OFAH First Vice President Glenn Rivard, and OFAH Director-at-Large Neil Wiens, attended from OFAH Zone B. The workshop was also attended by representatives of a number of native groups, who made it clear that these workshops are not to be considered "consultation with First Nations." They voiced other concerns, and then left. The workshop continued with all participants having concerns ranging from continued biodiversity of forest and wildlife, to access, to restrictions on economic development.

At the OFAH Zone B meeting in October, a representative from the MNR gave our members a presentation on the implementation of the Caribou Conservation Plan. The current part of the implementation plan is taking place in the continuous zones of caribou habitat.

Lake Superior Invasive Species Outreach Coordinator

The OFAH Invasive Species Awareness Program has secured additional funding through Environment Canada for the continued work of the Lake Superior Invasive Species Outreach Coordinator in the Thunder Bay area, in partnership with the Thunder Bay District Stewardship Council. Our thanks go to John Rafferty, MP for Thunder Bay – Rainy River, who was instrumental in securing the additional funding by approaching Environment Canada on our behalf.

Kinghorn Trail

At the Central Canada Outdoor Show, it was brought to our attention that approximately 111 kilometers of a decommissioned rail line between Nipigon and Thunder Bay was being proposed to become a multi-use recreational trail. This project is just in the beginning stages with involvement from Trans Canada Trails, Tourism Thunder Bay, and the towns of Red Rock and Nipigon. At this point in time, a feasibility study is underway to determine if the trail is viable. This trail would form a section of the Trans Canada Trail to help fill a large trail gap in Northwestern Ontario. OFAH Zone B has had several meetings with representatives regarding OFAH involvement.

Other Projects

OFAH Zone B partnered with the Thunder Bay Stewardship Council in a youth project to build mason bee condos. OFAH Zone B also partnered with the Trappers' Association, Northwestern

Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance (NOSA), and the Thunder Bay Stewardship Council in a youth workshop to build marten nesting boxes, which took place on June 18; approximately 500 nesting boxes were built.

For the third year, OFAH Zone B sponsored the "Kam River Reel In" on the Kaministiquia River in Thunder Bay. This event is held in conjunction with Kam Fest, which is held in the downtown core on the south side of Thunder Bay. Approximately 48 kids participated in this event, and all received a prize. Our thanks go to Basil and Ella Arney for driving from Armstrong to run this event for us.

Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP)

In 2011, OFAH Zone B applied for two seeding projects and received \$500 for each one. The seeding has been completed for 2011. We would like to thank Barry Tabor for taking on this project and getting the seeding done, with the help of Rory Mannilla.

OFAH Zone C Annual Report



Chair – Peter Sword

OFAH Zone C held zone meetings in Hearst and Kirkland Lake, as well as a Zone Executive meeting in Cochrane.

In 2011, OFAH Zone C Executive members attended Northeast Regional Advisory Committee meetings, Kirkland Lake Fish and Wildlife Committee meetings, Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) 12 Council meetings, Kirkland Lake Local Citizen's Committee meetings, and Temagami Local Citizen's Committee meetings. They also attended woodland caribou habitat protection consultation meetings in Hearst and Cochrane, the five-year Review on Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource-based Tourism meeting in Sudbury, and the Abitibi River Forest Management Plan open house in Iroquois Falls.

New hydro dam project consultation processes continue to occur within the zone, and to date, OFAH Zone C attended open houses for a total of 14 projects, the most recent being in Hearst,

Englehart and Cochrane. So far, only three of these projects have had completed the Environmental Assessment Reports submitted.

The Wawa Crown Land Atlas Harmonization Project held a series of open houses in the summer to present Phase III Management Options; OFAH Zone C attended the open house in Wawa. The MNR received over 900 comments on this Phase, and is currently dealing with them.

Once again, access issues surfaced this past year in the Chapleau, Foleyet, and Gogama areas, mainly as a result of the Remote Tourism Policy.

Ontario Outdoors Recreational Alliance (OntORA) held a rally in Foleyet this past summer to protest the decommissioning of access to Oswald Lake in 2010. OFAH Zone C was asked to attend to answer a few questions. Approximately 100 people attended the rally.

OFAH Zone D Annual Report



Chair – Roy Polsky

During 2011, OFAH Zone D dealt with many issues, some of which never go away such as access restrictions, road closures and abandonment, FMZ fishing regulations, and many wildlife issues. Even though the Sudbury Forest Management Plan was approved, there is still opposition, mainly from some cottagers, to remove

the gate at Frog Creek on the Spanish Arm Road to allow access. Sudbury Forest went through the process of an Independent Forest Audit, with the purpose of verifying that there is compliance with the Forest Management Plan, the effectiveness in achieving objectives, the comparison of the plan to actual forest management activities, the action implemented to remedy previous audit shortcomings, and the compliance with license obligations. The

audit is conducted every five years. The results of this audit have not yet been made public.

Research on sandhill cranes on Manitoulin Island, St. Joseph Island, and Algoma/North Shore was again conducted from September 1 to October 22, by Everett Hanna of Long Point Waterfowl, University of Western Ontario. This study concentrated on agricultural food abundance, behavioural observations, recruitment, satellite tracking, and population estimate. One population survey was also done in the Timmins area. The purpose of this research was to collect data to possibly have a hunting season for sandhill cranes.

The status on the Environmental Assessment for wild turkeys and pheasants for Manitoulin Island has still not been determined. The MNR has authorized \$160,000 for some research, but that is being done in southern Ontario. A diet study is being conducted, and some will be trapped and equipped with radio transmitters. The West Arm/French River Wild Turkey Group is actively conducting a count on wild turkeys in order to canvass the MNR and the Provincial Wild Turkey Advisory Committee to investigate the possibility of a spring hunt in WMU 42.

In July, OFAH Zone D participated in the focus group session of the five-year Review on Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource-based Tourism that was held in Sudbury. Other participants at this meeting were from OFAH Zone C, MNR, forestry industry, road base and remote tourism industries, and NOTO. Most of the discussion dealt with forestry operation around remote tourism lakes, but other topics that arose during the session were on buffer zones around lakes, Resource Stewardship Agreements, road construction, MNR's role in applying the guidelines, and road use by recreationists.

There is opposition to the proposed construction of several hydro dams on the Vermillion River Watershed and the Wanapitei River.

The Vermillion River Stewardship, along with the Ontario River Alliance which opposes all construction on rivers, is leading the charge. The chair is the same individual for both of these organizations, and as such, Xeneca personnel have been very active in the area, making presentations to area groups and councils on the proposed hydro-generating dams.

There is also opposition by natives on Manitoulin Island for the erection of wind turbines, which has the support of the chief and council. Some members are recommending a moratorium to ascertain the ecological and environmental impacts of the wind turbines.

During our zone meetings, MNR North Bay District personnel were invited to give a presentation on Species at Risk. We also invited a Conservation Officer to give us an update on hunting and fishing regulations, to answer questions from our members, and to advise us on the most common infractions that are committed. The Manitoulin Stewardship Council held another successful coyote workshop, with over 100 people attending. The workshop dealt with genetics, and the hunting and trapping of coyotes. It also emphasized that you have to possess a trapper's licence to set snares, and there was a demonstration on how to skin a coyote.

Concerns were raised by a local club on the overharvesting of Walleye in Lake Nipissing and surrounding lakes by First Nations, which is being carried out by spearing and netting during the spawning season.

The Greater City of Sudbury has implemented a bylaw for the use of ATV's. There were no bylaws before, and anyone operating an ATV within its boundaries could be charged. The bylaw is for a two-year trial period, and ATV's can only be operated on designated roads between April 1 and December 1.

Membership in OFAH Zone D has increased slightly during the past year, thanks to OFAH programs and perseverance.

OFAH Zone E Annual Report



Chair – Brian Sheppard

It was a busy year for OFAH Zone E. There were three meetings, the first being held on March 27 at the Ganaraska Regional Conservation Authority (GRCA) building in Port Hope. Guest speakers included Jeff Gill, Shane Hoskin, and Mike Gill of Prime Time Pursuits. They did a PowerPoint presentation on goose and duck hunting, discussed basics of calling, when to call, set ups, use of the wind, cover choices, using decoy placement, and using the sun to your advantage. Mike Gill did another PowerPoint presentation on coyote hunting, which included options of baiting, use of hounds, and calling. We also discussed issues such as permission to access land, scouting, target problem animals, firearm choices and calibers, use of camouflage, sound control, scent control, and how to control your movement.

Presenter Kevin Bartley from Gobblestalker Calls, discussed basic calling using the different types of calls, and their maintenance. He also discussed the use of the different woods that make up the strikers which produce different tones, where and how to place

decoys, and scouting to find where birds roost.

During this meeting we also discussed wind turbines, American eel, Presqu'île Provincial Park cormorant quotas, Rice Lake fisheries, and urine-based scents, and the issues with them.

Eric Smith reported on the Bridgenorth Panfish Festival, Ron Parker gave a presentation on the first elk hunt, Gord Trylinski gave updates on the Pembroke hatchery, the Petawawa River energy proposals, and advised us that the Pembroke Outdoors Sportsmen's Club is moving forward with the youth hunting course. Brian Sheppard updated the membership on Kendal, advising us that the financial and management plans are done and are at OFAH head office.

The second OFAH Zone E meeting took place on August 21 at the Bancroft Fish and Game Protective Association. Guest speakers included Meribeth Stott, Conservation Education Coordinator at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre, who made a presentation on the events that took place with the Get Outdoors Summer Camps during 2010 and 2011. An OFAH Zone E funding request was submitted to the OFAH

Executive Committee for the Get Outdoors Summer Camps.

The next guest speaker was Bruce Mighton from the MNR who gave updates on elk, moose and deer. Applications for the elk hunt were disappointing and way below MNR expectations at approximately 4,400. The Kenora elk herd is doing poorly; out of 160 animals, only 25 to 35 are present. The Burwash herd is stable, and the Huron/North Shore herd is growing.

Moose are doing well. During the winter of 2010-2011, the MNR did surveys in WMU's 57 and 55A. They will try to do surveys during the winter of 2011-2012 in WMU's 61 and 62, but have said there is no money to do a survey in WMU 48.

Deer numbers are way down, as they did not yard up last winter due to the fact that there was very little snow. There have been a lot of wolf signs, but the ban to hunt wolves has not been lifted. The MNR has also acknowledged evidence of cougars in Ontario.

Eric Smith reported that there were 10 more eels tagged. Nine tagged eels have gone through the dam at Chats Falls on the Ottawa River, with one dying. Hydro One is finally saying there is a problem.

The Kids' Fishing Day at Darlington Park was a great success, with many children and their parents participating. As well, the Haliburton Highlands Outdoors Association (HHOA) Fishstock Music Festival was a success. They gave 150 tours and received many new donations; over \$31,000 was raised.

We also discussed the Petawawa Ottawa River hydro project.

The last OFAH Zone E meeting took place on November 27 at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre. Various topics were discussed, including stream stewardship on Cobourg Creek (work was done downstream from Pratts Dam); the Darlington waterfowl hunt and the amount of new hunters taking part; the proposal for additional blinds has been sent for an Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR); wild turkey hunting training DVD; black bear camp license; leashed tracking dogs for locating big game; woodland caribou; the new MNR website on moose;

elk hunt results; FMZ 17; Invasive Species Hit Squad; Kawartha Highlands Signature Site boat cache and park fees; and the Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, which will continue to 2013.

Brian Sheppard attended a two-day workshop with the Community Stream Steward Program. Gord Trylinski reported on Pembroke District activity, and advised us that the fish hatchery was successful this year and that MNR staff and Ray Sheppard oversaw the operation to stock a small lake with 3,000 fingerlings in the Rolfton area. As well, the Renfrew County Youth Stewardship program had 15 local children, 12-17 years of age, participate in firearms training, hunter education, and in a goose hunt.

Funding requests included:

- \$200 for the Pembroke Outdoors Sportsmen's Club's Annual Kids' Fishing Day;
- \$250 for the Renfrew County Stewardship 2011 Envirothon;
- \$1,000 for the Renfrew County Stewardship 2011 Youth Hunt in Renfrew County;
- \$1,000 for the Peterborough Children's Water Festival;
- \$1,100 for the South Central Ontario Fish and Wildlife Association Inc.'s Annual Kids' Fishing Day;
- \$1,000 for the Bancroft Area Stewardship Council to purchase tanned furbearer pelts for youth education;
- \$3,000 for the Long Point Waterfowl Sea/Long-tailed Duck Tracking Project;
- \$3,000 per year for five years for the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre's Get Outdoors Summer Camp Program; and
- \$3,600 to the North Hastings Community Fish Hatchery for new equipment and improvements to their hatchery building.

OFAH Zone E received the following funds:

- \$1,000 for repairs to the Haliburton Highlands Outdoor Association's fish hatchery building; and
- \$3,000 from the OFAH Fish and Wildlife Fund to improve safety, hunting opportunities, and communication for the Darlington waterfowl hunt.

OFAH Zone F Annual Report



Chair – Ed Giffin

OFAH Zone F held four meetings in 2011 at the Royal Canadian Legion in Perth. The winter meeting was held on March 27, and the first guest speaker was Chris Maher of Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), who provided an excellent presentation on NCC's land acquisition program. He identified the potential for partnerships with the OFAH to allow access to a number of properties for hunting. Our next guest speakers were Barb Boysen, MNR Forester, and Rose Fleugal from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, who talked about butternut trees, an endangered species as a result of a fungus that causes canker. This disease threatens all butternut trees in Ontario. Barb and Rose appealed to landowners to contact them, so that they can check for healthy butternuts, or butternuts showing disease resistance. Healthy butternut trees can be possible future seed sources.

The spring meeting, held on May 29, welcomed the new MNR

Kemptville District Manager, Ken Durst. Scott Smithers, MNR's Area Biologist for the Kemptville District, provided updates on deer, turkey, and moose harvests in eastern Ontario.

The summer meeting was held on August 28. Dr. John Casselman, Adjunct Professor, Queen's University provided the meeting with excellent presentations on the impact of industrial wind turbines, Bernard & Crystal Lakes' Lake Trout study, and Crotch Lake Walleye study.

The annual meeting was held on November 27, with OFAH President, Bill Blackwell, as our guest speaker. The meeting heard annual committee reports, as well as updates from the OFAH affiliated clubs in attendance.

OFAH Zone F was represented on the following committees in 2011:

- OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee - Michael MacDonald and Len Dickinson
- OFAH Bowhunting Advisory Committee - Len Dickinson

- OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee - Ed Giffin
- OFAH Firearms/Recreational Shooting/Hunter Education Advisory Committee - Len Dickinson
- OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee - Kerry Coleman
- OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee - Kerry Coleman, Ed Giffin, and Shirley Giffin
- OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee - Kerry Coleman
- OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Birds Advisory Committee - Kerry Coleman
- OFAH/MNR Liaison Committee - Ed Giffin and Len Dickinson
- Bancroft District Elk Advisory Committee - Len Dickinson
- Eastern Ontario Deer Advisory Committee - Kerry Coleman and Len Dickinson
- Fisheries Management Zone 12 - Pierre Boucher
- Fisheries Management Zone 18 - Ed Giffin and Len Dickinson
- Fisheries Management Zone 20 (East Basin) - Mike Howe
- Lanark Stewardship Council - Wendell Crosbie
- Leeds and Grenville Stewardship Council - Kerry Coleman
- Local Citizen's Committee-Lanark/Mazinaw Forest - Hans von Rosen
- Mazinaw Area Bancroft District Fish & Wildlife Advisory Committee - Ed Giffin
- Standing Advisory Committee-Madawaska Land Use Plan - Doug Huddle
- Standing Advisory Committee-Mississippi River Watershed Plan - Len Dickinson
- Raisin River Advisory Committee - Glenn Runions
- South Nation Advisory Committee - Cyril Holmes

OFAH Zone F has six Plot Mules available for use by OFAH Zone F members; they are located in Brockville (Jack McNamee), Cloyne (Bob Yearwood), Cornwall (Glenn Runions), Lanark (Len Dickinson), Osgoode (Gord Atkinson), and Sydenham (Darrel Campbell).

OFAH Zone F continued to support conservation projects in 2011:

- Hunter Education Conference - silent auction item;
- Young Hunter Education Program;

- KIDFISH Program;
- Kingston District Fish & Game Club Annual Perch Derby;
- Madawaska Highlands Land Use Plan Study;
- Westport Area Outdoors Association Spawning Bed Project;
- Crime Stoppers Truck Lease;
- Loch Garry Fisheries Assessment;
- Osgoode Twp. Fish, Game and Conservation Club Kids' Fish Derby;
- Ottawa Region Walleye League's Kids' Ice Fishing Derby;
- Grenville Fish and Game Club's travelling conservation trailer; and
- Eastern Ontario Deer Advisory Committee.

In 2011, OFAH Zone F was actively involved in a number of special projects, which included:

- OFAH Zone F Strategic Plan;
- NCC/OFAH hunting agreement for OFAH Zone F clubs and OFAH members;
- OFAH Zone F resolution on establishing a trust fund for the purpose of acquiring land for conservation, and for maintaining our hunting and fishing heritage;
- improving and enhancing the OFAH Zone F website;
- distributing the OFAH annual report to all OFAH Zone F affiliated clubs; and
- producing and distributing the OFAH Zone F annual newsletter to OFAH Zone F affiliated clubs.

OFAH Zone F would also like to recognize and welcome the following new OFAH Zone F clubs:

- Dalhousie Game Club;
- Spring Creek Hunt Camp;
- Murphy Dillon Club;
- Cornwall Lunker Club;
- Moneymore Hunt Club; and
- Winchester Fish & Game Club.

OFAH Zone F membership continues to grow, with just under 13,000 members.

In 2011, Loyalist Township approved Sunday gun hunting, thanks to the special efforts of the Kingston District Fish & Game Club, and special thanks to Doug Huddle and Bob Wells for their efforts.

OFAH Zone G Annual Report



Chair – David Dixon

At the November 2011 annual general meeting, we were successful in attracting an OFAH Life Member to become more active in zone management. Christine Finter has been a long-time member of Muskies Canada, and with her better half, Jim Kelly, has been responsible for organizing our OFAH Zone G Youth Camp for the last couple of years.

As primarily an urban zone with hunting and angling opportunities limited to tributaries of Lakes Simcoe and Ontario, our 80 clubs and almost 11,000 members tend to travel outside the zone in pursuit of their outdoor activities. Hence, our opportunity to provide financial support directly to conservation projects supporting hunting and angling within the zone are limited.

In 2011, we reviewed and approved over \$13,000 in support of programs for youth and wildlife research, including:

- \$200 to Muskies Canada in support of the Dr. Ed Crossman Memorial Family Fishing Outing;
- \$400 for Huntfest 2011;
- \$750 for the Uxbridge Huck Finn Kids' Fishing Day;
- \$1,000 for Pefferlaw Winter and Summer – Take a Kid Fishing Days;
- \$1,000 for a fishing platform at the Islington Sportsmen Club (the club that sponsors the OFAH Zone G Youth Camp);
- \$1,500 to the Halton-Peel Woodlands & Wildlife Stewardship Council in support of the Butternut Monitoring Research Program;
- \$2,000 for the York Environmental Stewardship – Ranger's Program;
- \$2,000 for the OFAH/OFAH Zone G Wildlife Research Grant, which was awarded to Everett Hanna for research on sandhill cranes (this is the second year in a row that this award has been made to this recipient); and

- \$6,500 toward the OFAH Zone G Youth Camp.

Details of these projects/programs are posted on the OFAH Zone G website, now hosted on the main OFAH website, along with reports and photos of the youth activities and links to other sites associated with the zone.

Although the quarterly zone meeting dates, locations, and links to maps are provided on the website, the anticipated increase in attendance at zone meetings has not materialized. We have sent out emails to club contacts prior to the zone meetings to supplement the calendar of events posted in *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine, but response has been disappointing. As this was only our first year using the website as a communications medium, we will continue to improve the content and look for other opportunities to engage clubs and individual members in zone activities. With over 80 clubs in the zone, albeit some are hunt clubs that only get together once a year at moose, deer or fishing camps, there must be something that these groups want to share with their fellow hunters and anglers.

Please visit the site at www.ofah.org/zoneg and tell us what you think. We have provided the means for you to submit comments or send emails from within the website, so it is easy to tell us what your concerns are, or to add your support to a program or project. You will be able to download forms to register your child for the Zone G Youth Camps, or if you are involved with a program involving hunting, fishing or some aspect of conservation, you will be able to access the form to request financial support from OFAH Zone G. Not all requests can be satisfied, but each will be evaluated by the Zone's Executive, and then reviewed with members at the quarterly zone meetings.

As the site is being developed by volunteers, as opposed to contracted web designers, it will remain a work in progress. Comments and emails will be responded to as quickly as possible, and if there are changes suggested to be made to the site in either the format or information content, your input will certainly be welcomed.

OFAH Zone H Annual Report



Chair – Wayne Forgrave

There were many conservation projects within the zone in 2011, including tree planting, stream rehabilitation, and food plots to enhance bird and wildlife populations, just to name a few.

OFAH Zone H conservation awards went to the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association, the Orillia Fish and Game Conservation Club, and the Twin Lakes Conservation Club.

In August, the Barrie District Hunters and Anglers Conservation Club hosted the 4th OFAH Zone H Annual Black Powder Shoot; 21 shooters participated in the women's, men's and youth categories. The shoot is open to all OFAH members, and is a fun time for all.

In June, the first annual North Simcoe Youth Expo was hosted by the Barrie District Hunters and Anglers Conservation Club, and was attended by 61 young boys and girls. All participants and mentors had a great time, with some wanting to do it all over again the following weekend.

Some of the events included:

- archery instruction and 3D shoot;

- the circle of life;
- stream habitat;
- pellet gun shoot;
- .22 caliber shoot;
- shotgun shoot;
- birds of prey; and
- retriever trials.

OFAH Zone H continues to fund worthy projects, including:

- Friends of Hullett;
- Luther Marsh Youth Expo;
- OFAH TackleShare;
- Grey Bruce Water Festival;
- Environthon;
- OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference;
- Grey County Youth Expo;
- Orillia Fish & Game Conservation Club Kids' Fishing Day;
- Lake Huron Fish and Game TackleShare; and
- Barrie Junior Bassmasters.

OFAH Zone J Annual Report



Chair – Tony Jackson

We certainly feel very proud of our many accomplishments in 2011, and give thanks to the great support we received from our clubs, other OFAH Zones, OFAH head office staff and to our individual members.

OFAH Zone J membership continues to be stable at approximately 23,500, despite continuing concern for economic stability.

We continue to have success on many fronts, working to create

new or improved opportunities for anglers and hunters, and the protection of our natural resources. For example, this past fall, Southwest Oxford, West Elgin, and Brant municipalities all adopted Sunday gun hunting, thanks to our collective efforts to convince them of the value of Sunday gun hunting.

Getting young apprentice hunters into the outdoors continues to be a priority. With great excitement we recognize the excellent work of local clubs along with support from various Stewardship Councils. OFAH Zone J has been the area of focus for the youth

apprentice hunts. The youth pheasant hunts are now a seven-year success story, having originated in Fingal and are now successfully taking place in several locations. Volunteer and see the success that, as mentors, we can be proud. You can now find an excellent tool kit online for initiating, planning and implementing your own youth hunting event at www.youthhunting.ca. OFAH Zone J members participated in the development of this information package to be shared with all.

Another significant event of recognition in our zone was the OFAH Zone J 23rd Annual Youth Campout that was hosted at the Tavistock and District Rod and Gun Club. With nearly 100 youth in attendance, and with the support from a multitude of partners, including the host club, this year's camp was one of the largest ever held. Many thanks go to both of our long-time supporters, Greg Balch and the Tri-County Bass Masters. Greg supports this program with his excellent travelling hands-on educational display explaining the cycle of life, and the purpose and value of various species, including our part in that matrix as stewards and consumptive users. Tri-County Bass Masters donated supplies, manpower, and expertise to teach youth how to make bass lures – a prized possession for participants to take home. The host club put on events for participants, including archery, firearms safety (including shooting), bird house building, canoeing and hiking.

Land access continues to be one of the bigger issues in the zone. With much of the landscape privately owned, obtaining access is often a long and sometimes difficult process. Areas of public land within the southern and southwestern part of the province are few, and often the focus of high activity from a variety of user groups.

Although we are supportive of multi-use trail systems, our understanding and others' perceptions of acceptable activities is often different. For example, one such trail in the Thorold area is being targeted to restrict hunting, because a hiker feels a perceived concern for his/her own safety, which means hunting should not be allowed. OFAH Zone J is concerned. This is another reason to support our engagement with any new community trail initiatives; if we are not engaged early, we have a much larger and difficult challenge to protect our rights and access.

Discharge and noise bylaws seem to be an ongoing activity, and are certainly frustrating, as municipalities seem to adopt bylaw wording that exists in larger urban areas, and apply the wording in their small rural municipal ridings without careful consideration of the implications. Once realized, many have worked toward fixing the wording, but it is much more difficult to change an adopted bylaw. Please keep aware of what happens in your municipality, and advise us if you see anything that would suggest a change, or an introduction of a discharge or noise bylaw.

Coyotes are an activity center all unto themselves! They are receiving more attention than any other species in our zone. Oxford County created a coyote task force, involving a multitude of stakeholders to develop an information and action plan specifically for residents to deal with coyote issues. We have been approached in many situations to assist with connecting landowners and hunters where the problems persist. A strong relationship with the agricultural community can not be understated. Working together, we have both been supportive, which has resulted in being rewarded by positive outcomes dealing with crop and livestock damage, and predation issues.

Solar and wind turbine installations are now an added landscape

issue changing rural landscapes. OFAH Zone J is especially aware and concerned of a multitude of onshore and offshore industrial wind turbine sites planned without due regard for their impact, not only on the landscape, but potentially impacting wildlife, waterfowl, and for offshore, fisheries as well. Migration corridors of several species are directly impacted and industrial wind turbines will also affect feeding habits. Our most recent provincial election results, especially in rural southwestern Ontario, are an indication of the sentiment of many in our zone, and the concern of potential negative impacts on our valuable natural resources.

OFAH Zone J Executive members have all been very active with fisheries management, land access, hunting issues, club meeting presentations, and municipal council presentations. With respect to fisheries, we are actively engaged in FMZ 19, Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group, Halton Community Streams Committee, Grand River Fisheries Management Plan and implementation, Lower Grand River Technical Committee, Hamilton Harbour Restoration Groups, Misner and Springbank Dam issues, as well as others.

Again, special thanks go to Bruno and Yolanda Vanden Berghe for their exceptional commitment and effort to attend events promoting our zone and the OFAH. Profits from the merchandise sales are used to support many activities within the zone. The membership and zone are well represented through their efforts.

OFAH Zone J membership concerns include:

- wind turbines;
- cormorants;
- land access, restrictions or fees for access;
- Hillman Marsh/Point Pelee;
- Grand River watershed issues;
- relationships with First Nations;
- changing white-tailed deer populations;
- invasive species such as Emerald Ash Bore, Asian Carp, Kudzu Vine;
- Luther Marsh operation and future use;
- Zorra Township noise bylaw;
- securing additional Sunday gun hunting opportunities;
- pushing forward with Misner Dam decommissioning; and
- pushing forward with Springbank Dam decommissioning.

We will continue to work hard for you, and together we will find ways to protect, promote, and create new outdoors opportunities.

OFAH Agriculture Liaison Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Jim Magee

This advisory committee continues to work on wildlife issues with agricultural organizations. This past summer, the Ontario government made major changes to the Compensation Program for domestically raised livestock killed or injured by predators.

The list of species for which compensation can be claimed has been greatly increased, including such species as llamas and ring-necked pheasants. The list of predators has also been expanded to include such species as vultures, cougars and mink.

It is probably the case that the overwhelming number of claims will be for sheep and cattle predation; the coyote is still the major predator.

There have also been updates on the compensation levels to better reflect today's livestock values.

There is concern about discrepancies between judgments of livestock evaluations around the province. There will be increased training courses for evaluators to determine the species that caused the problem, whether the animal was killed by a predator or predated after a natural death, and the true value of the loss.

There is an appeal process to ask for a provincial evaluator if the farmer is not happy with the local municipal evaluator.

The Ontario government is looking at the Ontario Fur Managers Federation and the OFAH to play a role in controlling problem predators, particularly, coyotes.

We sit as an OFAH representative on the Agriculture/Wildlife Conflict Working Group. At the December meeting, the Fur Managers and the OFAH made proposals about how we could help farmers who have an ongoing problem with predation.

The OFAH Agriculture Liaison Advisory Committee is aware that we had tried a hunter/landowner connection program several years ago on a provincial basis, but it never got off the ground. Some hunters signed on, but only a few landowners. We now feel such a program would have better results if tried at a local level. A mechanism needs to be developed to put farmers with

predation problems in touch with local fish and game clubs. The municipalities and their livestock evaluators need to know how to contact local clubs and have experienced hunters contact the affected farmers.

The Agriculture/Wildlife Conflict Working Group is also looking at a potential program for compensation of crop losses. Such a program could cost many millions of dollars; however, when the various governments make restrictions on hunting and trapping opportunities (i.e. the spring bear hunt cancellation), perhaps farmers have legitimate arguments for more wildlife damage compensation.

An increasing issue of concern to agriculture is species-at-risk legislation (e.g. prohibitions on when hay can be cut to protect ground nesting birds, such as the bobolink). If a farmer can not cut hay until the bird is through nesting, the hay will be old and worthless.

In many cases, species-at-risk may not be abundant in Ontario, because it is at the periphery of their range, and yet are abundant elsewhere in their native range. The barn owl is a prime example, which is found all around the world, but does not appear to like cold weather and scarcely shows up in this province. More and more species, such as barn swallows and snapping turtles, are being added to the list. Farmers are not going to welcome these species, if they come with overly prescriptive regulations.

The OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game and Agriculture Liaison Advisory Committees have also looked at the possibility of allowing night hunting for predators. It would not only open up a new hunting opportunity, but would also allow hunters to help farmers who have an ongoing problem with predation, and target specific animals which are problematic.

I would like to thank head office staff for their guidance, and the members of the OFAH Agriculture Liaison Advisory Committee for their input; they have a broad knowledge of the various aspects of agriculture.

OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Doug Ogston

Ontario Elk Management Program

A critical element of the plan took place in September 2011. The first "resident only" elk hunt was held to harvest animals that were creating problems for landowners and farmers in the area, rather than the current harass or kill permit use. As reported, policies, guidelines and regulations were approved following extensive stakeholder consultations. The following information was prepared by the MNR and reported to our advisory committee.

Elk Licensing and Draw 2011

Applicants:

- there were 4,422 applicants for the draw at a fee of \$16.95 each,

generating \$75,000 in revenue.

- 70 seals were available;
- 42 groups of four, seven groups of three, seven groups of two, and 14 individuals were successful;
- 65 out of 70 successful applicants claimed their seal following the draw; 198 out of 215 possible licenses were sold at \$50 each, generating \$10,000 in revenue.

Harvest:

- out of the 70 seals (24 bulls, 46 cows), the total harvest was 20 animals (11 bulls and nine cows);
- 18 out of 20 harvested elk were brought to voluntary check stations;
- 64 of 65 mandatory reports were submitted;

- detailed information from mandatory reports and voluntary check stations are being summarized;
- the largest bull weighed in at 600 pounds, and was estimated to be five years old.

The MNR reported that in 2012 and beyond they will:

- undertake a complete analysis of detailed harvest reporting;
- continue population monitoring and research;
- conduct a population survey for 2012, and new collars will be put on some elk;
- decisions regarding potential harvest for the 2012 season will be determined in the spring;
- be looking into a potential hunt area expansion and/or season extensions or creations;
- continue to work under the key objective of continued sustainable management and adaptive responsive management.

In a November letter to the manager of MNR's Wildlife Policy Section, the OFAH outlined its draft staff-prepared options and recommendations for the 2012 licensed elk hunt. The letter clearly stated that the 2012 elk harvest plan can not be completed until the results of the 2011 harvesting and population assessments are completed in early 2012. The options presented show that hunting opportunities for elk can be increased. The Algonquin elk harvest will be discussed at the close of their hunt. Both the OFAH and the MNR need to be involved in these discussions as a key element of future harvest planning for elk.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (FWCA) Regulation Changes to Allow Leashed Dogs to Assist in Locating Wounded Big Game Animals

There will be more discussion with the MNR to try to have something in place before July 1, 2012. It was agreed that "big game recovery and retrieval using a leashed dog" is the key element. Both parties agree to work collectively toward achieving this in 2012.

Black Bear "Camp License"

Based on discussions with MNR staff at the April OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee meeting, in August, OFAH head office staff followed up with the manager of MNR Wildlife Policy Section, with a preliminary proposal for a new black bear hunting camp license.

MNR staff advised us of some concerns that they had with aspects of our proposal. Examples such as being WMU-specific, the number of hunters from two to a maximum of six or eight per camp, cost of \$39.95 for a seal, and \$12.50 to participate, party hunting rules, the value of black bear as "big game" declining, costs and timing of implementation, reconciling with increasing resident interest as "a second seal component," and limited availability.

At our December meeting, the MNR indicated that the current "bear population" evaluations by WMU being conducted by the MNR may address the concern to some degree when meetings are held with stakeholders, such as tourist outfitters, trappers, and resident bear hunters. These evaluations were due to begin in early 2011. The MNR will follow up at the District level early in 2012 and keep us in the loop.

The Moose Project

What:

This includes the development and implementation of moose population objectives and harvest strategies:

- the number of moose desired in a particular area generally developed by WMU and rolled up to broader geographies;
- counter-ecological factors (habitat suitability, competitors,

predators, other ecosystem interactions);

- consider socio-economic factors (e.g. stakeholder interests, associated activities, area accessibility, etc.).

Moose harvesting management strategies:

- how many moose can be harvested in a particular area;
- harvest planning (e.g. determine allowable harvest);
- harvest management (e.g. determining appropriate seasons, areas, gear, hunter management);
- should be effective, acceptable and feasible.

When:

- the development of draft WMU-specific moose population objectives are underway; the OFAH has provided a summary of their preliminary recommendations for new WMU moose population objectives;
- the development of proposed harvest management strategies are underway;
- targeting to initiate consultation in 2012, and implementation for the 2013/14 hunting season.

How:

- seek OFAH input on approach to consultation;
- how best to engage moose hunters on the proposals;
- what the potential impacts are for changes.
- Scoping Development of Regulations for Feeding Wildlife

To prepare the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee for future discussions with the MNR about wildlife feeding and baiting in Ontario, a document by the Wildlife Society, entitled "Baiting & Supplemental Feeding of Game Wildlife Species," was provided to us as a place to start. This organization is "hunter friendly."

One observation under the topic of supplemental feeding is that OFAH policy clearly distinguishes between supplemental and emergency feeding, especially winter "emergency feeding," and fundraising to support it.

In 2009, the MNR received approval to regulate "supplemental feeding," primarily over concerns about ongoing feeding practices in elk areas. Years ago they received "baiting regulatory authority" under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*. We anticipate further discussion with the MNR on this topic in 2012.

Woodland Caribou Conservation

To date, there does not seem to be any interest within the MNR to keep the OFAH, and in particular hunters, up to date on the status of this project. In January 2011, the MNR declared interest in preparing an article for *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* on this project, but there has been no action to date.

Similarly, the MNR indicated that they would have speakers attend meetings at the zone level to inform moose hunters, in particular, about the impact on moose habitat and the negative impact on moose hunting on traditional access roads. There have been no meetings that we are aware of to date.

We will be following up with the MNR in 2012 and requesting consultation with moose hunters in WMU's where caribou management will have negative impacts on current moose hunting.

In Summary

As usual, 2011 was a busy year for the advisory committee members with full agendas for all three meetings. MNR wildlife policy advisors were in attendance at all of our meetings, and fully participated. We would like to thank them for their presentations, time and participation. As well, we would like to thank head office staff who attend and assist us throughout the year.

OFAH Bowhunting Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Len Dickinson

This has been another year of waiting for the MNR to realize that bowhunters who want to obtain an H2 hunting license want the equivalent training to firearms hunters receive. Applicants for a firearms license are required to take the 10 hours of Canadian firearms training in order to hunt with a firearm; bowhunters receive one hour of training. OFAH policy requires a stand-alone bowhunter education program for all new hunters, because in our opinion, the current training is not adequate.

It is important that the MNR consider implementing a mandatory Ontario International Bowhunter Education Program (IBEP) course for first-time bowhunters, and give two specific streams for hunters to obtain an H1 and/or an H2 license. All of the courses have been developed, and all instructors are in place—it is just a matter of doing it.

First-time hunters would be required to take the Ontario Hunter Education course, and then take the appropriate course to be able to hunt with the equipment they prefer. If they want to hunt with all of the different types of equipment, they would be required to do all of the appropriate training. In this way, we would ensure that all hunters get adequate training to hunt big game animals in this province.

We are very fortunate in Ontario to have some great bowhunting seasons; however, there is always room for improvement to give bowhunters even more hunting opportunities. The OFAH will be seeking the possibility of having an extended bowhunting season for wild turkey and elk in the fall. The success rate for bowhunters is very low with these species, and we think that an extended season would not hurt the sustainability of their populations.

The OFAH supports the creation of new moose hunting seasons for bowhunters and others, wherever it is sustainable. Since 1990, there has been considerable expansion of existing bowhunting seasons, as well as the creation of new bowhunting seasons, for moose and deer.

The OFAH supports the identification of and support for new sustainable hunting opportunities for all types of hunting, including bowhunting. While bowhunting seasons for moose in some areas have already been extended, other areas were held in abeyance while waiting for new data. It is our understanding that the data now exists, and the OFAH should continue to pursue additional bowhunting opportunities for moose whenever possible, as per OFAH policy.

OFAH Firearms/Recreational Shooting/Hunter Education Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Len Dickinson

The OFAH Firearms/Recreational Shooting/Hunter Education Advisory Committee had an extremely busy year and dealt with a number of issues on the provincial and federal agendas. We are constantly seeking to ensure that the interests of anglers and hunters and recreational sport shooters in Ontario are recognized and respected, particularly in terms of laws that could impact negatively upon legal, law-abiding firearms owners.

Bill C-19

Currently, Bill C-19, an Act to repeal the long gun registry, is being passed through Parliament. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the need to register nonrestricted firearms will be a thing of the past; however, this does put the responsibility back on the firearms owner to keep track of firearm sales and purchases, especially to ensure the purchaser has a valid PAL.

Explosives Act

Natural Resources Canada, which has authority over the Explosives Act, has made several positive changes that will benefit anyone who stores black powder, or engages in handloading. These changes were reviewed by the OFAH, which supported the changes.

Minor's License and 18th Birthday

Presently, if you are between the ages of 15 and 18, you can obtain a minor's license to possess a firearm; however, on your 18th birthday, you have to apply for a valid PAL (without being notified), which takes approximately five to six weeks to receive. During that time, you have no license to possess a firearm. We are recommending to the CFO that applicants should be able to apply for their PAL in advance of their 18th birthday, so that it can be issued immediately when they turn 18.

Review of PAL Exams in Ontario

Ontario is the only province in which Canadian Firearms instructors must send their exams to their Provincial CFO for review before the student applies for their PAL. This is causing weeks of delays for applicants, and we feel that this is an unnecessary step. The CFO is being questioned on the validity of this exercise, and with valid statistics from other provinces, we are hoping to eliminate these delays in Ontario.

Hunter Education

The Ontario Hunter Education Program continues to see strong momentum with 18,505 students being trained in 2011. The number of instructors is reducing with our aging population, and we now have the challenge of finding new instructors so we can plan for future requirements. As well, we are trying to coordinate

our training with the Firearms Safety Education Services of Ontario (FSESO) regarding cross training instructors. Presently, there are about 35 instructors who teach the hunter education course only, which prevents them from providing a “one-stop” course opportunity.

A “Knowledge Assessment” was sent to all Hunter Education instructors in the fall of 2011. Results are currently being reviewed and will be available later in 2012.

Wild Turkey Hunting Seminars

Ontario Wild Turkey Hunting Seminars were all cancelled in the fall of 2011, likely due to the popularity of the DVD, of which over 3,000 were sold. It seems that the younger generation (especially

between the ages of 12 and 25) have purchased the DVD, rather than going to the seminar.

Sunday Gun Hunting

Sunday gun hunting has become very popular all across Ontario, and we now have 147 municipalities in southern Ontario that have approved Sunday gun hunting, with five more taking it under serious consideration. None have experienced any problems, and there are no areas that have rescinded their decision. It is a continuous battle for OFAH head office to deal with some urban communities to keep on top of discharge bylaws and restrictions on noise, many of which will carry into 2012.

OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Fred Geberdt

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the knowledgeable and dedicated OFAH volunteer members who have served on our OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee over the past year. They have worked on a large number of fisheries issues, and have made numerous recommendations to our OFAH Board of Directors regarding pressing fisheries issues occurring throughout the Province of Ontario.

The following is an overview of some of the fisheries issues that we dealt with, and in many cases, continue to work on:

FMZ (Fisheries Management Zones) Advisory Councils

The FMZ Advisory Councils are changing the way fisheries business is conducted across Ontario, and we continue to evolve along with them. The OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee is engaged with the MNR to improve the working process related to FMZ Councils.

Over the past year, our required attention on FMZ business continued to demand a considerable amount of our time. We are spending 50 percent of our time at OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee meetings on fisheries issues and reports brought forth from the operating FMZ's.

The following is brief look at the ongoing development of the 20 FMZ's in the Province of Ontario:

The first pilot councils established in 2007 were in FMZ's 6, 10, and 17. Since that time, councils have been established and are operating in FMZ's 4, 5, 9 (west/central basin), 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, and 20 (east/west basin).

The MNR has advised the OFAH that the establishment of advisory councils in the Far North (FMZ's 1, 2, and 3) has been deferred until they can determine the appropriate scale of fisheries planning in these zones relative to other planning initiatives in these areas.

In the remaining inland zones (FMZ's 7, 8, 15, and 16), the MNR has advised that their current focus is on the planning processes that are underway with the advisory councils currently up and running. As planning initiatives in these zones are finalized, they will initiate the remaining advisory councils.

It is interesting to note that some FMZ's have split their areas into two sections and have set up subcommittees for each area. Additionally, while the majority of FMZ's operate successfully, there are still a few FMZ's that have run into difficulties. It is imperative that MNR Districts are provided with sufficient staff and the required resources in order to operate successfully.

Staff from MNR's Fisheries Policy Section, have attended a number of our meetings to discuss FMZ issues. The OFAH has expressed concern on how some MNR District offices are running FMZ Councils (e.g. inconsistencies), and how resourcing and financial support is a challenge.

The OFAH is represented on FMZ Advisory Councils by existing OFAH Board members and/or OFAH staff, primarily from the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee. Due to the development of future FMZ's and the attrition of our present OFAH FMZ representatives, we will face an increased demand for OFAH representation on the FMZ Advisory Councils, and will need to depend more on our OFAH Zone Executives to recommend suitable individuals to serve as OFAH representatives.

Northern Ontario Aquaculture Association (NOAA)

Northern Ontario Aquaculture Association (NOAA) was invited to make a presentation to the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee on the benefits of cage aquaculture. Research on experimental lake #375 was carried out to study the effects of cage culture on Lake Trout lakes in Northwestern Ontario involving nutrients, macrophytes, estrogen loading, and any possible impacts on native fish species associated with cage culture. Findings indicated that abundance, condition, and size of Lake Trout increased, and most other species in the lake increased as well. Their studies also showed that oxygen levels remained natural for the lakes, there were minimal changes to the water quality, and algae increased slightly. After removing the cage culture, the lake returned to preculture abundance, as Lake Trout and forage species declined. Escaped fish, which were Rainbow Trout not from the lake, were tracked; some escapees survived over two years. It was noted that there were no records of farmed fish in Ontario infecting wild stocks, but that wild fish have infected farmed fish. Antibiotics are used for fish health, not for growth, and no genetically modified

stocks are used in Ontario. It has been found that the area beneath the cage can also grow large amounts of suckers, perch and Walleye.

NOAA believes the experimental lake example suggests that there are several Manitoulin lakes where Walleye or forage fish have declined that would benefit from cage culture. They would like to encourage the MNR, the OFAH and FMZ's 13 and 14 to pursue this in the future.

A number of additional topics and issues (e.g. fish genetics, invasive species) were discussed and suggested as possible areas of joint cooperation. NOAA has also extended an invitation to OFAH clubs to tour their fish farms and to call on NOAA for support and local collaboration on fisheries issues.

Enforcement

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the MNR have the enforcement mandate to administer the Fisheries Act in Ontario. Unfortunately, we continue to witness downsizing and underfunding with these government agencies. As a result, the OFAH invited DFO and MNR Enforcement staff to provide an overview of their respective agencies' enforcement program:

There are 625 officers nationally, with 90% of them assigned to our Atlantic and Pacific coastal areas. They are the second largest armed enforcement organization of the federal government. Only 35 officers are assigned in the central region, which consists of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario. As a result, only 10 officers are assigned for the whole Province of Ontario (4 in Parry Sound; 3 in Burlington; and 3 in Peterborough).

The issue regarding complaint and compliance protocols can result in many agencies getting involved, including Parks Canada, MNR, MOE, OMAFA, Conservation Authorities, Environment Canada, and Transport Canada. Unfortunately, this results in the question, "Who should one call?"

Presently, the Fisheries Act, and the fact that hydroelectric projects are being expedited, are causing an increased workload on DFO for inspections. We were disappointed to learn that DFO does not approve hydro dams or wind turbine initiatives; it is the responsibility of the Province of Ontario (MNR and MOE). Also, after 25 years in effect, no evaluation of the Federal *Fisheries Act* has been done. A year ago, the Auditor General's report was critical of DFO's strong policy objectives, but questionable performance. DFO informed us that, on a national level, they are working on this issue. Continuing with OFAH's ongoing concerns regarding enforcement of the Fisheries Act, Mark Robbins, Enforcement Specialist, MNR, was also invited to speak and engage in discussions with the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee. Presently, there are approximately 200 field Conservation Officers in Ontario; another 100 are involved in investigation, intelligence, and support (canine units, and surveillance branch). They enforce 27 statutes, but primarily work on the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*, and Ontario Fisheries regulations. The MNR Enforcement Branch strongly depends on public cooperation using the MNR Tips Line (1-877-847-7667) and Crime Stoppers (1-800-222-8477); both have resulted in some quality cases.

The following is a brief overview of the main fisheries charges during 2011: fishing without a licence (1,500); possession with over limits (500); angling during a closed season (200); possession of illegal size limits (150); and transporting fish which are unidentified (150).

For the past five years, the MNR Enforcement Branch has worked

using a series of priority risk receptors. The highest ranking of these relates to public safety and human health, which is followed by resource implications, economic effects, and social and cultural trends. In all cases, an enforcement plan is developed directing half of their time to high level priorities, and the other half of their time spent on tips and day-to-day activities, mostly on sport fishing issues. This past year, the majority of sport fishing issues also involved invasive species movement, illegal harvest and sale of fish, illegal importation of baitfish and leeches, and identified sustainability issues.

The issue of providing the MNR and DFO with adequate funding and sufficient manpower cries out as a priority for the OFAH. Pressure needs to continue to be placed on the Ontario Government, and the Federal Government of Canada to ensure that the administration and enforcement of the Fisheries Act is no longer compromised.

Lake Simcoe

The Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee (LSFSC) met on a regular basis during the first half of 2011, but had a brief hiatus from August to December. A primary focus of this committee has been the development of bait regulation options to satisfy the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan policy 7.3-SA (only bait from the watershed can be used in Lake Simcoe). The committee evaluated the potential social, economic and ecological impacts of each option, as well as potential issues with implementation and enforcement in an effort to arrive at a preferred recommendation. In December 2011, the MNR announced that an infectious fish disease known as Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) was detected in Lake Simcoe. This resulted in the creation of a VHS Management Zone encompassing the Lake Simcoe watershed to restrict the movement of bait in and out of the zone. It is likely that the designation of the Lake Simcoe VHS Management Zone will influence the LSFSC's discussions and recommendations regarding a Lake Simcoe bait regulation.

Considerable discussion continues regarding the potential of reopening the Lake Simcoe recreational Lake Herring fishery. The fishery closed in 2001 to protect the low abundance of Lake Herring in Lake Simcoe; however, MNR data shows the presence of at least two strong year classes. This data, coupled with a recent increase in incidental catch of Lake Herring by anglers, has resulted in considerable pressure to reopen the fishery. At this time, the MNR remains hesitant to reopen the fishery due to a concern regarding the sustainability of a Lake Herring population that is limited to only a few year classes. The OFAH will continue to advocate for the return of a recreational fishery for 2013, which will restore important recreational angling opportunities to Lake Simcoe, and will propose regulatory options that recognize the uncertainty in population data.

A socio-economic study to determine the value of the Lake Simcoe fishery and aquatic community is currently underway. The study will include a focus group of interested stakeholders who met in late 2011, and will continue to meet to discuss and share information on the social, cultural and economic benefits of the Lake Simcoe fishery and aquatic community.

The OFAH is also participating in an MOE exercise to develop a multi-seasonal Recreation Strategy for Lake Simcoe. This strategy will influence fishing and hunting activities on Lake Simcoe; the OFAH will continue to provide input and recommendations throughout its development.

Effects of Offshore Wind Turbines on Fish Habitat in the Great Lakes

The OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee is indeed fortunate to have Dr. John Casselman on our committee. Resulting from our ongoing concerns on the proposed installations of offshore wind turbines in the Great Lakes, we received an excellent presentation from Dr. Casselman on the scientific studies that need to be designed to effectively measure the impacts on the fisheries ecosystems. These studies need to be done prior to installation of a proposed project and should record the variance of change in fish populations. It will require seven years of research before installation, and seven years after installation to record the variance of change. Scientific studies also need to reflect other impacts by turbines, such as lake currents, changes in predation, climate change, commercial and recreational fishing. The turbine bases will require the establishment of a rock rubble island to build upon. In the rock rubble shoals established and studied in Lake Ontario, there was a significant change in the fish community of those areas. Rock Bass were attracted to the rubble, feeding heavily on the minnow population; Golden Shiners were the first to disappear, which removed a top prey species for young Lake Trout, Muskellunge, and Yellow Perch. Round Gobies were also shown to thrive in the rock rubble at densities of 100-150 meter². There was also a presence of Bluntnose Minnows (not known to be fed on by other fish species).

It is incumbent that the proponents of these offshore wind turbine projects undertake proper scientific-based studies. A prototype should be installed, and studies done prior to any large-scale project development. Additionally, a decommissioning policy agreement and funding plan should be an important component of offshore wind development. The OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee has worked on and brought to the OFAH Board of Directors a policy position on offshore wind turbines in the Great Lakes.

Fish Stocking in Lake Huron — Lake Trout Stocking Proposal

Resulting from an MNR presentation that was made to FMZ's 13 and 14, a number of OFAH member clubs that raise and stock fish in Lake Huron and Georgian Bay, expressed their concerns about the projected MNR stocking plans, and what impacts it might have on their own club's hatchery programs. Concerns were also expressed that it would appear that the MNR is engaging in a program of mainly Lake Trout stocking.

Dave McLeish, Manager of MNR's Upper Great Lakes Assessment Unit, and Dave Reid, Lake Management Supervisor of MNR's Lake Huron Assessment Unit, were invited to the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee to present and discuss this MNR fish stocking plan for Lake Huron/Georgian Bay. Fish stocking in Lake Huron began in the 1960's in an attempt to achieve an upper stocking limit target of 8.33 million, established by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Their presentation reflected on the history of the Lake Huron fishery, the overexploitation by early commercial fishing, the impacts of habitat alterations and the introductions of exotics, such as Smelt, Sea Lamprey and Alewife.

Lake Trout rehabilitation will begin in strategic locations in stocking densities that will hopefully enhance the level of success. Clubs that presently stock fish in Lake Huron/Georgian Bay, will become involved in a new Environmental Assessment Process. This Environmental Assessment Process addresses naturalized species such as Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, and Chinook

Salmon as nonnative species, and will require a process whereby volunteer hatchery operations file an objective plan with the MNR. As a follow up to this presentation, the MNR organized and conducted another meeting with Lake Huron/Georgian Bay clubs. Work continues on this issue.

Coaster Brook Trout

OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee member, Debbie Rivard, keeps us updated on this ongoing topic. The MNR held a Coaster Brook Trout Workshop as part of their commitment to review the status of Brook Trout after a five-year study period. Coaster Brook Trout population densities have increased and their range has expanded. Tagging continues to take place to better gather fish movement patterns. The OFAH continues to believe that MNR's "one fish over 22" is too restrictive.

Sustainable Energy Projects (Waterpower Energy)

As part of the OFAH's ongoing concerns regarding waterpower projects and the impacts on habitat and fish populations, Mark Holmes, Vice President, Xeneca Power Development Inc., was invited to provide us with an overview and updates on proposed sustainable energy projects. He gave a short history of waterpower energy in Ontario over the past 150 years, and provided background on Xeneca and their environmental policy. He stated that Ontario needs to redesign and rebuild its old electrical grid system to serve the entire province. Xeneca projects are structured to conform to EcoLogo program certification standards (third party certification of Environmentally Preferable Products), dictated by the province and the electrical association. Much of this presentation is available on Xeneca's website www.xeneca.ca.

We were concerned to learn that there is no obligation in Xeneca's agreements to monitor the success or the design regarding safe fish passage after the project has been approved and completed.

Aquatic Nutrient Regimes

OFAH head office staff and the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee have developed a draft policy regarding this issue, recognizing that too much phosphorous is unacceptable, but too little phosphorous is unacceptable as well. Similar to phosphorous, other inorganic compounds such as sulphates and nitrates, play a critical component regarding the base of the food chain, and can significantly alter the overall productivity of aquatic ecosystems. In short, aquatic nutrient levels play an important role in the productive capacity of fish. The management of these aquatic nutrient levels for fish are species-specific, and their levels will impact each fishery in a different way. The future management of aquatic nutrients will require species-specific assessment regarding potential ecological and socio-economic impacts that may result from alterations to aquatic nutrient levels, and how this will impact and affect fish community productivity.

Water Levels and Flows in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River

The OFAH has had input into a draft approach produced by the International Joint Commission (IJC) to manage water levels and flows in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. This report consists of a modified "Plan B," which in principle, will improve wetlands and support fish and wildlife. This new approach would mimic natural levels and flow patterns more closely than the previous plan, while also continuing to provide protection from extreme high and low water levels. It is anticipated that wetland meadow marsh communities, the most diverse and productive

type of coastal wetlands in this basin, will increase by 40 percent. This draft new approach for managing water levels and flows at the Moses Saunders Dam is not likely to pose any significant changes to communities downstream from the dam. Flood protection benefits, adequate depths at the Port of Montreal, and commercial navigation should be maintained.

This topic resulted in a number of spinoff discussions by the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee related to the ongoing studies of the Upper Great Lakes Water Levels:

- investigations on altering water flows in the St. Mary's River at Sault Ste. Marie to address the loss of water in Lake Huron;
- discussions regarding the issue of Lake Huron waters possibly flowing excessively through the St. Clair River, and the related research done by the Georgian Bay Association;
- concerns over continued lowering of water levels on Lakes Michigan and Huron; and
- questions of why Lake Trout and Sturgeon are used as indicators, while other fish species, such as prey species, are not used.

Additional Topics and Issues Addressed

- ongoing review of OFAH Fisheries policies;
- numerous new hydroelectric development proposals (126 in FMZ 4, alone);
- ongoing Thames River/Springbank Dam issues;
- movement of Smallmouth Bass into northern Ontario waters;
- proposed Rainbow Trout regulations for Lake Ontario;
- Port Burwell dredging project;
- proposed closing of the Thunder Bay Salmon Association's

salmon hatchery by the MNR;

- ongoing issues with MOE's water treatment fees for volunteer OFAH hatcheries;
- concerns on negative impacts for Brook Trout within the Lakehead Forest Management Plan;
- concerns regarding Walleye populations, and reports of gill netting operations on Lake Nipissing;
- draft policy work on the Importance of Fish Habitat to Ecosystem Health and Recreational Fisheries (this is an extremely important document);
- ongoing Black Sturgeon River Dam and Walleye habitat issues;
- Walleye tracking study of movement in and between Lakes Huron and Erie;
- proposal to change the possession law for bass during tournaments to allow movement from lake waters to inland locations;
- fish sanctuary proposal at Tillsonburg/Big Otter Creek;
- ongoing issues related to MNR's Lake Trout stocking proposals for Lake Huron;
- movement of Asian Carp through the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal;
- Larder Lake/Raven Dam hydro site proposals;
- Lake Erie/Wooley's Point shoreline dredging;
- stocking plans by OFAH clubs; and
- ongoing development of fisheries biology at Queen's University.

OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Roy Polsky

The Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee has representation from every OFAH zone. The advisory committee deals with many issues which are also relevant to the OFAH Big Game and Fisheries Advisory Committees.

Access issues are still a major concern throughout the province. In the north, most are dealt with during forest management plans – in the south it is a different issue. Since 1996, the loss of access and forest access roads through abandonment and restrictions amounts to 11,749 kilometres.

Some forest management plans that we responded to in 2011 were Black Spruce Forest, Pineland Forest, Bancroft Minden Forest, Mazinaw-Lanark Forest, Martel Forest, Nagagami Forest, and Ottawa Valley Forest. Regarding the Lakehead Forest Management Plan, local cottagers, users and clubs were at odds regarding access, so the local forester has deferred operations in the area. The use of herbicide in changing forest composition to manage for conifer forests was discussed.

Woodland Caribou Habitat Regulations and the MNR proposed framework for habitat were discussed. The OFAH submitted a response to our concerns, including that there should be focus on factors limiting woodland caribou productivity and growth,

current forest management strategies, such as the threat of forest pests (e.g. mountain pine beetle), focus management where caribou currently exist, establish herd population objectives, and the need for predator control. The Boreal Landscape Guide deals with woodland caribou habitat and road use management strategies that may impact on fishing, hunting, and the productivity of other important species, such as moose.

The OFAH was invited to participate in two focus group sessions (Dryden and Sudbury) to review the Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource-based Tourism. Discussions took place on the requirement to include other users, restriction on road closures, Resource Stewardship Agreement process and effectiveness, designated tourism lakes that are inactive, and whether there is a need for the guidelines. The Crown Land Use Atlas Harmonization Project was also discussed in regard to buffers around lodge lakes and outpost camps, seasonal closures of roads and land use permits. OFAH head office has sent a response to the MNR regarding the review.

The advisory committee also dealt with several provincial park issues, with OFAH head office expressing our concerns to the MNR, including:

- Presqu'île Provincial Park and cormorant management;

- Steel River Provincial Park and Slate Islands Provincial Park regarding the potential impact of park designation on hunting and fishing opportunities; and
- Kawartha Highlands Signature Site Park regarding the implementation of excessive boat cache fees of \$107.50 per boat, per year. The OFAH was able to reach a tentative agreement with Ontario Parks to reduce the fee to \$20.

Strawberry Island (Manitoulin Island) has been designated as a Nature Reserve class park, which does not allow hunting; prior to this, hunting did occur on Strawberry Island. Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) purchased the property in 2002. Hunting will continue in most areas of the Queen Mum Park (Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, M’Nidoo M’Nissing), which is also on Manitoulin Island.

Due to the large amount of opposition to the Melancthon Quarry Application, the Ministry of the Environment and the MNR have announced that a full Environmental Assessment will be carried out. The OFAH made several submissions on this project, as this could cause large ecological and socio-economic impacts.

Other topics discussed throughout the year included:

- nonresident Crown Land Camping – there is no formal review of fee schedules for the permits, which currently cost \$10.57 per day. The MNR considers the fee to be fair, relative to those charged by Ontario Parks for similar camping experiences;
- the Provincial Roads Funding Program – we continue to examine this issue;

- the Northwest Boat Cache Program – in most areas of Ontario, noncommercial Crown land boat caches are free under the Free Use Policy of the Public Lands Act. In the Kenora, Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, Dryden, and part of Fort Frances MNR Districts, authorization is required for boat caches. There is no fee for a three-year permit;
- Crown Land Use Atlas Harmonization Project – is being used in the Wawa District regarding access issues; we have looked at options for the two-week moose road closures;
- public hunting opportunities – addressed access and identified potential and existing hunting opportunities that exist in the southern part of the province;
- Ontario Trans Canada Trails – presents considerable potential for OFAH zones, members club and affiliated programs to participate in the enhancement of the trail system and provide positive publicity; and
- renewable energy. The construction of hydro dams on local waterways, wind turbines that are dotting the landscape and large solar farms, will be on future Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee agendas.

Many of the same issues occupy the advisory committee’s time year after year, such as forestry, motorized access and restrictions to Crown land, off-road vehicle issues, roads and parks, to name a few.

OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Gerry Haarmeyer

The OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee met in April, September and December 2011. At each session, the Algonquin Land Claim was a major item of discussion. Frustration and concern over the lack of transparency by the Ontario government in the negotiation process to establish an Agreement in Principle (AIP) surfaced at each meeting. Articles and editorial comments by OFAH President Bill Blackwell, and OFAH Executive Director Mike Reader in the *Angler and Hunter Hotline* section of the *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine reflected the concerns of the advisory committee and the OFAH around this very important issue. This is an issue that can have a major impact on all natural resource users in the claim area, and an issue that should be in the public forum prior to the signing of a negotiated AIP with the Algonquin.

A newly appointed federal negotiator stressed the consultation requirement with the nonnative community; however, the OFAH continues to hear that the Algonquin and provincial negotiators are close to agreement on a land package and harvest agreements. Compensation associated with the land claim will come in the form of land, where Ontario would provide the Crown land, and monetary compensation would come from the federal government. The OFAH will be seeking a number of bilateral meetings (province and stakeholders only at the request of the stakeholder), and involve our membership. The provincial government promised to reactivate the focus groups, but to date,

this has not occurred. There is a potential for the Algonquin, and the two levels of government to vote on an AIP in 2012, but the timing of such is still in doubt.

What effect the claims by a number of other First Nations, including the Quebec Algonquin, will have on the negotiations and AIP is not known.

In December, we were provided with an update on the Williams Treaty land claim by John Nolan, Chief Negotiator for the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, who was accompanied by Paul Murray, Legal Counsel for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and Graham Vance, Senior Policy Advisor for Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

The Williams Treaty claim addresses three points from the 1923 Treaty: 1) the amount of the original claim; 2) no reserve lands provided in the original treaty; and 3) that harvesting rights were disregarded. The Province will be commencing court proceedings to take statements from elders in May 2012, and conduct further court investigations that are expected to last more than two years. The Province would like to negotiate.

Our input is being sought by the Province, as the government considers us a key stakeholder. We expressed our initial concerns, such as the overlap of claim areas (Algonquin/Williams), and how that is being addressed, fair sharing, conservation, and Métis, among other issues. Because of the Algonquin/Williams overlap, we see this as a complicated issue for both claims. The OFAH also believes that the harvesting rights were surrendered under

the Williams Treaty, and that this was upheld in the “Howard” Supreme Court decision.

We also received an update on the Chapleau Cree land claims (who did not receive the lands promised them in their treaty), and that it was expected that considerable Crown land would be transferred to two reserves within the next two years.

The Mitaanjigamiing (Stanjikoming) Treaty Land Entitlement Claim in the Fort Frances area was brought forward, which is also based on not receiving the promised amount of land as set out in the original agreement. We are following this claim, and are seeking clarification as to what impact the claim may have on our interests. We want to be involved on behalf of our membership, and

strongly suggested that OFAH Zone A and local clubs be consulted by the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs before committing to any land transfers.

The OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee continues to monitor issues that have been brought before us in the past. The OFAH has asked the Minister of Natural Resources for an update on the Métis situation as it pertains to harvesting, but as of the end of the year, no response had been received. We continue to pursue that issue.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication of advisory committee members, and would like to thank them for their continued interest and hard work on your behalf.

OFAH Past Presidents Advisory Committee Annual Report

No report for 2011.



OFAH Provincial Director-at-Large Nominating Committee Annual Report

Chair – Rob Hare

I would like to thank my fellow committee members, Frank Wick and Glenn Rivard, for their participation, insight and wisdom.

I am pleased to report that we have a full slate of excellent candidates this term; their wisdom, knowledge and experience will be invaluable to the Board of Directors.

A new Provincial Director-at-Large this year is Tony Jackson, past chair of OFAH Zone J. Tony brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with him, which I am sure will be valuable.

Fred Geberdt decided not to seek reelection and will be leaving the OFAH Board of Directors. He wants to spend more time with his family and grandchildren, as well as more time in the field.

Fred has spent many years of dedicated service on the Board, most notably as Chair of the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee. He has worked tirelessly, and his guidance, wisdom and knowledge will surely be missed.



OFAH Resolutions Advisory Committee Annual Report

Chair – Glenn Rivard

A draft resolution was passed by the membership of OFAH Zone F at its March 27, 2011 meeting. All zones were to present this resolution to their membership at a zone meeting, and bring the position of their zone to the April 2012 Board of Directors' meeting, at which time it will be dealt with.

If approved and made OFAH policy, it will establish a wildlife trust fund to purchase fish and wildlife habitat and access for hunting, angling and other recreational pursuits. The draft resolution is as follows:

WHEREAS access to managed wildlife habitat, particularly throughout the Province in areas of large private land holdings continues to decline; and

WHEREAS this wildlife habitat in and of itself is of primary concern to members of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and other conservation-minded persons living in and

around these large urban/rural areas; and

WHEREAS the ownership and development of habitat and public access would attract support from other nongovernment organizations, business, and industry, as well as private donations and bequeaths along with the opportunity to draw support from special government funding when it is put forward;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters establish a Wildlife Trust Fund to purchase fish and wildlife habitat and access for hunting and other recreational pursuits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters review the Alberta Fish and Game Wildlife Trust Fund procedure as a guide to establishing an OFAH Wildlife Habitat Trust Fund.



OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Jim Greenwood

I would like to extend my thanks to the advisory committee members, and head office staff for the support they have given to me since assuming the chair's position. They are a great group of folks who continue to provide much valued expertise on matters brought to the attention of this advisory committee.

I would also like to recognize the outstanding effort by all involved in bringing together the OFAH Small Game Policy, which was presented to and adopted by the OFAH Board of Directors this past April.

Present regulations, under the authority of a small game licence, allow for the hunting of seven different species of game birds, five species of game animals, and nine species of fur-bearing animals that can be taken.

The hunting regulations of these species vary from one Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) to another, and can, at best, be described as confusing.

It is our hope that this advisory committee will continue to work with the MNR in developing proposals to harmonize existing regulations across Ontario, which will provide better opportunities for our hunting community. The existence of our OFAH Small

Game Policy will aid in that development.

The Hunter Education Program continues to grow with increased recruitment seen across the board. Many young people are successfully completing these courses, yet their appearance in the field is few and far between. We need to continue to highlight the opportunities that are available with small game hunting, and need to remind older/experienced hunters to take the time to mentor our youth.

It is encouraging to see youth hunts offered and managed by fish and game clubs and stewardship councils; these have a very real and positive impact on young hunters.

The OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee is pleased with the MNR's decision to proceed with the proposal (EBR# 011-3058) to allow for the capture and use of wild raptors for falconry. We understand that two amendments have been included: 1) to address any risks associated with the release of wild raptors that have been kept for falconry; and 2) to remove northern goshawk from the list of species that can be captured.

This policy is a welcomed and important step forward to assist Ontario falconers practice and preserve a valued hunting tradition.

OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Birds Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Scott Petrie

Proposal to Instate Waterfowler Heritage Days in Ontario

Waterfowl Heritage Days (WHD) provide youth (12-18 years of age) with the opportunity to hunt waterfowl with a mentor prior to the regular waterfowl season. With the exception of Ontario and Saskatchewan, all provinces in Canada have WHD's. Most provinces provide one day (the Saturday before the opener), but a few provide two days, and one province provides an entire week of WHD's. In 2010, the OFAH and Long Point Waterfowl proposed to the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) that Ontario instate WHD's during the weekend prior to the regular waterfowl opening season in each of the districts. Since that time, the CWS and the MNR have supported the idea of establishing WHD's in Ontario.

The Ontario Waterfowl Advisory Committee (OWAC), which consists of CWS, OFAH and MNR representatives, have supported establishing a WHD in the Northern, Central, and Southern Waterfowl Hunting Districts on the Saturday immediately preceding the opening day of the duck season, and in the Hudson-James Bay District, on the first Saturday of September. The CWS has indicated that WHD's will almost certainly be implemented beginning in the fall of 2012. Full daily bag limits would apply for youth hunters.

Proposal to Reinstate Mourning Dove Hunting in Ontario

Long Point Waterfowl and the OFAH have been promoting a mourning dove season in Ontario for several years. In response, the CWS recently completed an extensive Mourning Dove Population and Harvest Assessment Report. Conclusions of that report are as follows:

- mourning doves are the most heavily harvested game birds in North America, with 20 million birds harvested per year in 40 of 50 U.S. states;
- the fall mourning dove population estimate for Ontario is 2.8 to 3.7 million birds;
- the CWS estimates that 14,000 to 16,000 mourning doves would be harvested annually in Ontario, which is only 0.4% to 0.7% of the fall flight;
- the Ontario breeding population is expected to produce a fall flight that can accommodate anticipated harvest with minimal impact;
- based on this assessment, the MNR, OFAH and CWS affirmed that they do not have concerns about the ability to hunt mourning doves sustainably in Ontario;
- the advisory committee recommended that if a season is instated, Ontario should adopt the same harvest framework as neighboring U.S. states. This would include opening a mourning dove season throughout the entire southern hunting district, with a 70-day season opening on September 1, and a 15-bird daily bag limit; and

- the CWS will publish in its 2011 December regulatory report, *Proposals to Amend the Canadian Migratory Birds Regulations*, a notification that a mourning dove hunting season in Ontario is being considered. Pending feedback received by the CWS, a proposal to instate a season in the fall of 2013 could be considered.

Spring Snow Goose Hunt

Greater snow geese have reached overabundant status, and the Quebec Region has had a special spring conservation hunting season since 1998. Spring snow goose numbers in eastern Ontario have increased, and now number about 80,000 birds. In order to support the international goal of population reduction and to reduce crop losses, the CWS has approved a spring conservation harvest for greater snow geese in eastern Ontario (WMU 65) starting in 2012. The season will be from March 1 until May 31, and snow goose hunting will only be permitted on farm land. Hunters will be permitted to use electronic calls, but can not use bait. This season will help address a conservation concern (snow goose overabundance), while also providing increased opportunities for waterfowl hunters in Ontario.

Results of the 2011 Mid-summer Mute Swan Survey and Update to the List of Migratory Birds Protected under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA)*

Mute swans are an exotic/invasive waterfowl species that competes with native waterfowl species for space and food. The southern Ontario mute swan population has increased from 1,373 birds in 2002 to 3,062 birds in 2011. The OFAH has requested that the CWS remove mute swans from the list of species protected under the MBCA. The CWS has indicated that they are reviewing the issue with the possibility of delisting mute swans within the next year.

Proposal to Reinstate Late (Winter) Canada Goose Hunting Seasons in WMU's with Sunday Gun Hunting

A number of hunters have expressed concern that the opening of Sunday waterfowl hunting has resulted in the loss of traditional February/March Canada goose seasons. An analysis by the CWS showed that reinstating the late Canada goose seasons in the Southern Waterfowl District would result in a greater incremental harvest of temperate-breeding geese, than extending the regular season into late December (the current situation). In order to remain within the 107 hunting days allowed by the MBCA,

reinstating an eight-day late winter Canada goose season would mean reducing the regular season by eight days. The OFAH offered an alternative proposal to open the season for eight Saturdays during the winter between mid-January and early March. The CWS, the MNR and the OFAH agreed that this option would provide more harvest opportunities, and that it could increase the overall harvest of temperate-breeding Canadian geese. The CWS is currently considering these proposals for the 2012-13 or 2013-14 seasons, and will be seeking input from their Wildlife Enforcement Division, and from goose hunters. The OFAH offered to poll hunters using online polling, at OFAH Zone meetings, or in *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine.

Wind Turbine Projects

Improperly placed wind turbines (on and offshore) have the potential to displace waterfowl from important movement corridors and foraging areas. Numerous wind turbine projects have been constructed or are proposed to be developed along the shoreline of the lower Great Lakes. Certain developments have been cause for concern, because they are situated along important waterfowl migratory pathways, are too close to major staging/wintering areas, and/or they are located on important foraging areas. The OFAH is particularly concerned by the fact that the setback requirement from significant wildlife habitat is only 120 meters, and cumulative effects have not been taken into consideration. The OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Birds Advisory Committee is concerned that certain key waterfowl wintering and staging areas will be compromised, and will continue to lobby for adequate preconstruction monitoring of all potential developments, as well as adequate setback guidelines. Long Point Waterfowl (Phil Wilson, M.Sc. Candidate), in partnership with the CWS, are implanting approximately 50 long-tailed ducks with satellite transmitters. This two-year project is taking place on Lake Ontario with the intention of determining critical habitat areas for the species and the potential impact of proposed industrial wind turbine developments.

The OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Birds Advisory Committee will continue to promote the conservation and management of waterfowl and wetlands within the province. We will also continue to promote the expansion of hunting opportunities when/where it is considered to be ecologically sustainable.



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REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Members of The Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters Incorporated

The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at December 31, 2011, and the summary statement of operations for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial statements of The Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters Incorporated for the year ended December 31, 2011. We expressed a qualified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated February 28, 2012 (see below). The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Reading the summary financial statements, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements of The Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters Incorporated.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements based on the audited financial statements of The Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters Incorporated for the year ended December 31, 2011.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standard (CAS) 810, "Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements".

Opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statements derived from the audited financial statements of The Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters Incorporated for the year ended December 31, 2011 are a fair summary of those financial statements. However, the summary financial statements are misstated to the equivalent extent as the audited financial statements of The Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters Incorporated for the year ended December 31, 2011.

The misstatement of the audited financial statements is described in our qualified audit opinion in our report dated February 28, 2012. Our qualified audit opinion is based on the fact that we were unable to satisfy ourselves concerning the completeness of certain revenues. Our qualified audit opinion states that, except for the effects of the described matter, those financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Federation as at December 31, 2011, and its results of operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

McColl Turner LLP

Licensed Public Accountants

Peterborough, Ontario
February 28, 2012

THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS INCORPORATED
Year Ended December 31, 2011

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2011	2010
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 1,582,507	\$ 2,238,951
Investments	2,280,524	2,232,034
Accounts receivable	1,677,124	1,469,137
Inventory	315,170	238,014
Prepaid expenses	511,619	383,215
	<u>6,366,944</u>	<u>6,561,351</u>
TRADE NAME, LISTS AND CONTRACTS		
LAND, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT	-	100,000
	<u>3,110,769</u>	<u>3,125,547</u>
	<u>\$ 9,477,713</u>	<u>\$ 9,786,898</u>

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 622,948	\$ 912,358
Deferred revenue	<u>2,140,430</u>	<u>1,859,068</u>
	<u>2,763,378</u>	<u>2,771,426</u>

NET ASSETS

Invested in land, buildings and equipment	3,110,769	3,125,542
Internally restricted	418,362	381,328
Unrestricted	<u>3,185,204</u>	<u>3,508,602</u>
	<u>6,714,335</u>	<u>7,015,472</u>

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

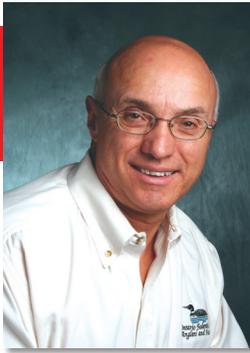
	2011	2010
REVENUE		
Membership fees	\$ 3,312,944	\$ 3,149,433
Program fees	2,434,298	1,990,283
OOD magazine revenues	3,641,634	3,623,990
Sales	307,767	345,415
Fundraising, net	136,254	263,487
Donations	893,696	927,459
Interest and investment income	<u>75,650</u>	<u>77,929</u>
	<u>10,802,243</u>	<u>10,377,996</u>

EXPENDITURES

Salaries and employee costs	1,721,102	1,793,490
Membership	2,106,042	1,812,439
Programs, public information and education	2,365,130	1,886,577
OOD magazine expenses	3,336,023	3,218,149
Office, general and professional	807,950	705,959
Cost of sales	330,315	277,059
Legal/policy	21,350	4,514
Informational programs	20,792	57,425
Amortization	294,676	243,860
Amortization of OOD trademark, lists and contracts	<u>100,000</u>	<u>100,000</u>
	<u>11,103,380</u>	<u>10,099,472</u>

EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES (EXPENDITURES OVER REVENUE)

	\$ (301,137)	\$ 278,524
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Will the long gun registry be gone by year end?

Mike Reader

Executive Director

It is not very often that I have the opportunity to talk about good news on the provincial and federal fronts at the same time. However, with the recent introduction of Bill C-19, An Act to abolish the long gun registry by the federal Conservative government, and the appointment of a northern based minister for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), I'm encouraged that the OFAH, our members, and indeed, anglers and hunters across the province, are being heard.

If all goes well, the long and acrimonious fight to end the badly flawed long gun registry could be over by year's end. Tabled on October 25th, the bill quickly proceeded to Second Reading, and as we go to press, should be in the hands of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security for public hearings. Having appeared as witnesses before this same Committee on Bill C-391 last year, the OFAH fully expects to again get the call to testify in support of the government's bill to scrap the registry. Once referred back to the House, the bill will be debated at Third Reading and then sent to the Senate where the process is repeated. The legislative process is generally a slow and often tedious process, but in this case, the government's unwavering commitment to legal, law abiding firearms owners has resulted in a heightened sense of action that could deliver an early Christmas present.

As long-time OFAH members will know, the OFAH has campaigned against the registry for over 15 years. We were there at the beginning, when Bill C-68 was passed; we have been there for every bill since, including Bill C-21 in 2006; Bill C-24 in 2007; Bill S-5 in 2009; and more recently, Bill C-391, which lost by a bare two votes last fall. The end of the long gun registry, including the destruction of the database that stores the records, will be a proud day for your Federation and a victory for all legal, law abiding firearms owners in Canada.

On the provincial front, we once again have a northern minister for the MNR. Representing the riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North, where most residents either hunt or fish, the Honourable Michael Gravelle is someone who understands the commitment of anglers and hunters to conservation. He understands the importance of our fish and wildlife to the social, ecological and economic well being of Ontario. He has worked with the OFAH previously, and knows how our values align with the perspective he brings to the table as a northern member.

It's also encouraging that with the appointment of the new Minister, the government has ended the ill-fated experiment that separated the Forestry section from the MNR that it engineered in 2009. The return of a northern Minister has been accompanied by a return of Forestry to the MNR. OFAH opposed the split in the first place, and is pleased to see this important sector of the Ministry return to where it always belonged. I have already spoken with the minister and we are scheduled to meet soon.

We are proud that our actions have helped bring down the long gun registry. As an OFAH member, you too should be proud of the support you have given your Federation, by exercising your right to vote, by signing petitions, displaying bumper stickers, attending town hall meetings, and a myriad of other actions that let governments at every level know that we care about the outdoors and will always act to protect our natural resources and our right to enjoy them.

Change of plans...

Last month, I talked about Dr. Randall Eaton's scheduled tour to Ontario. Unfortunately, Dr. Eaton experienced a medical emergency and was unable to travel. Our apologies for anyone who was inconvenienced by the sudden cancellation of this much anticipated presentation.

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Human/black bear conflict, legacy of cancelled hunt

Bill Blackwell

President

It has been over a decade since the spring black bear hunt was cancelled for reasons that had nothing to do with science or good wildlife management, yet we're still living with the consequences of that reckless decision today, and even more regrettably, so are Ontario's black bears.

You may have read in the *Toronto Star* about the woman who was attacked by a black bear after getting out of boat in a harbour at Pukaskwa Park, or *CBC News* coverage of a 24 year old MNR employee who was badly mauled while doing field work in the Thunder Bay area. That bear was captured and dispatched, good news for public safety, but is another sad reminder of the wasted bears that are a legacy of the cancelled spring hunt.

According to Dr. Stephen Herrero of the University of Calgary, bear attacks are more common in Canada and Alaska than anywhere else in North America. Herrero, whose findings were published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management* also found that male bears are far more likely to attack than females, a surprise to me, considering that so much has been made of the ferocity of the female protecting her cubs.

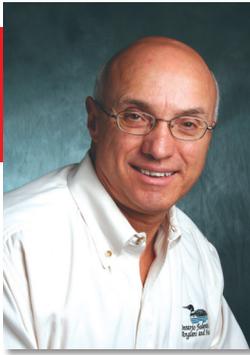
With attacks come consequences. If conservation officers can track the animal, it is usually relocated or killed, a loss all the way around. What I find most disturbing about this scenario is that the black bear/human conflicts occurring now could have been avoided by managing our black bear populations better, including an early season bear hunt. Keeping bores (male bears) wary of humans, while protecting females and their cubs during the spring season worked well for decades, as is evident by the low numbers of issues reported before 2000. Conflicts have trended upward with alarming speed since 1999, (less than a 1,000 reports prior to 1999 to over 12,700 by 2007) and although it is not the only reason, the cancellation of the hunt cannot be dismissed as a major contributor to the waste and destruction that is happening with increasing frequency to our black bear population.

If we subscribe to the Ministry of Natural Resources' Bear Wise program, their current approach to human/bear conflicts, then we can blame humans for the increase in attacks. Having food nearby, leaving garbage out, not cleaning BBQs, and keeping bird feeders must be avoided, but should bears be so pressured for habitat and so complacent around humans that we need to be vigilant of them, even in our cities?

In 2009, the MNR released its Black Bear Management Framework, which was intended to develop an improved bear management program that included management objectives, harvest allocation strategies, better population and harvest assessment and maintaining hunting as a bear management tool. What has happened since then? When will the benefits of better black bear management be evident?

Our black bears deserve their rightful place among the big game animals of the province. Continued human/bear conflicts threaten public safety, too often result in the wasting of our bears, and contribute to the decline of the black bear as a valued member of our diverse wildlife population.

The past decade has been a bad one for the black bear, but the OFAH remains committed to seeing this creature regain its previous status, and an early season hunt is still a part of that solution.



Why do we hunt? Dr. Randall Eaton explains

Mike Reader

Executive Director

Hunters share a deep passion for the outdoors and for the act of hunting. Our feelings about taking an animal's life are complicated things that are not easily put into words. Conversations about why we hunt are even harder with those who do not hunt. So when I am in the presence of someone who has the ability to eloquently convey how I feel about hunting, I am deeply moved and grateful for their skill. It is a rare thing.

Over the course of many years, I have, on perhaps a handful of occasions been in the presence of such a gifted individual, and have observed others in the audience being held as spellbound. Dr. Randall Eaton is one of those people. You may have had the opportunity to take in his keynote address at our Fish & Wildlife Conference in 2010, or you may have watched the video of that presentation, which the OFAH produced and which is available for OFAH zones, clubs and individuals to enjoy. Perhaps you've seen one of his award winning documentaries *The Sacred Hunt* or read one of his books, the most recent one entitled *From Boys to Men of heart, Hunting as a Rite of Passage*.

As you know from the many outreach programs that the OFAH runs, we are committed to ensuring that our hunting and fishing heritage is passed on to our children and grandchildren. As part of that commitment, we are hosting a speaking tour featuring Dr. Eaton, based out of our Peterborough head office. On October 12 and 13, he will speak to biology students and faculty at Trent University and to environmental management students and faculty at the Frost campus of Fleming College in Lindsay. He will also give a presentation to invited Ministry of Natural Resources staff at the OFAH | Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Centre Heritage Centre in Peterborough. **His final tour stop will be a free public presentation on Thursday, October 13 at 7pm at our Heritage Centre.**

Dr. Eaton has an international reputation in animal behavior and wildlife conservation, has made contributions to the history of science, philosophy, environmental ethics, mythology, men's studies and prehistoric art. For all his academic credentials, his delivery is warm and personal and resonates with the common man.

Dr. Eaton will explain how it is that hunting remains relevant and important even today, when the necessity to harvest our own meat is mostly past. He will share his insight about how adolescent males benefit from hunting, and how we, as hunters, can better communicate with the nonhunting community about why we hunt and how we can win much-needed support for our outdoor heritage.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to hear Dr. Eaton speak on our hunting heritage and you live within driving range of Peterborough, I hope that you will make plans to attend Dr. Eaton's presentation. I will be there and I look forward to the questions, comments and insights that will be shared by the audience at the conclusion of the session. Following the tour, we plan to post the presentation on our website, so watch for the link or order a DVD copy from head office.

Visit www.ofah.org or www.hfhc.ca for details about Dr. Eaton's public presentation and also to keep informed about other speakers in the OFAH | Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre series.



Dr. Randall Eaton will be in Ontario on tour this month and will give a public presentation on October 13, 2011 at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre. Plan to attend if you can.



OFAH and partners to host a Canadian first

Bill Blackwell

President

Your Federation has many firsts to its credit, dating back to our earliest years. We advocated for Ontario's first-ever game fish survey, which was completed in 1931, and which was followed shortly by the province's first game wildlife survey. We were the first to call for mandatory hunter education, and the first to demand a season for black bears, which had previously been hunted as vermin. In 2012, we'll be part of yet another first—Canada's first-ever National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress.

This exciting event will take place from May 27 to 31, 2012 at the Westin Hotel, Ottawa, thanks to generous support from major government and NGO partners from across Canada and the United States. Fish and wildlife professionals, NGO's, academics, biologists, scientists, policy managers and other stakeholders from across North America are expected to attend, and I encourage OFAH zones and clubs to consider sending a representative as well.

The Congress will provide a unique opportunity for local, state, provincial/territorial and federal levels of government, NGO's, First Nations, academia, media and the general public to come together to discuss the challenges facing the fish and wildlife populations, both in Canada and continentally, and to collectively seek conservation solutions for the 21st century.

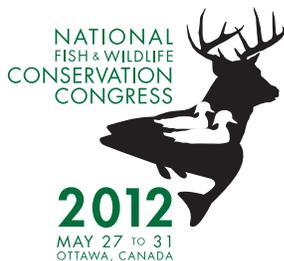
Canada's National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress will provide a forum for delegates to identify and heighten awareness of the challenges facing fish and wildlife populations; foster an understanding of the role hunting and angling continue to play in the conservation of these resources; and identify pragmatic solutions to the challenges at hand.

While focusing on Canadian issues, the Congress' ultimate goals are the perpetuation of abundant fish and wildlife populations in Canada; maintenance of the public trust and sustainable use traditions associated with our natural resources; the creation of government policy and funding mechanisms in support of fish and wildlife; and strengthening North American partnerships that provide effective continental engagement in conservation through coordinated policies, laws and institutions.

It is our hope that Congress participants will use the presentations and discussions as a launching platform to develop a realistic and focused agenda for action on fish and wildlife policies and priorities once the Congress has concluded.

The OFAH is proud to be behind this first for Canada and we are grateful to the many organizations who have enthusiastically come on board to help us ensure that it happens. Already, more than 20 major government, nongovernment and industry partners are participating, and more are getting involved all the time. Please visit the Congress website at www.nfwcc.com.

The National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress offers a new beginning for fish and wildlife conservation in Canada and a new level of continental cooperation. Be sure to mark the Congress dates in your calendar and be part of a Canadian first.



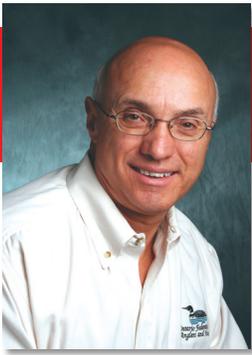
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Provincial long gun registry and other election issues

Mike Reader

Executive Director

Summer may be winding down, but the fall provincial election campaign is quickly gearing up. In just a few weeks, voters like you and I will choose our next provincial government, one that will affect how well or poorly our fish and wildlife resources are managed and our fishing and hunting privileges are respected over the next four years.

As anglers and hunters, we need to actively engage in the process of choosing the right local candidate or party leader. We can't rely on others to care about what the parties are promising to give, or more importantly, take away, from Ontario's natural resources. If we want to protect our hunting and fishing heritage, and I know we do because we care enough to belong to an organization like the OFAH, then it is crucial that we educate ourselves about which party platform most closely aligns with the needs of our resources.

Your Federation has prepared and sent an election questionnaire to the PC, Liberal, NDP and Green parties which can be viewed online at www.ofah.org. As we receive their responses, we will post them at the same location for you to review. We have asked some tough questions on issues that need our government's attention. Unfortunately, several of the questions are repeated from a previous election, as no headway has been made. Despite years of OFAH advocacy, some issues remain unresolved, such as insufficient funding of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR); the lack of a Crown land access policy which would secure fair access to publicly owned land; the threat of deadly CWD spreading to Ontario; overly strict requirements and costly fees charged to nonprofit, volunteer-run hatcheries; and the ineffective management of overabundant cormorant (see your president's column on page 11). We are asking for a commitment to continue support for the OFAH/MNR Invading Species Awareness Program, particularly in light of the threat posed by Asian Carp in the Great Lakes.

There are new issues we're challenging the parties on as well. We want to know which of the parties is prepared to restore a Fish and Wildlife Management Branch to the MNR, something that was lost in the realignment of 2010. We are asking if they will amend the Endangered Species Act to create public accountability for COSSARO (Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario). Currently, there is no appeal or veto process to contest COSSARO's assessments and decisions.

New to the provincial election platform, but a long standing issue for firearms owners, is the long gun registry. With the abolition of the federal long gun registry slated to happen this fall, some provinces are already talking about replacing it with a provincial version. In our view, this is a nonstarter, since the Harper government has pledged to destroy the records when the long gun registry is scrapped. The OFAH is adamantly opposed to any proposal that would see the federal database shared amongst the provinces, or to having any aspect of the ineffective, costly and wasteful registry brought into the provincial realm. We have asked the parties for their position on this issue, and urge you to ask your local candidate for their view.

On October 6, we will go to the polls to elect our next provincial government. Please review the OFAH election questionnaire and the parties' responses. Consider printing the questionnaire and taking it to your local candidate to learn their position on each of the issues. Attend an all candidates meeting, and participate in the process.

It is crucial that our next government knows that Ontarians value our fish and wildlife resources and consider them key to our economic, ecological and social prosperity. The approximately 1.3 million licensed anglers and hunters in Ontario have a real opportunity to make our voices heard and to help shape the next government of Ontario. Above all, please vote.

Read what the OFAH is asking candidates in our Provincial Election Questionnaire at www.ofah.org

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MOE Minister orders MNR to build cormorant nests

Bill Blackwell

President

For the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Conservation is all about benefits from our natural resources. We hope that key message comes across clearly and loudly in our current 2011 OFAH Provincial Election Questionnaire. (Please go to www.ofah.org for details.)

I'd like to share with you an example to illustrate why we asked each Ontario political party this question: If elected, will your government restore a Fish and Wildlife Management Branch within the MNR and ensure that active fish and wildlife management is returned as a core business activity?

My recollection is that the OFAH first alerted MNR to the need for management of cormorant overpopulation in Presqu'île Provincial Park in 1998—thirteen years ago. Two major problems directly caused by overpopulation were becoming obvious—habitat destruction because of too many nesting birds and severe negative impacts on fish by too many cormorants feeding on any fish species available that they could swallow. Loss of benefits, and costs (ecological, social and economic) were becoming equally obvious from the explosion of cormorant numbers across the Great Lakes Basin—not just the eastern basin of Lake Ontario where Presqu'île Park is situated, but the western basin of Lake Erie and the north channel of Lake Huron including Manitoulin Island.

Persistence on the part of your Federation led the MNR to establish a policy that the control of cormorant numbers should only be considered in specific local areas if the birds are found to be having significant ecological impacts on habitats or other species. The policy was a step in the right direction because culling of adults successfully reduced tree-nesting by cormorants significantly in Presqu'île Park.

Unfortunately, politics came to trump sound wildlife management. Right now, the number of tree-nesting cormorants in Presqu'île has been allowed to return to 2003 levels of more than 9,000 adult birds, yet Presqu'île can only support well under 2,000 nests if the environment is to recover from the damage caused over the last dozen years.

How could this failure to ensure continued, successful active wildlife management to prevent cormorant overpopulation happen? Can you believe the situation could get worse than this? Enter Ontario's Ministry of the Environment (MOE). At the end of 2009, MOE received requests for an individual Environmental Assessment (EA) for cormorant management in Presqu'île Provincial Park. The MOE Minister decided an individual EA was not required, and instead, issued an Order to the MNR in October 2010 (of which the OFAH did not receive a copy until the last week of May, 2011).

Here I quote MOE Minister John Wilkinson, "...to ensure that the environment is protected, I am, pursuant to my authority under subsection 16(3) of the EAA [Environmental Assessment Act], imposing by order, the following conditions on the Project [cormorant management in Presqu'île Park]." The following are two of the four conditions Minister Wilkinson has imposed on MNR's Islands Resource Management Plan:

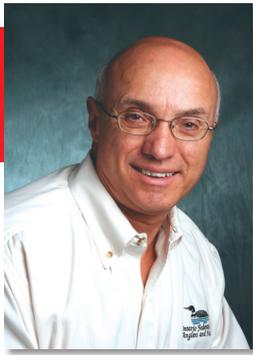
3. Amend Section 3.3.5—Description of Cormorant Management—Other Cormorant Management Methods—by adding the text in bold italics below such that the second sentence will read: "For example, the construction of artificial ground-nesting sites and/or **other feasible social attractant techniques shall be used annually** to attract displaced tree-nesting cormorants to the ground colony **nesting areas...**"

4. Amend Section 5—Plan Implementation Review and Amendment—by: Modifying the fourth sentence of this section by adding additional sentences immediately following so that it reads: "Management actions and their effects will be reviewed each year... MNR shall ensure that no detrimental cumulative effects on overall cormorant populations result from activities at Presqu'île Provincial Park by continuing to share information and collect data from other jurisdictions..."

There is more! Here's how Minister Wilkinson ends his declaration to the MNR. "Lastly, I would like to ensure that MNR understands that failure to comply with the EAA, the provisions of Class EA, and failure to implement the Project in the manner described in the amended RMIP's, are contraventions of the EAA and may result in prosecution under Section 38 of the EAA. I am confident that MNR recognizes the importance and value of the EAA and will ensure that its requirements and those of the Class EA are satisfied."

Minister Wilkinson, the OFAH understands conservation, we understand what wise wildlife management is and the benefits it brings and costs it avoids. We will continue to press for major change on cormorant management, in Presqu'île Provincial Park and beyond. Where is our MNR Minister on this issue?

Go to
www.ofah.org
to view
MOE Minister
Wilkinson's
Order in its
entirety.



A personal message for men and their loved ones

Mike Reader

Executive Director

My August column usually covers a fishing or hunting topic- subjects of importance to you and I as OFAH members and outdoors enthusiasts. This month, with President Bill Blackwell's support, I am penning my column on a personal issue, with the hope that sharing my experience may help others.

As you are reading this, I am looking forward to returning to work following an extended sick leave. On May 6, my family was thrown a curve ball when I was diagnosed with cancer – prostate cancer. Let me back up a bit to set the stage for the May 6 news.

There is no history of prostate cancer in my family. I have had annual PSA tests for several years merely as a precaution, yet that simple blood test may have saved my life.

In 2009, my annual PSA test (a measure of protein in the blood) was very low; my 2010 test however, revealed that it had risen dramatically. A retest showed an even higher reading. Doctors look for a rise in PSA levels as a possible indicator of prostate health. Many things can elevate a PSA reading — an infection, enlarged prostate, prostatitis, and even the presence of cancer.

After a series of additional tests and another PSA level of just over an earlier test, I chose not to wait to take another PSA test in three months, and opted instead for a biopsy. I'm glad I did. Despite the fact that neither my family doctor nor my specialist could detect a lump, on May 6, my wife Judy and I learned the results of the biopsy — prostate cancer.

My doctors were great, and I quickly underwent a number of new tests, including a bone scan, which is very important. The biggest issue, of course, was deciding on treatment. There was no indication that the cancer had spread outside of the prostate, so I had two options – radiation or surgery. I sought many opinions, and after a long discussion with my very supportive and loving wife, I decided surgery was the best choice for us.

One of the most difficult things in all of this was telling my family, friends and colleagues; but as usual, with lots of love and support from my sons, Jeff and Andrew, my daughter, Kelly and her husband Robin, and of course my two-year-old grandson, Alexandre, we soldiered on and have tried to deal with this news in a way that might help others.

In talking about my situation, I was surprised to learn that many men are not getting annual PSA tests. It's a simple blood test done beginning at age 50, or 45 if you have a family history of prostate cancer. It was my benchmark PSA level, established over years of annual testing, that helped us see a significant change in the pattern; I had no other symptoms to speak of.

If you are a male who's reached 50 years, I implore you to get a PSA test when you get your annual physical. (Women, please use your influence to convince them.) It costs \$30, but the price of not getting the test done could be far greater. Educate yourself about the symptoms associated with prostate cancer, and follow up with your doctor if you think something might be wrong. You know your body better than anyone does.

You may be squirming as you read this. I'm sorry. I know I am speaking candidly, but my hope is that sharing my story in this way will spur others to get tested. Not talking about prostate cancer is not the answer; we need to face this straight on because statistics show that one in six males will be diagnosed with it.

Judy and I want to thank everyone who has wished us well. Thanks to head office staff and the OFAH Board of Directors for talking openly with me about what, for many, is a highly uncomfortable topic. A special thank you to those who have spoken with me about your own cancer experience — the recently diagnosed, and those who've beaten cancer — I appreciate your openness.

I can't tell you how glad I am that I have been vigilant in taking care of my health. I love to fish and hunt with my family and friends, and I know you do too. I want all of you to be able to enjoy what I am now looking forward to during my retirement years, sharing time in the outdoors with my wife, my children and my grandchildren. Please, get a PSA test done annually.

Do your research.

Knowledge is power. Use the Internet to learn more by googling "prostate" or visit these sites and others.

www.prostatecancer.ca

www.pcf.org

www.psa-rising.com

Send a special thought to a friend with cancer through

www.victoriasquiltscanada.com



OFAH: a united voice for the outdoors

Bill Blackwell

President

In my ideal world, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) would be a front line Ministry; fish and wildlife management would be a core business; and program delivery would be the focus. The reality however, is quite different. Recent years have not been kind to the MNR. Budget cuts or 'constraints' are an annual occurrence; the fish and wildlife branch has disappeared; once familiar district offices have closed and been replaced by kiosks; and a once proud Ministry is becoming a pale reflection of what it used to be and what it used to mean to Ontario residents, particularly in rural and northern parts of the province.

In 2007, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller released a report entitled, "*Doing Less with Less*" which outlined how budget cuts were hampering the effectiveness of both the MNR and Ministry of the Environment (MOE). The reality of the situation he described continues to reverberate at the MNR, but on the ground, it seems little has changed. I can remember the days of the Department of Lands and Forests. You could call and talk to CO's and biologists, or you could go to one of the many district offices and actually meet with staff. Today, MNR office doors are locked, and you need to make an appointment to see anyone.

The Commissioner made it clear that the impact of annual budget cuts to what he called 'the once world renowned' MNR has made it increasingly difficult for staff to do their jobs, and for the Ministry to "carry out the duties that the public expects and the law requires," at a time when the responsibilities of the MNR continue to grow. At current funding levels, *only half of one cent of every tax dollar* goes to the MNR, and a mere \$3.25 per year per person goes to support our natural resources. In 2006/07, the MNR actually received 18 percent less operating funding than it did in 1992/93. The result: huge cuts in staffing and programs. If not for the OFAH, which has lobbied each year at Committee to have some of the cuts reversed, the situation would be far worse.

Everyone who buys a fishing or hunting license should give themselves a pat on the back, because we are the ones carrying the lion's share of MNR financing of the fish and wildlife program. Many years ago, the government created a Special Purpose Account (SPA), where all revenues generated through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses would be used to enhance what the MNR spent on fish and wildlife programs. It seems that the definition of the word enhance has changed, for the SPA now pays for roughly two thirds (\$68 million) of those programs.

The MNR is responsible for managing our natural resources for the people of Ontario, and making decisions based on sound science. Are MNR staff able to make public policy decisions on this basis, or are they being pressured to consider politics and public opinion over science? How else do you explain the inaction on cormorants or the failure to respond to increased reports of bear/human conflicts?

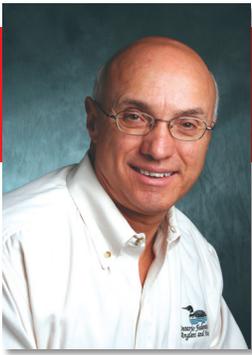
Folks, this is the reality of the situation we deal with every day, and the reason why a united, strong voice for anglers, hunters and those who enjoy our great outdoors, is more important than ever. Our membership is at an all-time high with almost 85,000 members, but there is still plenty of room to increase that count, with over 440,000 licensed hunters and over one million anglers in our province. By banding together, we can build on the success and reputation that the OFAH has earned at both the provincial and federal level. Many of our colleagues outside Ontario view the OFAH as one of the few national voices speaking on behalf of anglers and hunters, but if we intend to fight the decline of MNR here at home, we need to continue to grow in strength and numbers.

As you read this, you may think "I already am an OFAH member," but what about your fishing or hunting partners? If they aren't yet members, encourage them to join you in supporting your Federation. The OFAH is a strong, united voice for all who care about our outdoor heritage, which is why I am a proud OFAH member, and why everyone who enjoys angling, hunting and the outdoors should be too.

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Ontario Power Generation joins Bring Back the Salmon

Mike Reader

Executive Director

May was a big month for Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon.

In early May, we reached a five year milestone as we wrapped up Phase I of Bring Back the Salmon. Between 2006 and early 2011, Bring Back the Salmon, or the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program as it's also known, raised and stocked almost 3 million fish into three Lake Ontario tributaries, completed nearly 100 habitat projects and reached thousands of school children with hands-on environmental education.

On May 17, on the banks of Duffins Creek in Pickering, and with the help of our many partners, we launched the next chapter, Bring Back the Salmon Phase II and proudly announced our new lead sponsor. **We couldn't be more pleased to have Ontario Power Generation (OPG) join the restoration effort, and we look forward to working closely with them over the next five years.** Their annual contribution of \$250,000 will allow us to continue raising and stocking Atlantic Salmon, restoring habitat and delivering environmental education to school children.

We are pleased and grateful for the continued support of our Phase I partners into Phase II. Prior to releasing the three millionth fish into Duffins Creek, MNR Minister Linda Jeffrey recommitted her Ministry to the program. The LCBO will continue to contribute \$50,000 throughout Phase II and Banrock Station Wines will give \$50,000 to the program this year. TD Friends of the Environment, has come on board with a \$50,000 grant for the habitat restoration and water quality improvement component of the program, and Fleming College is raising Atlantic Salmon in their school hatchery and covering the costs of that effort. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association and four conservation authorities continue to be valued partners.

Five years ago, with the Ministry of Natural Resources, we set out to restore Atlantic Salmon to Lake Ontario, and we are well on our way to succeeding. Last fall, the first wild-born Atlantic Salmon in Lake Ontario was documented and last summer, anglers reported (and sent us the photos) of great catches of Atlantic Salmon. With the addition of Ontario Power Generation to the team, and with the continued support of so many partners, we are confident Phase II will take us even closer to a naturally reproducing population of Atlantic Salmon in Lake Ontario.



Left to right: John Murphy, OPG Executive Vice President, Hydro at the launch of Phase II, a student helps stock an Atlantic Salmon, OFAH field crew stock 20,000 fingerlings into Duffins Creek in Pickering.

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Métis harvest bears scrutiny

Bill Blackwell

President

Hunting and fishing are important to many cultures and aboriginal groups, including First Nations, Inuit and those of European descent. Ontario is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, but these resources are not unlimited, and it requires all of us who fish and hunt to be vigilant and work together to determine how best to use and conserve those resources.

You will be aware of the Algonquin Land Claim, which was the subject of a presentation at the 83rd OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish and Wildlife Conference in March 2011. The OFAH has put significant resources behind this issue on behalf of the 150,000 nonaboriginals who hunt in the claim area, many of whom are OFAH members, and has worked with senior levels of government and the Algonquin themselves to arrive at an equitable agreement on important issues like harvesting rights, access, enforcement, assessment and monitoring. Land claims are extremely complex, particularly when it comes to issues like historical and legal rights and fair sharing of resources, and we will continue to work with all parties to this future agreement on behalf of OFAH members and the larger outdoor community, while recognizing the inherent rights of the First Nations as laid out under Section 35 of the Constitution.

One of the complicating factors in the Algonquin Land Claim is the number of other aboriginal groups laying claim to some part of the area. This includes the Algonquin of Quebec, the Mississauga and Chippewa, Ojibwa, Mohawk, Cree and Métis.

Several years ago in the Sault Ste. Marie area, two Métis hunters were charged by Conservation Officers for hunting moose without a license and unlawful possession of moose contrary to Ontario's Game and Fish Act. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled in their favor and referred to a ten part test that should be used to define Métis rights, including the identification of where a historical Métis community existed. The Court gave several specific directions to governments with respect to Métis and added that membership requirements in Métis organizations must become more standardized. This came to be known as the Powley test.

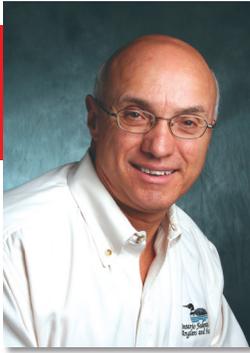
The Province however, has appeared to turn a blind eye to that test and to the best of our knowledge has not complied with the court's suggestion. In the meantime, while the Powley case pertained to the area around the Sault, the Province has failed to apply the test for others areas of the province where Métis hunting occurs, including the Ottawa Valley and Mattawa area.

A 2004 harvesting agreement between the Province and the Métis was supposed to be renewed, but it appears that this never occurred. This leaves many questions unanswered, the most important of these being, if no formal agreement exists, how is the province assessing, monitoring and enforcing the Métis hunt, the numbers taken and the impact on wildlife populations? The number of individuals identifying themselves as Métis increased from 48,300 in 2001 to 73,605 in 2006, and logic dictates that the number is even greater now. If that's the case, and no formal agreement exists between the Métis and the Province, how are we to know how many animals are being taken? What zones are they hunting in and what impact might this have on the populations of certain species?

Is the Métis harvest factored into the equation when assessing what the harvest numbers will be under a future land claim settlement with the Algonquin, for both Algonquin and nonaboriginal hunters? Is the Province ignoring the recommendations and test set out in Powley? Are they enforcing the application of this test when recognizing Métis communities across Ontario?

The OFAH has many members who are both First Nations and Métis, including many from the Algonquin community. However, while the Algonquin have a harvest management plan with the MNR, the same does not appear to be true in the case of the Métis.

There are many questions that need to be asked about the Métis hunt in the context of larger discussions around the Algonquin Land Claim. Rest assured that the OFAH will be asking these in the months ahead.



Majority government means delivering on promises

Mike Reader

Executive Director

What an election outcome! When I wrote my column last month, the safe money was on a minority Conservative government which, given the previous lack of credible support from opposition parties, would have likely meant the continuation of the long gun registry. I am delighted however, that the election of a Conservative majority government means following up on their commitment to end the long gun registry. It has been a long fight, but one well worth the struggle. More than a decade of wasted spending, ineffective gun control, breaches of privacy and focussing on the wrong target will finally be put behind us.

The OFAH is a nonpartisan organization that is ready and willing to work with any party that shares our commitment to conservation and outdoors issues. Throughout our 83 year history, we have worked with all forms of municipal government, and all parties at the provincial and federal levels on issues of concern to our members. Having said that, the federal Conservative government has clearly indicated its support for the outdoor community, through a policy platform that includes the scrapping of the long gun registry, and the creation of a hunting and wildlife advisory panel, similar in nature to what exists in the U.S.

OFAH members and licensed firearms owners are no doubt eager to see the registry gone, but we need to be patient, and let the government address the business of getting back to business. Once a Cabinet is named, and an agenda set for the return of Parliament, the reintroduction and passage of the budget will be a priority. The legislative scrapping of the long gun registry may take the form of a stand alone bill, or more likely, be part of a bigger crime and public safety bill in the fall. This will give the legal, law abiding firearms community the opportunity to have further discussions with the government on issues like the destruction of long gun registry records, possible changes to licensing and other pressing issues.

There is not, nor has there ever been any tangible proof that the long gun registry has fulfilled its two main aims; to save lives and enhance public safety. It is time to look at other means of actually impacting on gun crime, like a Prohibited Offenders Registry that has proven successful in other jurisdictions. It is also time to eliminate the database that supports the long gun registry, which is highly inaccurate and subject to serious security concerns.

Just a reminder to licensed firearms owners that recent amnesty aside, the long gun registry is still in effect. Until the legislation is passed to scrap the long gun registry, all firearms must continue to be registered. The amnesty is there to provide firearms owners with an opportunity to come into compliance, without penalty. It is not, under the current law, an excuse not to register. Nor should it be confused with licensing, which also continues.

The Prime Minister's commitment to the creation of a hunting and wildlife advisory panel is a great idea, which the OFAH initiated and hopes to participate in, and one which I expect will receive wide support from the outdoor community. We'll be looking for the government's continued support of our Invading Species Awareness program, particularly since Ontario is home to more invasive species than any other province or territory, and hope that they will increase their financial contribution to the program. Funding for restoration programs like the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration program will also be a priority during discussions with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

A majority government offers many opportunities for the outdoor community over the next four years and your Federation will be working to ensure our fishing and hunting heritage and the conservation of our resources remains front and center.

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Hunter education, a good beginning

Bill Blackwell

President

People often ask me which I prefer, hunting or fishing, and my reply is always, "I love to fish, but I live to hunt." I never tire of my time in the outdoors, those precious few days spent with friends and family.

I am grateful to my mentors for giving me the opportunity to learn to hunt and to appreciate our natural resources in a way that, in my view, only hunting can do. I am glad that I have been able to pass my love of hunting on to my son Patrick, and hopefully, one day, he and I will pass it on to the next generation of Blackwells.

Historically hunting and fishing were learned from elders, but as society became more industrialized and urbanized, we moved away from that model and more formalized training was needed. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters led the call for mandatory hunter education in Ontario, something we should all be proud of. As a direct result of Hunter education, hunting has become one of the safest recreational activities.

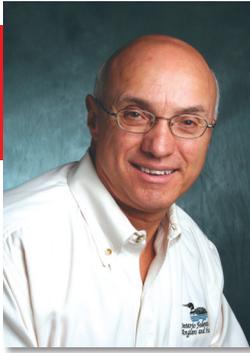
Thirty years ago I became a hunter education instructor and I have been at it ever since. The hours are long, the pay is minimal and the paperwork is tedious, but I still enjoy the challenge and the satisfaction gained from introducing and training people to hunt and handle firearms safely. There are over 300 certified instructors just like me offering courses across Ontario, each one of them passing firearms safety training and important hunting traditions on to the next generation. Because of their good work, injuries are rare and fatalities even more so, something that can't be said for golf, skating or horse back riding.

In April, the 20th annual Ontario Hunter Education Instructors Conference was held in Kitchener. The conference is a great opportunity to network with fellow instructors, take in informative seminars, and acknowledge long standing service. I was unable to attend this year for the first time since its inception, but I want to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation and congratulations to all Ontario Hunter Education Program (OHEP) instructors for their dedication and hard work.

The success of the OHEP is clearly showing in participation numbers, which have been rising for almost a decade. In 2010, 17,645 students completed the course, and a good percentage of those students are between the ages of 16 and 25 years and many are women, something that was almost unheard of 20 years ago.

Wild Turkey Hunter Education courses were also well attended again this year. In early April, the province made it easier for hunters to take the mandatory course by introducing a home study DVD version. The DVD is likely to be a popular alternative for those who would have difficulty attending an onsite course, or just prefer the format. Hunter education instructors have been enthusiastic about and supportive of the addition to the program, and have already begun submitting exam results completed by home study students.

For the inexperienced hunter, the Possession and Acquisition License (PAL), Hunter version Outdoors Card, and Wild Turkey designation are just the beginning. The next step, getting out in the field, is more challenging. Going from licensed hunter to experienced hunter can be difficult without a mentor. New hunters need to secure permission to hunt private property, get advice on which firearm to purchase, and ask questions that only experienced hunters have the answers for. If you can, please consider taking just one new hunter out with you at least once every season. If we all commit to helping one person, we'll go a long way to ensuring our heritage traditions will be continued.



Outdoor issues outlive elections

Mike Reader

Executive Director

Depending on when this issue of *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* arrives in the mailbox, you may be reading this column after May 2, voting day for our federal election. With a short election call and the long timelines of the printing industry, this may be less of a call to the candidates and more of a challenge to the new government. It is fair to say, however, that the outdoor issues that the OFAH has raised with the major political parties through our election questionnaire (*responses available online at www.ofah.org/election*) will live on long after the winners have taken their seats in the House of Commons. Your Federation is ready and willing to work with all parties to achieve the responsible management of our fish and wildlife resources, and the protection of our hunting and fishing heritage.

Licensed, law abiding firearms owners across the country were dismayed last fall when Bill C-391, which would have finally brought about the end of the **long gun registry**, was defeated 153-151. Had the Liberal and NDP MPs who initially voted to support Bill C-391 stayed the course, the registry would be history. We all know that didn't happen, because the Liberals forced their members to vote the party line, and several NDP MPs flip flopped at the eleventh hour, which killed the bill. I urge you to let your MP know your thoughts on the long gun registry, particularly if you live in one of the Ontario Liberal or NDP ridings that went from yes to no.

Invasive species are often described as the second greatest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss. The OFAH has repeatedly advocated for significant increases in financial resources to prevent or control aquatic and terrestrial species from wreaking further havoc on our environment. The federal government recently allocated \$400,000 to study the potential impacts of Asian Carp into the Great Lakes, but more is needed if we are to fight these invaders on land and in the water.

The OFAH has pushed for the **creation of a national fish and wildlife advisory body** that would provide expertise and guidance to the federal government. We were pleased to hear Prime Minister Harper commit to the creation of such a panel early in his campaign, and we look to the other parties for a similar commitment. An advisory panel on fish and wildlife resources would provide a sounding board for conservation groups across the country, similar to the US version known as the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council. The OFAH also supports the creation of a national **Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Day**, as proposed by Rick Norlock, MP Northumberland Quinte West. With the dissolution of Parliament, Norlock's bill died, however all parties should support its reintroduction and speedy passage into law.

Stretching every dollar is the challenge of nonprofit organizations across the country, and in Ontario, the introduction of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) made things even tougher. The OFAH calls on all parties to **exempt registered charities from HST** in order to help those organizations direct those funds to charitable programs and mandates.

Your Federation is also calling for action on **Chronic Wasting Disease** by eliminating game farms; for increased contributions to the **Great Lakes Fishery Commission's Sea Lamprey Control Program** to ensure Canada meets its responsibilities; to significantly increase our federal commitment to the **Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA)** which funds Great Lakes water quality and fisheries initiatives; and financial support for the **restoration of Atlantic Salmon to Lake Ontario**, which the OFAH is leading in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and with in-kind support from Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

An election lasts a few weeks, but outdoor issues and concerns are ongoing. No matter who wins, the OFAH will continue to work on behalf of our members to address these and other key issues. If you read this before the election, make sure you know where your local federal candidates stand on issues important to you, and vote accordingly.



Looking back as we proudly move forward

Bill Blackwell

President

I am honored to have been elected to the presidency of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and I thank the Board of Directors for their faith in me. It is a responsibility that I do not take lightly and one which I will do my very best to fulfill.

I want to congratulate Past President Rob Hare on the excellent job he has done, and the devotion he has shown in fulfilling his mandate. I look forward to calling on Rob for his expertise as I follow my predecessors, all of whom have done a great job of leading this organization.

I developed my love and passion for the outdoors while growing up just west of Sudbury in the small town of Creighton Mine. I was very involved in the scouting movement and the Creighton Lively Junior Conservation Club, an OFAH affiliated club. It was through this club that I participated in my first conservation project, replacing trees which had been cut down to feed the roaster beds which were used to smelt ore in the early years. In scouts I learned the art of cooking meals over open fires, how not to freeze on winter campouts in summer weight sleeping bags and how to use a compass and read maps—skills that have stayed with me to this day.

My father loved fishing, and we spent countless hours on the Vermillion River where he passed along his secrets and his passion, something I hope to do for my grandchildren. It was my grandmother who taught me how to fillet fish and how to sight my rifle. My early mentoring in hunting came from my neighbors and my friends' fathers. I also spent time with my cousin Bob and Uncle Jim, who later became my hunting partners. The opportunities these people provided me with have made me a firm believer in mentorship for young hunters. There are many youth and adults who are eager to learn, they just need the chance to do so. We have a responsibility to pass along our knowledge to the next generation, so please, take a kid fishing or hunting whenever the opportunity arises.

I confess that I am a bit of a hoarder. I still have hundreds of copies of the original OFAH magazine, the *Angler and Hunter*, and I recently took a trip down memory lane while leafing through issues dating back to the 1970s. In 1976, we were waiting for a provincial program to help grow our deer herds and Bill C-83, the first step to Firearms legislation, was on the way. An OFAH membership cost \$8.75 and the optional \$200,000 insurance was an additional \$1.25. In 1977, we started promoting Blaze Orange to reduce hunting accidents, and in 1979 we published a brochure entitled *Moose Management in Ontario Problems and Possible Solutions*. A piece by Dr. CHD Clarke, former MNR Fish and Wildlife chief, talked about our first Hunter Education Student Manual. A 1982 article warned of the potential impact of land claims on hunting and fishing, which is an issue we continue to work through to this day.

The OFAH has played, and continues to play, an important role in safeguarding and enhancing this province's natural resources, and celebrating our hunting and fishing heritage. Successive Board of Directors, with the expertise and dedication of our head office staff, have moved your Federation forward, never shying away from difficult issues or hard fights. This is what has made the OFAH one of the strongest and most respected conservation organizations in Canada.

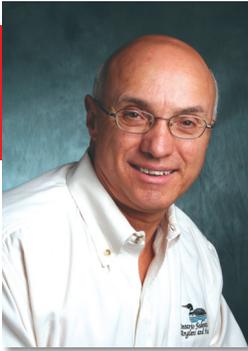
With a new heritage centre receiving thousands of visitors, a leading outdoor magazine, popular TV show, and now our own radio network, the OFAH has more opportunities than ever to get our message out. Strategic planning has positioned us for the future and astute succession planning will ensure a smooth transition from one strong executive director to another in March 2012.

I am both humbled and honored to serve as your president, and I give you my pledge that in partnership with my Board colleagues and head office staff, we will proudly carry on the traditions so strongly rooted in our foundation some 83 years ago.

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Are hunting and fishing still relevant?

Mike Reader

Executive Director

In early March, I had the pleasure of talking with Tom Otto on air during the premier edition of *Angler & Hunter Radio*, our newest communications tool. The show broadcasts on Saturday or Sunday across the Angler & Hunter Radio Network. Tom is doing a great job sharing his passion for hunting and fishing with OFAH members and fellow outdoors enthusiasts, and perhaps even more importantly, he is reaching out to the nonhunter and nonangler, who make up the majority of today's mainstream society.

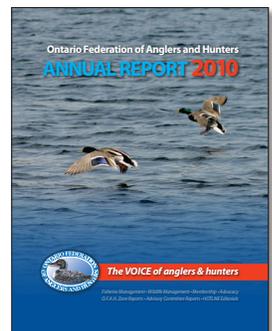
You might wonder why we would even consider connecting with those who don't share our enthusiasm for the outdoors, given that it is highly unlikely that they will join the OFAH. It is for exactly that reason, however, that we do need to make the connection. We live in an increasingly urban-focused society—the majority of our population doesn't regularly fish, much less hunt. Fortunately, at least for now, the vast majority of people who don't hunt are tolerant of those who do. In order for us to be able to pass on our heritage, it is essential that we communicate with mainstream society that we give back as much or more than we take from nature. People who don't hunt or fish need to know that we are active participants, often leaders, in managing and conserving our fish and wildlife resources. Our future depends on it.

So, how do we stay relevant? We ensure that government, business, other organizations and the general public are given lots of opportunity to see that our passion for the outdoors extends to the health and abundance of our fish and wildlife, our forests, lands and waters. We participate in conservation initiatives that range from litter removal to the restoration of a species and everything in between. We lead the Invading Species Awareness Program and the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, host the Community Stream Steward Program, our zones fund and run their own conservation initiatives and we deliver curriculum-based educational programming through the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre. In a largely nonhunting, nonfishing society, it is these kinds of activities that will ensure we continue to have a "place at the table". If we don't, society at large may well decide that angling and hunting are no longer pertinent. Your Federation is working hard make sure we not only are relevant but that others can see that.

Government relations is another way we can be of value by interacting with governments at all levels. By meeting with ministers, MPs and MPPs on major policy and legislative initiatives that impact on fishing and hunting, by appearing before standing committees, and sitting on advisory groups OFAH keeps its name and our issues front and center. At the municipal level, the OFAH has contacted every municipality in Southern Ontario regarding municipal Sunday gun hunting bylaws. This OFAH inspired initiative has brought the subject of hunting to over 140 council chambers and has shown local representatives that hunting is recreationally and economically beneficial to their community. Advocacy also helps safeguard against the kind of flawed policy that, though well intentioned, is actually detrimental to our natural resources. Good environmental legislation comes from hearing from all stakeholders, including those who fish and hunt.

We released our 2010 annual report at our conference last month. It is an excellent snapshot of the kinds of conservation and outreach work that we do. I encourage you to download the online version at www.ofah.org/report or contact your zone to obtain a print copy (while supplies last). This report is a 96 page testament to our commitment to conservation and our relevance in today's society, and I am confident that even our long standing members will be impressed by what the OFAH, on behalf of anglers and hunters, in partnership with others, accomplished last year.

Society is changing. Let's work together to stay relevant, to remain vital and valuable in today's world, so that we can preserve the outdoor privileges we enjoy, for ourselves, and for the next generation





It has been a privilege

Rob Hare

President

It doesn't feel like it was two years ago that I stood on the stage at our annual awards banquet and accepted the presidential gavel. Having served on the OFAH Board of Directors for years, I thought I had a pretty good idea about what was in store. Two years out, however, I see that I was naive. It has been much more than I anticipated it would be—much more challenging, and equally, much more rewarding.

One thing I learned very early on was how hard the head office staff work. I have had the opportunity to work with many of them over the past two years, and to a person I can report that they are friendly, knowledgeable, professional and dedicated to the OFAH. Sometimes, their jobs call for them to work long hours and travel extensively, but there are no complaints. I thank them all for their dedication to the cause, day in and day out. I am especially grateful to Executive Director Mike Reader for his invaluable support and assistance, and I wish him the very best in his well earned retirement, when that milestone arrives at the end of March, 2012.

I had the privilege of being on the committee that chose Angelo Lombardo as Mike's successor. He is a great fit for the demanding position, and I am pleased that we were able to bring him on board to lead the Federation forward.

This job has taught me a lot about leading a Board of Directors. We are a group of men and women who come from all over the province and from a wide range of backgrounds, joined by an exceptional organization that represents our shared hunting, fishing and conservation heritage. I learned that although we all have our own priorities and regional issues, we share common ground in our desire to leave this earth in a better way than we found it. It has been a privilege to work with them, and I look forward to continuing to do so as past president.

The Past Presidents Advisory Committee was a huge help to me, and I hope that I can contribute something in my new role on that committee. I was provided with some wise counsel and I know that I benefited from it on more than one occasion.

To my successor, Bill Blackwell, may I offer my hearty congratulations and very best wishes for a successful term. I know Bill's expertise in firearms safety and over 30 years experience in hunter education will serve the Federation well.

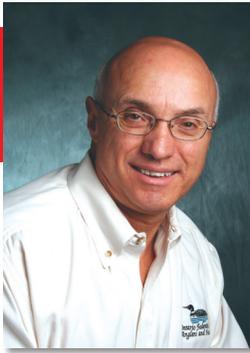
Dorothy, my wife of more than 30 years and my hunting and fishing partner, has been hugely supportive over the course of my term and I thank her immensely for that. She has never complained about the time commitment that comes with the job. I like to think there were some perks to my task that made it fun for her too, such as the wonderful people we have had the chance to meet and spend time with. As you know, conference just wrapped up and Dorothy and I thoroughly enjoyed catching up with the many Federation friends that we have made over the past two years.

Last, but not least, I want to thank each and every OFAH member and member club. You are truly the backbone of this fine organization and the reason we continue to exist. Without you, there is no OFAH, no Board of Directors, no President. It is our collective privilege to work on your behalf in delivering on our conservation mandate. Thank you for allowing me to proudly lead the province's largest conservation organization and the voice of anglers and hunters. I loved every minute of it.

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Cormorant management still an issue

Mike Reader

Executive Director

Of all of the topics that we have covered in *HOTLINE* over the years, the cormorant issue is one of the most prevalent. How is it that a bird that is protected under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*, (*FWCA*) warrants this kind of attention from anglers and hunters? Why has your Federation waded into the debate on how to best manage this extremely abundant bird?

We're conservationists, and as such, we recognize the value of all species and understand that each plays a role in our broader ecosystem. Where the problem lies is in the "hyper abundance" as scientists call it, of the cormorant, primarily along the coastlines of the Great Lakes basin, but elsewhere as well. Where their numbers have exploded beyond carrying capacity, these nesting birds and their guano (excrement) destroy the woody habitat and other vegetation that is used by many species of shorebirds, including some that are considered to be species at risk in their own right.

Scientists and biologists at both the provincial and federal level have studied this issue for years, and have produced management plans that recommend a number of tools, including controlled culls, aimed at reducing cormorant populations to sustainable levels.

In 2008, when Parks Canada took action to implement its management plan for Middle Island, cormorant colonies had already destroyed more than 40 percent of the forest canopy, and nine Carolinian species, protected under the *Species at Risk Act*, were under pressure. Parks officials estimated the island's population at over 5,000 pairs, with their goal to reduce that to between 400 and 800 pairs by 2012. Culling was identified as a tool in the plan, which predictably, sparked an outcry and a temporary injunction. By 2009 the path was cleared by a federal judge and the cull went ahead. Kudos to Parks Canada for taking the tough steps needed to begin reviving one of the last Carolinian forests in Ontario.

In 2009, the provincial government completed its implementation plan for the islands of Gull and High Bluff in Presqu'île Provincial Park. They too, identified a controlled cull as an effective and necessary means of bringing cormorant populations down to acceptable levels (their term). Unfortunately, the plan has yet to see the light of day, due to delays involving whether or not an environmental assessment (EA) was needed. Ultimately, late last year, the Ministry of the Environment declined requests for an assessment, however at this time, Ontario Parks staff have not confirmed that the plan will be implemented in 2011. Meanwhile the numbers of nests on the islands continue to rise.

In addition to habitat destruction and threats to other species, the cormorant has a voracious appetite for fish - something anglers have learned firsthand. A five-pound bird can eat a pound of fish a day. That means a colony of 1,000 birds consumes 1,000 pounds of fish daily! I have heard these numbers lots of times, but even I was shocked to see the contents of a cormorant's stomach in a photo that has been circulated recently (*shown here*). It certainly gives credence to an MNR study in Georgian Bay showing that when population control was assisted through the oiling of eggs, the impact on fish stocks dropped by 20 to 30 percent.



So, here we are, a decade into the cormorant issue and still waiting for concerted action by the province to stop the clearly documented negative impacts associated with burgeoning cormorant populations. Your Federation believes that the science is definitive and the course of action is clear. We have repeatedly asked the province to remove protected status for this bird under the *FWCA* which would allow the government to undertake a full range of population controls in support of other species, vulnerable habitat and fish stocks.

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More ways to take in the conference this year

Rob Hare

President

I love attending the O.F.A.H. Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference each year. I appreciate the time away from my daily work commitments, and the opportunity to focus on what I'm most passionate about—hunting and fishing. It's great to spend time with like-minded people, and to cheer on the many well-deserving individuals and clubs who receive O.F.A.H. conservation awards over the course of the conference. Maybe even more important, the food and entertainment are always top notch.

For months before the first delegates begin arriving for the action-packed three-day event at the Delta Meadowvale Conference Centre in Mississauga, head office staff are busy organizing all of the details involved in delivering this exceptional event. New features are added, and old favourites, such as the wild game banquet, are brought back by popular demand. I think it's that mix of old and new that keeps delegates coming back year after year.

Of course, not everyone can take the time to travel to the conference, and for those who aren't able to attend in person, this year we are introducing exciting new coverage of some of the proceedings via computer. Anyone with an Internet connection can watch three presentations happening on Friday, beginning at 8:30 in the morning. First up, Minister of Natural Resources, Linda Jeffrey, will speak to O.F.A.H. delegates, present the MNR Junior Conservation Award and take questions from the floor. This year, for the first time ever, any O.F.A.H. member can submit a question to the minister via email at asktheminister@ofah.org. While not every question can be asked, we will try to put as many forward as possible. The rest will be given to the Minister for follow up. Shortly after 10:00 am, Executive Director Mike Reader will deliver his always engaging Year in Review. You'll be amazed at the scope of work your Federation is able to accomplish with your membership dollars. Finally at 1:00 pm, Ontario Conservative Leader Tim Hudak will take to the floor.

For those in attendance, Friday afternoon and Saturday morning feature workshops designed to bring you up to speed on all of the hot button issues. This year's line up includes Southern Ontario's Whitetail Declines, Ontario's Wolf and Coyote, a sneak preview of "Fish Online," Ontario's New Fishing Resource Website, the Algonquin Land Claim and Ontario's First Modern-day Elk Hunt.

Saturday afternoon is reserved for the Toronto Sportsmen's Show, where all of the latest and greatest in hunting, fishing and outdoor gear is on display. A shuttle bus will pick you up at the hotel and deliver you back in plenty of time for the conference highlight, the awards banquet.

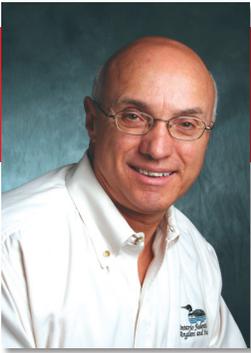
I am really pleased about the variety of topics that will be covered by speakers this year, and particularly excited about this year's keynote speaker, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller. Mr. Miller has reported on the management of our natural resources many times over his tenure as commissioner, and he never pulls any punches. You may not know that he is also an outdoorsman, and a supporter of our Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program. I can't wait to hear what he has to say to Ontario's anglers and hunters.

Speaking for the O.F.A.H. Board and staff, I am genuinely pleased to offer you more options than ever for connecting with our 83rd annual conference. Never before have so many had the opportunity to be a part of the proceedings and we couldn't be happier about that. Join us in Mississauga, watch the livestream coverage of select portions of the conference on the Internet, or read the annual report which is available at the conference or online (www.ofah.org/report) following the conference.

We are committed to keeping you, our valued members and the lifeblood of the Federation, informed and engaged, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM in March.

Catch Friday's conference highlights on the Internet!

Even if you can't make it to the 83rd O.F.A.H. Annual General Meeting and Fish and Wildlife Conference, you can watch some of the highlights on your computer. Visit www.ofah.org/conference for details and to link to the livestreaming feed.



Lots to look forward to in 2011

Mike Reader

Executive Director

Starting a new year means looking forward, and reflecting on the past. This year I am seeing our past successes and future challenges with a new perspective, as I have set my retirement date. Over the coming months I will be working closely with Angelo Lombardo, our new executive manager and future executive director, in preparation for handing over the reigns to him at the end of March, 2012.

I am enjoying working with Angelo, who is quickly getting up to speed on all of the initiatives and issues that the O.F.A.H. faces on behalf of our members and member clubs. Looking at things from Angelo's viewpoint gives me renewed pride in the things we accomplished in 2010, such as the completion of a strong strategic plan that will guide us forward over the next several years; the opening of the educational O.F.A.H./Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre; and the stocking of the two millionth fish in the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program. We are also proud that our contributions to the restoration of elk over the past decade have helped bring about the recent announcement by Minister of Natural Resources, Linda Jeffrey that Ontario will have a fall elk hunt in the Bancroft-North Hastings area this year.

Along with the successes come the frustration of issues unresolved during the past year. The long gun registry stands as one of our longest fought battles, not because we are anti-regulation, but because it just doesn't work. The November defeat of the latest attempt to scrap the registry through Bill C-391 garnered national media attention on this issue, and we will continue to fight for effective legislation that respects the rights of firearms owners. We were disappointed by yet another year of slow progress on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Despite CWD's potential to devastate Ontario's deer populations, the province has yet to take decisive action to end game farms, a known cause of the disease. The province's negotiations of the Algonquin Land Claim on behalf of Ontario's residents and our members will stay on our radar until a fair resolution is reached for all—the Algonquins and residents in the affected area who will be impacted by the outcome.

There is a lot to look forward to in 2011. In March, we'll launch Angler & Hunter Radio Network across Ontario – an hour long weekly radio show featuring all the topics outdoors enthusiasts are interested in. I am very excited to be reaching a brand new outdoors audience through radio, and I am confident that it will be as well received as *Angler & Hunter Television* and *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine have been. Our heritage centre staff will be delivering fish and wildlife programming to thousands of school children this year at every grade level, as well as welcoming visitors of all ages and backgrounds for tours. Come May, we'll be stocking the three millionth Atlantic salmon in a tributary of Lake Ontario. The potential invasion of Asian carp into the Great Lakes is another issue that we, along with federal and provincial governments, will continue to address through our Invading Species Awareness Program in the coming year.

Preparations are already in the works for our upcoming annual conference in March. Hundreds of O.F.A.H. members will descend on the Delta Meadowvale Conference Centre and Resort in Mississauga for three days of informative workshops, great food and entertainment. I hope you'll be able to join us, but if you can't make it to conference, do consider taking in the Toronto Sportsmen's Show, which is at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre for a second year.

Here at head office, we're already hard at work on the initiatives and issues facing Ontario's anglers and hunters and we're ready for the new challenges that no doubt lay ahead. I am looking forward with new energy and drive to serving you, our members and member clubs, partners and supporters throughout 2011.

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

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

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O.F.A.H. membership—more than a great magazine

Rob Hare

President

Do you remember why you joined the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters? Did someone buy you a membership, were you invited to join, or did you just learn about the great work of the O.F.A.H. and decide to add your voice to the Federation? Maybe you took out a membership just to receive *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine. Whatever your reason, the important thing is that you *did* join the province's largest and (in my view), most effective nonprofit fish and wildlife conservation organization, an organization that champions the rights of anglers and hunters like no other.

I joined the O.F.A.H. more than 20 years ago when I was impressed by how the Federation helped out with a local access issue. Until that time, I knew little if anything about the value of the O.F.A.H. or why I, a passionate hunter and angler, should belong. Once I became involved in the Federation, I learned that they not only fight for our fishing and hunting rights, but are on the ground helping to improve habitat, restore species, raise awareness about invasive species and much more. I began to tell others about the Federation, and invited them to join. Today when someone asks me why I belong to the O.F.A.H., I give them an issue of *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine (not my latest), loan them my annual report, or point them to our website. Their response is almost always the same, they can't believe the scope of the conservation work that we do.

Now that I am a grandparent, I am more focused on youth, and am keenly aware of how much our grandchildren and great-grandchildren's future environment depends on the efforts of O.F.A.H. members and member clubs, who are some of the most dedicated conservationists. Their financial support and volunteer efforts in fish hatcheries, stream restoration projects, conservation dinners and countless other initiatives help to protect our fish and wildlife populations. It is essential that our youth are mentored from an early age and encouraged to actively participate in looking after our natural resources. An O.F.A.H. membership is one way to begin that important process. That's why Dorothy and I will be giving each of our grandchildren an O.F.A.H. membership when they are a little older. Is there a young person in your life who might appreciate the opportunity to become an O.F.A.H. member?

It is very telling to me, that despite the recent recession and continuing economic challenges, O.F.A.H. membership numbers have held rock steady. It means that members see the value in what they get for their modest O.F.A.H. membership fee. For about the same price as a tank of gas or a restaurant meal, an O.F.A.H. member supports conservation projects and advocacy efforts throughout this province all year long; is insured for \$3 million of liability coverage; enjoys member discounts with a variety of Affinity partners; and receives a full year's subscription to *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*.

Maybe you have a fishing or hunting partner who, for whatever reason, isn't an O.F.A.H. member yet. Why not invite them to join, or better still, buy them a membership as a gift, and when they tell you how much they're getting out of it, encourage them to do the same for another outdoors enthusiast.

As anglers and hunters, we prize our time in the outdoors, and we know that this important gift comes with a responsibility to give back. Belonging to the O.F.A.H., as an individual member or through your outdoor club, is a great way to support conservation, while protecting the future of angling and hunting for your children and grandchildren.

As an OFAH member, you support our work across Ontario:

Conservation Programs

- Wild Turkey Restoration
- Bring Back the Salmon (Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration)
- Elk Restoration
- OFAH/MNR Invading Species Awareness Program
- Community Stream Steward Program
- Ontario Invasive Plant Council

Education and Outreach efforts

- OFAH Get Outdoors Leadership Camps
- OFAH Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre and Shimano Fishing Pond
- OFAH TackleShare
- Ontario Family Fishing Events
- Ontario Hunter Education Program
- Ontario Wild Turkey Hunter Education Courses
- Ontario Angler Awards
- Women's Outdoor Weekends

Campaigning for

- Hunting and fishing opportunities
- Fair sharing of fish and wildlife resources
- Bill C-19 to scrap the long gun registry
- Effective cormorant control programs
- Species conservation and enhancement
- New Sunday gun hunting opportunities
- Better black bear management and an early season hunt
- Reasonable "discharge of firearms" bylaws
- Improved moose and deer tag allocation
- Recognition of the value of hunting and fishing

Your hunting and fishing media source is the OFAH:





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