

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.

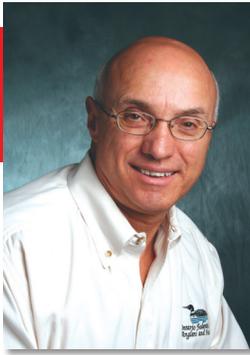
With attacks come consequences. If conservation officers can track the animal, it is usually relocated or killed, a loss all the way around. What I find most disturbing about this scenario is that the black bear/human conflicts occurring now could have been avoided by managing our black bear populations 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.

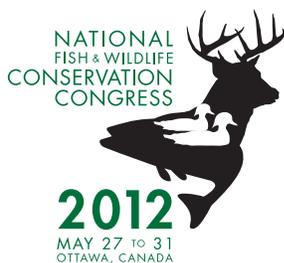
Canada's National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress will provide a forum for delegates to identify and heighten awareness of the challenges facing fish and wildlife populations; foster an understanding of the role hunting and angling continue to play in the conservation of these resources; and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



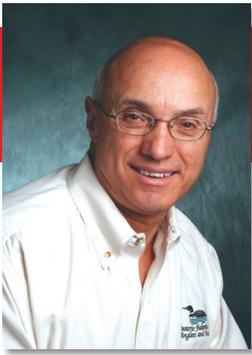
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Provincial long gun registry and other election issues

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:

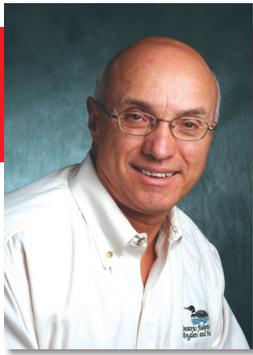
3. Amend Section 3.3.5—Description of Cormorant Management—Other Cormorant Management Methods—by adding the text in bold italics below such that the second sentence will read: "For example, the construction of artificial ground-nesting sites and/or **other feasible social attractant techniques shall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

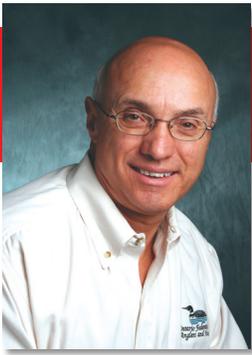
Folks, this is the reality of the situation we deal with every day, and the reason why a united, strong voice for anglers, hunters and those who enjoy our great outdoors, is more important than ever. Our membership is at an all-time high with almost 85,000 members, but there is still plenty of room to 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.

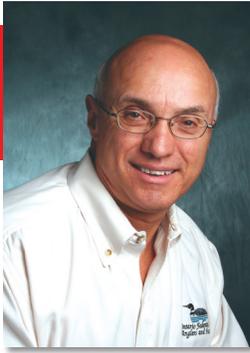
The Province however, has appeared to turn a blind eye to that test and to the best of our knowledge has not complied with the court's suggestion. In the meantime, while the Powley case pertained to the area around the Sault, the Province has failed to apply the test for others areas of the province 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.

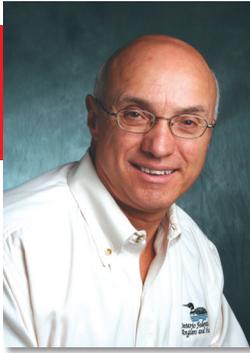
Thirty years ago I became a hunter education instructor and I have been at it ever since. The hours are long, the pay is minimal and the paperwork is tedious, but I still enjoy the challenge and the satisfaction gained from introducing and training people to hunt and handle firearms safely. There are 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.

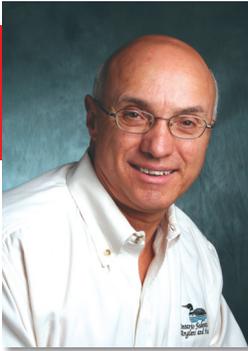
With a new heritage centre receiving thousands of visitors, a leading outdoor magazine, popular TV show, and now our own radio network, the OFAH has more opportunities than ever to get our message out. Strategic planning has positioned us for the future and astute succession planning will ensure a smooth 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.

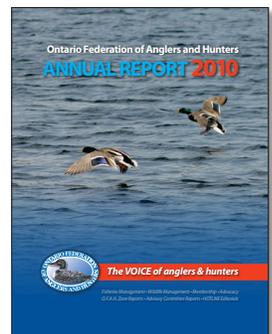
You might wonder why we would even consider connecting with those who don't share our enthusiasm for the outdoors, given that it is highly unlikely that they will join the OFAH. It is for exactly that reason, however, that we do need to make the connection. We live in an increasingly urban-focused society—the 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.

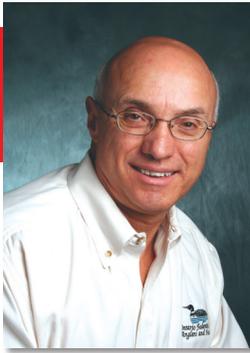
Dorothy, my wife of more than 30 years and my hunting and fishing partner, has been hugely supportive over the course of my term and I thank her immensely for that. She has never complained about the time commitment that comes with the job. I like to think there were some perks to my task that made it 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.