

# President's Report

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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

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*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

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*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](http://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](http://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 meter<sup>2</sup>. 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](http://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**

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### *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

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No report for 2011.



## OFAH Provincial Director-at-Large Nominating Committee Annual Report

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*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

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*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**

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
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>
<b>TRADE NAME, LISTS AND CONTRACTS</b>	-	100,000
<b>LAND, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT</b>	<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  
Deferred revenue

	\$ 622,948	\$ 912,358
	<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  
Internally restricted  
Unrestricted

	3,110,769	3,125,542
	418,362	381,328
	<u>3,185,204</u>	<u>3,508,602</u>
	<u>6,714,335</u>	<u>7,015,472</u>

**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS**

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
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
	<u>75,650</u>	<u>77,929</u>
Interest and investment income	<u>10,802,243</u>	<u>10,377,996</u>

**EXPENDITURES**

Salaries and employee costs  
Membership  
Programs, public information and education  
OOD magazine expenses  
Office, general and professional  
Cost of sales  
Legal/policy  
Informational programs  
Amortization  
Amortization of OOD trademark, lists and contracts

	1,721,102	1,793,490
	2,106,042	1,812,439
	2,365,130	1,886,577
	3,336,023	3,218,149
	807,950	705,959
	330,315	277,059
	21,350	4,514
	20,792	57,425
	294,676	243,860
	<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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