

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

ANNUAL REPORT 2012



The VOICE of Anglers & Hunters

Fisheries & Wildlife Management • Membership • Education & Outreach • Government Relations & Communications • OFAH Zone Reports • Advisory Committee Reports • 2012 Financial Statement • HOTLINE Editorials



Our Mission:

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

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





Table of Contents

Messages from the President and Executive Director	2
OFAH Board of Directors	3
OFAH Head Office Staff	5
Fisheries Management	7
Invading Species Awareness Program.....	12
Bring Back the Salmon (Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program)..	15
Community Stream Steward Program.....	17
Wildlife Management	18
Land Use Management and Access	22
Ontario Invasive Plant Council.....	25
Ontario Hunter Education Program	26
Ontario Wild Turkey Hunter Education Program	27
Education and Outreach	28
OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre	28
Membership	32
84th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference	33
Fundraising	34
Government Affairs and Policy	35
Communications	41
Ontario <i>OUT OF DOORS</i>	42
Angler & Hunter Television.....	42
Angler & Hunter Radio	42
OFAH President’s Report	43
OFAH Zone Reports	44
OFAH Advisory Committee Reports	51
Auditors’ 2012 Financial Report	59
HOTLINE Editorials	61

Cover Photo: Randy Therrien

Annual Report Notice:

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Messages from the President and Executive Director



It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as president of this wonderful Federation for the past two years. Collectively, we have been able to accomplish great things in 2012. By far, the biggest victory in 2012 for all Canadian hunters and law-abiding firearms owners was the scrapping of the wasteful long gun registry. It was a roller coaster ride for many years, but the OFAH did not give up. This proves that dedication and determination really do pay off.

Enough can't be said about OFAH Head Office staff. This Federation wouldn't be where it is today without the team of men and women who work tirelessly on our behalf on the issues that matter most to anglers, hunters and conservationists.

In addition to staff, OFAH members are the lifeblood of this organization. Our membership reached an all-time high in 2012 at 85,178. As well, the OFAH continues to administer the MNR Hunter Education Safety Program, which has continued to see record growth, and we were pleased to have 21,300 new hunters graduate in 2012. We have celebrated 25 years of turkey hunting in Ontario because the OFAH, along with the MNR, as well as an endless list of partners and supporters, helped launch the Wild Turkey Restoration Program, which is considered to be one of North America's greatest conservation success stories.

2012 was also a special year for many longtime OFAH employees, as we celebrated their retirement and thanked them for their many years of service to the organization and the future well-being of this province's fish and wildlife. Executive Director Mike Reader retired after 25 years with the OFAH, Nancy Cator after 35 years, and John Kerr, editor-in-chief of Ontario OUT OF DOORS magazine, called it a career after almost 40 years in the business. We wish you all of the best.

With your continued support, we move into 2013 as a strong Federation, ready to face the challenges that lie ahead.

Yours in Conservation,



Bill Blackwell
OFAH President



Who would have believed that from such a modest beginning 85 years ago, the OFAH of today would emerge? Since 1928, our members have relied on us to be the voice of anglers and hunters, to push for better legislation and to take on new fish and wildlife conservation initiatives. We are proud to carry on that tradition, and we know that our accomplishments have not gone unnoticed.

Since 1992 the OFAH, in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), has delivered the Invasive Species Awareness Program. We were pleased to renew that partnership in 2012, with a new five-year agreement that will allow us to continue to collaborate with hundreds of community groups, nongovernment organizations, and all levels of government to reach millions of Ontarians and engage their participation in preventing the spread of invasive species.

Since we opened the doors to the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre in 2010, we have welcomed in excess of 4,000 students through curriculum-linked field trips. Our diverse program gives youth from kindergarten to grade 12 the chance to learn about their role in conservation, and the opportunity to see and touch wildlife in a way they cannot experience by reading a science book or sitting in a classroom. We did not invent "making learning fun," but we certainly mastered it; what a wonderful facility to celebrate our hunting and fishing heritage.

We know that great things are in store for the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, which is closing in on releasing its five millionth fish.

Partnerships are crucial in allowing us to continue to deliver our very important conservation programs, and we continue to nurture those partnerships, and build new ones.

The first ever National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress was a true testament to the strength of partnerships. This event, which was led by the OFAH, attracted 28 partners from across Canada and the United States, and dealt with the trials, tribulations, successes and failures that face fish and wildlife on a continental scale, and collectively developed recommendations to address what needs to be done to ensure that our fish and wildlife populations remain healthy and sustainable.

The OFAH is more relevant today than it was 85 years ago, and we continue to gain momentum. Whether we are working to conserve our fish and wildlife or fighting to save our rights to fish and hunt, we are always serving our most important asset; you, our members.

Yours in Conservation,



Angelo Lombardo
OFAH Executive Director

OFAH Board of Directors



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OFAH Board of Directors (continued)



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Fisheries Management

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

Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) Advisory Councils

The OFAH continues to support the implementation of the FMZ Advisory Councils. While Advisory Councils are currently established and operating in FMZs 4, 5, 6, 9 (west), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19 and 20 (east and west subcommittees), there are still several FMZ Advisory Councils expected to form (i.e. FMZ 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 [east], 15, and 16).

FMZ 5 – Draft Fisheries Management Plan

Fisheries Management Zone 5's Draft Fisheries Management Plan was posted to the Environmental Registry for a 46-day public review and comment period. The draft plan was developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources with input from the FMZ 5 Advisory Council to tackle fisheries management priorities and issues specific to the zone. In addition, several public open houses were held across the zone to provide further opportunity for public input. In general, we were supportive of the MNR recommendations that were supported by the FMZ 5 Advisory Council. We were confident that the MNR and the FMZ 5 Advisory Council had scoped out many beneficial non-regulatory strategies (e.g. education/outreach).

FMZ 10

Proposed changes to the Ontario Fishery Regulations for bass and Lake Trout in Fisheries Management Zone 10 were posted to the EBR for comment. Bass are present in many of the inland lakes in FMZ 10, and were intentionally introduced to provide fishing opportunities. Therefore the OFAH strongly supports having year-round open seasons with no size limits and a six fish catch and possession limit for sportfish licence holders, to promote angling opportunities and reduce impacts on native species. The OFAH is concerned that the proposed Lake Trout regulations will compromise zone-wide angling opportunities for Lake Trout and other species. Specifically, the OFAH did not support the redesignation of acid-damaged lakes from "Lake Trout closed all

year" to "Fish Sanctuary – closed all year" because it will reduce angling opportunities for other species. In addition, the OFAH could not support the redesignation of Put-Grow-and-Take lakes from "Open all year" to "Open January 1 – Labour Day" and the redesignation of fish sanctuary dates from the "day after Labour Day – December 31" to "October 1 – December 31" because more information is needed to conclude whether the proposed changes are necessary.

FMZ 17

The FMZ 17 Advisory Council continues to review and discuss coldwater stream fisheries regulations.

FMZ 18

The FMZ 18 Advisory Council has invested significant time in reviewing and discussing proposed Walleye regulation changes. As a result, a new zone-wide slot limit regulation for Walleye will be implemented in 2013. Walleye must be between 40-50 cm (15.7 to 19.7 in.).

FMZ 19

The FMZ 19 Advisory Council discusses and provides advice to the MNR on Lake Erie fisheries management issues. The majority of discussions focus on the status and allocations of harvested species, particularly commercially harvested species such as Walleye and Yellow Perch. The OFAH remains actively engaged in these discussions to ensure the productivity of Lake Erie's recreational fisheries are maximized. A recommendation has been made by the FMZ 19 Council to create a two day possession limit of 100 Yellow Perch (currently a 50 fish catch and possession limit). The proposal is currently in an approval process that requires both provincial and federal sign-off before a regulation could take effect (January 1, 2014 at the earliest).

FMZ 20

OFAH FMZ 20 Advisory Council representatives attended a workshop in Picton, Ontario. The purpose of the workshop was to provide the FMZ 20 Advisory Council (east and west sub-committees) as well as representatives from the other Great Lakes Zones (FMZs 9, 13, and 14) a forum to discuss Great Lakes fishery management issues (e.g. multi-line regulations). It is anticipated that the outcomes of this workshop will help guide future Great Lakes management decisions. FMZ 20 will see several changes within the 2013 fishing regulations summary including new limits for Rainbow Trout

(sportfishing licence holders will have a limit of two Rainbow Trout; conservation licence holders will have a limit of one Rainbow Trout) and a new minimum size limit for Muskellunge (increased to 137 cm (54 inches)).

Bass Season Changes in Southern Ontario

The MNR sought public consultation on a proposal to open bass seasons earlier (3rd Saturday in June) and harmonize season closure dates to December 15 in FMZs 17, 18 and 20. MNR research shows water temperatures are increasing in many southern Ontario lakes, meaning that the critical parental care period for bass is occurring earlier, well ahead of the current season opener (4th Saturday in June). The OFAH provided comments on the proposal, which included our full support for longer bass seasons in FMZs 17, 18 and the Bay of Quinte in FMZ 20. The OFAH does have reservations about the application of the proposed changes in parts of Lake Ontario where water temperature data suggests that bass may still be providing parental care during the proposed season; therefore, the OFAH recommended that a bass season extension for Lake Ontario should be accompanied by monitoring and assessment to ensure no adverse impacts to the resource occur. The proposed regulation changes are moving forward in 2013 and will result in an extra week of bass fishing in June for all three FMZs and 15 extra days in December for FMZs 18 and 20. Other FMZs in southern Ontario may look at similar changes in the future. The OFAH is encouraged that the MNR has recognized the changing environmental conditions and has responded by adapting bass management. The extended seasons will provide more angling opportunities, and scientific evidence illustrates that the increase in opportunities will not come at the expense of bass populations or the immense social, economic, and cultural benefits that this resource supplies to the residents of Ontario.

Black Crappie Stocking Proposal – Parry Sound District

OFAH staff reviewed the MNR proposal to stock Black Crappie in Prospect, Morrison, and Muldrew lakes in Gravenhurst. While we appreciated MNR's interest in diversifying angling opportunities in FMZ 15, we were concerned with the rationale for introducing Black Crappie into new lakes outside their historical range. Black Crappie invasions can alter the inshore fish community and impact prey/food availability for some native species (e.g. Walleye). As indicated in the project description, once Black Crappie are introduced and become established, changes to the fish community cannot be mitigated. Although the lakes identified in the proposal do not currently support resident/native Walleye, proposing to stock Black Crappie on top of other desirable species (e.g. Muskellunge in Morrison Lake) could be in direct conflict with other FMZ 15 management objectives. The OFAH did not support the MNR facilitating the movement of Black Crappie on the landscape. The creation of new fisheries requires careful planning and thorough consultation, which were not carried out. OFAH comments were submitted to the Parry Sound MNR District Office.

Lake Simcoe

The OFAH is represented on the Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee (LSFSC). In recent years, the LSFSC has

discussed the potential for an open Lake Herring fishery in Lake Simcoe; however, the MNR has remained reluctant to reopen a fishery because they feel the current knowledge of Lake Herring fisheries is not sufficient. The OFAH participated in a Lake Simcoe Lake Herring Working Group comprised of representatives from the LSFSC as well as MNR technical staff to review the current knowledge of Lake Simcoe's Lake Herring populations. Based on the results of the Working Group discussions, the LSFSC made a recommendation to the MNR to reopen a Lake Herring season with a low catch limit because they believe it would offer a sustainable fishery with significant socio-economic benefits. Unfortunately, the MNR is still not satisfied and, therefore, the recommendation to open a fishery in 2013 was rejected. The MNR has committed to initiating a process to model the Lake Herring population and provide the information needed to determine when a sustainable recreational fishery could be returned to Lake Simcoe. The OFAH is disappointed with MNR's continued reluctance to open a Lake Herring fishery; however, we believe that a process to fill in the current information gaps is a major step in the right direction. The OFAH will continue to be a strong advocate for the return of a Lake Herring recreational fishery to Lake Simcoe.

Following the detection of an infectious fish disease known as Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) in Lake Simcoe, a VHS Management Zone was created to encompass the Lake Simcoe watershed and restrict the movement of bait in and out of the zone. Lake Simcoe is a major source of bait in Ontario and, therefore, steps have been taken by the MNR and the bait industry to develop a VHS testing program that will allow disease-free Lake Simcoe bait to be used during the winter of 2013. The OFAH will actively participate in a larger provincial strategy for bait management in 2013.

The OFAH participated in a socio-economic study to determine the value of the Lake Simcoe fishery and aquatic community. The first two workshops included a focus group of interested stakeholders who met to discuss and share information on the social, cultural and economic benefits of the Lake Simcoe fishery and aquatic community. The study concluded with a third workshop to develop the scenarios to be used for modeling the data. The resulting model will be used to determine the fishery-related socio-economic implications of proposed policies and regulatory options in the Lake Simcoe watershed.

Brook Trout Workshop

In October, OFAH staff attended a Brook Trout Workshop hosted by Credit Valley Conservation (CVC). The MNR and CVC initiated the workshop because Brook Trout declines have been observed in the CVC's Watershed Monitoring Program data. The CVC is planning to develop a recovery strategy for Brook Trout in the Credit River Watershed. CVC presented a suite of issues impacting Brook Trout, and possible strategies or tactics to address them. Participants were asked to provide input as well as prioritize which issues, strategies or tactics should be highest priority, and which are short and which are long-term goals.

Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group

The OFAH participates on the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group (LEPMAG) which met four times in 2012 to discuss Walleye and Yellow Perch modeling in Lake Erie. The LEPMAG workshops provided an opportunity to review the current modeling techniques and data sources, to address uncertainties, and to discuss management perspectives from government and nongovernment stakeholders of all five jurisdictions surrounding Lake Erie (Ontario, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan). The ultimate goal of this process is to produce scientifically sound and up-to-date Walleye and Yellow Perch stock assessment models that will accurately estimate population numbers and trends in order to guide decisions about the Recommended Allowable Harvest (RAH) and Total Allowable Catch (TAC) in Lake Erie. The Walleye model is near completion and is expected to impact the 2013 RAH and TAC for Lake Erie. Work has begun on a similar exercise for Yellow Perch.

Lake Huron Lake Trout Rehabilitation

The OFAH identified some serious concerns with the MNR's Revised Lake Trout Rehabilitation Plan for Ontario Waters of Lake Huron. The plan puts an emphasis on Lake Trout rehabilitation at the expense of other important fish species, including naturalized species such as Chinook Salmon, Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout. The OFAH has recommended that a comprehensive stocking plan for all species (including naturalized species) should be developed through widespread consultation with Fisheries Management Zone 13 and 14 Advisory Councils, other interested stakeholders and the general public. We also recommended that the plan reflect the preferences expressed by Lake Huron users in the 2009 Lake Huron Fish Community Questionnaire, which includes a mix of native and naturalized species. The plan should also seriously consider the needs and desires of the community-supported hatcheries that have helped to enhance Lake Huron's fisheries for generations through successful fish rearing and stocking programs. The OFAH has recommended that Lake Trout rehabilitation should focus on protection of the wild Lake Trout stocks. This can be accomplished through regulation of the commercial fishery to minimize Lake Trout mortality, and establishment of a "no-wild-fish-harvest" in those areas of the lake where it may help to simplify the complexity of Lake Huron's Lake Trout regulations (e.g. reduce the number of sanctuaries). The OFAH fully supported the proposed actions for addressing the impacts of Sea Lamprey predation on Lake Trout.

Lake Nipissing Walleye

OFAH staff reviewed the 1998-2011 Lake Nipissing Walleye Data Review Report commissioned by the MNR. Using MNR's own data, the OFAH produced the 2012 Report on the Lake Nipissing Walleye Fishery. Our findings clearly show that the abundance, age structure, and growth of the Walleye population in Lake Nipissing have changed dramatically, especially in recent years, to a point where very few spawning fish remain. Overexploitation by the commercial gill net fishery has been identified as a major contributing factor in the decline of the Walleye population. The OFAH recommended that the Ontario government immediately suspend all commercial gill netting, and the commercial gill net Walleye Fishery in Lake Nipissing must be regulated with

biologically defensible quotas, size limitations, and seasons, and include mandatory reporting for all Lake Nipissing Walleye fisheries (commercial, recreational, subsistence/ceremonial), prior to any other management actions being taken. Further restrictions to recreational anglers are unnecessary and inappropriate because they will have no positive impact on the Walleye fishery. Unfortunately, the MNR has ignored the data and reduced the recreational catch and possession limits for 2013 (from four to two for a sportfishing licence and two to one for a conservation licence) without taking any steps to fully regulate the commercial gill net fishery. If the successive strong year classes present in Lake Nipissing are allowed to survive, only to be overharvested in the commercial gear in the same way that has been done in the past, they will not contribute to the reproductive potential of the population. Even if all gill netting was suspended now, the recovery of the Lake Nipissing Walleye fishery will likely take more than a decade. The OFAH will continue to advocate for all commercial fishing operations in Ontario to be fully regulated.

Lake of the Woods Commercial Fishing

In response to OFAH member concerns about commercial gill netting in Lake of the Woods, the OFAH requested information from the MNR. Although our initial questions focused on commercial Lake Whitefish harvest, the MNR has indicated there are many other commercially targeted species, including Walleye and Northern Pike. Historical commercial fisheries were retired on Lake of the Woods by the MNR and have been replaced over the past decade by First Nation commercial operations. There are currently four First Nations fisheries operating under an Ontario Commercial Fishing Licence and six under harvest agreements with the MNR. Preliminary OFAH concerns include the absence of fully regulated commercial fisheries and the associated lack of formal harvest reporting, as well as use of gill nets and arbitrary quota determination. OFAH staff will continue to review this issue to determine whether any sustainability concerns exist.

Waterpower Class EA Amendment

The Ontario Waterpower Association, a not-for-profit organization representing the Ontario waterpower industry, proposed an amendment to the Waterpower Class Environmental Assessment. The proposed amendment would reduce the requirements to complete an environmental assessment for projects with an electricity generation capacity of 2 MW or less that use existing infrastructure (e.g. obsolete dams). The OFAH did not support the proposed amendment because it reduces the requirements to complete an environmental assessment and, consequently, weakens the existing level of environmental protection. The OFAH would go further and recommend that there is a need to strengthen the existing requirements of the Waterpower Class Environmental Assessment to ensure that we minimize any potential adverse impacts to Ontario's aquatic ecosystems. Regardless of their size or whether infrastructure is already present, all waterpower projects have the potential to seriously compromise aquatic ecosystems, including the fish and fisheries they support. Our comments were submitted to the Ministry of the Environment through the environmental registry.

Provincial Waterpower Development Strategy

The OFAH sent a letter to the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources requesting that the Province of Ontario, through the Ministry of Natural Resources, develop a provincial strategy to determine where, when, and how waterpower projects will be established. Our request was based on a long-standing concern regarding the adverse environmental impacts associated with waterpower development. In particular, the OFAH is concerned with deficiencies of the environmental screening process with respect to requirements for proponents to address cumulative ecological impacts of other nearby development. The MNR did not support our request for a provincial waterpower strategy review. The OFAH will continue to advocate a more strategic approach that is based on environmental considerations.

Agreements under Section 11 of O. Reg. 242/08 under the ESA, 2007 in respect of Lake Sturgeon for Waterpower

Lake Sturgeon (Great Lakes - Upper St. Lawrence River population) are listed as "Threatened" under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). While Clause 10(1) (a) under the ESA states that "no person shall cause adverse effects to the habitat of a species that is listed as endangered or threatened," it does not apply to hydro-electric generating stations, as long as they enter into an agreement under section 11 of Ontario Regulation 242/08 with the Minister. An agreement under section 11 of O. Reg. 242/08 must specify how the facility will take measures to "not jeopardize the survival and recovery of the species in Ontario" and must include an implementation plan and provide effectiveness monitoring. The MNR has been considering entering into these agreements with several generating stations throughout the province. In general, the OFAH supports the intent of these agreements and agrees the Waterpower Agreement process outlined in Regulation 242/08 of the ESA is one means to provide effective mitigation; however, the supporting information needed to critically evaluate the effectiveness of these agreements has been insufficient to date. These agreements must be consistent with, and reinforce important guiding government legislation and policy (e.g. Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act, Fisheries Act), as well as Ontario's Recovery Strategy for Lake Sturgeon.

The OFAH provided comments recommending mitigation and monitoring plans for these agreements must outline measures to:

- provide adequate upstream and downstream fish passage;
- describe how adaptive management approaches will be implemented;
- integrate sound targets for reductions in turbine mortality specific to hydro facilities;
- incorporate effectiveness monitoring programs associated with all mitigation; and
- address cumulative effects.

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA)

In September the new GLWQA was signed. The OFAH spent a significant amount of time over the years providing input, particularly through our participation on the Canadian Great

Lakes Stakeholder Advisory Panel. There is general support for the improvements to the GLWQA, in particular the new Aquatic Invasive Species Annex. We are hopeful that the new agreement, while highly focused on water quality, will also benefit both fish and wildlife.

Negotiations for a New Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA)

Canada and Ontario are currently negotiating a new COA, which will help Canada (and Ontario domestically) meet its obligations under the new GLWQA. In December, the OFAH provided initial feedback on considerations and priorities for a new COA for 2013.

IJC – Public Participation in the Lake Erie Ecosystem Priority (LEEP)

The International Joint Commission's (IJC) Lake Erie Ecosystem Priority (LEEP) Management Team sought public participation in the development of recommendations to the U.S. and Canadian governments on restoring the health of Lake Erie. The LEEP examined issues related to excess algal growth and sources of nutrient loading (e.g. phosphorus) to the lake. The IJC hosted a series of public meetings around the lake throughout August and September. OFAH representatives attended the meetings and will continue to participate throughout the process. Draft research papers were expected to be completed by the end of 2012 and will be considered by an expert stakeholder panel in February 2013. In the summer of 2013 a draft report is expected to be released for public comment. The final report will be presented to the governments in October 2013.

New Approach to Managing Water Level and Flows in the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River

The International Joint Commission (IJC) released information about the new approach to manage water levels and flows in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River system (LOSLR). The OFAH provided input through the stakeholder sessions. The new approach should allow for a more natural water regime and is expected to be more beneficial for coastal wetlands and wetland species. In June, the OFAH provided a letter of support for IJC's proposed new approach (Plan Bv7). The OFAH has been participating for many years in the IJC's process to change the water level management regime for LOSLR to incorporate fish and wildlife values as key criteria. Given the current approach (Plan 1958D) for managing water levels and flows through the Moses-Saunders Dam has not adequately protected aquatic ecosystems and has negatively impacted wetlands in the LOSLR system, we were pleased to see a new approach that incorporates fish and wildlife values and we look forward to the IJC implementing Plan Bv7.

Great Lakes Protection Act

In the November 2011 Speech from the Throne, the province announced that it would be developing and introducing a Great Lakes Protection Act. Accordingly, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) hosted several listening sessions to engage stakeholder input, which the OFAH attended. The purpose of the proposed Act is to protect and restore the ecological health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin, with an emphasis on creating opportunities for individuals and communities

to become involved in restoration and protection efforts. In our response we acknowledged the need to coordinate and integrate existing Great Lakes agreements, legislation, policies, etc.; however, the Province of Ontario, in partnership with other jurisdictions, agencies, and nongovernment organizations, currently has many of the tools needed for the effective management of the Great Lakes. The OFAH is not convinced that new prescriptive legislation is the answer. We had several concerns, specifically with the Act's intent to enable the Minister of the Environment's overriding authority to set Great Lakes targets and take targeted action on priority areas through geographically-focused initiatives. Furthermore, linkages between the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act and the renegotiated Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement were not well defined. There must be stronger coordination and integration of Great Lakes enhancement activities to better facilitate achieving healthy Great Lakes ecosystems.

Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy

In conjunction with the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act, the province developed Ontario's Draft Great Lakes Strategy and posted it for comment to the EBR. Many of the objectives outlined in the strategy already exist under other legislation, policies, acts, and agreements. In some cases these objectives are often binationally agreed-upon targets or municipal targets. It is not clear in the strategy how these objectives will be prioritized. Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy was finalized and released in December. The strategy will provide a blueprint for Ontario's new Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA) to achieve domestic commitments under the new GLWQA. While there is general support for the intent of the Great Lakes Strategy, it is not clear what added value the strategy will provide beyond existing efforts.

Proposed Management Plan for Grass Pickerel in Canada

In 2006, the Grass Pickerel was designated as "Special Concern" under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). This listing required the formation of a management plan. The OFAH reviewed the proposed management plan and made a submission outlining our concerns. First and foremost, the OFAH does not believe that SARA status for Grass Pickerel is appropriate in Ontario, because they have not been properly inventoried, they are relatively abundant (considering that they are at the northern extent of their range), and their populations in Ontario are likely to increase due to the warmer water temperatures caused by climate change.

COSEWIC Designation of Silver Lamprey

The OFAH did not support the recommendation by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) to list Silver Lamprey as "Special Concern" under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). Upon review of the COSEWIC Status and Assessment Report for Silver Lamprey, the OFAH determined that it would be inappropriate to designate any species under SARA based on the amount of empirical evidence that is currently available for Silver Lamprey, especially when the limited evidence suggests stable or increasing population trends over the past three generations.

The OFAH outlined how it would be completely irresponsible to develop subsequent goals or objectives (in future management plans – a requirement for a species listed as "Special Concern") that will reduce Sea Lamprey control measures, given the

extremely limited biological basis to do so, and the incredibly high potential for adverse impacts to the Great Lakes. In response to our submission, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) assured us that a listing of "Special Concern" under SARA would have no impact on current Sea Lamprey control measures.

Federal Fisheries Act

The OFAH and the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF) hosted two successful workshops in Ottawa for fish and wildlife conservation organizations on changes to the Federal Fisheries Act. Groups attending were the Atlantic Salmon Federation, British Columbia Wildlife Federation, Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Quebec Federation of Hunters and Anglers (La Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs), Manitoba Wildlife Federation, New Brunswick Wildlife Federation, Newfoundland and Labrador Wildlife Federation, Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Outdoor Network, Pacific Salmon Foundation, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation and Trout Unlimited.

The CWF paid for the first workshop and, at our request, the Department of Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) paid for the second workshop on October 11, 2012. Additional funding support was provided by Shimano Canada Ltd.

The Harper government has committed to us that the Fisheries Act changes will result in better protection of fisheries values from development projects such as hydro-electric facilities and dams, aquatic invasive species (e.g. Asian Carp), and increased partnerships with organizations such as the OFAH and our member community-based clubs. We continue to emphasize that the supply of healthy fish habitat is critical to our fisheries, that free passage of fish (where appropriate) is also critical to our fisheries, and that recreational fisheries, in particular, supply significant socio-economic benefits to Canadian society. According to government statistics, more than 3.3 million Canadians participate in recreational angling, resulting in economic benefits exceeding \$8 billion annually.

Senior DFO staff participated in the October 11 workshop and, as a result, the workshop group sent a letter to DFO Minister Ashfield. OFAH and CWF staff, on behalf of the workshop groups, had a follow-up meeting with Ministerial staff from several departments including Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Prime Minister's office on November 14 in Ottawa. The Harper government is also proceeding with the development of a National Conservation Plan. We are hopeful this will, in fact, be a National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Plan. We have made submissions on this and, most recently, invited our provincial and territorial counterparts (i.e. CWF affiliates) to submit their ideas on this to OFAH fish and wildlife staff, so that we can move the yardsticks forward on this important issue. OFAH staff participated in a stakeholder roundtable meeting and appeared before the federal Standing Committee on the Environment in response to the government's proposed creation of a National Conservation Plan.

Navigation Protection Act

The amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) proposed in Bill C-45 (Budget Bill) by the federal government created the new Navigation Protection Act (NPA). Maintaining

safe and navigable waters is critically important for providing access to angling and hunting opportunities. In response to our initial concerns and preliminary questions, Transport Canada has ensured us that the impacts to angling and hunting will be negligible. The OFAH remains concerned that the reduced scope of the new Act could negatively impact the accessibility of angling and hunting opportunities in some areas. The NWPA applied much more broadly to all bodies of water capable of being navigated by any type of floating vessel for transportation, recreation or commerce, whereas the new NPA only applies to 162 of Canada's waters (oceans, lakes and rivers) that are listed under Schedule 2 of the Act. For all unlisted waters, the Canadian public right of navigation in waters not listed under the Act will now only be protected under Common Law, meaning that infringements on navigation rights will have to be addressed through the courts. As a result, the OFAH identified concerns related to accessibility and public safety for "unlisted" waters under the new act, and sought greater clarity on how the proposed changes will impact anglers and hunters.

Experimental Lakes Area (ELA)

The OFAH wrote a letter to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to describe the importance of fundamental and applied scientific research related to fish, fisheries, and aquatic ecosystems, for providing significant and direct contributions to the understanding, management and enhancement of our freshwater fisheries. We asked the federal government to make every possible effort to retain the ELA program by exploring all possible alternatives to the elimination of this world-renowned and unique program. In response to our letter, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has assured the OFAH that they are "working diligently to find another operator for the facility so that this important work can continue by another party better suited for this type of research."

Asian Carp

The OFAH attended and presented at the Asian Carp Public Forum, co-hosted by the Great Lakes Cities Initiative and the Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre. We can take pride in the fact that the OFAH has successfully contributed to the public awareness of the threat posed by Asian Carp to the Great Lakes Basin. Over the last three years alone, the federal government of the United States has invested more than \$150 million on activities associated with ending this threat. The Canadian government is spending \$17.5 million over the next three years. We also continue to participate as members of the International Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, the Asian Carp Control Regional Technical Working Group, and we are the only Canadian organization on the Natural Divide Advisory Committee to the Great Lakes Commission/Great Lakes Cities Initiative.

Invading Species Awareness Program



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

In 2012, in collaboration with hundreds of community groups, nongovernment organizations, and all levels of government, the ISAP reached millions of Ontarians and engaged their

participation in preventing the spread of invasive species. The ISAP proudly launched a new website and online newsletter, increased program engagement through social media outlets, and continued making valuable contributions to early detection and rapid response initiatives for invasive species that are threatening Ontario's biodiversity, such as Asian Carp and Water Chestnut. The ISAP made significant contributions to provincial, national, and international initiatives, including the Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre, OIPC, Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network, and the Great Lakes Panel for Aquatic Invasive Species.

Partnerships

In 2012, the OFAH and MNR entered into a new five-year agreement and continued the successful joint delivery of the ISAP, with OFAH staff working collaboratively with staff from MNR's biodiversity branch, as well district offices across the province. The program also received funding from the Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre to produce a Compendium of Education and Outreach Resources in Ontario, and 50 new invasive species fact sheets. Federally, funding commitments were made by Environment Canada's Great Lakes Management and Reporting Section, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Summer Jobs Program. Numerous additional organizations made valuable in-kind and financial contributions to the ISAP in 2012. These organizations included: OFAH Zones; Ontario Invasive Plant Council; Canadian Food Inspection Agency; Community Fish and Wildlife Involvement Program; Ontario Woodlot Association; Boating Ontario, Federation of Ontario Cottager's Association; Centre for Community Mapping; Ontario Professional Foresters' Association; Ontario Nature; Couchiching Conservancy; Thunder Bay District Stewardship Council; Wisconsin Sea Grant; Minnesota Sea Grant; Conservation Authorities (Ganaraska, Toronto Region, Central Lake Ontario, South Nation, Credit Valley, Rideau Valley, Mississippi Valley, Lower Trent, Nottawasaga Valley); provincial parks (Voyageur, Wasaga Beach, Killbear, Algonquin); Eastern Georgina Bay Stewardship Council; Manitoulin and Area Stewardship Council; Lake of the Woods District Property Owner's Association; Kids for Turtles Environmental Education; Plenty Canada; Ontario Streams; Bruce Trail Conservancy; University of Windsor; and Kirkland Lake, Aurora and Sault Ste. Marie District MNR Offices.

Capacity Building

Terrestrial Invasive Plant Species Conference

ISAP staff attended and participated as part of the Organizing Committee for the inaugural Terrestrial Invasive Plant Species Conference held in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario in August 2012. The conference focused on terrestrial invasive plant species and their introduction, impacts, and control and management, and was sponsored by the Invasive Species Centre, in partnership with MNR, OIPC, Invasive Species Research Institute, and the OFAH.

Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network II

We continue to participate as a member of the Board of Directors for the Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network (CAISN). This network seeks to provide a comprehensive profile of AIS in waters across Canada, and to develop and to determine the effectiveness of possible tools for early detection and rapid response.

Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species

The ISAP continues to participate as a Member-at-Large of the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species. This panel works to prevent and control the occurrence of aquatic invasive species in the Great Lakes.

National Invasive Species Forum

We were invited to attend the Invasive Species National Forum in Ottawa, Ontario. The objective of this forum was to facilitate networking opportunities and encourage collaboration between agencies working on invasive species across Canada. We delivered two presentations at the forum profiling the implementation of two specific projects: the Early Detection Network and the Lake Simcoe Community-Based Social Marketing Project. We also participated in a day of workshops dealing with invasive species data management and reporting/tracking tools; staff delivered a presentation on the Invasives Tracking System and the Invading Species Hotline.

Communications

We were successful in attracting media interest around invasive species in 2012. Our efforts resulted in over 46 media/promotional events with the program being profiled in newsprint/web (37), radio (6) and television (3), reaching millions of people. Highlights of media included stories profiling the outreach efforts of the members of the Invading Species Hit Squad, as well as our outreach efforts for Lake Superior and the North Shore. Regular articles were submitted for publications by members of the Invading Species Hit Squad, and were published in the Orillia Packet and Times, Lifestyles, and The Beacon in Parry Sound,

Program Outreach Overview

The ISAP conducted outreach to a broad audience in 2012, including anglers, hunters, recreational boaters, gardeners, ATV users, aquarium hobbyists, education institutions, bait harvesters, woodlot owners, and the general public. We attended more than 220 events, including the Toronto International Boat Show, Central Canada Outdoors Show, Ottawa Boat and Sportsmen's Show, Outdoor Adventure Show, Canada Blooms, Spring Cottage Life Show, and the Toronto Sportsmen's Show, reaching over 500,000 people. Numerous workshops and presentations were delivered by staff, focusing on a variety of topics for bait harvesters, lake associations, garden clubs, school groups, and landowners. These ventures were always collaborative in nature, working with hundreds of organizations, including stewardship councils, conservation authorities, nongovernment organizations, and community groups. As a result of these initiatives, hundreds of thousands of educational materials were distributed province-wide, and staff fielded direct calls/requests from over 950 people who phoned the Invading Species Hotline.

Targeted Education & Outreach

Public Service Announcements

We coordinated the inclusion of invasive species public service announcements in early spring and summer issues of Ontario Home and Gardener Living, as well as the Renfrew County Visitor's Guide. We also coordinated the circulation of the Adventures of the Green Family radio public service announcements. The radio public service announcements were aired approximately 1,575 times on over 35 radio stations across the province.

Invasive Species Workshops

With funding assistance from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, four Aquatic Invasive Species Workshops were delivered in 2012. Workshop participants included staff and students from Sir Sandford Fleming College's School of Environmental and Natural Resource Sciences, staff and students from Sault College, as well as natural resource professionals in northeastern Ontario. In May, a workshop was delivered to the Bruce Peninsula Environment Group to which the public was invited to attend. This workshop focused on training participants in invasive species detection, monitoring and reporting, in order to increase capacity for early detection. These workshops were funded by Environment Canada's Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program. Unfortunately, due to the cancellation of the Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program, the delivery of additional early detection workshops was postponed.

Invading Species Hit Squad

The ISAP received funding from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Canada Summer Jobs Program for 22 students. The students worked with host partners in Finch, Kirkland Lake, Lanark (2), Sault Ste. Marie, Trenton, Peterborough, Oshawa, Espanola, Manotick, Aurora, Mississauga, Chute a Blondeau, Utopia, Kenora, Orillia, Windsor, Wasaga Beach, Nobel, Whitney, Parry Sound, and Hamilton. The summer was extremely successful for the Invading Species Hit Squad. Following a two-day training workshop at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre in Peterborough, they attended nearly 130 community events. Events included boat launch inspections, presentations, meetings, and interpretive programs in provincial parks. Bait retailers, tourism centres, marinas, and garden centres were visited by the Hit Squad to share educational resources and to spread the word about invasive species in their communities. Invasive species boat launch signs were also posted at numerous boat launches across the province, and staff coordinated numerous invasive species monitoring and control events.

Aquarium, Landscape and Water Garden Outreach

We continue to contribute to the Horticulture Outreach Collaborative, a committee of the Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC). Key projects of this collaborative included the finalization and promotion of the Northern Grow-Me-Instead Guide. We coordinated an event in northern Ontario to launch the guide; this event was hosted by the OFAH, on behalf of the OIPC, at the Central Gardens Nursery in Thunder Bay.

Over the summer, a total of 113 nurseries and garden centres were visited and surveyed by OFAH staff in the counties/regions of Durham, Halton, Hamilton-Wentworth, Kawartha Lakes, King, Lanark, Northumberland, Ottawa, Peterborough, Peel, Simcoe, Toronto and York. Over 2,600 educational materials were distributed as a result of this outreach.

Educational Materials

ISAP E-Newsletter

The ISAP launched a program e-newsletter. ISAP staff issued the first e-newsletter on October 1, 2012; the e-newsletter was issued to over 45 individuals, and was followed by a second newsletter in December. Interested parties are able to sign up to receive the e-newsletter through the ISAP website.

ISAP Website & Social Media

Program staff have been utilizing Facebook and Twitter to reach a broader audience with invasive species messaging, and have seen a significant increase in the number of people being reached. To date, the program has 226 followers on Twitter and 346 followers on Facebook.

Lake Simcoe Outreach



Invasive species signage was installed at three Lake Simcoe access points to encourage anglers to use local bait. Program staff visited Sibbald Point Provincial Park and McRae Point Provincial Park, set up the mobile boat wash units, and offered visitors the opportunity to clean their boats before they entered Lake Simcoe. Program staff also took this opportunity to speak to visitors about invasive species, and they disseminated educational resources throughout the parks.

Lake Superior Outreach

The Lake Superior Invasive Species Outreach Coordinator was busy conducting outreach to local aquarium and water garden stores, delivering presentations, and attending community events, such as the Sault Ste. Marie Spring Expo, Central Canada Outdoors Show, Lake Superior Day, Summer in the Parks, and the Pigeon River Tourism Week Open House. Program staff coordinated the official launch of the Northern Grow Me Instead Guide in partnership with the Ontario Invasive Plant Council, and coordinated the dissemination of education materials to fishing tournaments, such as the Geraldton Walleye Classic, Shebandowan Smallmouth Showdown, and Perch Lake Bass Challenge. Numerous presentations were delivered to visitors to provincial parks, including Sleeping Giant, Blue Lake, Rushing River, and Kakabeka Falls.

Invasive Species Information Management

In 2012, program staff received over 950 calls to the Invading Species Hotline to report a sighting, request resource materials, or to seek more information on invasive species. Program staff responded to these requests, resulting in the distribution of over 150,000 educational materials. Staff received over 190 sighting reports for a variety of invasive species as a result of the contacts made directly through the Invading Species Hotline.

Invasive Species Monitoring & Control



Invading Species Watch

Interest in the Invading Species Watch program continued to be strong across the province. With the assistance of volunteers from the community, lake/cottage associations, as well as our Invading Species Hit Squad, over 100 lakes were monitored across the province for the presence of zebra mussel veligers and spiny waterflea.

Garlic Mustard

In May, program staff coordinated a group of 15 eager volunteers to help pull Garlic Mustard at Ken Reid Conservation Area. Volunteers included representatives from the Ontario Invasive Plant Council, Fleming College, Kawartha Conservation and local residents. Staff and volunteers were able to pull the entire population of Garlic Mustard at this location, resulting in 119 yard waste bags of the plant with a total weight of 1310 kilograms. The bags were loaded into a trailer and two trucks and were then sent to the landfill.

Water Soldier Control

Program staff monitored for Water Soldier populations in the Trent Severn Waterway below Healey Falls. This monitoring effort was the result of a report of plants in the Healey Falls locks, which resulted in concern that the plant may have spread past its presently known locations. Staff were happy to report that no new populations of Water Soldier were detected below the Healey Falls locks.

Water Chestnut Control

Efforts to control Water Chestnut in the Ottawa River continued in 2012. A member of the Invading Species Hit Squad was based out of Voyageur Provincial Park and assisted with this control project. Mechanical and manual methods of control were used primarily in Iroquois Bay, as this is the area with the highest level of infestation. The installation of a floating oil spill boom was installed to separate the Iroquois Bay infestation from the Ottawa River by preventing cut floating heads to spread and re-establish in other areas.

Bring Back The Salmon



Partnership Development

In addition to ongoing support from Ontario Power Generation (lead sponsor) and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, in 2012 the program received general funding from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (\$30,000), and the Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows (\$10,000). Toronto Tourism/City of Mississauga (\$10,000) funded fish production and habitat restoration on the Credit River in 2012/13.

Funding specific to the habitat component was received from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (\$50,000), Ontario Wildlife Foundation (\$10,000), TransCanada Pipelines (\$5,000), Uxbridge Nurseries (\$1,200), and Greenside Up Environmental Services (\$1,000). Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) sponsored three new classroom hatcheries in 2012. In February, the program was awarded the Spring Fishing & Boat Show's Conservation Project of the Year award for 2011, as voted on by members of the Canadian Angler Hall of Fame. This was the fourth award won by the program or participating staff.

Fish Production and Stocking

Over three million green eggs were collected for 2012's fish production and were distributed to the participating hatcheries in late 2011 and early 2012. In late February, yearling stocking began from both the Normandale and Fleming College facilities. Over six weeks, 92,000 Atlantic salmon yearlings were stocked into three target tributaries. Students from Cobourg and Pickering stocked 150 yearlings from Fleming College as part of our annual Earth Week clean-ups on each of Cobourg Brook and Duffins Creek. Also stocking yearlings in Duffins Creek were Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Keith Ashfield, local MP Chris Alexander, Pickering Mayor Dave Ryan, and local councillors. On Cobourg Brook, MP Rick Norlock and MPP Rob Milligan helped with the clean-up and stocking.

An additional 975,000 surplus eggs were stocked directly into streams in January, and 60,000 surplus non-feeding fry were stocked in March from Fleming College. Through April to June approximately 440,000 feeding fry were stocked from Normandale, Harwood FCS and Fleming College, and a further 60,000 swim-up fry were stocked by Fleming College, Belfountain Hatchery and the Islington Sportsmen's Club. The Credit River received approximately 50% of the fish, with the Humber River, Duffins Creek and Cobourg Brook splitting the remainder. Of the Humber River's allocation, roughly 60,000 were swim-up fry and 20,000 were feeding fry.

The 49 classroom hatcheries the OFAH work with directly also stocked their fry over this period, in addition to one class with Fleming College, nine with Ontario Streams, and seven classes with each of the Toronto Zoo and Let's Talk Science (McMaster University).

In September and October, 192,000 fall fingerlings were stocked from the Normandale and Harwood Fish Culture Stations and Fleming College. Roughly 50% of the fish were released into the Credit River with the remaining fish split between Duffins Creek and Cobourg Brook. Approximately 87-92,000 yearlings from 2012 are still in the hatchery and are expected to be stocked in

March and April 2013.

Production planning for 2012-14 occurred in September, and egg collection occurred during November and December. In addition to eggs going to fish production at the various partner facilities, approximately 500,000 surplus eggs will be available to stock directly into streams in January. Some eggs will also be reared again as part of NSERC-funded PhD programs in partnership with MNR (Codrington Research Hatchery). In total, all facilities combined have a production target of 589,000 fry, 175,000 fall fingerlings, and 90,000 yearlings. Allocations for schools and smaller partner facilities (e.g. Belfountain Community Hatchery, Credit River Anglers Association and Islington Sportsmen's Club) are included in those totals. Normandale Fish Culture Station's rebuild should be functionally complete and a re-opening ceremony is being planned for this.

Water Quality and Habitat Protection and Enhancement

The program held two Earth Week events with students, including a 1.3km stream cleanup on Duffins Creek, supported by OPG Pickering and TRCA. The second event was our sixth annual Cobourg cleanup.

This was the first year we partnered with the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation on their national TD Tree Days program in September, hosting three events with them. The first was in Etobicoke with 34 volunteers planting 150 trees and shrubs. The second was in north Pickering with 57 volunteers planting 250 shrubs, and the third was two sites in Lowville Park (Burlington), which had over 600 trees and shrubs planted by 50 volunteers.

A subset of the Atlantic Salmon Habitat Working Group met three times to discuss projects on the Humber River and Duffins Creek. Through this, staff from the team assessed the Albion Hills Conservation Area (Humber River) for restoration opportunities in the summer. The OFAH then implemented five fall projects on the CA lands. We removed old gabion baskets, rebuilt an eroded bank with anchored wood, planted 1,025 potted shrubs and inserted 4,000 live willow and dogwood shrub stakes at two sites. On Duffins Creek we created a wetland on the Transport Canada Airport Lands, and planted 1,792 shrubs and 617 trees with 90 students from Fleming College and a local high school. Program staff have been working with TRCA on the newly acquired Brock Lands (now the Greenwood Conservation Lands) properties since 2011. In the fall we submitted a successful funding proposal to the new Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund for \$25,000, which will be used in 2013 for restoration work around a decommissioned pond. At the decommissioned Spring Pond on the Credit River, we planted 280 trees/shrubs along with 2,374 live willow shrub stakes. Smaller planting projects included one on the Credit with material donated by the Dufferin-Northern Peel Anglers and Hunters Association, and another by Trout Unlimited Canada on Bronte Creek.

We completed a total of 17 projects with the help of 561 volunteers who contributed 1,098.5 person-hours planting 819 trees and 10,321 shrubs over 39,769m².

Research and Assessment

The Science Team met twice in 2012 and hosted a symposium in May at the annual International Association for Great Lakes Research conference. Colleagues working on Lake Champlain Atlantic Salmon participated in one meeting and the symposium. Some interesting results were the diet of Atlantic Salmon (primarily round goby and rainbow darter) and the discovery of likely wild fry in new parts of the Credit River.

The OFAH did not conduct any assessment in 2012. The MNR (Lake Ontario Management Unit, Aurora District), Credit Valley Conservation (CVC), TRCA, and the NSERC Strategic Grant researchers undertook the majority of research and assessment. Temperature trends and water levels were extreme in 2012, making it a difficult year to assess numbers for the program. Generally, fewer fish were seen, but with an early spring and extreme summer conditions, fish were likely missed when they were entering or leaving the rivers.

With Canada-Ontario Agreement funding, the MNR and CVC were again able to assess smolts on the Credit River using the rotary screw trap. As with last year, large numbers of Atlantic Salmon smolts (338) were observed, including those marked last fall in the upper reaches of the river. The field crew was also able to make important observations of other species, including sport fish and invasive species.

Reports of angler catches of Atlantic Salmon from Lake Ontario continue and are being quantified by New York's creel program and MNR's Chinook Salmon headhunting program. Both collected data and tissue samples (for genetic analysis), as did a subset of anglers in Ontario. Some reports of catches from the tributaries of Lake Ontario also came in this summer, including some off the Port Credit pier in May and early June. Three adult Atlantic Salmon were caught during the Bowmanville Creek fish lift in the fall.

With the rebuilt Norval fishway in place, we were able to leave the Streetsville fishway open during the summer (and after Chinook and Coho Salmon runs in the fall). We primarily counted Atlantic Salmon at Norval, where temperatures were lower in the summer and the fish did not need to be moved overland to spawning habitat. To operate the fishways, the MNR hired a three-person crew in early June, and had a challenging year. As mentioned, the early run of Atlantic Salmon appeared to occur much earlier than in previous years due to stream conditions, and by November, the crew had handled 20 adults at the fishways. The Credit River crew also surveyed stream anglers below the Streetsville dam through a formal creel, the first on the Credit River in many years.

In the fall, a COA-funded MNR crew again electrofished the upper Credit River to assess in-stream survival and growth rates, and marked Atlantic Salmon to assess over winter survival. They caught 2,727 Atlantic Salmon. We received an update on research being conducted under the NSERC Strategic Grant to the Universities of Windsor, Western Ontario, and the University of Quebec at Montreal. Currently, the grant is supporting in whole or in part, one Post-Doctoral Fellow, four PhD students, one M.Sc. student, two research assistants and two undergraduate student assistants. Another four students (two M.Sc., one PhD, and one undergraduate) are also associated with the research funded through the grant.

Education and Outreach

Forty-four classes and five education centres reared Atlantic Salmon in classroom hatcheries under OFAH head office guidance. This is up from 44 units in 2011. The geographic range was again from Fort Erie to Kingston. The Toronto Zoo administered an additional seven units, and McMaster University's Let's Talk Science node oversaw another seven. The MNR (Aurora District), Ontario Streams, and Fleming College combined for ten units in operation, for a total of 73 units across the program.

The classroom hatchery program was without funding for a dedicated staff person. Stocking days were staffed by the program coordinator, habitat technician, and intern (29 staff days). Three hatchery units were removed from schools where there was a lack of engagement on the part of teachers and/or students, or there were mentoring problems. These units were moved to schools on the waiting list (approximately 30 schools) for 2013.

In January, a new classroom hatchery was launched with an event at the OPG Pickering Nuclear Plant. In April, the long-awaited *Fishes of Toronto* booklet was printed, which features Atlantic Salmon as the "(un)Official Fish" of the city. An official launch event was held in Toronto as part of the Toronto Harbour Remedial Action Plan's Lake Ontario Evenings lecture series.

Communications

Along with approximately 30 presentations to classes/schools in the winter, presentations were made to the Willow Beach Field Naturalists Club in Cobourg, the International Association of Great Lakes Research Conference, Pickering Nuclear's Community Advisory Council, environmental staff of the CANDU Owners Group, and three prospective schools interested in the classroom hatchery program. The program had a booth at the third annual Sunny Days for Conservation fundraising dinner in Pickering/Ajax in April, and the program also manned a station at a Family Fun Day in Lowville Park, Burlington in June. The program attracted TV, print, online and radio media coverage in 2012, including DurhamRegion.com, CHEX TV (Peterborough and Durham), CHCH-TV, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, *InsideToronto.com*, *Toronto Sun*, *Toronto Star*, *Northumberland Today*, *Watertown Daily Times*, and several other local and regional media sources. The OFAH's own *Angler and Hunter Radio* and *Hotline* also featured BBTS initiatives.

In May, a Chicago film crew producing a documentary for PBS on the Great Lakes (www.makingwavesdocumentary.com) filmed and interviewed students loading and releasing their fish. They stayed a second day to get more footage of Credit River production stocking. The documentary will focus on native versus invasive species in the Great Lakes. The crew has now been in Ontario three times over the last year to film Atlantic Salmon program activities.

The program's Facebook page and Twitter account were active throughout the year. The program has over 400 likes on Facebook and more than 120 followers on Twitter.

Community Stream Steward Program

Outreach & Training



In 2012, the CSSP hosted three watershed bus tours which included Cold Creek, Lake Scugog, and Bowmanville and Soper Creek watersheds. The purpose of these tours was to increase awareness of local issues, bring together partners, stakeholders, and volunteers, and provide insights into conservation and stewardship across the landscape. These tours were supported by local partners and by Environment Canada's EcoAction program.

Two Stream Steward Trainings were held this year with the highest participation rates ever attained. At the end of March, the CSSP hosted a Lake Simcoe focused workshop in partnership with Ontario Streams' Adopt-a-Stream program. In October, the second training was held at the Scouts Canada property, Camp Samac, along Oshawa Creek. Both trainings were full, with 20 and 17 participants, respectively. The trainees took time to learn about stream ecology, monitoring activities, restoration projects, and support organizations for local stewardship activities. The workshops were supported by Wildlife Habitat Canada and Environment Canada's Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund.

A group of students from Trent University approached CSSP in the winter with findings from a school report they completed on Harper Park and Harper Creek, in the City of Peterborough. This group has since formed the Harper Park Stewardship Initiative and is being guided and supported by CSSP.

The CSSP continues to seek out and support local efforts for stream conservation. We attended several shows and events to provide informational materials, advice, and youth education. The Lindsay Woodlot Conference and the East Central Farm Show targets rural/agricultural landowners from within the program's focus area. In April, a presentation was done for the Kingston Fly Fishing Club on stream stewardship and fish habitat restoration techniques. The CSSP participated in a number of youth education events through the spring and summer, including the Brook Never Sleeps in Uxbridge, the annual Cobourg Earth Day Event, the Peterborough Children's Water Festival, and the Conservation Day on Bronte Creek hosted by Pioneer Petroleum.

Stream Monitoring

Two watersheds were targeted for intensive monitoring: Bowmanville/Soper Creeks (Durham Region, Lake Ontario Tributaries); and Blackstock Creek (Durham Region, Lake Scugog Tributary). On July 16 CSSP held the Bowmanville/Soper Community Monitoring Day. The entire headwaters were covered with 119 stream crossings being assessed. On July 23 CSSP held the Blackstock Creek Community Monitoring Day. to gather water quality information. Despite very low water levels, 35 stream crossings were assessed and 12 water samples were collected and analyzed. This information will be used by CSSP and partner organizations to target restoration efforts and future monitoring. Temperature loggers were used to assess habitat suitability for Brook Trout in cold-water streams. The Cold Creek watershed had a full profile created using 11 temperature loggers placed at the convergence of major tributaries. Twelve additional loggers were used at past restoration sites to evaluate project success.

Habitat Restoration Projects

The CSSP worked to implement and support projects which enhanced and rehabilitated stream and wetland habitats for the benefit of water quality and fish habitat. In 2012, CSSP completed 40 projects including bank stabilizations, livestock exclusion fencing, and streamside plantings. Habitat restoration projects were focused on the Bowmanville/Soper Creeks watershed and Lake Scugog tributaries this past year due to funding support from Environment Canada's EcoAction Program. A riparian planting was done in the headwaters of Bowmanville Creek, a bridge removal and debris clean-up was done on the main branch of Soper Creek, and an urban stream clean-up was done in downtown Bowmanville. Urban stream stewardship projects were completed in Port Perry along Williams Creek; they involved two property owners and included fish habitat features and riparian plantings. A native shrub planting was also completed at a municipal park in Blackstock to serve as a demonstration project to local landowners. Other projects completed in the summer included projects supported through the Kawartha Farm Stewardship Collaborative (KFSC) and the Ontario Wildlife Foundation (OWF). A wetland creation project that was completed in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada created a pair pond, connected an existing pond to the wetland complex, and naturalized the area with native trees and shrubs. Along Baxter Creek (Peterborough County), a section of cold water stream was naturalized by removing a concrete bank and stabilized using bioengineering techniques. In Brighton along Butler Creek, log jams were removed to improve water flow, and interpretive signs were developed to increase community awareness of healthy streams. A Scouts Canada property along Oshawa Creek had a bank stabilization project completed using cedar trees. A farm stewardship project was done to create a by-pass channel to separate a cold water tributary of White's Creek from a pond and pasture area. A fencing project was done to exclude livestock from a branch of Cobourg Brook which has been influenced by cattle for the last 50 years (Northumberland County).

Funding

In 2012, operating and project support for the CSSP was provided by Environment Canada's EcoAction Program, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Canada's Summer Experience Program, and the Ontario Wildlife Foundation. Additional project funding was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program; however, the funding was not approved until mid-September and only five out of 17 projects were completed. The CSSP continues to face serious funding restrictions and is not likely to be operating in 2013.





Wildlife Management



Moose Management

Due to less than ideal weather conditions in the early months of 2012, only half of the planned Moose Aerial Inventories (MAI) were flown. This has increased the backlog of MAI's to be flown. With the recent cuts to the MNR's operating budget, the OFAH is greatly concerned about the potential negative effect on the government's ability to effectively monitor and manage the moose resource. The OFAH continues to pressure the MNR to find cost-saving measures elsewhere, and to maintain and increase the budget for MAI's to ensure it has the best possible assessment data when making management decisions.

The MNR continues to make progress on WMU-specific Moose Resource Reports. The reports are expected to be released in 2013, but no firm deadline has been given by the MNR. OFAH continues to pressure the MNR to show progress on the Moose Project, including finalizing and consulting on WMU-specific moose population objectives. There has been discussion between the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee and the MNR about reviewing the effectiveness of the Northern Resident Tag Allocation to ensure it is operating as designed.



Photo: Jim Markou

Elk Management

Amendment to Regulation Under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act to Extend Open Season for Hunting Elk (EBR #011-5624)

Due to lower-than-expected harvest results in the inaugural 2011 elk hunt, the MNR proposed to extend the open season for elk by one week. The OFAH generally supported the proposal as a reasonable step to achieve local harvest planning objectives, but continues to seek consultation with the MNR to optimize this new hunting opportunity. This includes a redistribution of unpurchased tags and the possibility of splitting the two-week season into two separate one-week seasons. The MNR also redistributed tags between harvest areas to increase pressure on cow elk in the core conflict area.

Bancroft-Hastings Elk Hunt

Draw

- Applications for the 2012 elk hunt dropped significantly from 2011, from 4,422 to 2,727 applications.
- 70 tags were available.
- 65 of 70 successful groups claimed their elk seal.
- 196 of 209 eligible licences were purchased.
- Application fees and purchased seals resulted in over \$49,000 in revenue to the Special Purpose Account. Successful applications went to groups of 4 (59% of seals), groups of 3 (19%), pairs (9%) and individuals (14%).



Photo: Mark Majchrowski

Harvest

- A total of 23 elk were harvested in 2012; 10 bulls and 13 cows.

Next Steps

- Analysis of detailed harvest reporting, including the impact of the open season extension is complete and OFAH is reviewing the data.
- Continue herd/population monitoring, assessment and research.
- There are no new regulations anticipated for 2013.

White-Tailed Deer Management



Photo: Mark Majchrowski

Management of Deer in Ontario Parks

Ontario Parks mailed a Public Notice for a Category B Evaluation—White-Tailed Deer Population Management, requesting an extension of their deer population management practices in the Pinery and Rondeau Provincial Parks in order to protect ecologically significant habitats. Culling of white-tailed deer in these parks is typically performed by MNR staff and local First Nations. The OFAH recognized the need to reduce deer densities in the park to protect important habitats, but advocated the involvement of licensed hunters in the deer herd reductions. The OFAH continues to assert that a licensed hunt outside the park is the most practical and effective means of managing deer densities.

Amendment of Ontario Regulation 670/98 (Open Seasons - Hunting) made under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act to Change the Open Season for White-tailed Deer in Wildlife Management Unit 83C (EBR #011-6992)

The MNR proposed to extend the white-tailed deer open season in WMU 83C (Hay Island) from 2.5 weeks to 11 weeks to synchronize it with neighbouring Griffith Island. WMU 83C is entirely privately-owned, and access is by invitation only. After verbally discussing the proposal with MNR staff, the OFAH did not submit a response to this EBR posting due to lack of public access.

Black Bear Management

The OFAH met with the MNR to discuss black bear issues, including the methodology used to generate population estimates, and to obtain an update on public consultation efforts with respect to Black Bear Ecological Zones and zone-specific black bear population objectives and densities. Every MNR District where bear hunting exists has completed some type of public outreach, and efforts are ongoing to consult on WMU-specific black bear population objectives. Population estimates have been generated

for most Black Bear Ecological Zones using DNA-based capture-recapture analysis.

Recovery Strategy for Woodland Caribou, Boreal Population in Canada

The OFAH has grave concerns with the proposed federal Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy. In a submission to Environment Canada, the OFAH outlined our primary concerns with the risk assessments of sustainability, and particularly the scientific modeling on which they are based. The Recovery Strategy recognizes that boreal caribou should be managed on a herd-specific basis, yet its risk assessments and recommendations for management actions are largely based on a meta-analysis (all herds in Canada) approach. This is problematic because individual boreal caribou herds are faced with a diversity of conditions (e.g. geography, climate, soil and anthropogenic use of the landscape) that will heavily influence their productivity and persistence. There is no sound biological rationale to justify using a metapopulation approach for managing Canada's boreal caribou. We believe that our concerns with the Recovery Strategy and Scientific Assessment ultimately result from the inappropriate and unnecessary designation of Ontario's boreal caribou herds as "Threatened" under the Species At Risk Act (SARA). We do not disagree that some of Canada's individual boreal caribou herds may require additional management attention to achieve self-sustainability; however, it is unnecessary and ecologically inappropriate to designate (under SARA) and manage all boreal caribou herds as a "threatened" species. The concerns outlined in our submission emphasized this point. The final Recovery Strategy for Woodland Caribou, Boreal Population, in Canada was released in late fall 2012. The OFAH reviewed the recovery strategy to determine if the authors considered any of our comments that were submitted. There is no evidence that our comments and suggestions were incorporated into the Recovery Strategy; furthermore, a comparison of the draft and final strategies reveals that no public comments were incorporated into the final strategy. The OFAH continues to have grave concerns about the management of all woodland caribou herds in Canada when data is sufficient for only a fraction of Canada's herds.

Leashed Dogs

The MNR posted to the EBR an amendment to Ontario Regulation 665/98 (Hunting) made under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act to allow the use of leashed dogs to track and retrieve big game animals in areas where hunting with dogs is not permitted.

The use of tracking dogs to recover big game has a long conservation history in Europe, where it was first formalized in law in the 19th century. In North America, the use of tracking dogs is legally recognized in two provinces (British Columbia and Quebec), and in some U.S. states (Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Ohio). In Ontario, the beneficial use of tracking dogs for locating big game is currently allowed only in those WMUs where dogs are allowed for hunting big game. Permitting the use of leashed dogs to track and retrieve big game throughout Ontario would be beneficial for wildlife conservation.

The ability to retrieve big game in a reasonable time is invaluable. The OFAH strongly agreed that the use of a leashed dog for tracking would increase the likelihood of retrieving big game, and

we supported the amendment. If approved, the new regulation for the use of leashed dogs to retrieve big game could be in place for 2013.

Hats for Hides

The MNR and BRT Group partnered to secure the necessary services and funding for 2012 to sustain the Hats for Hides program in the same format as last year.

Approximately three quarters (\$75,000) of the total budget came out of the SPA to cover off the minimum 32,000 hats.

Unfortunately, no commitment has been made beyond 2012 at this time. The OFAH plans to follow up with MNR and the Hats For Hides committee to discuss next steps/program options in 2013.



Cervid Farming

Escaped Red Deer in North Bay District

We continue to request a meeting with MNR North Bay District to discuss the escaped/released red deer in that district. The idea was initially met with positivity, but no progress has been made since February 2012. An unknown number of farmed red deer appeared on the landscape four to five years ago and are now confirmed to be breeding. Male red deer are capable of breeding with female elk, raising concerns of genetic dilution of Ontario's reintroduced elk populations. In addition, there are serious concerns about the potential spread of disease from farmed animals to the wildlife population. The OFAH continues to oppose cervid farming in all its forms.

Cervid Farming in Ontario

As a direct result of the ongoing situation in North Bay District, OFAH staff and the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee reviewed the cervid farming industry in Ontario, and made recommendations to strengthen the legislation and improve accountability of the industry. The cervid farming industry is governed federally by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and provincially by the MNR and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). In many respects, the various elements of federal and provincial legislation are adequate and effective at protecting Ontario's wild, native cervid species from the negative impacts of the cervid farming industry. The OFAH continues to have grave concerns about the lack of accountability and responsibility when animals escape, the disease risks to native cervid population posed by escaped farmed animals, and the lack of financial sustainability in the industry.

Human-Wildlife Conflict Advisory Group

The Human-Wildlife Conflict Advisory Group is a diverse group of highly-invested stakeholders who meet to discuss contentious, often irresolvable issues, and provide suggestions to the MNR using the 2007 "integrated solutions (policy) framework." The suggestions are relayed to a multi-ministry steering committee for consideration and response. This multi-stakeholder group met twice in 2012 to discuss vehicle-wildlife collisions and how the municipal and provincial land use planning processes impact human-wildlife conflicts.

Modelling the Risk of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Ontario

The OFAH met with the MNR to discuss the model used to evaluate CWD risk in Ontario. The model contains input for game farm density, deer density, winter severity, time since the last CWD sampling, elk density, linear distance to the nearest CWD case (in the USA), and soil type. The OFAH continues to stress to the MNR the importance of maintaining adequate funding for disease surveillance, given the spread of CWD in North America.

Wild Turkey



Photo: Dave Allen

Manitoulin Wild Turkey and Ring-necked Pheasants

In October, the MNR confirmed their decision to "indefinitely postpone" the introduction of wild turkeys and ring-necked pheasants to Manitoulin Island. The MNR is concerned the introduction of these species may negatively affect a number of species at risk in the area. They have cited significant costs (over \$1 million) associated with the proposal which is not economically feasible, and it is outside the MNR's core business mandate. Therefore, they will not be proceeding with an individual environmental assessment, which is a requirement for the introduction. The MNR also informed us that the research completed (to date) on the Bruce Peninsula will be analyzed to provide more insight into the behaviour and feeding habits of wild turkeys in northern habitats, should the proposal be revisited in the future.

Ontario Wild Turkey Harvest Totals - 2012

The reported spring harvest for 2012 was 8,079 turkeys (481 birds less than last spring). This is the fourth consecutive year of decline in reported harvest. License sales this year (50,434) were also noticeably lower than previous years.

Proposed Mourning Dove Season

The OFAH has advocated on behalf of our members for the creating of an Ontario Mourning Dove hunt for many years. A new Mourning Dove season is being proposed in the central and southern hunting districts for early 2013. If approved, the season would open the same day as the early Canada goose season and length would be 70 days with a daily bag limit of 15, and a possession limit three times the daily bag limit.

We are convinced it will provide welcome and sustainable new recreational hunting opportunities.

Snapping Turtle – Mandatory Reporting

Photo: Michelle McCann Rowan



It was brought to our attention that a petition on snapping turtles had been submitted to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. The snapping turtle is listed as “special concern” under the provincial Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA), and the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). The petition (initiated by the Friends of Ontario Snapping Turtles [FROST]) calls for the province to remove the snapping turtle from the list of “Game Reptiles” (Schedule 4) under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 (FWCA). The regulation currently allows (under a valid fishing license) the daily harvest of two snapping turtles with a possession limit of five. In response to the petition, a letter was sent by OFAH staff to all Members of Provincial Parliament, requesting they review our previous submissions to both the MNR and Environment Canada regarding the lack of empirical data. This data is required to rationalize any proposed change to existing regulations. In addition, we asked that they help us to continue to ensure that sound fish and wildlife management is based upon concrete, scientific evidence. The OFAH provided comments to EBR Registry Number 011-6043: Amendment of Ontario Regulation 665/98 (Hunting) made under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act to require annual mandatory reporting of snapping turtle harvest activities. Snapping Turtle Mandatory Harvest Reporting came into effect on July 1, 2012.

Ontario Regulation 665/98 - Protection of Property “Classes of Agents”

In response to a recommendation brought forward by the OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee at the September OFAH Board of Directors’ meeting, in November OFAH staff submitted a letter to the MNR to request that they develop a proposal to amend Ontario Regulation 665/98 (Hunting), 132 (1) to include licensed small game hunters for the purpose of coyote and wolf control. Those belonging to a class of agents (e.g. licensed trappers) are preauthorized by the MNR to act on behalf of a landowner; however, O. Reg. 665/98, 132 (1) which prescribes the classes of agents, does not include licensed small game hunters. Ultimately, adding licensed small game hunters to the classes of agents will provide an accessible, efficient and effective tool to manage coyotes in Ontario.

Modernization of Approvals

The MNR is consulting on a proposal to update requirements for approvals for specific fish and wildlife-related activities under the

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. The intent of the proposal is to streamline the permitting process and improve approval efficiency. For example, if approved, clubs that host fish and game dinners would no longer be required to obtain individual authorization from the MNR, as long as they were in compliance with the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Health.

It’s in Our Nature, Ontario Government Plan to Conserve Biodiversity

It’s in Our Nature, Ontario Government Plan to Conserve Biodiversity, was posted to the EBR in June to inform and invite comments on actions and activities the government is proposing under Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, 2011.

While we supported the general intent of the proposed government response, we expressed concern with the plan’s lack of setting priorities for action, given fiscal realities, and its lack of timelines for delivering on the proposed actions. Ontario’s final Government Plan to Conserve Biodiversity was released in December.

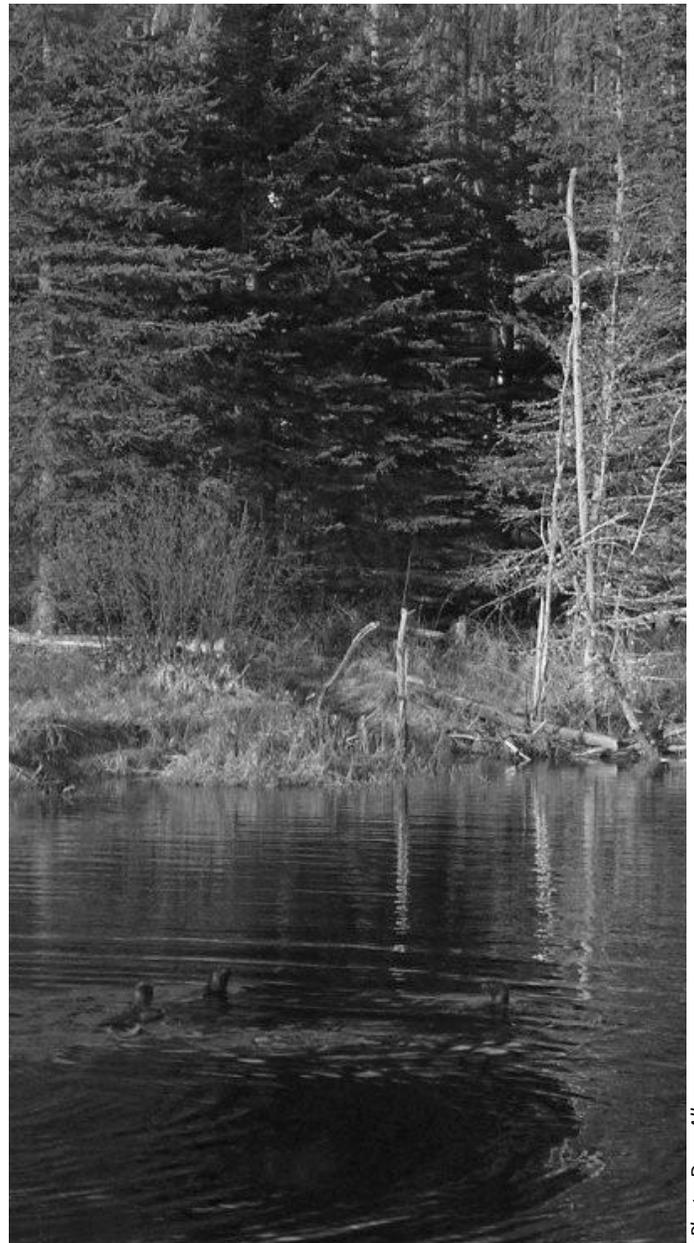


Photo: Dave Allen



Land Use Management & Access

Photo: Ian DesLauriers

Forest Management Planning

Aber Lake Forestry Road Decommissioning (Lac Seul Forest, OFAH Zone A)

The OFAH provided comments regarding the decommissioning of a forestry road associated with the Lac Seul Forest Management Plan. We indicated our opposition to works that physically decommission the road, and encouraged the MNR to allow the road to return to its natural state without being made physically impassable. However, the MNR has decided to proceed with the decommissioning, citing the need to address public safety concerns from known hazards on the road.

White River Mining Road Minor Amendment (White River Forest, OFAH Zone C)

The OFAH commented on a Public Notice for an amendment to the White River Forest Management Plan. The amendment was in regards to an additional road to be built to connect forestry road 200 to Highway 631. The OFAH had numerous comments and concerns regarding this amendment, including the lack of transparency in the Public Notice (i.e. no mention of the proposed access restrictions), the designation of the trail as “Multi-Use” (although limited to forestry and mining operations), roads funding, and our opposition for the proposed physical access restrictions including gated access.

The OFAH participated in an Issue Resolution for the amendment, where we again provided comments on the use of physical barriers, motorized access restrictions, remote tourism Land Use Permits (LUP) and timing restrictions. The MNR’s final decision stated that they have decided to proceed with their original proposal to build the road with a gate, based on the input received from the stakeholders who initiated the original Issue Resolution on this particular road in 2008.

Kenora Forest, draft 2012-2022 Forest Management Plan (OFAH Zone A)

The OFAH reviewed and submitted comments on the draft 2012–2022 Forest Management Plan for the Kenora Forest, and was primarily concerned with the lack of attention to wildlife habitat in the plan. In particular, the OFAH was concerned with the absence of specific targets and objectives for important wildlife species such as moose, white-tailed deer and black bear. Our submission also highlighted questions and concerns regarding natural disturbance emulation (e.g. clearcut sizes and residual

forest patches), as well as forest access and road use management strategies used in the Kenora Forest. As part of the submission, we provided the MNR with a socio-economic analysis of big game hunting in the Kenora Forest. OFAH staff followed up on our submission and met with the MNR Area Forester and Management Biologist for the Kenora District.

Parks and Protected Areas

Darlington Provincial Park (OFAH Zone E)

The OFAH has been involved as a key stakeholder in the McLaughlin Bay Restoration Project at Darlington Provincial Park. McLaughlin Bay is home to an annual Controlled Waterfowl Hunt (administered by OFAH Zone E), and provides for fishing opportunities and community-based events. The OFAH has provided input to ensure the restoration project remains focused on maintaining, or improving, the important recreational aspects of McLaughlin Bay. The final McLaughlin Bay Existing Conditions and Restoration Opportunities Report has recently been distributed for review, with an additional final strategy report to be available for review in 2013.

Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan Amendments (OFAH Zone E)

The OFAH submitted comments on the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan Amendments (EBR #010-8824), and was supportive of the proposed amendment to permit trapping and hunting to continue in Bruton, Clyde and Eyre Townships within new Natural Environment Zones. However, we were largely opposed to the zoning changes and how they may influence resource accessibility. We submitted extensive comments on access control measures, the criterion for determining protected areas, the impact to forest habitat availability, and the cumulative impacts that operational restrictions have placed on forestry operations within the park.

Cottage Lease Policy in Algonquin Provincial Park (OFAH Zone E)

The OFAH submitted comments on the Cottage Lease Policy in Algonquin Park (EBR #011-7289) and was very supportive of the policy’s proposal to allow for leases to be extended for another 21-year term. However, there was no specific wording provided for the terms and conditions of the leases, and so we provided our input and expressed concerns on several aspects that may

negatively impact lease holders. Specifically, the OFAH would not support any restrictions on lease transfers that could ultimately result in the forfeiting of the lease, or restrictions on construction/maintenance that may negatively impact a lease owner's ability to do beneficial activities (i.e. installation of roof-top solar to reduce/eliminate generator usage). In addition, we expressed concerns on how the Algonquin Land Claim may impact current or subsequent lease renewals.

Algonquin Roads Review (OFAH Zone E)

The OFAH participated in an Independent Roads Review for Algonquin Park which was initiated by the Algonquin Forest Authority and Ontario Parks, and undertaken by FPInnovations. The review involved soliciting stakeholder feedback on aspects such as roads standards, density, construction, and management practices. OFAH feedback included support for forestry work and road construction within Algonquin Park, and concerns regarding access. Access restrictions were beyond the scope of the review; however, the OFAH strongly disagreed with this condition and stressed that a discussion regarding access restrictions should be included as part of the review. Access controls should not be used as a fish and wildlife management regime. Fish and wildlife management should be sought through full compliance with Ontario's fishing and hunting regulations, which already incorporate sound fish and wildlife management practices. A final report is anticipated to be completed in late 2012. Although it was not clear if the document would be publicly available, the OFAH will be requesting a copy.

Sibbald Point Provincial Park Management Plan (OFAH Zone H)

The OFAH submitted comments on the Sibbald Point Provincial Park Management Plan (EBR #011-3487) and commented on the current wording within the plan which leaves little certainty for continued winter access to Lake Simcoe within the park. We are deeply concerned that if winter access is removed from the park, it may impact the quantity and quality of winter angling opportunities, as well as important community events such as the "Perchin' For MS Ice Fishing Tournament" which is an all-abilities event. Subsequent to our submission, we have been informed that access to Lake Simcoe will remain open for the 2012-2013 winter season. We will continue to monitor this issue in upcoming years.

Luther Marsh Management Plan (OFAH Zone J)

The OFAH strongly supports the continued enhancement of hunting and fishing opportunities within the marsh, as outlined in the plan; however, we had several concerns with specific wording in the plan related to hunter distribution, dog trial and training areas, and opening wild turkey hunting opportunities within the marsh. No response has yet been received.

Natural Heritage Protection

Provincial Policy Statement Review

The OFAH submitted comments for the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) Five-Year Review (EBR #011-7070). The OFAH was deeply concerned that there was very little change in the draft policies to increase protection for sensitive natural heritage features. Rather, the policy changes were largely in favour of development within these features and prime agricultural lands. Given the pressures to sustain wildlife habitat, and the continued removal of natural and prime agricultural lands for large-scale

aggregate and renewable energy projects, the OFAH will not support such changes. The OFAH supports a more efficient and cost-effective approach for the approvals process, so long as it does not come at the expense of environmental protection. We provided a number of questions and concerns, and have encouraged the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to incorporate our comments and recommendations into a revised PPS.

Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide

The Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide is a detailed technical manual that provides information on the identification, description and prioritization of significant wildlife habitat (e.g. moose aquatic feeding areas, deer yards). It is an advisory guide intended to be used by ecologists, biologists, environmental planners and others involved in the development of strategies to identify and protect significant wildlife habitat in the municipal planning and renewable energy planning processes. The OFAH reviewed the criteria schedules, and has provided comments and recommendations regarding the identification and protection of winter deer congregation areas, animal movement corridors, and early successional habitat. We are still awaiting a response.

"Kawarthas Naturally Connected" Natural Heritage Planning System (OFAH Zone E)

The OFAH has been involved in the development of the Natural Heritage Planning System in the Kawarthas. The project has been in development since the fall of 2011, during which time stakeholders have been involved in identifying and setting ecological "targets" to help identify the key areas on the landscape with the most significant natural heritage systems. The goal of the group is to identify and map a connected system of key natural areas that can be used during land use planning exercises. This will help to ensure that sustainable resource management decisions are made. The final "Kawarthas Naturally Connected" Natural Heritage Planning System meeting took place in late 2012. The project will be moving into the implementation phase in 2013, and the OFAH has made a request to remain involved.

Renewable Energy on Crown Land Policy

The OFAH submitted comments on the Renewable Energy on Crown Land Policy (EBR #011-6005). This policy was a high-level policy to be used as an early screening process for projects proposed on Crown land in areas where approval would not be granted (i.e. Provincial Parks, Lake Trout lakes). The OFAH submitted comments regarding the important benefits of Crown lands and posed questions on whether cost-benefit analyses would be done, if cumulative impacts would be considered, how other sensitive wildlife habitat (i.e. wintering areas, flyways, feeding areas) would be considered, and what provisions would be made to ensure that any project granted would be fully decommissioned at the end of its term.

Additional Amendments to Renewable Energy Approvals

The OFAH submitted comments for the proposed additional amendments to Renewable Energy Approvals (EBR #011-6509), which included concerns regarding the proposed reduction in setback distances from Natural Heritage Features (such as wetlands). Although a formal response to our submission and answers to our questions have not yet been received, the Decision Notice has been posted on the EBR. Despite admission that comments varied widely from being very supportive to strongly

opposed, the MNR has largely approved the policy changes as initially proposed. The OFAH is deeply concerned that the comments from those who were strongly opposed to such changes appear to have been completely disregarded.

Other Land Use Issues

Photo: Ian Deslauriers



CLUAH Update (OFAH Zone C)

The Crown Land Use Atlas Harmonization Project (CLUAH) was put on hold during last year's provincial election. Following the election, the MNR was not sure how a new government and a new Minister of Natural Resources would approach CLUAH. Therefore, the project was stalled again. The new Minister of Natural Resources was briefed on CLUAH and was interested in seeing the project move forward. The public consultation for Stage 3 that occurred in the summer of 2011 must now be followed by First Nation consultations before Stage 4 can occur. First Nations consultations were anticipated to occur in the late summer/early fall of 2012, with Stage 4 public consultations anticipated to be posted in the summer of 2013. We still await the results of the First Nations consultation.

Temagami Land Use Plan Amendments (OFAH Zone C)

The purpose of the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas (CLUPA) Amendment #2011-011 was to complete minor administrative corrections, add clarity to the wording of the CLUPA reports, and to redesignate 29 management areas from "General Use" to "Enhanced Management Areas" to capture the original intent of the Temagami Land Use Plan (TLUP). The OFAH submitted a response with concerns regarding the administrative changes and how public consultation opportunities will now be undertaken with regard to changes to the TLUP, CLUPA, and a number of other land use planning documents applicable to the Temagami area. The OFAH is still awaiting a response.

Madawaska Highlands Land Use Plan (OFAH Zones E & F)

The Madawaska Highlands Land Use Plan is long overdue for a review. As such, a few camps impacted by access restrictions have been unable to make any progress in engaging the MNR to review options that will allow some form of access for these long-term LUP holders. Two camps in particular have written several letters to the MNR with very minimal requests to allow for access

to their camps. After reviewing the information submitted by both camps, the OFAH agrees that the requests are reasonable and that the restrictions have been imposed without the proper consideration of and consultation with these LUP holders. We will continue to help LUP holders work with the MNR to resolve any issues. The OFAH will also continue to advocate for amendments to the MHLUP that will offer more access for anglers and hunters within the plan area.

Hunting on NCC Lands (OFAH Zone F)

The OFAH and Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) entered into an agreement in 2012 that would allow OFAH member clubs to administer hunting on some specific NCC properties. The OFAH is working with NCC to establish hunting opportunities on NCC properties in eastern Ontario for 2013. We are hopeful that the successful implementation of the current agreement will result in future opportunities on NCC properties throughout the province.

OFAH Website Updates

The OFAH website has undergone recent changes to help inform members about the OFAH Fish & Wildlife Services department's involvement and action on issues related to fishing- and hunting-related fish and wildlife management. The website now directs members to the EBR and other postings available for public comment (www.ofah.org/postings) and offers an opportunity for members to learn what the OFAH position is on recent postings (www.ofah.org/ofahcomments). We will continue to improve the fish and wildlife sections of the website and update content as it becomes available.

Crown Land Use Policy Atlas Guide

The Crown Land Use Policy Atlas (CLUPA), hosted by the MNR, is an interactive web browser that allows users to search for Crown land in Ontario. Policies (permitted and prohibited activities) are available for each Crown land parcel, which allows anglers and hunters to determine if angling and hunting is permitted, and if there are any additional restrictions; however, the CLUPA can be challenging to navigate and use effectively. As a service to OFAH members, we have created a CLUPA guide to assist members in searching for Crown land hunting and fishing opportunities. Members can contact the OFAH to receive an electronic copy of the guide, free of charge. Interest has been steadily increasing since January 2012, and we have now distributed over 150 guides to OFAH members.



Photo: Dave Allen

Ontario Invasive Plant Council



The Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC), a nonprofit organization, was incorporated in 2012 and is housed within the OFAH Conservation Centre. The

OFAH provides office space and administrative support for OIPC staff, as well as contributing to the OIPC Board of Directors. The OIPC mandate is to provide leadership, expertise, and a forum to engage and empower Ontarians to take action on invasive plant issues. This mandate provides the opportunity for the OIPC to work closely with the OFAH and the OFAH/MNR Invading Species Awareness Program, and to collaborate and partner on provincial initiatives related to invasive plant species.

Partnerships

Clean Equipment Protocol

This protocol was developed in 2012 and establishes a standard for cleaning vehicles and equipment, and provides a guide to prescribing its application where current codes of practice, industry standards or other environmental management plans are not already in place.

It is much more costly to control invasive species after their establishment and spread than it is to prevent their spread. The unintentional introduction of invasive species can be minimized significantly by the diligent cleaning of vehicles and equipment when leaving an existing site and moving to another site. This is important even if movement is within the same property. The draft protocol has been implemented by forest managers, provincial parks and municipalities.

Look Before You Leave (Mayday Campaign)

The Look Before you Leave Campaign began in 2009 as a method of educating cottagers, campers and other outdoor enthusiasts about invasive species and how they can avoid inadvertently bringing them from home to their summer activity destinations. Currently, the campaign is launched every year on the Victoria Day Weekend, and it reminds people of the potential pathways of spread. Since 2009, a poster and public service announcement has been available and several events are held every year, along with media interviews. This past year, a 24-for-24 cartoon campaign was released on the OIPC Facebook and Twitter pages, and ads were placed in the Hunting Regulations summary and Ontario Parks tabloids.

Grow Me Instead

The Grow Me Instead Program consists of two guidebooks (one for northern Ontario and one for southern Ontario), a canned presentation, and a pilot nursery recognition program. The program focuses on providing information on potentially invasive garden plants, and it offers alternatives to plant instead. In 2012, 13 nurseries signed on to a pilot program to provide the guidebooks in their nurseries, and to promote the sale of the native or noninvasive garden plants that are featured in the guide. For further information about OIPC activities (and to see our annual report), please visit our website at www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca



OFAH/Brokerlink Fish and Wildlife Internship

The BrokerLink logo features a stylized square icon above the text "BrokerLink" and "Auto/Home/Business Insurance" below it.

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Intern, who was sponsored by BrokerLink, completed a four-month internship (April 30, 2012 to August 31, 2012). For the duration of her employment, the intern gained practical work experience in stream rehabilitation and aquatic ecosystem assessment projects related to the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program and the Community Stream Steward Program. Knowledge and skills relating to monitoring local waters and natural areas for invasive species, experience networking with resource professionals and other agencies, engaging volunteers and the public were possible by working directly with the Invading Species Awareness Program. A final report was completed outlining the intern's work experience and activities.

A black and white photograph of a young woman wearing a safety vest, smiling as she works in a stream. She is using a net to catch something. Another person is visible in the background.



Ontario Hunter Education Program

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

The Ontario Hunter Education Program continues to see very strong momentum, and 2012 was another great year for recruitment with 396 courses and 2,795 more students than in 2011. We are very proud to report that from 2001 to 2012 we have experienced 11 years of consecutive growth. The number of students put through the program each year has increased by 11,000 during this time span.

Hunter Education by the Numbers

Total courses to date1,764
 Average # of courses per instructor..... 6.5
 Average # of students per course11.65
 2012 students..... 21,300

Instructor Training

During 2012, a number of hunter education instructors decided to retire. For the first time in a number of years we have fewer than 300 instructors. Along with the MNR we looked at the instructor applications on file and decided to do more training, as more and more areas are underserved. There are not enough instructors to meet the demand in the Oshawa, Whitby and Pickering area of south central Ontario. We also need to keep ahead of future retirees. In November, 34 instructor trainees were selected. All of them forwarded the information and the paperwork required, and dates are being selected for training. We are confident that these 34 will all be trained by March 30, 2013.

We understand that the Firearms Safety Education Service of Ontario (FSESO) is also in the preliminary stages of training. In July they mailed a letter to all hunter education stand-alone instructors, asking them to resubmit their firearms instructor applications along with a \$50 application fee. They have an entirely new application form which is 14 pages long. It is our

hope that the CFO will train these stand-alone hunter education instructors first. At this point, the FSESO is not accepting any more applications and they are asking those interested in applying to check their website to see when they will be accepting applications again.

Knowledge Assessment

In late November 2011, we mailed a Knowledge Assessment to all hunter education instructors. The evaluation of these assessments was very time-consuming. They have all been marked and the overall average on this knowledge assessment was 52.2/55, or 94%. We were pleased with the results and communicated them to the instructors so that they can further learn from the feedback.

Hunter Education Conference

The 21st Annual OFAH Hunter Education Instructors Conference was held this past spring in Parry Sound. It was a great success with 52 instructors in attendance. A range of speakers spoke on many topics including: Charlotte Hooper concerning the new MNR licensing system; Bob Raymond (a champion marksman) spoke about selecting and tuning a scope; and Martin Geleynse from the Ontario Hawking Club spoke on hunting regulations for his group. Our keynote speaker was Lois Deacon, Director of the MNR’s Enforcement Branch. During the conference, Robert Paxton from Little Current, who contributed to his community and the province in many ways, was inducted into the Ontario Hunter Education Hall of Fame. Several years of service presentations were also made.

Cross Training

We met with FSESO regarding cross training some instructors who are not dually certified. Currently, there are about 35 instructors who teach hunter education only. We have also met with FSESO and the MNR to discuss training instructors in areas of need. They are not promising to train all instructors, but are willing to listen to our input and recommendations. Our opinion is that half of these applicants will be trained in the near future, which will help our programs. We continue to meet with the MNR, along with the FSESO, to further advance safe firearms handling and hunting in Ontario.

Other Program Improvements

Our annual financial audit was prepared in July and was submitted to the MNR by the end of August. As always we were fiscally responsible and came in below the workplan budget. A new insert was created for the Student Kits. Along with the CFO's office, we are now providing students with an information sheet called "What Do I Do Next?" which contains information regarding obtaining your first Hunting version of the Outdoors Card, and information for students on how to obtain their firearms licence (PAL). Our hope is that this will further help students after they get home from their course, as well as alleviate a lot of phone calls that we field. We want to make it as easy as possible for students to get their paperwork processed.

We continue to meet and have dialogue with the MNR on a number of items, including updating the Hunter Education Program Standards, as well as a more formalized instructor audit protocol.

Students continue to visit the www.ohp.net website for course information and schedules. We are also happy to see that quite a few instructors have also developed their own websites to provide information for their students.

Young Hunter Education Scholarship (YHES)



In 2012, the YHES fund received three large donations which will help youth enjoy the experience of taking their hunter education course in preparation for their first hunt. Donations totaling \$6,500 were received from the SCI Foundation in Arizona, the Ottawa Valley Chapter of Safari Club International, and OFAH Zone

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

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

Ontario Wild Turkey Hunter Education

Attendance at the spring wild turkey hunter education courses totalled 2,816 (37 scheduled events/locations). This resulted in a smaller average class size of 75 students, which was more manageable. This total attendance (for seminars only) was a sharp fall from 2011, and was due to the amazing success of the DVD program. As a result, there were no fall courses scheduled for 2012. As requested by the MNR we only employed one turkey instructor per seminar in 2012, but with the smaller class sizes and an additional hunter education instructor on site, operations went smoothly, as usual. The additional hunter education instructor will continue to assist with marking and course operations.



Photo: Randy Therrien

Wild Turkey DVD Program

The OFAH Hunter Education department developed a seamless workflow for the Wild Turkey Hunter Education DVD, with over 10,000 DVD's being sold since April 1, 2011. This home study DVD program has proven to be very successful. In 2012, over 6,000 DVD's were sold. We have noted a sharp increase in DVD sales accompanying hunter education courses, so we can again expect diminished seminar numbers for 2013, as many students will purchase the DVD and have an instructor administer their exam. DVD's were sold daily, even throughout the summer months. Our thanks to the 230 hunter education instructors who not only signed up for this program, but also provided guidance and great promotion in their communities. Many instructors have links on their website which explain how students can purchase their DVD and take the home-study course.

Wild Turkey Course Numbers

The following is a summary of 2012 activity:

2012 students.....	2,816
DVD purchases	6,260
2012 total	9,076

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



Education and Outreach

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

OFAH | Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre



It was an exciting 2012 for staff and volunteers at the OFAH| Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre, as we experienced the addition of new displays and

programs. June marked the grand opening of our brand new Excalibur Archery Range and Stoeger Airgun Range, located in the lower level of the Heritage Centre. Representatives from both donor companies, along with local media, attended the highly anticipated event.

Our MNR enforcement exhibit in the upper level was also unveiled in June, and features a modern-day Conservation Officer uniform surrounded by a mural of images depicting the past, present and future of MNR enforcement, and the positive connection with anglers and hunters.

In July, the Heritage Centre hosted the McCallum family for a day of reflection and to unveil a memorial plaque to commemorate the financial donation from the late Harold McCallum.



August marked the popular Get Outdoors Summer Day Camp. An additional camp was added to accommodate 85 youth who participated in a variety of activities both at the Heritage Centre and offsite at locations such as the Sir Sandford Fleming College Atlantic Salmon Hatchery. Thanks to financial support from OFAH Zone E, the camp will continue to run for the next three summers.

With many strong connections between the Ontario curriculum and our conservation education programs, a total of 1,932 students from kindergarten through grade twelve visited the



Heritage Centre to take part in field trips, increasing the grand total of student visitors since opening day in 2010 to 4,737. The spring semester of 2012 also marked the launch of our secondary education programming, offering high school students the chance to discover their role in conservation.

In addition to the field trips, range rentals, birthday parties, various community outreach initiatives and private events, a total of 2,419 visitors stopped by to visit the Heritage Centre in 2012, including people from the area, other provinces and even other countries.

Shimano Fishing Pond

The Shimano Fishing Pond had another busy season as summer staff and volunteers assisted with fishing bookings from various community groups, including students, day cares, retirement homes, and special care agencies.



The Shimano Fishing Pond was also the site of our second annual fishing event, partnering with Peterborough's New Canadians Centre and sponsor Coleman Canada. For many, it was their first time casting a line and trying out a truly Canadian tradition. In 2012, 1,449 anglers made use of the fishing pond.

OFAH Fish and Wildlife Land Trust Fund

In March 2011, OFAH Zone F passed a draft resolution regarding the establishment of an OFAH Wildlife Trust Fund. The resolution was subsequently approved by the OFAH Board of Directors at the April 2012 meeting, along with a change in the name to the OFAH Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund. The purpose is to fund the acquisition of lease of suitable fishing, hunting and outdoor recreation properties, which will focus on conservation, fish and wildlife habitat, and access for the purpose of fishing, hunting and other outdoor pursuits. The properties will be managed under the direct supervision of OFAH Head Office staff, with the assistance as required from our nine OFAH zones, 675 member clubs and members of the Board of Directors. Only when funds are available in the OFAH Fish and Wildlife Land Trust Fund, which have been made available through fundraising specifically for this program will the acquisition of property be considered.

Ontario Family Fishing Events



Twice a year, during February and July, the Province of Ontario declares licence-free fishing opportunities aimed at encouraging families to try fishing. During these designated days, Canadian residents do not need to buy the otherwise mandatory fishing version

Outdoors Card. Launched in 1994, the aim of the program was to break down barriers which prevent Canadian residents from taking the initiative to fish Ontario's waters. By taking part in the licence-free days, children and their families discover the fun of fishing, and develop an appreciation and respect for our natural resources. Ontario Family Fishing Events are highly successful at combining licence-free fishing periods with volunteer-led community fishing events and, as a result, have been repeatedly expanded over their 19-year history. Event hosts included many OFAH clubs, community groups, service groups and other agencies. The OFAH provides promotion and educational materials such as posters, flyers, information booklets, participation certificates, coloring draw entries, and other materials.

In 2012, Ontario Family Fishing Events (formerly Ontario Family Fishing Weekend) was given a new name, new logo and new slogan, but the program is the same great initiative that has been enticing new anglers on to the water for almost 20 years. With a new look to the program, and some diligent marketing, we have received 2.3-2.5 million impressions via the new website, Facebook page, Facebook advertisements, and The Weather Network advertisements. We have also received an overwhelming volume of coloring contest entries in comparison to previous years. This year we successfully added seven new events to the list, meaning 91 provincial events were held in 2012. Overall, provincial participation increased by over 7,000 people this year in comparison to 2011.

Visit www.ontariofamilyfishing.com to learn more or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



OFAH TackleShare

OFAH TackleShare is a province-wide program initiated by the OFAH in response to an overwhelming number of individuals who



expressed an interest in fishing, but had no idea how to get started. For nearly 15 years, the OFAH has invested in this program in order to deliver materials free of charge to beginners who do not have their own fishing equipment. TackleShare distributes this fishing gear to loaner sites, such as public libraries, Ontario Parks, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and other community locations, which in turn loan out the equipment to new anglers, similar to the way that library materials are borrowed.

The OFAH TackleShare Program continues to attract outstanding media coverage for our organization through its loaner sites and the Travelling TackleShare program.

Travelling TackleShare is the mobile component of the program, as it brings fishing equipment to specific locations for special community events. The Travelling TackleShare crew delivers a free, three-hour interactive workshop that teaches the public about fish identification, aquatic habitat, the threat of invasive species and fishing techniques, followed by the opportunity to go fishing using TackleShare equipment. This travelling program was delivered at 11 events in 2012, allowing us to reach out to urban families who discovered that the OFAH takes an important lead role in environmental work in Ontario.

2012 was the most successful year in the TackleShare program's 14-year history, with 148 established loaner sites across the province that enabled 4,700 children and novice anglers to borrow gear from loaner sites and experience the thrill of fishing. Almost



9,000 people participated in Travelling TackleShare this summer, and many of them told us that the presentation made it easy for both kids and adults to learn the basics about fishing. They also wished that there had been enough time to learn more. Strategic planning and early promotion produced increased participation, resulting in loaner site participation doubling that of 2011, and event participation coming in at 3.5 times that of 2011. Additional advertising increased overall program impressions from 2.5 million in 2011 to 4.3 million in 2012.

With financial support from lead sponsor Ontario Power Generation, OFAH TackleShare distributed 470 rod and reel combos, and 333 fully stocked tackle boxes to various loaner sites throughout the province. This is the second year in a row that Ontario Power Generation has been TackleShare's title sponsor. Lucky Strike, Walmart, KTL Canada, Canadian Tire, Ontario Parks, Shimano, Shakespeare and Berkley also provided significant support for this program. Visit www.tackleshare.com to learn more.

Women's Outdoor Weekend



For the past 18 years, the OFAH has been actively supporting women's growing interest in hunting, fishing and other outdoor pursuits through our Women's Outdoor Weekend program. Many women have expressed an interest in making the outdoors a greater part of their personal

and family lifestyle, but did not know how to get started. The OFAH initiated the Women's Outdoor Weekend to break down this barrier, and is the only provincial program of its kind to do so. This annual event is held in September at the Kinark Outdoor Centre near Minden, where over 100 participants and volunteers converge for a three day weekend of archery, fishing, fly tying, fly fishing, trap range, rifle range, high ropes course, woodcarving, game calling, orienteering, outdoor survival, and outdoor workshops. Cabin-style accommodations, delicious meals, guest speakers, and evening entertainment make for a memorable experience for all.

In 2012, we were proud to have CHEX TV and the Muskoka Sun present to give great reports on how the OFAH is offering a great opportunity for women to get involved in the outdoors. Visit www.ofah.org/wow/ to learn more, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

OFAH Get Outdoors

Summer Leadership Camp

Once again, great campers, hardworking staff and phenomenal volunteers made the OFAH Get Outdoors Summer Leadership Camp 2012 a program that should be the envy of every conservation-minded organization around the world. To the best of our knowledge, no other summer camp delivers such quality programming for such great value. The four-day experience for OFAH youth members combines outdoor exploration, conservation education and leadership into the experience of a lifetime. Top activities include: leadership, fishing, target shooting, fly tying, archery, kayaking, canoeing, game calling, wilderness survival, animal tracks, tree identification, evening camp fires, stargazing and night hikes but, most importantly, campers spend four days learning about the OFAH and why its members care about their participation in our organization. This year, all 180 spots were filled just 19 minutes after the registration began, and we continued to produce a waiting list through the remainder of the spring. Volunteers are the heart and soul of this camp, and are the key to its 11 years of success. We appreciate all of the great volunteers who give up their personal family vacation time to help OFAH staff with every aspect of camp including program delivery, administration, as well as kitchen and bathroom duties. Visit www.getoutdoors.org/camp to learn more, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



Youth Leadership Conference

For nearly a decade, the OFAH Get Outdoors program has welcomed youth to its Youth Leadership Conference, held in conjunction with the OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference. In 2012, the enthusiastic group of youth members who toured the Toronto Sportsmen's Show exhibits, and took a day trip to the Islington Sportsmen's Club where the youth were able to partake in fly tying, archery, .22 rifle range and 20 gauge shotgun range, visit a hatchery, and learn how maple syrup is made. A special demonstration by Fleming College gave all participants a glimpse into the future of fish and wildlife management in Ontario, and provided some insight to furthering their education in wildlife biology. Visit www.getoutdoors.org/conference to learn more, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Youth Hunting Day Events

The OFAH, in partnership with the Elgin, Perth, and Middlesex Stewardship Councils, launched two annual youth hunting events in 2012 in an effort to recruit youth who want to try hunting but have no one to mentor them. OFAH Zone E partnered with the Delta Waterfowl Rice Lake Chapter to bring an annual mentored hunt to 14 youth on September 14 and 15 (Heritage Day). Prior to the hunt, participants attended the provincial hunter education and firearms safety license training course for 20 hours of classroom training which was held at the OFAH|Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre in Peterborough. The Long Point Youth Camp was another great success this year; 28 youth between the ages of 12 and 15 successfully completed a comprehensive program that included Hunter Education, PAL training, and Wild Turkey training. There are plans in the works to host two camps in 2013 in an effort to keep up with demand.

OFAH Youth Hunt



The OFAH hosted its first annual youth hunting event on Sunday, October 21, with a mentored pheasant hunt where eight youth between the ages of 12 and 15 enjoyed a great guided tour of the Mill Pond game bird egg hatchery at Bird's Eye View Pheasant Farm. Participants were paired with mentors who helped them develop shooting, hunting, processing and cooking skills. There was also skeet shooting, falconry demonstrations, and a game luncheon. Prior to the event, students attended the provincial hunter education and firearms safety license training course on October 12, 13 and 14 at the OFAH|Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre in Peterborough for 20 hours of classroom training. Both the training and the mentored hunt were free of charge to these students. OFAH clubs that want to host a Youth Hunting Event can request a toolkit that includes everything they need to get started, including a DVD copy of the Ontario Stewardship's "How To" guide on successfully planning and implementing a Youth Hunting Day Event.

OFAH Wild Turkey Registry

In 2012, 122 people registered their birds on the OFAH Wild Turkey Registry. The top typical score was held by William Sheppard of Erin, whose bird scored 89.90; it weighed 26 pounds, had an 11.9 inch beard and matching 2 inch spurs. The non-typical category score was held by Joseph Tetreault at 76.50 with a 23-pound double-bearded giant. Beard number one measured nine inches, while beard number two came in at a close 7.75 inches. The matching spurs were one inch each. Wild Turkey Registry pins and registry certificates were mailed in early December to the successful hunters.

Ontario Angler Awards



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

In 2012, there were a total of 3,727 Angler Award entries. June saw

the highest number of entries at 895, and the lowest month was December at 24.

Thousands of people visit www.ontarioanglerawards.com annually, generating tremendous profile for the OFAH and program sponsors, including the Government of Ontario, Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows, SAIL, and *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*.

OFAH Record Fish Registry

The OFAH Record Fish Registry is the official registry for recreational anglers who land the most remarkable fish in Ontario waters. The angler of each new record receives a beautifully hand-crafted, hand-painted, fiberglass replica of their fish, created by internationally-acclaimed Advanced Taxidermy and Wildlife Design. In 2012, two potential records were submitted to the registry in the categories of Fallfish and Longnose Gar but they cannot be declared as confirmed records until February 15, 2013. May's issue of *Ontario OUT of DOORS* magazine featured an Ontario Record Fish Registry advertisement and encouraged anglers to refer to the current listings and submit their potential records.

We continue to promote the OFAH Ontario Record Fish Registry through a display of current record replicas at the OFAH | Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre. In the fall of 2012, we extended the OFAH Ontario Record Fish Registry mural to accommodate the addition of new replicas and the increasing size of the new records. We have also added some substantial signage on the wall to increase program recognition. Visit www.ofah.org/fishresources for a current listing of record fish acknowledged by the OFAH Ontario Record Fish Registry.





OFAH Membership

Members are the lifeblood of the OFAH. The Federation was formed by conservation-minded anglers and hunters 84 years ago, and remains strong to this day through the loyalty and dedication of its members.

Membership Growth

Congratulations to every OFAH member. In 2012, the OFAH achieved an all-time OFAH membership record of 85,178. Strength in membership is the lifeblood of our organization, and the cornerstone of 84 years of world-leading conservation action. Indeed, that is a bold statement, but one that deserves to be repeated, particularly to anyone who somehow thinks that fishing and hunting opportunities come without a personal investment. For the betterment of conservation, and hunting and fishing traditions, the founders of our great organization had the wisdom to empower their fellow sportsmen. OFAH members knew that big city politicians, even at the turn of the 19th century, could easily forget outdoor priorities, unless their government ever underestimated the voting power and grassroots determination of hardworking people prepared to stand up for it.

Since 1928, joining the OFAH remains the single greatest investment a conservation-minded angler and hunter can make. As always, our success in membership retention and growth is the result of a solid team effort by OFAH staff and members who work diligently to remind fellow anglers and hunters about the importance of an OFAH membership. Even the best featured membership promotions cannot compare to the powerful influence from one hunter to another when he/she asks, “are you an OFAH member?”

Member Services

Monthly Giving

Through the OFAH monthly giving program, 2,545 OFAH members kept their membership current and contributed to conservation in Ontario. In 2012, the total contributions from this program exceeded \$400,000. In addition to the convenience of automatically donating a fixed amount monthly, all members in this program receive a tax receipt for the donation that exceeds their membership fee. In 2012, monthly giving and expired member calling campaigns

generated 171 new donors to the monthly giving program, with an increase in donations totalling \$2,000 per month. In June, we mailed a coaster set to our 2,500 monthly donors as a “thank you” for their continued commitment to conservation in Ontario. We made a request to our monthly donors to consider increasing the amount of their monthly contribution, and had excellent results with 41 donors responding and increasing their donations by a total of \$3,500 a year.

OFAH Life Members

Life members are among the most dedicated and loyal supporters of our fish and wildlife conservation work. This exceptional group grew again in 2012; we now have 543 Life Members.

OFAH Member Club Growth

We currently have over 675 OFAH affiliated clubs. The “no-cost” primary club comprehensive general liability coverage that hunting, fishing and conservation clubs receive when they join as a 100% OFAH affiliated club continues to be one of the main draws for new club recruitment. If you are part of a hunting, fishing or conservation club/camp, and are looking for insurance coverage, an OFAH club membership is what you need. Our club membership continues to gain interest, with many of the enquiries relating directly to insurance questions on the broad coverage that is included. The OFAH is extremely proud of the insurance program that is offered to our clubs and individuals, and we can say with confidence that it is the best program available.

Member Benefits

Brokerlink Insurance

Our partnership with Brokerlink Insurance was a huge success in 2012. Many OFAH members took advantage of great savings on home and auto insurance policies that are available to them through our partnership. We continued to encourage our members to call for a “no obligation” quote to take advantage of great savings that other OFAH members are already enjoying. The OFAH is also pleased to announce that Brokerlink Insurance has once again committed to the \$5,000 OFAH/Brokerlink Fish and Wildlife Conservation Internship program for 2013. This is a great opportunity for a student who is currently enrolled in a post-secondary fish and wildlife program to gain valuable work experience while still in school.

Mark's Work Wearhouse

2012 proved to be another productive year for our partnership with Mark's Work Wearhouse. Once again, OFAH members showed their support of this program by continuing to show their OFAH/Mark's discount card when shopping. Total volume sales reached \$615,000 over the course of the year. Be sure to show your discount card on all purchases, even if the item is on sale, as this will result in a larger donation back to the OFAH and, therefore, toward the conservation of fish and wildlife in Ontario.

AIL

OFAH members continue to take advantage of great life insurance policies being offered through AIL insurance. From final expense planning to an increased AD&D policy, AIL can be of assistance. The \$4,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment Policy included in your membership provides some coverage for you in the event that you are severely injured, or worse.

BMO

The OFAH/BMO MasterCard is the official MasterCard of anglers and hunters in Ontario. Every time you make a purchase using the OFAH/BMO MasterCard, a percentage of that purchase is donated back to the OFAH to be put towards the conservation of fish and wildlife in Ontario. Visit www.ofah.org for details.

TSC Stores

TSC Stores continued to offer OFAH members a variety of savings opportunities within their stores. OFAH members can save up to 15% on a variety of products every time your OFAH member discount card is scanned. Each year, TSC makes a contribution based on the total volume of OFAH sales in the calendar year, which directly supports the conservation of fish and wildlife in Ontario. Be sure to check out the monthly specials on our main website at www.ofah.org.

The Brick

OFAH members can save anywhere between 10-40% off a purchase of home appliances, televisions or furniture. Remember, when you take advantage of the OFAH discount program at The Brick, your purchase is directly supporting the conservation of fish and wildlife in Ontario.

The UPS Store

OFAH members can save anywhere between 5-15% off a variety of products and/or services. Simply show your OFAH membership card to take advantage of these savings. In November, the UPS Stores ran a fundraising campaign to help support fish and wildlife in Ontario. The OFAH is pleased with the efforts and acknowledgment by The UPS Store of the importance of raising funds for conservation.

Manulife Financial

This is a reminder to all OFAH members who are looking to save on health and dental costs; to select from a variety of different coverage options, contact Manulife Financial. They offer everything from health and dental plans to life insurance policies. The more policies that are purchased, the greater the donation back to the OFAH.

Affinity Partner Recruitment

We are always looking for quality retail and service providers that can offer our members discounted prices on products or services

that they regularly purchase. If you know of a company, or have a suggestion, please pass the information on to us.

Great North Wildlife Affiliates (GNWA) - Individual Coverage

There were no changes made to the individual coverage provided by the GNWA in 2012.

Great North Wildlife Affiliates (GNWA) - Club Coverage

There were no changes made to the Primary Club Comprehensive General Liability coverage in 2012. As always, we are reminding all OFAH affiliated clubs that they must maintain a 100% affiliation with the OFAH for their no-cost Primary Club Comprehensive General Liability coverage to be valid. This means that every member of the club must also be an OFAH member.

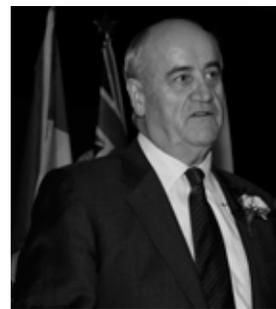
Sustaining Members

GOLD: AIL Canada; Bass Pro Shops; BoaterExam.com/HunterExam.com; Brokerlink; Cabela's; Coleman; DT Powersports; Excalibur Crossbow; Fox 40; H.M. Dignam Corporation Limited; Imagewear; Le Baron Outdoor Products; National Fishing League; Ontario Stewardship; Pioneer; Pure Fishing (Berkley); Shimano Canada Limited; Stoeger Canada Ltd.; The UPS Store; Toronto and Region Conservation Authority; Toronto Sportsmen's Show; TSC Stores; Zeiss Sports Optics (Gentec International).

SILVER: Northern Ontario Aquaculture Association; The Brick.

BRONZE: Commercial Press & Design Inc.; Grant Custom Products; Idris Insurance Brokers Ltd.; Long Point Waterfowl; Lucky Strike Bait Works Ltd.; Ruffed Grouse Bistro; The Vincentress Ltd.; W.I. Villager Ltd.

84th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference



The 84th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference welcomed over 700 outdoors enthusiasts to the Delta Meadowvale Resort and Conference Centre in Mississauga in March.

In addition to the annual general meeting, the three day event featured speakers on a range of outdoor-related topics, award presentations, delicious food, and great entertainment. Tim Hudak, Leader of the Conservative Party of Ontario was the featured speaker at the President's Reception on Thursday evening. Associate Minister of National Defence, Julian Fantino, delivered the keynote address at the Conservation Awards Gala on Friday evening.

Once again, the Friday speaker series was livestreamed over the Internet. Saturday evening was when we celebrated OFAH Executive Director Mike Reader's retirement after more than a decade at the helm, and 25 years with the OFAH. The OFAH Get Outdoors Youth Leadership Conference also welcomed an enthusiastic group of youth from 8 to 18 years of age for two days of activities and field trips.



Fundraising

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

38th Annual OFAH Conservation Lottery

The OFAH Conservation Lottery is our largest fundraiser and is a terrific way to support the OFAH and conservation. Once again, lottery winners took home fantastic prizes while supporting conservation efforts in their communities and beyond. The 38th lottery grand prize winners hailed from Cayuga, Pembroke, Newburgh, Hanmer and Tecumseh. A complete list of winners was posted at www.ofah.org and was printed in the August *HOTLINE*.

The line-up of prizes totaled more than \$302,000, a record amount. Thanks to Dodge (Chrysler Canada), our major vehicle sponsor, G3, who provided boats, and Yamaha, who continued their sponsorship with ATV's and outboard motors.

Anyone selling more than five books of tickets was eligible to order *Opening Morning* by Trevor Tennant; 270 framed prints were sold.

Our 2012 lottery ticket sales (club and individual) were down from 2011, with a total of 38,693 books sold. Thanks to all of those who purchased and sold tickets; what a great way to support the OFAH and conservation!

OFAH Ontario Wildlife Calendar and Christmas Cards

The 2013 OFAH Ontario Wildlife calendar was mailed in October and featured a total of 35 member photographs; eight of which were selected to appear as featured months. Donations for the 2013 Ontario Wildlife Calendar continued to pour in until year end, with an average donation of \$18. OFAH Christmas card sales



also generated revenues, and not only did we reach our sales goal, we also reordered to keep fulfilling orders.

Merchandise

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

Nevada Lottery

The OFAH has been involved in the provincial break open ticket program since 1993 and we, along with all other municipal and provincial charities, continue to see sluggish sales in these lottery programs. Our number of open and active locations remains fairly steady at 19. We appreciate the effort made by some of our Directors to approach local businesses and request their support as a break open ticket seller for the OFAH. Please keep up those efforts, as every box sold nets \$188.24 for your Federation. We continue to attend and participate in the provincial charity meetings hosted by the Ontario Charitable Gaming Association, and we hope to take advantage of some funds that have been made available for provincial charities to pursue variations on the standard break open ticket program products and practices. Our locations sold 80 boxes of tickets during the first three quarters of 2012, which garnered the OFAH net proceeds of just over \$15,000. Our 2013 proceeds are earmarked for Heritage Centre educational programs.

Conservation Dinners

In 2012, OFAH head office assisted with four fundraising dinners across the province that generated approximately \$69,000 in important funding for local, community-based fish and wildlife projects. By all accounts, these fundraising dinner events provide an evening of entertainment, good food, exciting auctions and raffles, and a chance for like-minded conservationists to spend an evening together raising funds to support the heritage activities they treasure. Eighty five percent of the money raised is returned to the community.



Government Affairs & Policy

On behalf of OFAH members, supporters and subscribers, and anglers and hunters across the province, the OFAH represents their interests at all levels of government on matters related to fishing and hunting, fish and wildlife conservation, management, restoration and protection.

Algonquin Land Claim

The Algonquin Land Claim continued to occupy a great deal of staff time and attention in 2012.

Smaller, in-depth consultation meetings with selected stakeholder groups, including the OFAH, finally began in May 2012. The main focus of the meetings was the harvesting chapter of the AIP. (This is not to be confused with meetings of the Committee of External Advisors (CEA) or true public consultation). Three of these meetings occurred by year's end. As part of the process, participants were provided with a draft versions of the harvest chapter, and were asked to provide Chief Provincial Negotiator Brian Crane with suggestions for change. It is clear from reviewing the AIP, which was released shortly before the end of the year, that the comments, concerns and suggestions provided by the OFAH and other stakeholders were largely ignored.

It seems readily apparent that input into the harvest chapter from MNR fish and wildlife staff, despite reports to the contrary, has been minimal. The harvest chapter is missing key components reflective of OFAH feedback. We have received no indication that any of the suggestions made by the OFAH were taken to the negotiation table. A promise by the negotiators that a timetable for public consultation would be presented at a July 26 meeting did not materialize, nor did the promised fish and wildlife review that was committed to by MNR staff at the Bancroft meeting. In fact, by year's end, despite the release of the AIP, no timetable for public consultation had been released. In June, Mr. Crane met with the OFAH privately to discuss various aspects of the claim. In early August, we met with the Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to express our concerns over her public comments about the claim and timelines for resolution of the AIP. Also present at this meeting were the Deputy Minister, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Negotiation and Reconciliation, and her Chief of Staff. We outlined our concerns over the timeline that the provincial government is pursuing with respect to the

AIP, which could be ready for signing as early as January 2013. Since legitimate stakeholder consultation only began in May, the acceleration of the timeline was not supportable. We were made aware that consultations with other First Nations with conflicting claims to the territory had begun, in light of a court decision in western Canada, which requires governments to consult with all potential claimants PRIOR to an AIP being signed. How this might impact fair sharing is unclear. We expressed serious concerns about these discussions without the province having agreed to and establishing a fair sharing formula similar to what appears in other AIP's. A second meeting with Mr. Crane occurred on August 9 to discuss the OFAH position on issues including fair sharing, designation of species, enforcement and access. On August 10, we met with MNR staff to focus on issues related to fisheries and Algonquin Park, and on August 13, Algonquin negotiator Bob Potts met with us to provide an update on the status of the claim from the Algonquin perspective, and to ask for our input on two specific conservation issues. The Algonquin Chief Negotiator has made the rounds of the Algonquin communities to apprise them of progress on the claim, with particular attention paid to land selection (roughly 100,000–150,000 acres including some nonoperational parks) and financial compensation (amount previously approved by federal Cabinet, but not announced). Given the ongoing lack of commitment by the provincial government regarding broad, open public consultation, in early August the OFAH created and circulated three letters, which were sent to other stakeholders for their approval, and to sign on. The first was directed to the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission; the second to local municipalities in the claim area; and the third to MP's and MPP's who represent ridings in the claim area. The main goal of all three letters was to increase the pressure on the provincial government to hold open public consultations. Fifteen stakeholder groups covering a wide range of interests signed the letters, while the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association sent separate letters on their own letterhead, using OFAH information. On August 8, 2012, copies of all three letters were sent to all member clubs within the land claim area asking them to act on the information provided with local municipalities and their provincial and federal representatives. Also in August, the government, through the Chief Provincial Negotiator and MNR staff, met with municipal leaders in the claim area to outline which lands have been selected for inclusion in the AIP. During the

meeting, the Mayor of East Ferris refused to sign a nondisclosure agreement and walked out of the meeting to protest the secrecy around the information session, his inability to brief his council, and the lack of broader public consultation. In September, the Algonquin negotiator made the rounds of all Algonquin communities who are party to the claim to update them on the status of negotiations. In October, the OFAH attended a fisheries workshop in Pembroke, where a fisheries management plan for Algonquin Park was discussed. Outside of the negotiations on the claim, but related to the issues of hunting and fishing within the claim area, the Algonquin continue to raise concerns over the unregulated Métis harvest in the Mattawa area. This is a concern shared by the OFAH. With the AIP now public, it is likely that the pace of discussions around the claim will accelerate in 2013. The draft AIP was released to the public on December 17. On December 24, hunt camp operators and LUP holders on land parcels selected by the Algonquin received letters advising them of the future need to negotiate their continued occupancy with the Algonquin.

Williams Treaty

In 1923, seven First Nations signed the Williams Treaty, which provided land and financial compensation to the signatories. Under the terms of the Treaty, they agreed to the extinguishment of their pre-existing rights to hunt and fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes in their traditional territories covered by Clause Three of the Treaty (an area in southern/eastern Ontario).

In 1992, those seven First Nations brought a court action to review the terms of the 1923 Treaty, which included a claim that they had not given up those rights. In 1994, in what is known as the Howard decision, the Supreme Court of Canada reaffirmed that, under the Williams Treaty, the First Nations had indeed given up their hunting and fishing rights, and that the conditions of the Treaty were upheld. The OFAH was an intervener in the Howard case, arguing that the conditions of the Treaty were valid; a position shared at the time by both the federal and provincial governments. In 1996, the First Nations once again sought leave from the Supreme Court to argue the matter, but the court refused to hear the case. Fast forward to October 30, 2012. The OFAH received a letter from the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources notifying us that on October 29, 2012, litigation in the federal court in Ontario had commenced, supported this time by both the federal and provincial governments, indicating that “new historical evidence” had come to light that supported the position of the Williams Treaty First Nations in their quest to re-establish their traditional right to hunt and fish in the Treaty area. The trial is expected to stretch into mid-2013, and is scheduled for 168 trial days over 18 months. It involves thousands of pages of documentation and the hearing of almost two dozen “expert” witnesses whose testimony alone will be over 4,000 pages. The OFAH has learned that evidence collected in support of the case actually began in May 2012 with hearings in the affected First Nations communities.

The Deputy Minister’s letter also indicated that while the trial is proceeding, the province has adopted an Interim Enforcement Policy, contrary to the 1994 Supreme Court decision. The Interim Enforcement Policy provides that aboriginal person(s) who identify themselves as such, when harvesting or transporting wildlife or fish for personal consumption, social or ceremonial purposes, would not be subject to enforcement procedures, with

few exceptions. By adopting the Interim Enforcement Policy while the case is still before the court, the province appears to be prejudging the outcome of the trial in favour of the First Nations and undermining years of equal treatment of all anglers and hunters, including those from Williams Treaty First Nations. In November, the OFAH met with senior MNR staff who briefed us on the province’s position in the case. At the time, it became clear that despite the Supreme Court ruling in Howard; despite the OFAH’s involvement in this issue at the Supreme Court; and despite the impact that this case could have on non-aboriginal hunting and fishing in Ontario, the province deliberately did not inform the OFAH of the litigation, or the province’s change in position prior to going to trial. In mid-November the OFAH met with the federal Minister’s senior policy advisor to advise of our displeasure at this turn of events, and to determine why the federal government had changed their position in this matter. It is expected that future meetings with the federal government on this issue will occur in 2013.



Bill C-19 An Act to Amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act and Related Amendments

Bill C-19 passed on April 5, 2012, abolishing the long gun registry. During the parliamentary process, the OFAH appeared as a witness before both the House of Commons and the Senate standing committees studying the bill. As expected, the Province of Quebec challenged the legislation and the case was heard in May/June with the expectation that a decision would be rendered by the end of June. In September, a Quebec Superior Court Judge ruled that the federal government must hand over all records on Quebec-owned guns to the provincial government within 30 days. The federal government appealed the decision, but no outcome from the appeal was reached by the end of 2012. Further complicating the issue was an application before the Ontario Superior Court by the Barbara Schlifer Clinic, to have most of Bill C-19 declared unconstitutional. They sought an injunction to ensure that the registry continued to operate and that no records were to be destroyed until the case was heard. The injunction motion was heard in August and the court ruled against issuing the injunction.

In May, Toronto City Council passed a motion urging Queen’s Park to ask Ottawa for the records from the registry of local gun owners. Council reaffirmed its support for the federal registry and ordered city lawyers to seek ways to prevent the deletion of records of more than 287,000 registered firearms in the GTA; Mississauga passed a similar motion in 2011, prior to the passage of C-19.

In the meantime, some provincially appointed CFO's, most notably Ontario's, refused to recognize that the passage of Bill C-19 and the abolition of the long gun registry nullified the CFO's policy requiring retailers to keep detailed ledgers of all transactions as a condition of license. Despite a clarification from the federal Minister of Public Safety and the Commissioner of the RCMP indicating that, under C-19, retailers would no longer have to keep this information for nonrestricted firearms, the Ontario CFO and his counterpart in New Brunswick insisted that the information continue to be collected and that the legislation did not prevent this action. In fact, the Ontario CFO stated publicly that the Minister would have to change the legislation to stop him from following the practice. The OFAH and the Canadian Shooting Sports Association (CSSA) met with the CFO in May and argued this point, to no avail. In response, the federal Minister introduced an amendment to C-19 in the House of Commons and the Senate at the same time, expressly prohibiting CFO's from collecting this information, which is contrary to the spirit and intention of C-19. In June, the OFAH appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in support of the government's amendment, which passed before the House rose for summer break. In Ontario, the ledgers kept by retailers are the property of the CFO, and are so marked. On occasion, the CFO requests that retailers return the ledgers for review. The information contained in the ledgers could be used to create a provincial registry, which the amendment to C-19 is designed to prevent. In July, the Ontario CFO informed firearms dealers that they would no longer be required to keep personal information on buyers of non-restricted firearms, although many retailers will continue to keep minimal records for liability and insurance purposes. These records will now only be available to police through warrant as part of a specific investigation. Furthermore, the personal information in the ledgers on purchasers of non-restricted firearms is considered to be ipso facto part of the records that are required to be destroyed under C-19.

Records for Long Gun Registry Destroyed

On November 1, 2012, the Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety, announced that with the exception of information related to firearms owners in Quebec, the data contained in the long gun registry for non-restricted rifles and shotguns owned by Canadians had been destroyed, along with the backup system that contained a duplication of the data. Minister Toews also indicated that, over the next few months, the federal government would be working with the firearms community through the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee (CFAC) on licencing and the United Nations (UN) marking system, among other issues.

United Nations (UN) Marking

You will be aware of the long-standing issue surrounding the UN Small Arms Marking Regulations, agreed to by the former Liberal government. Despite the fact that the former government signed on to the treaty, the current government has purposely dragged its feet on actually implementing the guidelines with respect to the marking of firearms. At a meeting early in the year with the CFAC, of which the OFAH is a member, the government discussed a number of options for their participation in the regulations, many of which the committee rejected outright. In October, the government outlined its position in the Canada

Gazette, as required by Parliament. Their position recognized the concerns raised by the CFAC, but still went beyond what the committee was prepared to live with. The CFAC agreed to support the requirement for serial numbers to be marked on all firearms, with the exception of rare firearms, or firearms of an exceptional value. The CFAC did not support the inclusion of markings indicating the country and year of import. Despite this, the government included this requirement in the gazetted regulation. The impact of this was immediate, with members of the committee letting the government know that any markings, aside from serial numbers that were required to be applied after the manufacturing process, would not be supported by the firearms community. This would result in undue burdens for importers and retailers, and would also be prohibitively expensive. Given the controversy, and with the CFAC clearly not onside, the government announced the deferral of their response to the marking regulations until December 1, 2013.

Fees for Federal Firearms Licenses to be Restored

The Government of Canada waived the fees associated with renewing or upgrading all classes of firearms licenses until September 17, 2012. Effective September 18, the fee waiver for restricted and prohibited licenses expired, and a cost of \$80 is now applied for renewal every five years. The waiver for non-restricted licences will remain in place until May 16, 2013, at which time a cost of \$60 will be applied for renewal every five years.

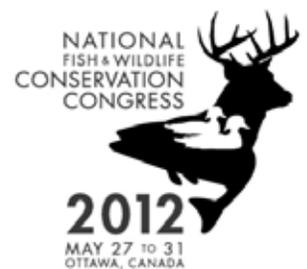
Repeal of Gun Show Regulations

In October, the federal government announced a proposal to repeal the gun show regulations. The government made it clear that the regulations, introduced but never enacted by the previous government, were redundant and already covered off by existing regulations. All current regulations that apply to gun shows will still apply, but the government strongly believed that the additional regulations did nothing to enhance public safety, and served only to create more bureaucracy for legal firearms owners and retailers.

National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress (NFWCC)

The National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress, organized by the OFAH, occurred from May 27-31, 2012. The event was a great success, with over 400 in attendance. Delegates attending the congress came from every Canadian province and territory, 20 U.S. states, and Australia. Most major conservation organizations in Canada and the U.S.

were represented, and the success of the congress should pave the way for future events of this nature. The Prime Minister delivered the keynote address, and announced the creation of the Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel. As planned, the congress resulted in a series of recommendations that came out of workshops and were voted on by delegates on the final day. The congress received good media coverage, and follow-up articles have appeared in *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine, the Wildlife Society magazine in the U.S. (10,000 circulation), the Conservator magazine from



Ducks Unlimited Canada and Fair Chase, a Boone & Crockett publication. In August, the OFAH spoke about the outcomes of the congress at the annual general meeting of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) in Missoula, Montana.



Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel

During his speech at the National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress (NFWCC), Prime Minister Harper announced the creation of a Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel (HAAP) that will provide advice to the federal government on issues impacting fishing, hunting and conservation. The OFAH had been advocating for a panel like this for several years, and is pleased that the government moved forward on this initiative. The OFAH is also pleased to have been appointed to the panel, along with our counterparts from across the country, representing the vast majority of hunting and angling organizations in Canada. The panel will report jointly to the federal Minister of Environment and Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and met for the first time in October, with the Minister of Environment in attendance for the entire five hours. During the meeting, the participants drafted a tentative agenda of issues to be tackled in the future:

- access/protectionism;
- aquaculture's impact on fisheries;
- the socio-economic impact of fishing and hunting;
- the need for better communications from the federal government;
- the Species at Risk listing process;
- the National Conservation Plan;
- the implementation of recommendations from the NFWCC;
- fish and wildlife diseases, notably Chronic Wasting Disease;
- invasive species;
- conservation and sustainable use;
- a definition of conservation;
- funding for fish and wildlife;
- National Fish Habitat Action Plan;
- National Habitat Bank;
- National Fish and Wildlife (Conservation) Act; and
- National Fish and Wildlife Heritage Act.

The panel will meet with the two Ministers twice a year, with

conference calls at other times when their schedules permit. The next meeting will take place in January/February 2013.

Meetings with the Prime Minister's Office

Throughout the year, the OFAH met with senior staff at the PMO on a number of occasions to discuss issues including changes to the Fisheries Act, the need for changes to the Species at Risk Act, the goals of HAAP, the National Conservation Plan, funding for fish and wildlife, and the Navigable Waters Protection Act, among many other items. It is the intention of both parties that these meetings occur on a regular basis to ensure that the Prime Minister and his staff are aware of our concerns on various issues.

National Conservation Plan

In January, the federal Minister of Environment convened a roundtable to discuss the National Conservation Plan (NCP), announced during the 2011 federal election. The OFAH, along with 20 other major stakeholders from across Canada, were included among the participants. The day long meeting provided the Minister with background from each organization with respect to the creation of the plan. We followed up our appearance with a letter to the Minister, urging caution when it comes to the creation of new parks or the inclusion of definitions in the plan that would prohibit sustainable use. The plan was sent to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development for extensive hearings. The OFAH applied for standing at the hearings and made an appearance in May. Following this, a comprehensive response to questions asked by the committee was forwarded to the chair.

Bill 55 (Provincial Budget)/MNR Transformation Plan

Since the introduction of the provincial budget in March, the OFAH has been seeking details as to how the cutbacks to the MNR (\$70 million over three years) will impact on the ground. As part of the budget bill, the government introduced amendments to dozens of Acts, including seven impacting on the MNR: Fish & Wildlife Conservation Act; Public Lands Act; Endangered Species Act; Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act; Lands and Rivers Improvement Act; Crown Forest Sustainability Act; and the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act. We remain uncertain how the legislative amendments will affect anglers and hunters. We look forward to further discussion with MNR. The new organizational structure for the MNR is expected to be in place by 2014/15, and some of the changes are as follows:

- the MNR will move from six divisions to five, with the Science and Information Resources Division being split up and assigned to parts of the other five divisions;
- three regional offices will continue, but field structure will be realigned over the next two years. This will include shifting some of the planning and decision-making to the regional level;
- several branches within the Ministry will be realigned;
- seven provincial parks with low visitation rates will be redesignated as nonoperational parks, but will continue to exist;
- cuts will be made to the Community Fish and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP);
- the Stewardship program in its current form will end. It will be replaced by a smaller cadre of staff working at the district level.

A new funding model will be created that not all councils will qualify for, and dedicated staff support will cease;

- Outdoor Card renewals will no longer be mailed to cardholders;
- the overnight Ranger Program and the 13 ranger camps across the province will be scrapped and replaced with a day-based program;
- the training unit in Enforcement Branch will be downsized; and
- some district offices will close, but it is not clear at this time which ones, or how many.

Special Purpose Account (SPA)

In 2012, the MNR initiated a review of the SPA. The MNR is attempting to establish a five-year revenue generation strategy, which will focus on new sources of revenue generation for the SPA. The MNR staff leading the review were invited to give a presentation to the OFAH Board of Directors in December. They provided surveys to Board members, which were filled out and submitted through head office. In general, the OFAH is supportive of the development of a revenue generation strategy for the SPA because we believe that a modest increase in SPA revenues would generate large returns for anglers and hunters. First and foremost, the OFAH wants to ensure that no revenue generation ideas will place undue financial hardships on anglers and hunters. We also want to ensure that any new revenue generated for the SPA by this initiative will be spent appropriately. Therefore, the OFAH is seeking greater clarity from the MNR for how SPA funds are currently being spent and how additional funds generated through the SPA Revenue Generation Project will be allocated. In addition, the OFAH will not want additional revenue generated by this initiative to result in diminishing funds to fish and wildlife programs from the consolidated revenue fund. Some of the MNR's proposed revenue generation ideas are non-starters for the OFAH because many include new fees that will not have any appreciable return on the investment for anglers and hunters. We anticipate that the OFAH will continue to be involved in discussions around this project throughout 2013.

Federal Budget

The federal budget introduced in March 2012 contained a number of cuts to all departments, including DFO and Environment. Since that time, the OFAH, either through the Outdoor Network, or directly with senior staff at DFO and the Minister himself, has been participating in discussions around what the new regulations attached to changes in the Fisheries Act might look like. The DFO engaged in consultation with affected groups across the country. The OFAH has had the benefit of meeting with the department more than any other stakeholder, given our proximity to Ottawa and are strong relations with the Minister's office.

Queen's Park Wild Game and Fish Reception

The 8th Annual Wild Game and Fish Reception was held at Queen's Park in June. The OFAH, the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association, the Canadian Shooting Sports Association, the Canadian Sporting Arms and Ammunition Association, the Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows and the Northern Ontario Aquaculture Association spent time speaking with politicians and staff on a variety of issues. Over 40 Ministers and MPP's attended the event along with their staff, and many called it the

most successful event to date.

Freedom of Information on the Licensing Automated System

Given ongoing concerns that the OFAH and others have had over the introduction of the MNR's new licensing automated system (LAS), the OFAH filed a Freedom of Information request seeking the following: a copy of the contract; the dollar value of the administrative fee being withheld by the vendor; how much money, if any, had been spent out of the Special Purpose Account (SPA) on the system; how much SPA money was being spent on postage from the U.S.; and the names and bids of others who responded to the request for proposals. Access to this information was granted.

Aquatic Invasive Species

In April, the OFAH appeared before the federal Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans regarding aquatic invasive species. Since that time, the binational Risk Assessment on Asian Carp in the Great Lakes was released. In May, DFO announced that the government would make a significant investment to protect the Great Lakes from Asian Carp, and allocated new funding of \$17.5 million over the next five years to four key activities: prevention; early warning; rapid response; and management and control. The OFAH continued to remind the Minister's office of the key role played by the OFAH Aquatic Invasive Species Program, and advocated for a portion of that funding.

Amendments to the Federal Fisheries Act

We attended several meetings with the federal Minister, Ministerial staff and senior department staff to discuss changes to the Fisheries Act that came about as a result of the federal budget in May 2012. Many of the proposed changes were controversial in nature and were opposed by some stakeholders from the outdoors community. As part of the consultation process, the OFAH attended an invitation only briefing with the DFO Deputy Minister and senior DFO staff in July in Burlington. While the changes to the Act itself were approved, the OFAH continued to work with several stakeholder partners, including the CWF, regarding what the regulations in support of the legislation would look like.

Provincial Party Platforms

In December 2012, the OFAH produced a document outlining a number of issues that should be included in provincial party platforms for the next provincial election. Among these were: 1) the socio-economic importance of hunting and fishing; 2) access to public lands; 3) reinstatement of a spring bear hunt; 4) full consultation on the Algonquin Land Claim; 5) status change for cormorants; 6) implementation of a provincial waterpower plan, and fish hatchery and stocking plan; 7) rescinding the ban on coyote and wolf hunting and trapping; 8) regulation of all commercial fishing; 9) elimination of deer farms; and 10) expanded wild turkey and elk hunting opportunities. This document should not be confused with the provincial party election questionnaire that the OFAH produces during every election campaign. Rather, it was created in response to a request for information on key issues facing the OFAH, in anticipation of a provincial election in 2013.

Municipal Discharge Bylaws and Sunday Gun Hunting

Brooke-Alvinston and Adelaide-Metcalf

Both of these municipalities approved Sunday gun hunting in 2012 and were added to the regulation for the fall season.

Clarington

This municipality approved a new noise bylaw. Local gun clubs, which were aided in their fight by the OFAH, are required under the bylaw to create improved buffers to mitigate the impact on local residents.

Springwater

Council decided not to pursue a discharge bylaw, but to continue in their quest for a new noise bylaw. OFAH Zone H Chair Wayne Forgrave, amongst others, met with the mayor, who is generally supportive of hunting and recreational shooting. If council continues its pursuit of a noise bylaw, which would impact the two clubs in the area, we will attend the anticipated public meeting and speak in opposition to the bylaw.

Sarnia

In view of complaints to council about “stray gunshots,” the municipality decided to review its discharge bylaw. A preliminary report and draft bylaw went to council for consideration. The city sent OFAH Zone J and OFAH head office copies of the report and the draft bylaw, and invited us to meet with them at our convenience to discuss any concerns we may have. We have spoken with the bylaw enforcement officer, who is not supportive of the changes being proposed. OFAH Provincial Director-at-Large Tony Jackson spoke at a public meeting, which no councillors bothered to attend. A second draft bylaw was presented to council which still contained serious concerns for the OFAH and local hunters, and ignored much of the input presented at the earlier meeting. The OFAH sent a letter to council, copying OFAH Zone J and local clubs, outlining our ongoing issues with many aspects of the bylaw, including buffer zones, areas excluded, and prohibitions on the water, which do not fall under municipal control.

Woodstock

The OFAH was made aware that the Woodstock police chief, a known opponent of firearms, was encouraging council to amend the discharge bylaw to include all of the rural lands annexed by the municipality and not covered by the current bylaw. The OFAH arranged to make a deputation before council in November, alongside a representative of local residents and the agricultural community, both of whom are opposed to any extension of the bylaw. At the same time, council was contemplating the introduction of several new additions that would require local hunters to provide Woodstock police with proof of gun and hunting credentials before hunting in the municipality. Clearly, the OFAH opposed any such imposition, and met with the police chief in mid-November. The chief did not support council’s decision to have local hunters report to his office before hunting. The OFAH provided suggestions for changing the bylaw, which is expected to be dealt with at council in 2013.

Cavan-Monaghan

In October, the OFAH was asked by the Municipality of Cavan-Monaghan to review proposed amendments to the discharge bylaw. The OFAH made extensive comments, some of which were immediately adopted, and others which were not.

Uxbridge

In October, the OFAH was contacted by the Town of Uxbridge regarding changes to their discharge bylaw. As with Cavan-Monaghan, some were accepted, and others were not.

Whitby

The Town of Whitby passed a new discharge bylaw, which the OFAH was not aware of until after the fact. The OFAH spoke to the clerk of the municipality to make our opposition to the bylaw known. We were assured that the bylaw would be referred back to the Operations Committee for further discussion, and that we would be notified when this occurred and that we would be invited to appear. This meeting and opportunity to speak before the committee will occur in 2013.

Kawartha Lakes

Rumors had surfaced that the City of Kawartha Lakes was planning to extend its discharge bylaw. The OFAH made significant representations the last time the bylaw was before council and we did not support any extensions. Upon checking, we were assured that no such plans were in the works, and that the bylaw department will oppose any further expansion of the no discharge zone, should it be raised.

Port Hope

The OFAH became aware that the Municipality of Port Hope was in the process of updating its discharge bylaw. The OFAH spoke to the clerk who was pleased to receive input into the wording of the new bylaw. We also spoke to a local MNR conservation officer who indicated that he did not support changes to the current bylaw, and that he would inform the municipality of his opposition. We will provide suggestions for amending the draft bylaw.

Markham

In late 2012, the OFAH learned that the Town of Markham was planning to amend their discharge bylaw. In speaking with the CAO, it was clear that changes being made would not impact hunting in the municipality, given the lack of those opportunities under the current bylaw.

King City

The OFAH was informed that the Municipality of King City was contemplating further changes to their discharge bylaw, in addition to the changes made seven years ago, which the MNR and OFAH helped to develop. The OFAH appeared before council in September. The report was referred back to the clerk and council questioned the rationale for bringing it forward. No time frame for bringing it back for consideration has been set.

In early December, the OFAH wrote to an additional 15 municipalities that had previously dealt with the possibility of supporting Sunday gun hunting, but voted against it. These included: Beckwith, Southwest Middlesex, LaSalle, Enniskillen, Malahide, West Lincoln, Brighton, Seguin, McDougall, Douro-Dummer, Carling, Achipelago, Georgian Bay, Hamilton, Haldimand, Southwold Township, Oro-Medonte and Asphodel-Norwood. The OFAH received positive responses from several who are prepared to reconsider their earlier position. The OFAH will appear before these councils in 2013.

Additionally in 2012, we took part in meetings on the Navigable Waters Protection Act, Responsible Resource Development, Sustainable Use Coalition, NCC lands, SPA, and Lake Nipissing Walleye.



Communications

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

In the News

In 2012, we issued 34 media releases, primarily through Canadian Newswire (CNW), a newswire service. To further broaden our reach, we made use of our extensive web presence, including social media, which encompassed Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. We also provided an OFAH e-news service and an RSS feed to enable followers to automatically receive OFAH media releases and other updates electronically. OFAH communications handles media inquiries, provides and arranges for interviews with the media (print, radio and television), and consults with head office staff on various issues that are of public and media interest.

The scrapping of the long gun registry and the Algonquin Land Claim attracted interest and media opportunities all year long. The launch of the MNR's new licensing automated system (LAS) for hunting and fishing licenses proved to be challenging with issues such as long line-ups, system glitches and traditional outlets not up and running for January. In order to assist anglers and hunters, we worked closely with the MNR to resolve as many issues as possible, and connected weekly to identify and resolve problems as they arose. Some other issues that made headlines included the new Thunder Bay bow hunt, the Lake Nipissing Walleye crisis, and Shaw Media/Global Television's decision to drop hunting shows from its network.

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

support and newsletters are examples of the efforts undertaken to promote these important conservation and outreach programs.

Angler & Hunter HOTLINE

Hotline is your go-to source for the latest information on hot topics, issues of concern and interest to our members, club news, upcoming events, plus much more. The 16 page insert can be found in the members' only section of *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, the outdoors enthusiast's favourite magazine.



Internet Presence

Our corporate website (www.ofah.org) redesign was launched in January with great feedback. The new site is user-friendly and was constructed using current coding. OFAH members can easily join, renew and donate online, with the assurance of secure financial transactions provided by Moneris. New privacy and terms of use policies are posted on the new website.

In time for the new season, *Angler & Hunter Television* launched a brand new website featuring new host Mike Miller. The OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre, the Ontario Family Fishing Events and Invading Species Awareness Program websites were also completely rebuilt by the web team and launched in the spring. The new sites feature updated content, enhanced graphic design and more interactivity.

We have continually increased our use of social media tools, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, to promote OFAH programs and activities, and to reach a younger market. Facebook and Twitter references and icons now appear on many OFAH web and print materials.

Some OFAH zones are using their OFAH-hosted zone websites

under the OFAH domain (www.ofah.org/zonex). We would be pleased to provide training support for any new launches or maintenance of existing sites.

In September we launched an online video blog featuring OFAH Executive Director Angelo Lombardo. It can be found at www.ofah.org/angeloblog. In-house communications staff film, edit and upload the blog, which is produced on a regular basis.

We are pleased to be continuing our working relationship with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership (OTMP). They renewed our contract to populate the hunting and fishing portals of www.northernontario.travel (the OTMP website) through to March 2013.

Our web team manages more than a dozen OFAH web properties and their associated Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts, as well as the OOD forum. In just under one year, the web team has processed more than 1,900 web service requests.

Ontario OUT OF DOORS

Ontario OUT OF DOORS

Ontario OUT OF DOORS (OOD) magazine enjoyed a fourth successful year under the OFAH banner, and celebrated its 45th anniversary, a huge milestone in the publishing industry. OOD is the province's leading outdoors magazine and is showing no signs of aging as it continues to inform and engage its readers like no other in its class.

Once again in 2012, OOD attracted the country's top outdoors writers and contributors, as well as major advertisers. Readership rose too, with subscription numbers up for a second consecutive year, a reflection of the quality of the hunting, fishing and conservation coverage OOD provides to the province's outdoors enthusiasts. Keeping pace with social networking, OOD connected online with over 2,700 Facebook (facebook.com/OODMag) friends and engaged 1,200 Twitter (Twitter.com/OODMag) followers. Remarkably, the OOD forum (www.oodmag.com) received 11.5 million page views in 2012, as anglers and hunters weighed in with their views on a wide range of topics. The OOD video library swelled to over 100 clips, all of which are accessible on the website (www.ontariooutdoors.com) and the OOD YouTube channel.

OOD publishes ten issues a year and is mailed directly to OFAH members. It is also available through subscription, and can be found on newsstands and at many TSC locations across the province.

As powerful a communications tool as the main section of OOD is, the magazine's most direct connection with OFAH members is the 16-page insert, Angler & Hunter HOTLINE, which keeps readers up to date on all things related to the Federation.



Angler & Hunter Television



2012 was a challenging year for *Angler & Hunter Television* (AHTV). We secured a new broadcast partner with OLN after Shaw Media/Global Television announced it was dropping all hunting programs from its network.

For the third straight year, AHTV received a Wild TV Grizzly Award. In 2012 the program was awarded the Hunting and Fishing Network's Fan Favorite Best Educational/Conservation Show.

As you start to enjoy the airing of the 20th season, *Angler & Hunter Television* will continue to highlight all of the news and views of what is important to our members, to conservation, and to our natural resources, as well as deliver hardcore hunting and fishing content.

Sponsors play a huge role in our television production. Canadian Tire Corporation has extended their contract for another year as a title sponsor; we also agreed to a contract with Yukon Gear hunting apparel as the exclusive clothing sponsor of AHTV. Bushnell and Wildgame Innovations have also joined us as product sponsors, reinforcing the use of trail cameras and optics in the program. Our television program has continued to grow and we have renewed contracts with our current list of great sponsors including: Mercury Marine, Winchester Ammunition, Browning Firearms, Yamaha ATV's and Lund Boats. AHTV is also supported by Berkley, Excalibur Crossbow, Minn Kota, Humminbird, Cannon, J.J. Stewart Motors, DT Power Sports, our very own *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine, and Lucky Strike. Check us out at www.ahtv.com. Filming for the 21st season is already well underway.



Angler & Hunter Radio

Season two of *Angler & Hunter Radio* was well received by listeners, and we received a lot of positive feedback. We expanded to ten stations across the province. KICX 91.7 FM in Sudbury joined the Angler and Hunter Radio Network to provide additional listening opportunities for our members in the Sudbury area.

AH Radio enables us to deliver OFAH messaging in a timely fashion on topics and issues that are important to our members, as well as all residents of Ontario.

Season three will begin airing in March 2013. You can listen to the broadcast every weekend on the station nearest you.

Visit our website to see which stations air the show, and at what times on either Saturday or Sunday. Or, you can listen anytime by visiting www.ahradio.ca and downloading the podcast. Angler & Hunter Radio is proudly sponsored by Canadian Tire, Yamaha, Valvoline, Thermacell, Alumacraft, and Tourism Toronto.

President's Report



The past year has once again proven to be both busy and full of challenges for the OFAH Board of Directors and head office staff. It is impossible for me to convey everything that your Federation has been working on in such a short space. Please take the time to read this full annual report, and share it with your family and friends.

The year included the retirement of Mike Reader and the appointment of Angelo Lombardo as Executive Director. Angelo has proven to be a great choice as Mike's successor, and has provided us with a seamless transition of authority, which was very important given the number of pressing issues we were and are dealing with. During the year, we also experienced other retirements from our head office staff, including the retirement of John Kerr as editor-in-chief of Ontario OUT OF DOORS magazine and, more recently, Nancy Cator who has been on staff for the past 35 years. We were again fortunate to have excellent replacements for both of these long-time staffers. From within the ranks, John's position was filled by former OFAH Manager of Communications, Lezlie Goodwin, and Nancy's job was filled by Jane Beggs, who has been a part of our membership and administrative staff for over 25 years. We wish all of those who have retired this past year good luck and good health in the years to come, and congratulate their successors who are settling in to their new roles admirably.

Over the past year, one of the biggest issues we have been working on is the Algonquin Land Claim, which is now making its way through the political and public arenas. The OFAH has been involved in discussions around this claim for over two decades. To say that we are less than pleased with the lack of public consultation and failure to consider changes to the Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) is an understatement. During 2012, the OFAH was given the opportunity, along with a small group of stakeholders, to review a draft of the harvest chapter and provide input. On several occasions, the OFAH also met with the Algonquins and their legal counsel to reinforce the need for fair sharing of the resources. Unfortunately, very few of our proposed changes were incorporated into the AIP. As I write this, we continue to meet with both levels of government in an effort to make changes to the document, and to press for comprehensive public consultations on the agreement BEFORE it is signed. Of particular concern are issues related to fair sharing, access, and loss of Crown land.

The Algonquin Land Claim was not the only significant development in 2012 that directly involved the First Nations and aboriginal rights. In late October, both levels of government returned to federal court in support of a review of the Williams Treaty, under which seven First Nations communities gave up their traditional hunting and fishing rights. In 1994, the OFAH was part of a case at the Supreme Court that upheld the Treaty, and we will continue to support the 1994 decision, possibly through legal channels.

Another notable development in 2012 involved the downsizing of the MNR as part of the larger cost reduction strategy of the Ontario government. Although many of the changes will not be evident until some time in 2013, cuts to a number of programs and changes in the way that the Ministry does business began in earnest in 2012. The new Licensing Automated System (LAS) left many anglers and hunters, as well as licence issuers, very frustrated with the many months of system problems, fewer licence issuers in the province, and the added costs absorbed by the SPA with all of our licences coming from a United States provider. Another cost saving measure was the scrapping of notices to holders of expiring Outdoors Cards. At a time when the MNR is looking for ideas to increase revenue, the possibility of having hundreds, if not thousands of Outdoors Cards expire not only affects the bottom line, but could result in anglers and hunters in possession of expired cards.

The news for 2012 was not all bad. The first ever National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress, organized by the OFAH, was a major success. The partnerships that were developed with major conservation, hunting and fishing organizations on both sides of the border in support of the congress helped to raise the profile of the OFAH across North America and beyond. From a program perspective, our award-winning Invasive Species Awareness Program continued to demonstrate why it is one of our flagship programs, and we are pleased to have signed another five year agreement with the MNR to work cooperatively to deliver this program. The Hunter Education Program, which the OFAH delivers on behalf of the province, continued the trend of teaching more new students every year for the past decade.

I would like to close by thanking all head office staff for their hard work this past year. You do not really know the enormous workload that each of our staff have, and to say that they all multi-task is an understatement. They are the most dedicated and hardworking group of people I know. On behalf of our Board of Directors, I want to thank each and every one of them for their hard work, and the dedication they bring to this Federation. You are a great bunch of people. To our Board of Directors and all advisory committees, thank you for your zeal and dedication to the tasks you have undertaken this past year. To accomplish the amount of work we do, to address the issues we tackle, and the efficiency with which we conduct our meetings is what makes this Federation one of the greatest in all of Canada. I would like to give personal thanks to each and every member of the Board for their work and dedication this past year.

Bill Backweg

OFAH Zone A Annual Report



Chair – Bruce Hamilton

OFAH Zone A's 2012 annual meeting was hosted by the Fort Frances Sportsmen's Club in January. Conservation Officer Steve Pauluzzo briefed the delegates on the "no discharge from the right-of-way" regulation, which came into effect in 2011 in parts of Fort Frances and Kenora. Elections at this meeting saw the same executive elected for a third term.

The spring meeting was in May, and was hosted by the Atikokan Sportsmen's Conservation Club. Lisa Solomon was on hand to brief members on the moose research project within Quetico Provincial Park. Poor snow conditions hampered collaring during the 2011/2012 winter. Also updating the meeting delegates were Mark Bowler and Cathryn Moffitt from Osisko's Hammond Reef Gold Project.

OFAH Zone A's summer meeting was hosted by the Northwoods Fish & Game Club of Red Lake. We were very pleased to welcome the OFAH Zone/Member & Club Services Liaison, Brian McRae, to his first OFAH Zone A meeting. I am sure he will prove to be of great value to all zones.

FMZ 5 expedited their meeting schedule and was able to go to the public with five open houses across the management area in November. At these meetings, the draft Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) was presented, and was also posted online. The council met in December to refine the plan. FMZ 4 has moved slightly slower, but also had a draft Fisheries Management Plan available for review online by year end. One area of concern within this plan is the restrictive regulations on the Watcomb Lake area. There is also an access issue, as the land around the lakes was "free-hold land" and has been sold to interested parties in the United States.

There was no activity by Ojibway Power and Energy Group after the closing of their Environmental Report on the Namakan River Hydro Development Project in February 2010. The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ministry of Environment (MOE), and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency were critical of the report. Technical work did resume on the site during the summer of 2012.

Several mining operations within the zone are moving through the permit system at different stages. The most advanced is the Hammond Reef Gold Project (Atikokan). The Environmental Impact Statement has been accepted by the federal government. The Terms of Reference (TOR) were also accepted by the provincial government; however, the Osisko's Hammond Reef Gold Project has since added a fibre optics line and a large permanent work camp to the TOR, and these have yet to be accepted. The Rainy River Resources (Fort Frances) have filed their proposed Terms of Reference. Most of the concerns in the draft have been addressed at this stage. By mid-November, this was one of two projects in Canada to fall under the new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012 (CEAA 2012). A third project, northeast of Ear Falls, by Gold Canyon Resources Inc., will see them extend the Wenesaga Road in the Trout Forest to their Springpole Gold Project site in 2013. The first 20 kilometres were planned for construction in 2014 under the Forest Management Plan (FMP); the second 20

kilometres will be gated until use/access can be determined in the next FMP extension.

In mid-January, five members of the Fort Frances Sportsmen's Club and the OFAH Zone A Chair met with the Ontario Aboriginal Affairs negotiators to review six areas of interest identified by the Mitaanjigamiing (Stanjikoming) First Nations in their Treaty Land Entitlement Claim. Both the club and zone filed submissions addressing issues such as: conservation; loss of bait harvest areas; and possible creation of "headland to headland" concerns. Further meetings are expected in 2013.

The Turtle River-White Otter Lake Park Management Plan has finally been adopted. The clubs in Fort Frances and Atikokan were very involved when the park was first envisioned in 1982. During the Lands for Life process, the park area was expanded, but nothing was done regarding a plan. Many of the original concerns have now been addressed.

Those who attended last year's conference will remember that Jeff Muirhead received the 2011 OFAH/Oakville & District Rod & Gun Club Conservation Research Grant. His research work regarding Lake Sturgeon and water flows (hydro dam controlled) was carried out on the Rainy River (Fort Frances area). A second student, Adrienne Smith, also did research to evaluate food and habitat in the river. They gave an excellent presentation to the Fort Frances Sportsmen's Club on their first year studies.

The Moose Aerial Inventory (MAI) conducted in WMU 6 during the 2011/2012 winter showed alarmingly low numbers. A population of 3,700 animals in 1988-1992 has fallen to 300 animals in the last MAI. There is a concern about future calf harvest if a population turnaround doesn't occur soon. An MAI will take place in WMUs 2 (northwest of Kenora) and 12B (Atikokan) during the winter of 2012-2013.

A slow decline in the OFAH Zone A's membership number finally turned around at the end of November. This can be attributed in part to the dedicated work of one membership representative from one of our larger clubs. This individual has raised his club's membership by approximately 50 members. These numbers will be very hard to maintain, as the main employer in this area has suffered a major downturn in operations. Member numbers are very important to the OFAH and the zone, not only financially, but more importantly as support when interacting with governments on issues of importance to anglers, hunters, and conservationists. I am asking each zone member who reads this annual report to consider either purchasing a gift membership for a family member or friend, or encouraging them to join a club in 2013.

OFAH Zone B Annual Report



Chair – Debbie Rivard

City of Thunder Bay Bow Hunting

In May 2012, Thunder Bay City Council passed a bylaw that would allow bow hunting for deer in designated areas of the City of Thunder Bay to start in the fall of 2012. An open house was held to educate and inform residents of the city regarding the details of the hunt. A bow hunting seminar, sponsored by the OFAH and Lakehead Archers, was held in early September, free of charge, for any interested bow hunters. It was held at the Lakehead Archery Club and provided bow hunters with an overview of the difference between bow hunting and gun hunting, as well as deer anatomy and treestand safety. Participants were also encouraged to bring their equipment for proper instruction and target practicing. The season opened on September 1 and closed on December 15, 2012. The MNR provided an additional 800 antlerless tags for WMU 13 to facilitate the city hunt. City officials and police were pleased to report that there were no incidents. OFAH 1st Vice President, Glenn Rivard, will meet in early 2013 with the MNR, city police, city officials, and other stakeholders to review and possibly improve on the success of the 2012 hunt.

Community Fish & Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP)

At the end of September it was announced that the provincial funding to CFWIP was being cut almost in half. As a result, OFAH Zone B only received \$600 for each of the two seeding projects that we had applied for at the beginning of the year. In the past we received \$1,000 for each project. We were notified at the beginning of October that we had received funding for seeding for 2012. The seed was ordered and paid for in 2012, and will be spread in the spring of 2013.

OFAH Zone C Annual Report



Chair – Peter Sword

The zone held meetings in Cochrane on April 1, and New Liskeard on September 30. In addition, zone executive meetings were held in Cochrane on February 8, and Englehart on June 27.

Fisheries Management Zone Councils have been established and are active in FMZs 10, 11, and 12. OFAH Zone C has representation on the FMZ 12 Advisory Council, as well as on the Kirkland Lake Fish and Wildlife Advisory Council, the Temagami Local Citizens Committee, and the Northeast Regional Advisory Committee.

Proponents for waterpower projects on the Frederick House River, the Blanche River and the Ivanhoe River have held their final public open houses. There are two land use planning processes ongoing in the zone. The Wawa Crown Land Use Atlas Harmonization

Entrance Removals

Late in summer, it was brought to our attention that construction work was taking place on highway 527 outside of Thunder Bay, and that the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) was removing a number of entrances to forest access roads and trails. In one instance the entrance was removed, leaving anglers stranded. OFAH Zone B 1st Vice Chair, Gilles Dumais, was given the lead on this issue. After some discussions with the MNR and the MTO, some of the entrances were replaced. A meeting with the OFAH, the Northwestern Sportsman Alliance, the MNR, and the MTO was requested in September, but to date has still not happened. We have been informed that a meeting is pending.

Shows & Events

The Central Canada Outdoor Show was held on February 24-26, 2012. Once again, a new record was set for memberships sold at the show; 60% new memberships and 40% renewals. The kids' moose calling contest continues to grow in popularity. The Northwestern Ontario Trapper's Convention was held from March 1-2, 2012. OFAH Zone B Executive members and volunteers ran the booth for this show. The Kam River Reel-In was once again held in September. As in previous years, OFAH Zone B sponsored this event. Basil and Ella Arney again volunteered to look after this event on behalf of OFAH Zone B. This event was held in one of the downtown cores of Thunder Bay, and provided an opportunity for the youth in the area to try fishing. Approximately 57 youth participated, and 40 fish were caught. Prizes were given to all participants. Our thanks go out to the many volunteers who assisted at these events.

Project has had no new developments in the last year, and we are still waiting for a response to the comments that we submitted at the last public information center. The 10-year review of the Temagami Land Use Plan, and its rolling into the Crown Land Use Atlas has not been finalized; we have not received a response to our comments, and no EBR posting announcing the completion of the project has been made. The zone has recently submitted comments to the FMZ 10 Advisory Council regarding the proposed changes to Bass and Lake Trout regulations in FMZ 10.

OFAH Zone C made donations to Long Point Waterfowl for sandhill crane research, the Temagami Area Fish Involvement Program for repairs to a Walleye rearing pond, and a youth waterfowl hunt held by a group of conservation officers.

OFAH Zone D Annual Report



Chair – Roy Polsky

This past year was a busy one for our zone executive and members alike. Many of the same issues never seem to go away, such as access and road restrictions, road closures and abandonment, forest management plan amendments, new fishing and hunting regulations, and a range of wildlife issues.

OFAH Zone D held three meetings: their annual meeting in Sudbury; a meeting in Sturgeon Falls, hosted by the Sturgeon Falls Rod & Gun Club; and a meeting in Parry Sound, hosted by the Parry Sound Anglers & Hunters.

During our meetings we had presentations by: Brian McRae, OFAH Zone/Member & Club Services Liaison; Everett Hanna spoke about Long Point Waterfowl and their study on sandhill cranes in the Manitoulin Island and North Shore Area; and Anglers and Hunters Insurance Brokers representatives, Debbie Young and Angele Giroux, spoke about insurance.

The Huron Shores Elk Sub-committee was formed to deal with the problem of nuisance elk in the North Shore/Algoma area. Our zone, along with OFAH head office, has representation on this committee. So far, two meetings have been held, and a third was rescheduled. They are presently documenting elk damage to local crops and will try to come up with a solution to the problem.

The Sudbury elk herd seems to be doing well and increasing with many calf sightings. The overpass over the new four-lane highway in the Burwash area that provides a route across the roadway for wildlife is complete.

In early fall, our zone was advised by the MNR that the environmental assessment for wild turkeys and pheasants for Manitoulin Island had been indefinitely delayed, due to financial restraints, but the research that was being carried out in the south (Jordan Plain Area) to study their diet and behavior will move forward and the data collected will be analysed. The MNR had allocated \$160,000 for this study.

The West Arm/French River Wild Turkey Group has collected data on wild turkeys in the area and submitted the results to the Provincial Wild Turkey Working Group and the MNR along with a request to possibly open a season in WMU 42. OFAH Zone D supports this initiative.

Concerns are still being raised by local groups in regard to the construction of hydro dams on local waterways, and how they will affect fish spawning shoals, water levels, and water quality.

Our zone attended a stakeholder consultation on the protection and recovery of Lake Sturgeon and Polar Bears, which are listed as threatened under the Species at Risk Act. During the course of the session it became apparent that some attendees were only there to see how it would benefit them in their opposition to hydro dams.

OFAH Zone D, along with OFAH head office, were invited to attend a Youth Elder Summit on Earth Day with the theme “Walking the Waters.” This aboriginal event was sponsored by Environment Canada and the Ministry of the Environment to open up communication between the youth and elder members of First Nations and Métis communities along the French River.

Our zone attended a stakeholders’ meeting, held in Little Current on Manitoulin Island, regarding the Ministry of the Environment’s Bill 100, Great Lakes Protection Act and the Great Lakes Protection Strategy.

There was a request from a member of the public to amend the Sudbury Forest Management Plan and the Area of Concern (AOC) prescription for Lake Trout lakes. These changes would have almost shut down the forestry operations. After consultation with the Local Citizen’s Committee (LCC), the District Manager rejected the request.

MNR’s Sudbury and North Bay Districts have appointed new district managers and area supervisors.

There are new fishing regulations for Lake Nipissing (FMZ 11). The Walleye catch limit has been reduced from four to two with a sportfish licence (and from two to one with a conservation licence) as the lake has suffered a dramatic decline in the Walleye population, due to unregulated commercial netting. Several members of the Lake Nipissing Walleye Project Advisory Committee were disappointed that the MNR did not heed their recommendation, and that the decision had already been made prior to the consultation.

New regulations for open season, catch and possession limits, and size restrictions were also proposed for Bass fisheries in FMZ 10. There are also proposed changes to Lake Trout regulations to provide more consistency for management strategies and fishing rules.

We provided funding to member clubs and organizations to help them carry out their worthwhile projects.

- Long Point Waterfowl received \$1,000 to help continue the sandhill crane study;
- Manitoulin Area Stewardship Council received \$2,500 for their Youth Trapping Initiative. The money provided six youths with a trapping starter kit. The course was delivered by certified instructors to help them become licensed trappers;
- Manitoulin Streams received \$2,500 for some restoration projects to improve water quality and spawning habitat for Salmon and Lake Trout;
- Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council received \$2,500 for a Youth Hunting Opportunity Day program;
- Gore Bay Hatchery received \$1,000 toward the purchase of new equipment; and
- Temagami Area Fish Involvement Program received \$1,000 for bridge repair and work at the Sherman Mine ponds.

OFAH Zone D would like to thank OFAH head office for all of the assistance and direction they have provided during the course of the year.

OFAH Zone E Annual Report



Chair – Barney Moorhouse

It has been another busy year for OFAH Zone E. The following are the meetings/issues which were dealt with by OFAH Zone E:

The first OFAH Zone E meeting was held in Port Hope at the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority on March 25. Topics included:

- A discussion on the North America Fish and Wildlife Congress - Valley 2000, and the restoration on Bowmanville and Soper Creeks; the gala dinner was attended by five OFAH members;
- An update on elk;
- Chronic Wasting Disease;
- Lower Trent Valley Youth Day in Frankford; reports on current status – firearms paperwork;
- A powerpoint presentation on the Lake Simcoe Muskellunge Project, which was given by Dave Boxall, Jim Kelly, Ian Young and Emily Funnell from MNR Aurora District, and information was placed on our website; and
- Eric Smith and Brian Sheppard attended the National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress in Ottawa on May 27-31, 2012. The next meeting was held at the Bancroft Game and Fish Club in Bancroft on August 19. Topics included:
- The opening of the new archery and air rifle gun ranges at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre;
- MNR budget cuts;
- Haliburton Highlands Outdoors Association's anniversary;
- Long-tail duck tracking;
- Lake Nipissing Walleye numbers and issues;
- Wild game meat and food banks;
- CFO's retail stores record-keeping on long gun sales;
- Bill 55 and MNR funding;
- Licence Automated System (LAS) information going to the United States;
- Lack of opportunities for stakeholder input on the Algonquin Land Claim;
- OFAH Zone E's involvement with the Family Fishing Day at Darlington Provincial Park. This event turned out to be a huge success, with 100 children and adults taking part. Thanks goes to the zone membership, Darlington employees, the MNR and OFAH head office;
- Arnprior & District Fish & Game Club's 65th anniversary;
- South Central Ontario Fish and Wildlife Association's Kids' Fishing Day and classroom hatcheries; and
- 6th Annual Earth Week/Pitch-In event. There was student involvement from Cobourg's East and West high schools, Fleming College, Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority, and the Cobourg Trap and Skeet Club.

The zone has been involved with the Bancroft Area Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee, and topics of discussion included:

- Broadscale monitoring reports;
 - Deer and moose tags;
 - Updates on nuisance elk and elk season extension; and
 - Farmer concerns with species at risk.
- Pembroke District activity included:
- Fish hatchery;
 - Hunter Apprenticeship Safety Program (HASP) (12 students took part and obtained their safety certificates);
 - 14th Annual Fishing Derby; and
 - Proposed Petawawa River power development.

OFAH Zone E Annual General Meeting and Elections

There was some discussion on the McLaughlin Bay Restoration Project and how it would affect the Family Fishing Day event and waterfowl hunt, as well as the people that fish there on a daily basis.

OFAH Zone E, along with the Delta Waterfowl/Rice Lake Waterfowlers, held a youth hunt in Bewdley on September 15. Introductions, matching up mentors with hunters, handing out calls, hats, and other items for the youth, as well as bird identification, were conducted on the Friday evening. After the hunt the youth were taught how to clean the harvested birds, trap shooting, decoy set up and display and dog retrieval. Different types of hunting blinds were on display. The sponsors of the event were BJ Tackle, who supplied breakfast, the OFAH, who donated calls, a hunter safety course, and other items, and Winchester and Federal, who supplied the ammunition. Thank you to all of the volunteers and sponsors for this great day. There has been some talk of possibly hosting a spring youth wild turkey hunt for 2013.

Class of Agent – adding licenced small game hunters to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act regulations

- Land use/access trails;
- Madawaska Highlands Land Use Plan; and
- Road access removal.

Big Game

- Surplus moose tags;
- Use of dogs;
- Moose review; and
- OFAH Big Game Policy review.

Donations to date (totaling \$18,000) went to:

- Ontario Sporting Dogs;
- OFAH head office;
- Rice Lake Waterfowlers;
- Muskies Canada;
- Bancroft District Game and Fish Association;
- South Central Ontario Fish and Wildlife Association;
- Renfrew County Stewardship;
- Peterborough Children's Fishing Day; and
- The OFAH[Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre.

OFAH Zone F Annual Report



Chair – Ed Giffin

OFAH Zone F held three meetings in 2012. The April 22 meeting was held in Perth. Beverley McCreight, Area Supervisor (Acting), Kemptville District MNR, provided information on fish and wildlife updates, tag allocations for the upcoming hunting season, and the latest on possible fishing regulation changes in FMZ 18. The August 30 meeting was also held in Perth with the OFAH Zone/Member & Club Liaison Representative (Brian McRae) as our guest speaker. It was our first evening meeting and was well received by all members in attendance. Our last meeting of the year was the annual meeting, which was also held in Perth. At this meeting, annual reports were presented, and 1st Vice Chair, Kerry Coleman, presented the OFAH Zone F Strategic Plan, which was approved.

OFAH Zone F was represented on the following committees in 2012:

- OFAH Executive Committee (Ed Giffin)
- OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee (Len Dickinson)
- OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee (Ed Giffin)
- OFAH Firearms/Recreational Shooting/Hunter Education Advisory Committee (Len Dickinson)
- OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee (Ed Giffin)
- OFAH Access/Land Use/Trails Advisory Committee (Kerry Coleman)
- OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee (Kerry Coleman)
- OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Birds Advisory Committee (Kerry Coleman)
- MNR/OFAH Liaison Committee (Len Dickinson and Ed Giffin)
- Eastern Ontario Deer Advisory Committee (Kerry Coleman, Len Dickinson, and Wendell Crosbie)
- Madawaska Highlands Land Use Plan – Standing Advisory Committee (Doug Huddle)
- Mississippi River Watershed Advisory Committee (Len Dickinson)
- Mazinaw Area Fish & Wildlife Advisory Committee (Ed Giffin)
- FMZ 12 Council (Pierre Boucher and Don Pajot)
- FMZ 18 Council (Ed Giffin and Len Dickinson)
- Mazinaw/Lanark Forest Management Plan Local Citizens Committee (Hans von Rosen)
- Lanark County Stewardship Council (Wendell Crosbie)
- Leeds Grenville Stewardship Council (Kerry Coleman)
- South Nation Conservation Authority Advisory Committee (Cyril Holmes)

OFAH Zone F continued to support its OFAH affiliated clubs and their conservation projects, including:

- Grenville Fish & Game Club for their events trailer, as well as maintenance and operation of equipment for youth events;
- Ottawa Region Walleye League for their Kids' Ice Fishing Derby

and Winter Fishing Derby;

- Kingston & District Fish & Game Club for their ice fishing derby, their Youth Ice Fishing Derby, and Annual Perch Derby;
- Osgoode Twp. Fish, Game, and Conservation Club for their fishing derby and Plot Mule repairs;
- A camera purchase for the Safari Club International fundraiser;
- OFAH Zone F 3-D archery competition;
- Perth KIDFISH Derby;
- Young Hunter Education Scholarship (YHES) fund;
- Crimestopper vehicle lease;
- Frisbees as handouts at OFAH affiliated club youth events;
- MNR's elk study; and
- Westport Area Outdoor Association.

Total funding provided for conservation projects for 2012 was \$10,425.

OFAH Zone F Newly Affiliated Clubs

- Buckhorn Lodge;
- Giles Camp;
- Rideau Lakes Bass Anglers;
- Sedore Hunt Club;
- Buck Ridge Camp; and
- Shuttleworth Hunt Club.

OFAH Zone F Secretary/Treasurer, Len Dickinson, maintains the website as part of the zone's strategic plan. Posted on our website are:

- Agreement-in-Principle for the Algonquin Land Claim after it was released on December 13, 2012;
- The latest fishing regulation changes for FMZ 18;
- Fish stocking lists for MNR's Pembroke District; and
- The scientific paper written by Christopher Godwin, James A. Schaefer, Brent R. Patterson, and Bruce A. Pond on "Contribution of Dogs to Whitetail Hunting." This paper came about after 25 years of study in the Canonto Township area, with partial funding by OFAH Zone F.

The use and maintenance of this website is part of our strategic plan to improve communications with our OFAH clubs and members.

The Madawaska Highlands Land Use Plan has been undergoing an internal review by MNR District staff in Bancroft, Kemptville, and Pembroke. OFAH Zone F has made enquiries as to the status of the 10-year review of the Land Use Plan (LUP).

OFAH Zone F has completed its strategic plan for the next five years. 1st Vice Chair, Kerry Coleman, authored and directed the process, which led to the creation of the plan, with help from Wendell Crosbie, Len Dickinson, Doug Huddle, Merrill Elliott, Jack McNamee, and Ed Giffin. The purpose of developing this plan is to give direction to the OFAH Zone F Executive to prioritize the actions that will best serve our clubs and membership.

OFAH Zone G Annual Report



Chair – Rob Hare

OFAH Zone G has enjoyed another successful year; our membership number has remained stable at approximately 10,500 members. Quarterly zone meetings are hosted by zone clubs at various locations throughout the zone. Our January meeting was hosted by the Canadian Croatian Hunters & Anglers Club in Mississauga. The guest speaker at the meeting was MNR's Operations Manager, Lake Ontario Management Unit, Colin Lake, who spoke about the state of the Lake Ontario fishery. The Islington Sportsmen's Club hosted our March meeting in Caledon. Eugene Bulizo was the guest speaker at that meeting, and spoke on bowhunting. Our August meeting was hosted by the Georgina Sportsmen's Alliance at District 3 of the York Regional Police. Emily Funnell and Wil Wegman were the guest speakers, and they spoke about a wild rice reintroduction project in Lake Simcoe. OFAH Zone G's Annual General Meeting was held in November and was hosted by the Ajax Rod and Gun Club. The guest speakers were Jon Clayton from the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, and Brian McRae, OFAH Zone/Member & Club Services Liaison. Jon spoke about the monitoring project for Brook Trout in the Credit River, and Brian spoke about the OFAH insurance program for member clubs.

This past year, our zone provided funding for a number of youth-related events, in conjunction with zone clubs. We assisted the Pickering Rod and Gun Club at the Uxbridge Huck Finn Day. This event has seen tremendous growth over the years, and has truly become a community event. This year, over 1,000 youth

participated in a one-day Brook Trout fishing event. In July, we also provided funding for a Family Fishing Event near Pefferlaw on Lake Simcoe. This event was hosted by the Pefferlaw Post, and the Georgina Sportsmen's Alliance provided assistance to over 500 youth. OFAH Zone G also provided funding for an MNR five-member Stewardship Ranger crew working out of the Aurora District. This crew worked on various conservation-related projects throughout the York Region during July and August. In cooperation with the Islington Sportsmen's Club, we reached a major milestone in 2012. This was the 20th year that our zone has operated a youth adventure camp at the Islington Sportsmen's property in the Caledon hills. For one week in July, 24 boys (in alternate years, girls attend this camp) had the opportunity to experience the great outdoors and learn a number of skills.

At last year's 84th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference, Phil Wilson was the recipient of the OFAH Zone G Wildlife Research Grant. Phil's research was on the habitat selection of long-tailed ducks overwintering in Lake Ontario.

Members of the OFAH Zone G Executive continue to work with head office on discharge bylaws in the Township of Uxbridge, City of Markham, and the Town of King City; and have also resolved an issue related to "no fishing" signs being posted on the Toronto waterfront. We are happy to report that the "no fishing" signs were removed. OFAH Zone G is looking forward to another year where we strive to save and protect from waste the natural resources of our country.

OFAH Zone H Annual Report



Chair – Wayne Forgrave

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

In 2012, the OFAH Zone H conservation awards went to the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association, the Dufferin Northern Peel Anglers & Hunters, and the Barrie District Hunters & Anglers Conservation Club.

In June, the 2nd Annual North Simcoe Youth Expo was hosted by the Barrie District Hunters and Anglers Conservation Club, and was attended by 75 boys and girls. Everyone had the opportunity to experience what Ontario has to offer in our great outdoors.

Once again, the Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular was a great success. The winning salmon weighed in at approximately 20 pounds, and the winning Rainbow Trout was approximately 15 pounds. The 2nd Annual Barrie Fall Fishing Festival, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Barrie-Huron and assisted by the Barrie District Hunters & Anglers Conservation Club, was also very successful. Any game fish qualified for daily prizes, while Perch were the targeted fish that were tagged for cash prizes ranging from \$500 – \$10,000.

The Highland Corporation has withdrawn its application to turn 4,300 acres of prime farmland into the Melancthon Mega Quarry, citing lack of government and public support.

The Springwater Provincial Park in Midhurst is slated to close as more MNR cutbacks take place. The park houses a mini zoo of Ontario birds of prey and wildlife, as well as many hiking and cross country ski trails. The public use this park extensively and are protesting its closure.

OFAH Zone H continues to fund worthy projects, some of which are:

- Friends of Hullett;
- Luther Marsh Junior Day;
- North Simcoe Youth Expo;
- OFAH Tackleshare;
- Grey Bruce Children's Water Festival;
- Envirothon;
- OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference;
- Grey County Youth Expo;
- Orillia Fish & Game Conservation Club Kid's Fishing Day;
- Lake Huron Fish & Game Tackleshare; and
- Barrie Junior Bass Masters.

OFAH Zone J Annual Report



Chair- Jim Greenwood

OFAH Zone J covers an area from Windsor to Oakville, with nearly 24,000 members and 180 affiliate OFAH clubs.

In 2012, upwards of 600 quarterly newsletters were sent by mail or in electronic format to our members and clubs. An upgraded website and the use of social media including Facebook and Twitter convey and disseminate information that, years ago, was unheard of. Technology has given us the tools to keep in touch on a regular basis. It is exciting to open our Facebook account and read the stories of hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and conservation activities across our zone.

In addition to holding member meetings in different parts of our zone, the OFAH Zone J Annual Youth Camp brings people together for an exciting weekend. Celebrating the 25th year in 2013, the Wellington Street Sportsmen's Club will be hosting the event at their club in Dorchester on June 7-9.

OFAH Zone J has been actively promoting hunting activities across the zone this past year. Representation on the Essex Region Conservation Authority Areas Advisory Committee, the St. Williams Conservation Reserve Community Council, and the Grand River Conservation Authority Hunting Liaison Committee have provided opportunities to advocate hunting, and to comment on land uses within their respective land holdings.

OFAH Zone J has continued to gain ground with adding municipalities allowing Sunday gun hunting. North Perth has recently been added.

At our OFAH Zone J membership meeting at the Greenwood Rod and Gun Club in St. Agatha, a donation of \$7,000 was made to the Grand River Conservation Authority Conestoga Hunting Area. The money, in collaboration with Ducks Unlimited, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and the Grand River Conservation Authority, will allow for habitat work on a 500-acre property managed for hunting.

Fisheries matters in our zone, both inland and offshore, continue to raise concerns. Water quality, introduction of exotic species, commercial and recreational uses are just some of the many issues to which OFAH Zone J has input.

Changes in federal and provincial legislation will have significant impact on our resources and our recreational uses of them.

The federal Acts including Fisheries, Navigable Waters Protection, and Environmental Assessments, and provincial Acts under the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and the Ministry of Environment (MOE), have been weakened significantly.

Clearly, development sanctioned by the government will have less scrutiny, since there will be minimal federal oversight (enforcement) and selective provincial enforcement. What is happening is the downsizing of resources (staff and funding), and streamlining legislation to the detriment of environmental protection.

On a positive note, the Randall Reef Toxic Waste Containment project is moving forward in an effort to delist Hamilton Harbour as an area of concern. This project will, in time, reduce the toxin

loading in fish and improve habitat conditions in the harbour.

Water issues were a serious consideration this past summer with near drought conditions. Our smaller creeks and river tributaries were nearly dry. Stage 2 water advisories from conservation authorities were in place for several weeks. Wildlife and fish were impacted, as fish moved to deeper waters, and wildlife resorted to obtaining moisture where they could find it, including vegetable and fruit crops.

Our habitat across the zone is rapidly being depleted. Small woodlots, forest edge, and windrows are continually being cut to increase productive farmland for grain crops. Pastureland that held large numbers of mice and other rodents, typical food for coyote, fox, and aerial predators, are being turned into cropland. This is forcing wildlife to source for food elsewhere, including urban areas where municipalities are having to deal with human/wildlife conflicts.

Recent developments in our zone have caused concerns for our members and other residents. The recent removal of an eagle nest to allow for wind turbine development has angered many people who view this as a not so "green" environmentally friendly government initiative.

First Nation hunting at Pinery Provincial Park and Short Hills Provincial Park have raised questions as to why this has been allowed, and why non-natives were not given any opportunity.

OFAH Zone J is active, and I want to take this time to thank our members, clubs, and executive for the work they have done in keeping the conservation of our resources at the forefront. We also want to thank our OFAH Board of Directors, and head office staff in Peterborough for the outstanding job they do.

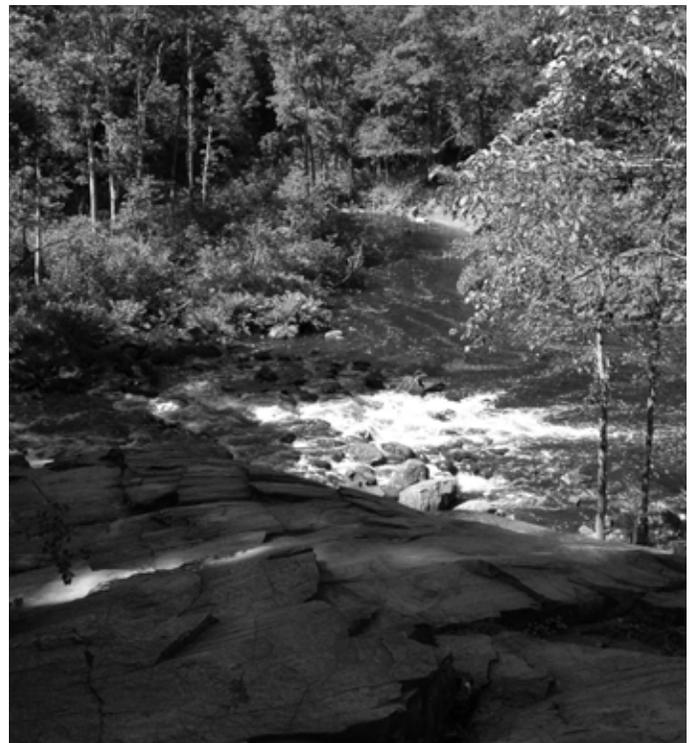


Photo: Ian Deslauriers

OFAH Agriculture Liaison Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Jim Magee

The OFAH Agriculture Liaison Advisory Committee continued to be a member of the Agriculture/Wildlife Conflict Working Group. All major farm organizations were involved, as well as the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), rural municipalities, Ontario Fur Managers Federation (OFMF), and the OFAH.

OMAFRA has asked Agri-Corp (the organization responsible for crop insurance) to survey farmers when reporting crop yields to estimate their losses to wildlife. To date, this is still ongoing, with no firm data to report.

OMAFRA has asked the OFMF and the OFAH to be proactive in controlling livestock predators, such as coyotes; the losses to livestock continue to escalate. Farmers try to be proactive in protecting their livestock, but only so much can be done against such a wily predator. One member of the advisory committee has a herd of cattle and has built a nine-wire hi-tensil electric fence and has three guard dogs, and still, coyotes have penetrated the herd.

The advisory committee has looked at the potential of organizing coyote hunting workshops. Two very successful workshops have been held in Manitoulin, and we could use them as models.

Some people have said this is an agriculture issue and the OFAH should not be involved. There are probably several good reasons to increase the hunting of coyotes:

- Research work in the upper portion of Michigan and South Carolina has shown coyotes to be major predators of deer. They may also be taking a large number of turkeys too;
- Coyotes can offer a new winter or off season hunting opportunity;

- A hunter willing to help a livestock farmer with predation problems could be opening a door to other hunting opportunities;
- Municipalities would appreciate coyote hunters to help where there is a predation problem; and
- Hunting will keep coyotes wary of humans.

All of the above are dependent on hunters who have the equipment and knowledge to effectively hunt coyotes.

OMAFRA is willing to help fund workshops, and there are enough qualified speakers available. The advisory committee would like to attempt three workshops for this coming fall and winter (2013-2014). We have looked at the areas where predation is the highest and believe that those areas would benefit the most. We have also considered videotaping the workshops so they could be shown at clubs and other venues. We will work together with the OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee for such workshops.

The agriculture community continues to be concerned about increasing numbers of species at risk. Too often, the regulation that comes with this punishes the landowner, and will not reward them for hosting these species. One of the drawbacks would be farmers not willing to increase wildlife habitat on their farms for fear that a species at risk is found or attracted to their property.

At their annual meeting in November, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) passed a resolution to lobby for the return of the spring bear hunt, due to increasing bear damage to agriculture. We would like to thank the members of the advisory committee and head office for their contributions.

OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Neil Wiens

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee members and head office staff for their selfless dedication and commitment to working on this advisory committee. Over the year, our work and reviews covered all of the big game species that we hunt throughout the Province of Ontario, and touched on a myriad of topics that were important for the continued conservation of all of these species, and to ensure our continued ability to maintain access to harvestable portions of the populations.

Bear

Completion of the Barbed Wire Hair Trap program by the MNR and analysis of the data have resulted in a ball park figure for bear populations across the province's Wildlife Management Units (WMUs). Provincially, the population of bears stands at approximately 95,000. State of the Resource reports for individual units have been completed, and we continue to push the MNR to

get stakeholders more involved with bear management. Now that the government has a baseline data set of population numbers for individual WMUs, we have discussed with the MNR the need for continued assessment and active management of this valuable resource. We have been advised that Regional and District offices of the MNR will do an annual assessment and harvest planning based on what the population objective is for each WMU. Recurring barbed wire hair traps will not be part of the program in the foreseeable future. Harvest statistics will be the guiding factor in determining what management actions will be taken each year. Tools for manipulating harvest are currently limited to quota adjustments for Bear Management Area (BMA) operators and the number, if any, of second seals that may be available for resident hunters.

Bear hunting license sales have remained relatively steady for the last three years, with 17,000 residents and 5,400 nonresidents participating in the hunt.

Bear Wise Program

The MNR discontinued the trap and relocation of problem bears, as well as other services formerly delivered under the province's Bear Wise program. In discontinuing the ineffective trapping and relocation of problem bears, the MNR will need to look at a more effective means of managing this valuable game species. The OFAH is unwavering in its position that a spring bear hunt is the most advantageous means of sustainably managing Ontario's bears. An early hunt assists in controlling problem bears (particularly males) by reducing their abundance and density in the spring and summer. The OFAH has a long and storied history of support for Ontario's spring black bear hunt, which was cancelled suddenly and without scientific rationalization in 1999. Since the cancellation, the province, as proven by its own data, has been dealing with an ever-increasing number of human/bear conflicts, and has attempted to address the problem through its Bear Wise program, with little success. The MNR is aware that public safety is a factor, with too many black bears on the landscape. MNR records show that prior to the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, there were fewer than 1,000 human/bear conflicts province wide, however by 2007, that number had risen to 12,700 reported incidents.

Deer

Throughout much of Ontario, deer numbers have declined from what were, in many WMUs, numbers deemed too high just a few short years ago. While those population peaks brought about new opportunities with extra seals and expanded hunts, now that population numbers are lower, there is a need to make sure that we continue to press the MNR to actively manage these ungulates. There are still populations of deer in areas of Ontario that continue to grow and expand, which makes this a challenge for both government and our Federation. We have had, and will continue to have, discussions with the MNR to maximize our hunting opportunities. We have reiterated our desire to maintain a fair sharing of the resource among our licensed hunters, and ensure that we are optimizing the use of the resource through our desire to see a review of the Controlled Deer Hunt program.

Elk

A second elk hunt was held in Ontario in 2012. Although the number of tags available for resident hunters remained the same as 2011, there was the addition of a second week to the season. There were a total of 70 tags to be issued (18 bulls and 52 cows). Interest in the hunt was still evident, although the number of applications to the draw dropped from 4,422 in 2011 to 2,727 in 2012. The total harvest was similar to 2011's hunt, with 23 animals being reported as taken by licensed hunters. Reports of crop damage declined after the first year's hunt, and elk herds in many of the problem areas broke up with animals dispersing over broader areas.

This advisory committee has been discussing potential solutions to nuisance elk issues that have surfaced in the North Shore elk release area. From the original release of 47 animals, the population estimate currently stands at between 155-200 elk. As this population has grown, there have been similar negative human-elk conflicts arising at an increasing rate, as was experienced in the Burwash area. The OFAH has representation on the elk subcommittee of the Economic Development Advisory Committee of the Municipality of Huron Shores, which is tasked with discussing potential solutions to elk-human conflicts.

Moose

As moose are the most intensely managed big game species in Ontario, we tend to spend a lot of time on discussions pertaining to this largest member of the deer family. Our involvement starts early with an in-depth review of the moose harvest planning that takes place for the annual tag allocation each year. Considering the compressed timeframe that is available before individual tag numbers are available in the "Hunting Summary" for review by the approximately 100,000 moose hunters in the province, we must thank all of our advisory committee members and other members of the OFAH Board of Directors who take the time and opportunity to sit on local wildlife committees in their respective MNR Districts to help get this stage of the planning right.

As budgets are constrained, it is clearly evident that our goal to keep the MNR holding to their commitment of three year rotating Moose Aerial Inventories (MAI) is heading down a slippery slope. Poor weather conditions over the last few winters have exacerbated the problem when scheduled flights are cancelled or cut short and not completed. For the winter of 2012/13, only six MAI's are on the books to be flown (not including the four WMU's that have a calf tag allocation). Focus of flights now and in the future will be in core moose range where hunting activity is highest.

We have had discussions with the MNR around our concerns about the Licensing Automated System (LAS) and the issue of access to surplus moose tags, considering the technical difficulties that seem to plague the government's telephone system when it is overwhelmed with calls from interested hunters.

The MNR has advised us that district offices are in the final stages of completing their State of the Resource Reports and population objectives for each WMU. To date, some of our discussions have revolved around how to get stakeholders involved with this next phase of consultation. There are some concerns around our committee table, and within the MNR, as to how we can best address the low calf component of herds in many of the northeastern WMUs, and what impact this will have on the management of this resource.

EBR Postings

An initiative of the OFAH to allow for the use of leashed dogs to track wounded game has gone through the requisite postings and is expected to be in the regulations for the 2013 hunting season. The EBR posting sought public response for the use of leashed dogs for the retrieval of big game in areas of the province where the use of dogs for hunting is not currently permitted. The OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee and the OFAH Board of Directors have endorsed this proposed regulation. We worked hard and are pleased to see that it is expected to go ahead.

Modernization of Approvals was another EBR posting that was brought to our advisory committee for discussion by the MNR. While the deciding factor for the MNR's position may be dictated by the need for fiscal relief, there are a number of places where our government seems to go over the top with their requirement for applications and documents of approval. The MNR is reviewing those instances where individuals are required to make an application and receive written approval for things that can be covered under common sense or a simple agreement to follow pre-approved rules and guidelines. Positive changes could include dealing with road kills for personal use, or having a wild game dinner.

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



Chair – Len Dickinson

In the spring of 2012, the OFAH Board of Directors made a decision to combine some of the advisory committees that dealt with similar issues, because as a united front it would be more appropriate to make recommendations. Therefore, a new advisory committee was formed to deal with bow hunting, muzzleloading, shooting sports, firearms safety and hunter education. The following are some of the items that have been discussed during the subsequent meetings.

Long Gun Registry

In keeping with his election promise, Prime Minister Harper's Conservative government successfully scrapped the long gun registry, and subsequently had the records destroyed for every province and territory, with the exception of Quebec who is challenging the government's right to do this; which is now before the courts. Firearms owners are reminded that the long gun registry was the only thing done away with and there is still the requirement for all firearms owners to have a valid firearms license (Possession Only License [POL] or Possession and Acquisition Licence [PAL]), and the requirement to register all restricted firearms is still in place.

United Nations (UN) Marking

In October, the government outlined its position, as required by parliament, pertaining to the marking of firearms. The Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee agreed to support the requirement for serial numbers to be marked on all firearms, but did not support the inclusion of markings indicating the country and year of import. The government announced the deferral of their response to the marking regulations until December 1, 2013.

Gun Show Regulations

It was great to hear that Public Safety Minister, Vic Toews, repealed the regulations for guns at shows. This legislation was introduced in 1998, but was never implemented. Appropriate safe storage and transportation regulations will continue, but the suggested regulations for guns at shows will not be implemented.

Municipal Discharge/Sunday Gun Hunting Bylaws

The OFAH continued to engage in discussions around 12 municipal discharge bylaws and Sunday gun hunting bylaws. Many of these bylaws are being updated due to new subdivisions being constructed, new land descriptions, etc. Details of any changes will be published in Ontario OUT OF DOORS as each result has been negotiated. We continued to make inroads on the number of southern municipalities that allow Sunday gun hunting to take place. Currently, 151 municipalities in southern Ontario allow Sunday gun hunting.

Hunter Education

In 2012, the Ontario Hunter Education Program, administered by the OFAH on behalf of the province, taught 21,300 students, an increase of 2,795 or 15% over 2011. This continued a trend of 11

consecutive years of growth.

After many years of growth, the Ontario Wild Turkey Hunter Education Program has started to see a decline in the number of students attending the half-day seminars. However, the new DVD program has experienced great growth. By the end of 2012, 6,510 DVD's were purchased and 3,597 had taken the tests had been taken.

Hunter Education Policy

Late in 2012, this advisory committee started to work on the development of a hunter education policy for consideration by the OFAH Board of Directors in 2013.

Disabled Hunter Policy

The advisory committee has been contacted to develop a policy for disabled hunters; however, the MNR is currently working on a revision to the hunting regulations in regard to hunters with disabilities. Once the MNR has completed their revisions, and we are able to see them, we will be in a better position to make recommendations and create our policy. Therefore, until we see the revisions, the advisory committee will not be able to comment and make recommendations.

Canadian Firearms Safety Course

Discussions have been ongoing with the Canadian Firearms Office (CFO) and the Firearms Safety Education Service of Ontario (FSESO) to update the Canadian Firearms Safety course and eligibility of students. The CFO and the FSESO created a policy that said a person must be 18 years of age to take the Canadian Restricted Firearms course and test; however, after a meeting between the CFO, the OFAH and the Canadian Shooting Sports Association (CSSA), we were able to convince the CFO, and subsequently the FSESO, that anyone who is 15 years of age should be allowed to take the course and test, as it is in line with current policy for getting a minor's permit to possess nonrestricted firearms. It is also being recommended that the Canadian Restricted Firearms course be reduced to eight hours, since there is so much duplication in the restricted and nonrestricted course that there is not enough material to cover in the mandatory 10 hours.

Fees for Canadian Firearms Licenses

As of September 17, the fee to obtain a restricted Possession and Acquisition License will be \$80 and, as of May 16, 2013, the fee to obtain a nonrestricted Possession and Acquisition License will be \$60.

The OFAH Firearms/Recreational Shooting/Hunter Education Advisory Committee is continuously working to keep ahead of all of the issues that are being brought up on a daily basis. Please take a minute and thank the members of this advisory committee for their dedication, and the insight that they have provided during the year.

OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Debbie Rivard

It has been an honor to chair the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee for the past year. At this time, I would like to thank all of the advisory committee members for their dedication and support.

The advisory committee consists of members of the OFAH Board of Directors representing OFAH zones across Ontario, and science advisors who offer a tremendous amount of expertise and guidance. Many of these members also sit on one or more of the Ministry of Natural Resources' Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) Councils as OFAH representatives. In 2012, the advisory committee continued to make numerous recommendations on fisheries issues to the OFAH Board of Directors.

During the past year, the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee discussed many important fisheries topics ranging in scale from local and regional issues (e.g. FMZs) to fundamental changes in how our fish and fisheries are managed across the province and country in these challenging times of government cutbacks, access limitations to fishing opportunities, and increasing threats to our fisheries (e.g. development, invasive species, etc.).

Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) Councils

Advisory councils have been established in FMZs 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, and 20. We are still waiting on the MNR to form councils for FMZs 7, 8, 15 and 16. The OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee commits a considerable amount of time at each meeting to hear reports from committee members who serve as representatives on FMZ Councils. In addition to information updates, the advisory committee discusses some FMZ Council issues in greater detail to provide OFAH representatives and staff with additional guidance for future FMZ Council meetings or public consultations. The time dedicated to FMZ Council updates and discussions at advisory committee meetings has proven to be extremely beneficial in providing OFAH representatives an opportunity to share their Council experiences, and discuss similar fisheries issues. Due to the large volume of fisheries topics covered by the advisory committee, I will only highlight those that resulted in significant discussions during the past year.

Some of the FMZ Council discussions included Northern Pike size limits in FMZs 4 and 5, proposed regulation changes for Bass and Lake Trout in FMZ 10, Lake Trout in FMZ 11, the proposed extension of the Bass seasons in FMZs 17, 18 and 20, and a reduction in the Rainbow Trout sportfish limit to two and a conservation limit of one in FMZ 20.

Lake Huron and Lake Superior are in the process of formulating a stocking plan (fish stocking is an annual topic of discussion for the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee). Members are encouraged to request local or district stocking plans from their local MNR, and provide input to ensure that stocking reflects angler desires.

Lake Huron Lake Trout rehabilitation was also discussed. There are concerns that the MNR's proposed Lake Trout Rehabilitation Plan will come at the expense of other species, including naturalized species such as Chinook Salmon, Rainbow Trout, and

Brown Trout.

An MNR proposal to stock Black Crappie in select FMZ 15 lakes was discussed by the advisory committee. We acknowledged the MNR's interest in diversifying angling opportunities in FMZ 15, but raised concerns related to introducing Black Crappie outside of its historical range, because of the known impacts to native fish species (e.g. Walleye).

The FMZ 17 Advisory Council hosted a Walleye workshop at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre. It was attended by 43 members of the public, as well as guest speakers. Feedback from the workshop was positive and the Council will review proposals for future workshops.

An FMZ 20 Advisory Council workshop was held in Picton. Representatives from other Great Lakes (FMZs 9, 13, 14 and 19) attended to discuss Great Lakes fishery management issues such as multi-line regulations.

The potential for reopening a Lake Herring fishery in Lake Simcoe has been discussed periodically by the advisory committee during the past few years. The Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee continues to seek greater explanation from the MNR on why a recreational Lake Herring fishery cannot be reopened at this time. The MNR will not open a season with only two good year classes in the lake, but has committed to initiate a process to attempt to model the Lake Herring population in Lake Simcoe, which could be used by the Lake Simcoe Management Committee to determine when a sustainable recreational fishery could return.

Commercial Fisheries

OFAH Zone D has expressed concerns with the decline in the Walleye population on Lake Nipissing over the past few years, due to the commercial gill net fishery on the lake. The OFAH was asked to review a report commissioned by the MNR on the status of Lake Nipissing Walleye, and to provide comments. The OFAH concluded that Walleye populations in Lake Nipissing have suffered dramatic declines over the past decade due to the unregulated commercial gill net fishery. The OFAH declined an invitation to participate on a stakeholder advisory committee exclusively devoted to Lake Nipissing recreational fishing, that did not address the real problem of the unregulated commercial gill net harvesting. Lake Nipissing recreational anglers have already experienced shorter open water and winter seasons, lower creel limits, and a protected slot size. As of January 1, 2013, the creel for recreational anglers will once again be reduced from a four to a two fish limit. No new regulatory measures have been taken to regulate the commercial gill net fishery on Lake Nipissing.

Other commercial fisheries have been brought to the attention of the advisory committee including operations on Lake of the Woods.

A joint meeting between the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee and the OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee was held to discuss common issues related to fisheries.

Fisheries Act Changes

The advisory committee discussed the changes to the federal Fisheries Act, with a specific focus on what the changes will mean for the protection of fisheries values in Ontario.

MNR Fisheries Policy

The MNR Fisheries Policy Section staff attended parts of two advisory committee meetings to provide updates on relevant fisheries management topics, as well as receive feedback on FMZ Councils, and other fisheries policy issues. This included an update on the success of the MNR's Fish On-Line tool that has information available for 13,000-plus lakes.

OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Roy Polsky

The OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee has representation from all OFAH zones. The advisory committee deals with many issues which are also relevant to other committees, such as the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee and the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee.

One issue that never seems to go away is access. Although most access issues are dealt with in forest management plans, amendments to the plans occur throughout the implementation phase.

Some of the issues that the committee dealt with during the course of the year were:

The Temagami Land Use Plan (TLUP)

- A minor amendment to redesignate 29 management areas from “general use” to “enhanced management areas” to capture the intent of the TLUP;

Wolf Lake Forest Reserve

- Arguments were made that it should be disentangled and removed from forest reserve status; the EBR was posted in 2011. With substantial media coverage and a public campaign objecting to the status removal, a policy decision was issued to reject the proposed amendment and keep the forest reserve status;

The White River Mining Road

- The OFAH was not opposed to the road being built, but had concerns that the road would be gated, thereby preventing access for hunting and fishing. The MNR rendered a decision that the road be built as originally proposed, and gated;

McLaughlin Bay Restoration Project

- There was concern expressed to the MNR and the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority about the potential loss of hunting and fishing opportunities if some of the proposed restoration activities were undertaken;

Kawarthas, Naturally Connected

- The OFAH is involved in the natural heritage planning process to identify and set ecological targets and areas with natural and historical values. The final planning meeting was held in November and dealt with the restoration of land to the ideal

Additional topics and issues addressed were:

- reviewing current fisheries policies;
- Lake Erie percid management;
- Great Lakes Protection Act;
- Ontario's Great Lakes Strategy;
- Asian Carp prevention;
- Navigable Waters Protection Act;
- Waterpower Class EA Amendment; and
- National Conservation Plan.

distribution of forest cover, species distribution, water quality, etc. The project will be moving into the implementation phase in 2013. The OFAH has requested to remain engaged;

Melanchton Mega Quarry

- Due to the lack of public support and widespread opposition to the quarry, the Highland Corporation withdrew its application. The quarry would have encompassed approximately 2,300 acres and would have been excavating 200 feet below the water table;

Madawaska Highlands Land Use Plan

- The MNR has indicated that the 10-year plan review is on hold until the Algonquin land claim is settled. There are a few Land Use Permit (LUP) holders that have issues due to access restriction, as they are not able to access their camps. The MNR will not review options for some form of access, and the LUP holders asked the OFAH for their support to deal with this matter. The OFAH is working with the LUP holders to try to resolve this issue;

Copeland Forest

- The forest is under MNR ownership and the Couchiching Conservancy wants to set up an advisory board from various user groups to facilitate how to manage the land. The OFAH has zone representation;

Crown Land Use Atlas Harmonization Project

- The project was put on hold during last year's provincial election and was stalled again until the new Minister of Natural Resources was briefed. He had indicated that the project should move forward. Consultation with First Nations must occur before proceeding to stage four public consultations.

Woodland Caribou

- The OFAH has grave concerns with the proposed recovery strategy plan. Of the nine herds identified in Ontario, five are self-sustaining, two are likely not as self-sustaining, and two are not self-sustaining. The latter two have been grouped into “not self-sustaining,” which has an impact on land use and access;

Public Hunting Opportunities Database

- A preliminary report by the OFAH identified 214 areas and the project is still ongoing;

Crown Land Use Policy Atlas Guide

- OFAH head office has set up a guide to help users navigate this MNR web browser. They have distributed over 130 guides to OFAH members to assist in searching for Crown land for hunting and fishing opportunities. The guide is available by contacting the OFAH;

Hunting on Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) Land

- Only traditional users had access to the land this fall, but plans will be implemented for 2013 to allow access for OFAH members;

Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Road Issues

- The MTO is now removing road access points (when upgrading highways) without proper notification and a chance for public consultation, unless a permit fee has been paid to maintain access. The advisory committee recommended that

the OFAH meet with the MNR and the MTO to deal with the issue of road access removal from highways, and establish a proper protocol for access removal;

MNR Parks Closure Decisions

- Due to cost cutting and low attendance, the MNR has slated 10 parks for closure to overnight camping. Due to public outcry, the MNR will review its decision on two to four of the parks; and

OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee Policy

- The advisory committee has reviewed the land use policy, and revisions were made to bring the policy up to date. The policy was submitted to and approved by the OFAH Board of Directors.

I would like to acknowledge and thank OFAH head office staff for their help, guidance, and assistance in dealing with these issues. I would also like to thank the members of the advisory committee for their time and dedication.

OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Gerry Haarmeyer

The OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee consisted of Chair, Gerry Haarmeyer, Vice Chair, Ed Giffin, and members, Felix Delongchamp, Jack Doherty, Wes Brown, John Sullivan, and Shirley Giffin. These individuals, as well as head office staff, spent many hours on complex files in attempts to get our OFAH message heard by federal and provincial governments in their dealings regarding native issues, and how they affect conservation, fishing and hunting, fair sharing, and Crown land use. Everyone on this committee is to be commended for their dedication, hard work and belief in a fair and equitable resource sharing arrangement, and I would like to thank them personally.

The major file on the agenda for 2012 was been the Algonquin Land Claim, and the input that we provided to the provincial and federal negotiators who were working toward an Agreement-in-Principle regarding the land claim with the Algonquins. We proposed a number of core principles for consideration in the AIP including: a definition of conservation; fair sharing of resources; designated species; a management plan for Algonquin Park; cooperative vs. comanagement of resources; and full public consultation. We had major misgivings about the process. The general public was not consulted and we insisted that public consultation should have occurred prior to the release of the draft AIP. To this end, we used *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine to get the message out to the public to make them aware of the issues and get them involved. OFAH President, Bill Blackwell, and Executive Director, Angelo Lombardo, wrote about this claim process on numerous occasions. In spite of our best efforts, the draft AIP was released mid-December, just before Christmas, with very little, if any, attention drawn to it. The AIP does not appear to consider today's anglers, hunters, and Crown land users in any favorable way, so we urge you to participate in the upcoming public consultation opportunities. Your future use of these resources in the claim area

may depend on it.

For the draft AIP and background information on the claim, go to: www.aboriginalaffairs.gov.on.ca/english/negotiate/algonquin/preliminary-draft-aip.asp.

The advisory committee also stayed current on the Stanjikoming First Nation file in northwestern Ontario, as well as the Cape Croker file in Lake Huron. We reviewed and fine tuned our OFAH Native Affairs policy, and resubmitted it to the OFAH Board of Directors for approval in December, where it was accepted.

The OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee and our advisory committee met regarding the Lake Nipissing Walleye fishery collapse, and the impact the native gill net fishery has on the population, as well as our concern over expanding exploitation of Walleye in other lakes in the area. This is an area of major concern, as the recreational angler is forced to take reduced limits while the commercial fishery is left untouched. This file will be kept active by both advisory committees.

In December, the advisory committee was informed of a new case in the Ontario Federal Court where the seven Williams Treaty First Nations are seeking to reestablish their traditional fishing and hunting rights with the support of the federal and provincial governments. This decision flies in the face of the 1994 Supreme Court of Canada's decision in the Howard case, in which the OFAH was a major player, and a subsequent refusal by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1996 to rehear the case. In both those instances, the Supreme Court ruled that those rights had in fact been extinguished. This file promises to be a major issue for the OFAH in the year ahead.

We are following this issue closely, and are seeking legal opinion on our possible involvement in this matter.

OFAH Past Presidents Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Rob Hare

For the past two and a half years, in consultation with the OFAH Board of Directors, head office staff, and our legal counsel, the Past Presidents Advisory Committee has been reviewing the OFAH Constitution and Bylaws.

This review was undertaken as a matter of due diligence, to ensure that our constitution and bylaws were kept current.

Some of the proposed amendments are merely housekeeping in nature, while other proposed amendments are required to assist in

defining and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the OFAH Executive Committee, the OFAH Board of Directors and officials, as well as head office staff, as they conduct business on behalf of the OFAH.

At this time, I would like to thank the past presidents, the OFAH Board of Directors, members of our head office staff, and our legal counsel, for all of the long hours and extremely hard work they put into reviewing the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws.

OFAH Resolutions Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Glenn Rivard

In 2011, a draft resolution was passed by the membership of OFAH Zone F to create a land trust fund.

In 2012, OFAH zones brought the resolution forward to their respective zones to be voted on by their membership at a zone meeting.

The resolution was approved by all OFAH zones and then brought before the OFAH Board of Directors at their April 2012 meeting,

where it received final approval.

It is now OFAH policy, and an OFAH Fish and Wildlife Land Trust Fund has been established to help purchase fish and wildlife habitat and access for hunting, angling, and other recreational pursuits.

OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair - Jim Greenwood

Habitat loss continues to be one of the greatest threats to wildlife. Land use in southern Ontario is changing, which directly impacts wildlife habitat. The value of agricultural land has risen in recent years to \$8,000/acre and, in some areas, to more than \$12,000/acre. We are seeing the removal of small woodlots, forest edges, and windrows, as well as pasture lands being converted to expand crops (grain in particular).

As cities and towns expand their boundaries, surrounding wildlife habitat is further reduced. Coyotes in particular seem to be able to adapt easily to land disturbances and have become increasingly more common on the landscape. Wildlife/human conflicts will likely continue as a result of land use changes. Annual livestock depredation claims to OMAFRA are in the millions.

In September, the OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee made a recommendation to the OFAH Board of Directors to have OFAH staff draft a letter to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), requesting the MNR to develop a proposal to add licenced small game hunters to the Class of Agents for protection of property, as outlined in the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (FWCA). I am pleased to report that a letter was sent to the MNR on this matter.

In addition, the OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee has given their support to the OFAH Agriculture Liaison Advisory Committee to develop coyote hunting workshops. The idea behind these workshops is to provide information to those interested in hunting coyotes more efficiently and effectively. In the Leeds and Grenville area, a Relaxing Cable Restraint Pilot Project was initiated to assess the effectiveness of using relaxing cable restraints to capture coyotes involved in livestock depredation, and the impact the device may have on non target species (e.g. deer, dogs, etc.). The successful implementation of this project relies heavily on the dedicated time and effort contributed by volunteer licenced trappers. This project will be completed in the spring of 2013.

Given that the MNR has no current information on hunting efforts or hunting success for small game species, it would be beneficial to see some form of a survey, whether it is a postcard-type or an electronic version, conducted periodically in all wildlife management units to gain insight from hunters. Perhaps it would be possible to incorporate some questions on the big game surveys already in place. The committee will explore this further in 2013.

We were pleased to see the picture of an Ontario falconer on the cover of the 2012 Hunting Regulations Summary. We continue to support the ongoing efforts of the Ontario Hawking Club in promoting the practice of this valued hunting tradition in Ontario. We would also like to recognize the Ontario Deer Hounds Association (ODHA) for their continued work in providing temporary shelters for lost hounds during the two week gun season in areas where the use of hunting dogs is permitted. This initiative began in 2001, and the ODHA provides shelter, food, and water for

hunting dogs lost during the hunt. Hunters can check the shelters for their lost dog, or they may be contacted by the shelter through information on the dog's tag.

Lastly, I would like to thank the advisory committee members and head office staff for their support.

OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Birds Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Scott Petrie

The OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Bird Advisory Committee consists of the following members: Scott Petrie, Jim Greenwood, John Sullivan, Kerry Coleman, Roy Polsky, and Clark Boyd. Our advisory committee was involved with a number of migratory bird- and wetland-related issues in 2012. A brief update pertaining to the most important issues is provided below.

Waterfowl Heritage Days (WHD)

Waterfowl Heritage Days (WHD) provided youth (12-18 years of age) with the opportunity to hunt waterfowl with a mentor prior to the regular waterfowl season. In 2010, the OFAH and Long Point Waterfowl proposed to the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) that Ontario establish Waterfowl Heritage Days during the weekend prior to the regular waterfowl opening season in each of the districts. This was approved and Ontario held its first annual Waterfowl Heritage Day in September 2012, which was a great success, and many OFAH youth members look forward to participating again in 2013.

Proposal to Reinstate Mourning Dove Hunting in Ontario

The OFAH and Long Point Waterfowl have been promoting a mourning dove season in Ontario for many years. In response, the CWS completed an extensive Mourning Dove Population and Harvest Assessment Report. The main conclusion of that report was that the breeding population is expected to produce a fall-flight that can accommodate anticipated harvest with minimal impact. As such, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), the OFAH and the CWS affirmed that they do not have concerns about the ability to hunt mourning doves sustainably in Ontario. In 2011, a Notice of Intent to implement a mourning dove hunting season was included in the CWS December Regulatory report. A mourning dove hunting season proposal has since been included in the 2012 CWS Regulatory report. If approved, mourning dove hunting seasons will open in the central and southern districts of Ontario in September 2013.

It was agreed that season length (70 days) and daily bag (15) limit would follow the current United States Eastern Management Unit season framework, but the season start date would not. It was agreed that the season opener would be concurrent with the early Canada goose season opener because it makes the regulations simpler for hunters and enforcement, and it would be after the Labour Day holiday weekend. It was agreed that the mourning

dove season would commence on the same day as the early Canada goose season in the central and southern hunting districts, and would close 70 days later. The possession limit would follow the standard practice in Ontario of three times the daily bag limit.

Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) Proposal to Implement International Harvest Strategy for American Black Ducks

The CWS has proposed that the International Harvest Strategy be used to set black duck harvest regulations. At the recent Ontario Waterfowl Advisory Committee meeting the CWS, the MNR, and the OFAH agreed that the harvest of black ducks in Ontario is currently below the moderate regulatory package (i.e. harvest neutral scenario) and, therefore, liberalizing the hunting regulations for black ducks to 107 days with a daily bag limit of two birds in the southern hunting district and four birds in the central, northern, and Hudson-James Bay hunting districts is warranted. If the proposal is accepted (consultation period until February 28), these regulatory changes will take place in the fall of 2013.

Sales of Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permits in Ontario

Sales of migratory game bird hunting permits in Ontario peaked in 1978 at 159,698. Since 1978, there has been a consistent decline in permit sales, with only 53,164 sold in 2005. Fortunately, permit sales have been increasing since that time; 56,305 permits were sold in 2011. Increased sales could be attributed to Sunday waterfowl hunting and other increased opportunities to hunt waterfowl within the province.

During 2013, 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 and 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, 2012, 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, 2012. We expressed a qualified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated February 27, 2013 (see below).

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. 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, 2012.

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, 2012 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, 2012.

The misstatement of the audited financial statements is described in our qualified audit opinion in our report dated February 27, 2013. 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, 2012, and its results of operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

McColl Turner LLP

Licensed Public Accountants

Peterborough, Ontario
February 27, 2013

THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS INCORPORATED
Year Ended December 31, 2012

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2012	2011
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 1,339,850	\$ 1,582,507
Investments	1,951,074	2,280,524
Accounts receivable	1,567,568	1,677,124
Inventory	318,270	315,170
Prepaid expenses	<u>412,853</u>	<u>511,619</u>
	5,589,615	6,366,944
	<u>2,975,443</u>	<u>3,110,769</u>
LAND, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT	<u>\$ 8,565,058</u>	<u>\$ 9,477,713</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 603,464	\$ 622,948
Deferred revenue	<u>1,411,269</u>	<u>2,140,430</u>
	<u>2,014,733</u>	<u>2,763,378</u>
NET ASSETS		
Invested in land, buildings and equipment	2,975,443	3,110,769
Internally restricted	408,618	418,362
Unrestricted	<u>3,166,264</u>	<u>3,185,204</u>
	6,550,325	6,714,335
	<u>\$ 8,565,058</u>	<u>\$ 9,477,713</u>

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

	2012	2011
REVENUE		
Membership fees	\$ 3,427,927	\$ 3,312,944
Program fees	2,925,471	2,434,298
OOD magazine revenues	3,826,822	3,641,634
Sales	272,165	307,767
Fundraising	1,305,343	1,388,934
Donations	811,118	893,696
Interest and investment income	67,971	75,650
Solar panel revenues	<u>29,041</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>12,665,858</u>	<u>12,054,923</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Salaries and employee costs	1,914,038	1,721,102
Membership	2,127,399	2,106,042
Programs, public information and education	2,758,038	2,365,130
OOD magazine expenses	3,517,636	3,336,023
Office, general and professional	765,885	807,950
Cost of sales	300,702	330,315
Legal/policy	24,392	21,350
Informational programs	14,500	20,792
Fundraising	1,104,162	1,252,680
Amortization	303,116	294,676
Amortization of OOD trademark, lists and contracts	<u>-</u>	<u>100,000</u>
	<u>12,829,868</u>	<u>12,356,060</u>
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURES OVER REVENUE	<u>\$ (164,010)</u>	<u>\$ (301,137)</u>



Good news on three fronts!

Bill Blackwell

President

Late this summer, we were blindsided when Shaw Media/Global Television informed us that the network was dropping all hunting programming by the end of the year, including the award winning Angler and Hunter Television (AHTV).

Global was willing to make one concession: drop the hunting portion of the program and carry on with a fishing only show. Clearly, this was never an option, as it would compromise our integrity and insult our viewers, supporters and sponsors.

Despite the bad news, OFAH was determined to see AHTV continue to air in 2013 and beyond. After a flurry of negotiations, I am delighted to announce that effective January 2013 (date and time to be announced), AHTV will have a new broadcasting partner, and appear nationally on Outdoor Life Network (OLN).

I want to thank our loyal members and viewers for their outpouring of support. As soon as word of the cancellation got out, we were flooded with calls and emails from people asking what they could do to help. Dozens of supporters wrote to Global to protest the decision, including some who don't hunt and fish themselves but enjoy the conservation message the program delivers.

OFAH takes pride in being the voice of our 100,000 members, supporters and subscribers. We've been especially vocal over the badly flawed long gun registry for non-restricted rifles and shotguns, which we were thrilled to see abolished earlier this year. Bill C-19 not only scrapped the registry, but provided for the destruction of all the records associated with it.

On November 1, 2012, the federal Minister of Public Safety confirmed that, with the exception of the Province of Quebec, which is challenging the federal government in court over the destruction of its records, all of the data in the previous long gun registry for non-restricted rifles and shotguns for the rest of Canada has been destroyed. This ensures that no future government can simply resurrect the system and use it to target legal, law abiding hunters and recreational sport shooters. It's been a long battle, but one that was well worth the fight, and we applaud the Harper government for following through on their commitment to the outdoor community.

Speaking of commitment, for several years the OFAH has been urging the federal government to become more visibly involved in supporting hunting, fishing and trapping in Canada. In May, the OFAH, along with almost two dozen major partners from the outdoor community across North America, hosted the first-ever National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress in Ottawa. In addition to the long list of fish and wildlife experts from Canada and the U.S. who spoke at the Congress, Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered the keynote address. In his remarks, he spoke about the importance of heritage activities such as hunting and fishing, and announced the creation of a Canadian Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel designed to provide advice to the federal government on a wide range of issues impacting fish and wildlife conservation in Canada.

The Panel, which reports to the federal Minister of the Environment, met for the first time on October 5 and developed an impressive list of future issues to tackle. The OFAH is pleased to have a seat on the Panel, and strongly believes it will ensure that the federal government continues to recognize and be heavily involved in issues of importance to the outdoor community across Canada.

Since this is my last column of 2012, I want to wish you all a safe and successful hunting season. Thank you for your continued support of the OFAH and happy holidays.

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

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MNR cuts take a slice out of fish & wildlife programs

Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

When the Province of Ontario presented its budget in March 2012, it was clear that government ministries would be expected to show restraint in terms of future spending. Accordingly, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) announced it would be cutting \$50 million to address budget shortfalls, and \$20 million to help reduce the province's overall deficit over the next three years. Since that time, the OFAH has been asking the MNR for details on how these cuts would roll out and, more importantly, how it would affect fish and wildlife programs. The answers, however, have been slow in coming.

As part of the budget process, the government also announced a slew of legislative changes that are of interest to the OFAH. Included among these are the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act, the Public Lands Act, the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act which, according to the MNR, "would allow a reduction in the number of various authorizations and licences that are currently required and instead allow the ministry to set standards which individuals or organizations would need to meet." At this time the impact is still unknown.

The financial fallout from the budget started in May, when the MNR quietly announced changes to the Bear Wise Program. It's unfortunate that the government spent millions of dollars on a badly-flawed program to control the bear population, money that could have been better spent on other programs that have already been cut, or will be cut as a result of this budget. If they had listened to the OFAH and reinstated an early season bear hunt, the money wasted on the Bear Wise Program could have been directed to fish and wildlife programs that actually work.

In September, we started to get a better idea of how the cuts would roll out on the ground when the MNR released its transformation plan. A number of Ontario Parks in the north will be closed, reminders to renew outdoor cards will no longer be sent to individual outdoor card holders, which may result in involuntary noncompliance and a loss of funding to the Special Purpose Account; funding to partnership programs will be cut; and structural and financial changes to the stewardship program will occur.

For example, 45 percent of the funding for the Community Fish and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) has been slashed, which will result in the cancellation of hundreds of volunteer-driven community-based conservation projects. CFWIP has proven to be one of the most successful partnership programs, which operates on a cost-sharing basis and involves more than 35,000 volunteers who spend over 200,000 hours getting their hands dirty with 600 on-the-ground projects such as stream restoration, fish stocking, tree planting, erosion control, and spawning bed and fish ladder construction. CFWIP also helps to leverage millions more in funding from other sources.

Cuts to on-the-ground programs, limitations on access to ministry people and resources, and reductions in service delivery strike at the heart of what the MNR is supposed to be about. The bottom line is that we don't want to see any of the province's fish and wildlife programs jeopardized in any way, shape or form, simply to save a buck, when some other government departments are being asked to do less.

We will continue to seek answers, and keep our members informed as we hear more. At stake is the future of our valuable natural resources, something on which we are not willing to compromise.

Don't forget...

My video blog is online at www.ofah.org/angeloblog. Stay tuned for the latest updates on issues that affect OFAH.



Challenges we face

Bill Blackwell

President

As President of the largest, non profit conservation-based organization in Ontario, I was shocked to hear from Shaw Media/Global Television that Angler and Hunter TV and all other hunting programs were being dropped from the network. Hunting is part of our Canadian heritage, and is recognized as such through legislation both provincially and federally. Hunters donate more than one million hours annually to conservation and projects designed to maintain and improve wildlife habitat. In Ontario, the revenue generated through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses pays for almost 70 percent of all fish and wildlife programs. Through controlled wildlife harvesting, hunters also help maintain the balance between wildlife numbers and habitat.

It's absurd that a popular network that reaches nearly 100% of Canadians would drop successful shows that attract more than one million viewers each week. In fact, at the 2011 OFAH Annual General Meeting, the National Sales Manager of Shaw Media/Global Television made the following remarks: "We are thrilled to have this type of programming on our station. The message that anglers and hunters are putting out there about conservation, each day it's becoming more and more important. The audience is so vast, it's not just for your serious anglers and hunters, it captures a very broad audience." So the question remains, what changed?

When Shaw/Global announced their decision, the OFAH wrote to the CEO of Shaw Media asking for an explanation. To date, we have not had the courtesy of a reply. Despite the curve ball we've been thrown, AHTV will continue to broadcast on Shaw Media/Global Television until the end of the year. We also owe it to our viewers, our supporters and our sponsors to ensure that AHTV continues to air across the country. The OFAH, producer of AHTV, is moving forward and working with potential network partners on a deal that will see a twenty year tradition of broadcasting AHTV continue in 2013 and beyond.

Another major challenge facing us this fall is the ongoing negotiation around the Algonquin Land claim in eastern Ontario. Covering an area of 36,000 square kilometres (14,000 square miles), the claim area is home to roughly 8,000 Algonquin and 1.4 million non-aboriginal residents. Negotiations have been dragging on since the early 1990's, but over the last two years, the pace has picked up considerably. All three parties at the table, Ontario, Canada and the Algonquin, are suggesting that an Agreement in Principle (AIP), the preliminary step towards a final treaty, may be ready for signing by spring. Throughout the negotiations, the OFAH, the Canadian Sport Fishing Industry Association (CSIA) and a diverse group of other organizations representing everyone from cottage owners, hunt camps, municipalities, tourist operators and others impacted by the claim, have been engaged in discussions with both levels of government and, in some cases, the Algonquin themselves, to ensure that our voices are heard, and that the interests of our members and residents throughout the area of the claim are considered.

The greatest stumbling block has been the province's reluctance to hold full scale public consultations BEFORE the AIP is signed; something that the OFAH and others have been requesting for a long time. Given the impact that the claim may have on the lives and livelihoods of 1.4 million non-aboriginals in the area of the claim, the government has an obligation to consult the public. So far, they have been long on talk, but short on action when it comes to the promised broad scale public consultation.

In the 1990's, negotiations over the Mississauga land claim in the Blind River area involved a three month public consultation process with regional residents, local residents, private property owners and commercial operators. This included a public information centre, four open houses in affected communities, independent meetings between negotiators and groups, presentations to local citizens and frequent mailings and updates. None of this has occurred in connection with the Algonquin claim, despite pressure from the OFAH and other stakeholders. This begs the question, why not? Those who live, work and recreate in the area of the claim deserve nothing less.



We need Crown land access for fishing and hunting

Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

For anglers and hunters, the word access means opportunity. Unfortunately, our access to high quality fishing and hunting opportunities has become increasingly threatened in recent years. The closure of forest access roads on Crown land, the elimination of public hunting areas by municipalities and conservation authorities and the absence of well-maintained boat launches are only a few of the issues that impede access for fishing and hunting. Although the specific challenges we face may differ depending on where you fish and hunt in the province, limited access to high quality fishing and hunting opportunities remains an important issue and core priority for the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

The slogan "Access Denied" may hit a little too close to home for many anglers and hunters in Ontario. This was the theme of recent postcard and bumper sticker campaigns initiated by your Federation to draw public and political attention to diminishing Crown forest access. Between 1996 and 2008, we lost almost 12,000 kilometres of forest access roads in Ontario. It is alarming to think of how many more roads may have been lost since 2008.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) often cites a lack of funding for road maintenance, liability concerns, caribou habitat management, and protection of ecologically sensitive areas as some of the primary justifications for road closures. However, road closures for the purpose of protecting remote tourism values is arguably the most contentious issue in much of northern Ontario.

The Crown Land Use Atlas Harmonization (CLUAH) project was initiated six years ago by the MNR in an attempt to reduce the number of conflicts between road-based recreationalists and remote tourism operators in the Wawa District. The OFAH believes that the overly restrictive measures to protect the value of "remoteness" have come at the expense of road-based recreation. The OFAH submitted a series of recommendations with the intention to increase the quantity and quality of opportunities for road-based recreation, while maintaining an adequate level of protection for remote tourism in the MNR's Wawa District. Our positions represent a balance of the various needs and desires of OFAH members who enjoy remote recreation opportunities, and those anglers, hunters, trappers and other Crown forest users who rely on an accessible network of forestry roads for outdoor recreation.

The OFAH recommended that the current three kilometre "motorized access restriction" or "buffer" surrounding a remote tourism lake should be reduced to one kilometre and only apply where a tourist operator has an active Land Use Permit. We also recommended that motorized access restrictions should not extend beyond the peak summer tourism operating season (i.e. June 1 – August 31), therefore eliminating the current road closures during the first two weeks of the moose hunt. We recommended that signs should replace physical barriers (e.g. gates and berms) to enable motorized access to other lakes or hunting areas on the remaining road network beyond the buffer. There is a current forestry prescription that locates the construction of new roads at least two kilometres from a tourism lake in the Wawa District. In combination with this forestry prescription, our recommendations to reduce the buffer to one kilometre or less, as well as to remove physical barriers on existing roads, should significantly increase opportunities for road-based fishing and hunting activities without compromising the value of remoteness. The CLUAH project has not yet been finalized and the OFAH remains actively involved in the process.

I have only highlighted a few of the OFAH recommendations, so please view our CLUAH submission in its entirety, along with other Crown land access information at www.ofah.org/hunting/access.

Access to Crown forests is an issue that the OFAH takes seriously. For decades, Crown land access issues have been a core priority for your Federation and we will continue to fight on your behalf to ensure anglers and hunters have access to Crown land fishing and hunting opportunities.



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Ready for the hunt with family and friends

Bill Blackwell

President

I can't begin to describe the feeling of excitement that I experience every September. As the summer season winds down, my favourite time of the year is just around the corner. I long for opening day of hunting season, whether it's flushing out a partridge on a sunny afternoon, or sighting in a moose in the crosshairs after sitting for hours in the cool fall air. We are fortunate to live in a province that offers a wide variety of hunting opportunities, from big game to waterfowl, something I'm looking forward to getting back into after a brief hiatus.

Perhaps what I enjoy most about getting out for a hunt is having my son Patrick as my faithful partner. After learning of the McCallum family, I am reminded of how important it is to pass on and treasure the traditions that go back generations. As you read on page 4, Harold McCallum was a lifelong angler, hunter, and conservationist whose greatest joy was to see his children and grandchildren share in his passion for the outdoors. Harold was a life member since 1988, but unfortunately passed away in November 2011. With a generous \$100,000 donation, countless people will learn about our proud outdoor heritage and perhaps make their own connection with our precious natural resources through Harold's gift.

From my own experience as a hunter education instructor for 32 years, it's rewarding to see the look on the faces of students who just received a passing grade, and to later hear about their successful hunt and overall experience. The Ontario Hunter Education Program (OHEP), administered by the OFAH on behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources, continues to build momentum. There are daily inquiries (by phone and email) from those looking for instructors and courses. We are the only jurisdiction in North America with 10 consecutive years of growth. As of July the number of students enrolled in OHEP was up by one thousand from the year before, and a busy fall is still ahead.

Also taking place this fall is our annual Women's Outdoor Weekend. Since 1994, women who love the outdoors have been gathering each September at the OFAH Women's Outdoor Weekend event to share their knowledge and experiences with other women who may just be getting started in outdoor activities. The OFAH created this program in response to an overwhelming number of women who expressed an interest in hunting and fishing but didn't (or do not) know how or where to get started. With one on one instruction participants actually learn how to handle a fishing rod, shotgun, and bow from experts, avoiding the intimidation and frustration of learning on their own. Activities may include canoeing, fishing, archery, shotgun range and rifle range, outdoor survival, wood carving, fly tying, high ropes course, night hike and stargazing, demonstration by the Ministry of Natural Resources canine unit and the all new and highly requested introduction to small engine repair. The weekend runs September 7-9 at Kinark Outdoor Centre near Minden.

This September we're reminded of the success of the first elk hunt which took place last year. The OFAH is a proud supporter of the elk restoration program. Our organization has contributed significantly through financial, technical and physical means via committed member volunteerism at all stages of the elk restoration process—from initial planning to reintroduction and population management. Through our efforts, this fall's elk hunt will be twice as long.

The hunt, which was one week long in its inaugural year last fall, will run from September 17 to 30. As in 2011, 70 tags will be available in eight Wildlife Management Units.

Hunting is an experience like no other. It provides the opportunity to connect with nature while testing your patience and instincts. We all have different reasons for partaking in our outdoor pursuits. Whatever your reason may be, I wish you and your family a safe and happy hunting season.



Lake Nipissing Walleye fisheries are in crisis

Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

Conservation is the protection, use and management of natural resources to supply benefits at optimal, sustainable levels for present and future generations. Taxpayers count on the Government of Ontario, primarily through the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), to embrace this definition of conservation and to ensure that our valuable natural resources are managed wisely. Unfortunately, in the case of the Lake Nipissing walleye fisheries, the government has abdicated its responsibility to sustainably manage the resource, which is in danger of crashing due to ongoing unregulated commercial gill net operations. Spawning size walleye have virtually disappeared from fishing harvests. More shocking still is the fact that this impending disaster was entirely avoidable.

In May 2012, the MNR asked the OFAH to provide comments on a recently commissioned independent review of the status of the Lake Nipissing walleye fisheries. Using the MNR's own data, OFAH biologists concluded that the Lake Nipissing walleye fisheries are in crisis.

Fourteen years ago, the MNR imposed significant restrictions on recreational angling in Lake Nipissing, which included shorter seasons, lower limits and a protected slot size, in an attempt to address concerns over the health of the walleye fisheries. However, no restrictions were placed on commercial gill netters.

Eight years ago, the MNR imposed additional sanctions on recreational anglers, but again failed to impose restrictions on commercial gill net operations. Fast forward to 2012 and, according to the terms of reference of a new Lake Nipissing Walleye Project Advisory Committee, the MNR will seek additional restrictions on recreational anglers for 2013, but take no action whatsoever against commercial gill net operations. Enough already!

The OFAH was recently asked to sit on this advisory committee. We declined, because in good conscience we could not participate on a committee whose mandate seems to relate only to recreational fishing on Lake Nipissing, with no mention of other users who impact on the resource. The continued focus on recreational angling will do nothing to address the problem with the walleye fisheries on Lake Nipissing; namely, the unregulated commercial gill net fishery. Recreational anglers are not the problem, and we will not be a part of a committee, or party to a mandate whose goal is to ignore the obvious and target the blameless.

For fourteen years, recreational anglers have made sacrifices to improve the walleye fisheries. Despite this, the fisheries are in worse shape today than ever before. Why, you might ask? Clearly, the Ontario government should have acted years ago to regulate the commercial gill net fishery. They did not, and despite all evidence to the contrary, they still seem to be missing the point. It is imperative now, more than ever, that the province stops pointing the finger at recreational anglers. It's time to take their responsibility as stewards of the resource seriously, and stop ignoring what their own data is telling them, by immediately suspending all commercial gill net operations on Lake Nipissing, and regulating their activities in order to allow the walleye stocks to begin to recover. Failure to do so will doom these once-vibrant fisheries and call into question the province's commitment to protect our natural resources. Future generations will not know walleye on Lake Nipissing unless they do.

To learn more about our position on this issue, visit www.ofah.org/nipissingwalleye

New Video Blog

Beginning this month, I'm going online with my views on all things related to hunting, fishing and conservation.

Join me at www.ofah.org/angeloblog

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New opportunities for young hunters and anglers

Bill Blackwell

President

After 32 years of teaching hunter education, it's safe to say that hunter recruitment is in my blood. I never get tired of seeing the look on a student's face as they get their passing grade and immediately start imagining their first independent hunt. It is deeply gratifying to play a part in their introduction to responsible hunting even though the most important part, the actual hunt, is still ahead.

This month, we received wonderful news that will provide additional "in the field" opportunities for new hunters. The Canadian Wildlife Service has confirmed that it will bring Waterfowler Heritage Day to the province of Ontario in 2012. The OFAH has long advocated for this day, as have other organizations, clubs and individuals, and we welcome the news that Ontario will join several other provinces in giving our youth some extra time in the field in advance of the main season.

Waterfowler Heritage Day is reserved for apprentice or youth hunters who are 12 to 17 years of age, and are accompanied by a qualified mentor. Each youth must be directed and supervised by a licensed hunter acting as a mentor. The mentor must be at least 18 years old and have their Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit (MGBHP), but may not hunt. According to the Ontario Hunting Regulations Summary (page 79), for the Waterfowler Heritage Day only, *"Qualified young hunters will not need to purchase the MGBHP and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp, but they must meet all mandatory federal and provincial requirements, including having a hunter apprenticeship safety card or small game license."* Full bag and daily possession limits apply. Please note that the youth hunter is only exempt from needing a MGBHP on Waterfowler Heritage Day—for the rest of the season a permit is mandatory.

If you have the chance, I urge you to take a young hunter out during Waterfowler Heritage Day, which in Ontario will be September 1 in Hudson-James Bay and Northern Districts, September 8 in Central Ontario and September 15 in Southern Ontario.

The OFAH is also working on providing more days in the field for Ontario youth. Building on the terrific model developed by the Elgin, Middlesex and Perth stewardship councils, we are actively seeking to engage OFAH individuals and clubs who are interested in hosting a youth hunting event this fall. Many OFAH clubs and zones are already doing this important outreach work, but more days are definitely needed. Read more about this initiative on page 6.

Other OFAH outreach is in full swing this summer, with OFAH TackleShare and Travelling TackleShare programs in full gear. Ontario Power Generation makes these programs possible with their sponsorship, and adds their critical water safety message to the mix, making these summer events doubly important to youth and their families who are new to fishing and enjoying time around the water.

Our Get Outdoors Summer Youth camps are fully subscribed again this year, with 180 children over three sessions taking in the one-of-a-kind outdoors programming that only the OFAH offers. Archery and air gun instruction are offered in a safe, certified environment alongside fishing, kayaking and hiking, all delivered by a topnotch crew of staff and volunteers. The OFAH|Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre is also running a series of one-week sessions of day camp adventures this month, which are also full.

Whether you take one young person out fishing this summer, or help to organize a group youth hunting day for the early fall, I hope you will embrace the opportunity to engage someone you know in discovering the great outdoors. We are all richer for our time spent surrounded by the wonders of nature.

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Future secure for ISAP, other funding still in question

Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

One of the greatest threats to our natural resources, and fish and wildlife populations in particular, continues to be aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. The OFAH was one of the first to recognize this threat and, as a result, created the Invasive Species Awareness Program (ISAP) in the early 1990's. For almost twenty years, the ISAP has been proud to be partnered with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), which has provided matching funding for the program under a series of ongoing agreements since 2003.

We are pleased that the government has committed to a renewal of our longstanding partnership in the fight against invasive species. The funding provided under the new agreement will be allocated toward achievement of partnership goals which include public education and raising awareness, prevention, control and monitoring.

The OFAH has been fortunate to partner with the MNR in this extremely important program, which has successfully engaged thousands of Ontario residents in invasive species awareness and prevention. We look forward to continuing the excellent level of cooperation that has existed between the MNR and ourselves. Together, we have led the charge against invasive species and we are considered to be among the leading experts on invasive species in Canada. In the process, we have developed an expertise that is frequently called upon by government and others. We are also pleased that for the first time, the province has developed a comprehensive, government-wide strategy that will involve a number of ministries in the fight against invasive species; something that is badly needed.

The news on other fronts is not quite as positive. As part of the budget in March, the federal government announced major changes to the *Fisheries Act*. Since that time, the OFAH has been involved in direct discussions with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and senior DFO staff regarding the impact of the proposed changes. In addition, the OFAH has participated in conference calls with DFO and our partners across the country, as we struggle to understand how these changes will impact on fisheries policy, protection of fish habitat, programs, service delivery and DFO staff. While some of the changes make sense and are long overdue, others have raised red flags with the outdoor community and, as a result, the government is attempting to expand its consultation process. They intend to continue this dialogue throughout the fall as the conversation focuses in on what any new regulations attached to the *Act* will look like. Many questions remain to be answered, but at least we are talking, and the government has realized that more thorough consultation is necessary to alleviate the growing level of concern that recent announcements of cutbacks and layoffs have created.

On the provincial front, the government has been unable to provide us with details on what the associated cutbacks under the budget will mean for ministries like Natural Resources. Four months after the introduction of the provincial budget, the only thing we are certain of is that drastic cuts are coming. How this will translate on the ground is still unknown. To be fair, Deputy Minister David O'Toole has been as forthcoming as possible, but the changes are a work in progress, and until the dust settles, uncertainty over how this will roll out will continue. It is clear that the MNR will create a new structure and way of doing business, which will undoubtedly include reductions in funding and/or staff. The changes will be difficult for all concerned, and cannot be made overnight, but the lack of a comprehensive dialogue with stakeholders raises the level of concern. Given that anglers and hunters pay for the majority of fish and wildlife programs through their contributions to the Special Purpose Account (SPA), it is critically important that the government be as transparent as possible. We hope that the government will soon be in a position where they can advise the OFAH and others of what the future holds for the MNR because, at present, the silence is deafening.



No lazy days this summer

Bill Blackwell

President

The days are long and warm and the fish are biting this time of year. You might think things would slow down at the OFAH, but that doesn't appear to be the case so far this summer. We are facing challenges on multiple fronts that do not appear to have easy solutions.

The provincial budget was introduced on March 27, 2012. As a result, it is clear that there will be significant cuts across the government, including at the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). We're now into June and despite recent discussions with the MNR, we are no closer to knowing how these cuts will impact on the Ministry and the provision of front line services. What does seem clear, however, is that the cuts will mean that the MNR will have fewer people, places and programs, as will most government ministries, perhaps with the exception of health and education. Which programs will be affected, and what MNR services will look like on the ground, is still open to question.

Since the early 1990's, the MNR's budget has been continually reduced, staffing levels have declined by over 2,000 individuals, while the Ministry has been saddled with an increasing legislative responsibility. To survive, it has, in the words of the Environmental Commissioner, been required to 'do more with less', and will have to continue doing so. The fact that we are this far into the budget process with so little knowledge is a major concern, which we intend to address when the OFAH appears before the Standing Committee that will shortly be holding hearings on the budget.

We can assume that the recent cancellation of the provincial Bear Wise program trap and relocation program is budget related, a move that we support because for a high percentage of adult bears, the process didn't work. The OFAH continues to call for a return to a spring bear hunt, as we believe that it is an effective approach to human/bear conflict. If the MNR is not prepared to act, which seems the case, then how do we address increasing bear incursions into populated areas, and the resultant tragic waste of bears shot as vermin or public safety menaces?

Another significant issue facing us is the Algonquin Land Claim. Over the last two years, this longstanding grievance has taken on significant importance and the pace of negotiations has increased. All along, the OFAH has been pressing for broad public consultations around an issue that has the potential to impact over one million residents in the claim area, and affect local municipalities, anglers, hunters, hunt camps, provincial parks, crown land uses and access.

Only by engaging stakeholders like the OFAH in meaningful consultation, as part of a broader public consultation process, and not simply as an exercise in information sharing, can the interests of our members be protected and help to frame Ontario's position at the table, where they represent the broader public interest. Issues such as fair sharing, harvest reporting, data collection and assessment, enforcement, land use permits and designated species must all be addressed as part of the consultation process, and there needs to be a definition of conservation that applies to all parties included in the Agreement in Principle. Recent statements by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs which suggested that the process was nearing a conclusion have caused great concern, and the OFAH will be seeking a meeting with Minister Wynne to clarify those remarks. Her comments have also called into question whether the recently started consultation process will accomplish what it's intended to do, or will simply be a shell of what it should have been. Time will tell.



Congress offers an historic step forward—let's take it

Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

As this issue went to press, over 400 fish and wildlife conservationists were just returning from the first-ever National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress, held in Ottawa. It was an incredible experience; being in the company of more than 100 presenters, many of whom are considered to be among the North American leaders in science, academia, and the outdoors industry. It was enlightening, engaging and motivating; I know that I will reflect on this event and all that I have taken away from it many times over my tenure, and it is my sincere hope that others will too. More importantly, the Congress is intended to act as a catalyst for significant improvements in the way we manage fish and wildlife conservation in Canada.

I have never attended a more productive event, and am proud that this historic Congress was organized in large part by the OFAH, under the leadership of Greg Farrant, Manager of Government Affairs and Policy, who took on the role of Congress General Manager in addition to his already full work slate. Shane Mahoney, a renowned biologist and expert on the North American Model for Conservation, (and who, you may recall, has spoken at OFAH Conferences) acted as Honourary Chair.

Every Canadian province and territory was represented at the Congress, as were 20 American states and the country of Australia. This broad participation elevated the event to a truly international level. I was struck by the generosity of the many American participants and sponsors - some of whom had travelled great distances at considerable expense to share their science, their experiences, their successes and failures, all in aid of a clearly articulated Canadian action plan.

However great our scientific and organizational strengths may be, change requires political will, so we were pleased that Prime Minister Stephen Harper chose the Congress to announce the creation of a national Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel (HAAP), which is great news for fish and wildlife conservation and anyone who hunts and fishes. In making the announcement, the Prime Minister was fulfilling another election promise, which recognizes the key role that anglers and hunters play in the conservation of our resources. We are also proud and pleased to be one of the 19 organizations that have been invited to sit on the panel.

Other highlights included the Hon. Terry French, Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Environment and Conservation, who provided a fascinating case study on the decline of Caribou in Newfoundland, and federal ministers Keith Ashfield, (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans) and Peter Kent, (Minister of Environment), who helped close the event Thursday morning.

Innovation was also a feature of this Congress. On day three, we broke out into groups and spent an intensive afternoon discussing and putting forward our best ideas to move fish and wildlife conservation forward; those ideas were then filtered for redundancy, and on the final morning, we each voted on a broad slate of recommendations for future action. These included the development of a coalition of public and private organizations to chart the course of fish and wildlife conservation in Canada; a recommendation that the federal, provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with major stakeholders, establish national fish and wildlife priority lists and strategies; the development of a national hunter/angler recruitment and retention strategy; and the development of new and innovative funding models for fish and wildlife programs.

This Congress was the result of many years of planning, and the dedication of many groups and individuals from major conservation based organizations like Ducks Unlimited Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Manitoba Wildlife Federation, Boone & Crockett, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Conservation Force and Dallas Safari Club, just to name a few. We hope that the foundation laid at this event will serve as the springboard for another Congress in the not too distant future, and look forward to seeing the recommendations from this Congress translated into action.

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Public consultation on Algonquin Land Claim

Bill Blackwell

President

OFAH members, and anglers and hunters in general who live anywhere within the Ottawa Valley, will be familiar with the longstanding Algonquin Land Claim. As Ontario's only comprehensive land claim, the Algonquin Land Claim covers an area of approximately 36,000 square kilometers, and is home to 1.4 million people, including approximately 10,000 Algonquin. Negotiations between the Algonquin, federal and provincial governments have been ongoing since the early 1990's.

As a member of the Committee of External Advisors (CEA), the OFAH has invested significant time and energy to ensure that the voices of Ontario's anglers and hunters are considered before a final Agreement In Principle (AIP) is signed. For well over a decade, we have also been involved in separate meetings with both the provincial and federal levels of government in discussions around the claim, and more recently, have met with the Algonquin leadership and their negotiator to discuss issues affecting the outdoor community, including conservation, access, hunting and fishing in the context of the claim.

Those who have been following the negotiation process to settle the claim will no doubt be pleased to hear that the long overdue public consultation is now getting underway. In early May, the first of a series of promised consultation meetings took place in Peterborough where discussions around three major topics; management regime, designated species and enforcement were on the agenda.

The OFAH has insisted that a broad range of designated species and harvest allocations for those species must be considered in the context of an AIP, not just for moose. We believe that enforcement as well as management authority and jurisdiction over natural resources should continue to reside with the respective levels of government, but encourage cooperative management with appropriate parties, including the OFAH.

For these meetings to be successful, and considered genuine public consultation, they must, a) provide answers to questions, b) address issues related to fish and wildlife management, including harvesting and harvest reporting, designated species, access to fishing and hunting opportunities, conservation and sustainability of resources, enforcement, socio-economic impact and other topics, and c) include promised workshops which will examine issues related to fish and wildlife management on a detailed level. We look forward to continuing discussions directly with federal and provincial staff, the chief negotiators, the Algonquin and other major stakeholders.

The landscape in which the claim is located is highly settled. Parties have a shared objective that fish and wildlife resources continue to be greatly valued, that existing uses are recognized and that fair sharing exists. There are certain universal principles that we can all agree on, for example, the definition of conservation. Conservation is the protection, use and management of natural resources to supply benefits at optimal sustainable levels for present and future generations. Conservation will be our bottom line "GPS" system to guide and navigate our discussions on fish and wildlife management and its many components, such as habitat, harvesting and enforcement.

I look forward to sharing the results of these meetings and discussions with you over the next several months.

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Issues that need answers

Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

If you have renewed your Outdoors Card, purchased a fish or game license or entered a game draw in the past few months, then you have used the province's new Licensing Automation Service (LAS).

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) implemented LAS as of January 1, 2012 in order to improve the delivery of fish and game licenses in Ontario. It is the first modernization of the system in decades, and it was no doubt needed. Automated licensing offers more Internet access and the phasing out of an inefficient and outdated paper system, and we believe that once the inevitable glitches are ironed out, it will deliver most of what it promises. The transition from old to new, however, has been fraught with challenges.

We have heard from hundreds of OFAH members who are frustrated and disappointed with the new system, and our response has been to work with the MNR to help resolve some of the more pressing flaws in the service. For the most part, MNR has been swift to fix those that were fixable and to develop temporary measures for the more difficult problems.

There are two issues, however, that are not so easily resolved, and leave us wondering if they were given due consideration before the contract was awarded.

Under the new system, game licenses purchased on the Internet or by phone are issued by Active Outdoors, the LAS contractor, which is based in the US. To date, Internet and phone purchases make up approximately half of license sales, so we were appalled to learn this, given that each piece of US mail costs 85 cents versus a Canadian stamp which costs 69 cents. When our respective currencies are trading at par, MNR is spending an additional 16 cents on each and every piece of outgoing mail. With hundreds of thousands of deer, moose, bear and elk tags sold over the course of the year, what will the cumulative cost be? And to make matters worse, those postage costs are coming out of the Special Purpose Account (SPA), which is primarily comprised of our hunting and fishing fees.

The second is an issue of privacy. Given that Active Outdoors, the successful bidder for the LAS contract, is an American firm, all personal information collected for Ontario licenses and fees is sent to the US and is therefore subject to the laws of the jurisdiction where it is stored. At the recent OFAH Fish and Wildlife Conference, an MNR presentation on LAS assured attendees that their information would not be accessed by the US government, but have all eventualities been factored into that assurance?

All of this leaves us wondering what else we don't know, so on behalf of OFAH members and Ontario's anglers and hunters, we have submitted a Freedom of Information request to find out more about LAS.

The provincial budget is another area of concern for your Federation. Released in late March, we have yet to see any details about how the cuts will look on the ground. Despite our attempt to meet on this major issue, we are still in the dark. The one thing that seems clear is that there will be negative impacts on the MNR. The OFAH has applied to appear before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs when the bill is referred to it by the Legislature.

The federal budget has been causing its own ripples across the country, as changes to fisheries habitat protection have been included in it. The OFAH has met with the Minister of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Keith Ashfield, and his staff several times on this matter. We have been assured that fisheries habitat will continue to be protected, and we are cautiously optimistic about the direction that DFO is taking, but we won't know all the details until we see the regulations, which are still some time off. We will be seeking to appear before the Finance Committee to address the section of the *Budget Implementation Act* that pertains to fisheries habitat, and we will continue working with the government to understand how these changes will impact our recreational fisheries.

The OFAH expects governments at every level to make the best use of every dollar they receive, and to protect our privacy. We need resolution on these critical issues, and we will continue to press for definitive answers and action on your behalf.


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Conference presentations provide valuable insight

Bill Blackwell

President

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youtube.com/ofahcommunications

It has been a little more than a month since we wrapped up the 84th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish and Wildlife Conference, and I find myself reflecting back on what was another great event. If you haven't been to an OFAH conference yet, I strongly urge you to consider attending next year. I haven't missed one in over a decade, even when it meant some creative planning to fit it into a busy schedule. My wife Rose always accompanies me and we both enjoy the great food and the camaraderie—this year was no exception.

In my view, no event offers more opportunities to learn about what affects anglers and hunters than the OFAH conference. Over the course of three days, we heard a wide variety of interesting and enlightening presentations, asked tough questions of government and industry representatives and had the chance to chat with Ministry of Natural Resources staff and representatives from other leading government agencies and NGO's.

The highlight of the Conference was the farewell to former Executive Director Mike Reader, after 25 years of exemplary service and outstanding leadership. The number of testimonials honouring Mike from a broad range of political, outdoor and NGO leaders made it clear how highly he is regarded by his peers. At the same time, your Federation looks forward to a bright future under the direction of new Executive Director Angelo Lombardo, who brings with him a vast array of knowledge, experience and leadership that will continue Mike's tradition of excellence.

With the conference over, we turn our attention to the vast array of issues facing the OFAH and the outdoor community in the year ahead. As I begin my second year as President, I am both honoured to continue to serve in that capacity, and daunted as I look at all of the challenges we are tackling.

After seventeen years, we have finally rid ourselves of the badly flawed long gun registry. That victory is a testament to perseverance, hard work and expertise by the Board, head office staff, thousands of OFAH members who attended rallies, wrote letters, and made their voices heard. It's also a result of strong alliances we have forged with our affiliate partners and other NGO's across Canada and the unshaken conviction on the part of the Harper government that the registry had to go.

One of the most significant files we will work on over the course of the coming year will be the Algonquin Land Claim. Covering a huge swath of eastern Ontario, which is home to 1.4 million people, the claim will impact on municipalities, cottages, hunt camps, fish and wildlife resources, parks, local economies and obviously the Algonquin people themselves. The federal and provincial governments, who are negotiating on behalf of all Ontarians, must get it right the first time, there are no do-overs. OFAH will spend a great deal of time working to ensure that the promised comprehensive public consultation occurs before an Agreement in Principle (AIP) is signed.

The National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress in May and a host of specific fish and wildlife issues will make for a busy year, and we look forward to keeping you informed of our progress and successes along the way.



Building on an already strong foundation

Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

It is an honor to be stepping into the role of Executive Director, a role filled so admirably by Mike Reader for the past eleven years. I can't thank Mike enough for his guidance, wisdom and sense of humor as I prepared to transition into his shoes. Over his tenure, Mike has grown the OFAH and made it stronger and more effective than ever in its 84 year history. I am fully aware that his are indeed big shoes to fill.

I am looking forward to carrying on his legacy of building successful partnerships and collaborating with all levels of government, nongovernment and the private sector.

It is humbling to work alongside such knowledgeable, experienced and dedicated people as the OFAH has been able to attract to its ranks. Our Board of Directors, and staff and members are unparalleled in their commitment to conservation, and I know that together we are going to accomplish many things. Collectively, we will continue to be heard on issues that threaten our natural resources, and our fishing and hunting traditions. We will work tirelessly to ensure that hunting, fishing and trapping remain relevant in our Canadian culture, which is essential if we are to pass our passions on to future generations.

Those of you who were able to join us at our 84th Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference (or who watched the proceedings via live streaming video) will have a sense of the challenges that lie ahead for your Federation. MNR Deputy Minister David O'Toole pulled no punches when he spoke during his presentation about the difficult provincial budget cuts, and sure enough, there are indications that the Ministry of Natural Resources will be impacted by the latest budget. At this point, the OFAH is reviewing the sweeping changes contained in the omnibus budget legislation, Bill 55, *Strong Action for Ontario Act, 2012* to determine how these changes will impact on fish and wildlife. Minister Gravelle and Deputy Minister O'Toole have committed to working with the OFAH to address our concerns.

There has been much discussion recently in the media and through social media channels about the possible axing of fisheries habitat protection in the latest federal budget. The March 29 announcement contained no specific details, but we are concerned, as are all conservationists, and we are committed to working with the federal government to ensure that whatever changes occur, there remains an accountability for fish and fish habitat.

Our long "to do" list spans federal, provincial and regional issues: we are currently pushing for the widest possible public consultation on the Algonquin Land Claim, supporting an expanded elk hunt for 2012, continuing to expand Sunday gun hunting opportunities in southern Ontario, and many more issues too numerous to detail here.

There will be many challenges in the coming months and years, but given the strength of the OFAH team, our members and our partners, we are confident that there will also be many achievements. We have only to look at the recent abolishment of the long gun registry to see what we are capable of accomplishing together.

The future is bright. I look forward to many shared successes and accomplishments in the years to come.

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Lezlie Goodwin, Manager of Communications, OFAH, P.O. Box 2800, Peterborough, ON K9J 8L5

Phone 705-748-6324 ext. 270 Fax 705-748-9577 Email ofah@ofah.org Visit www.ofah.org



Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities

Bill Blackwell

President

I am a Canadian, I was born, raised and have always lived in Ontario. There is a long history of fishing and hunting in my family, proudly handed down through the generations to me, and from me to my children and grandchildren. It is a part of my heritage and who I am today. Like millions of Canadians, I treasure our rich natural resources and the opportunities my family and I have to Canada who have similar backgrounds, I believed that by virtue of my birth in Canada and these heritage activities that have been passed on to me I had rights, rights that included an inalienable right to fish and hunt. Imagine my surprise when I found out that as a nonaboriginal I do not have the right to hunt and fish, but rather I have a privilege. There is a very distinct difference between the two.

Rights are things that are not mistaken, they are recorded or guaranteed in writing, things that you can claim. Freedom of speech, from religious persecution for example, are rights guaranteed to all Canadians in the Canadian Bill of Rights. There is a difference between my rights and the privilege of being able to hunt and fish.

A privilege or as defined in the dictionary "a benefit" and like any privilege or benefit, they can be seriously diminished or taken away altogether.

It is important that we hunters and anglers fully understand and accept our duties and responsibilities so that we can continue to enjoy these privileges.

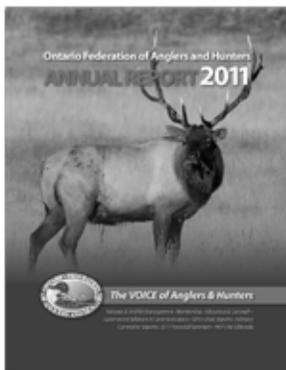
The first consideration for any fish and wildlife program is and always has to be conservation and the sustainability of the resource based on sound science. Bearing that in mind, the courts have reaffirmed aboriginal rights for food and ceremony, but the courts have also said that if need be, conservation is an overriding factor to their rights. We at the OFAH are dedicated to working to ensure that "fair sharing" is part of all agreements with First Nations, and it is also a reason why we need all levels of Government to introduce and recognize fishing, hunting and trapping as heritage activities for all Canadians.

If we are to continue to enjoy our rights and privileges, we all have duties and responsibilities. Our responsibility is to manage our resources so that we can guarantee their existence for future generations to use and enjoy. We need the Ministry of Natural Resources, which is charged with the responsibility of managing our lands and waters for all Ontarians, to do so in a manner that will meet this goal. Part of that management aspect and the ability for the MNR to do their job lies in the hands of all hunters and fishermen. It is our responsibility to abide by all the laws governing fishing, hunting and trapping, and by complying with mandatory or even voluntary reporting of harvested game and fish.

I enjoy the privilege of being able to hunt and fish in this great province of ours and I fully understand my responsibilities if I am to continue to do so. I hope everyone will also take their responsibilities seriously.

Mike and has been working with Mike for the last 18 months and did a great job of handling things when Mike was off sick this year. Mike will stay on until the end of the year when he will officially retire from work. Mike has been a dedicated employee of O.F.A.H. and has been very instrumental in taking our organization to new heights. He has been instrumental in building new and stronger partnerships with our fellow affiliate organizations, industry partners and many levels of governments and ministries. Under Mike's foresight and guidance we have grown Angler and Hunter TV, bought our own magazine, and now have our Angler and Hunter Radio. O.F.A.H. is bigger and stronger than it has ever been and we owe a lot of the credit for that to Mike and his managerial skills. Mike has always been one who leads by example and he is respected by everyone he deals with. Mike will be missed once he does depart but we wish both he and Judy many happy years of retirement and great times as they travel, hunt and fish together in the years to come.

It has been my privilege and good fortune to serve most of my years on the board with Mike as our Executive Director and I know I speak for all members of the Board of Directors present and past when I say it has been a privilege and we wish you a long and happy retirement.



Read all about us!

The 2011 OFAH Annual Report is hot off the presses.

Get yours in print by contacting us (call 705-748-6324 ext 270 or email ofah@ofah.org) or visit www.ofah.org/report to view or download a copy.



A fond farewell

Mike Reader

Executive Director

As I was preparing to pen my last column as OFAH Executive Director, I took some time to speak with senior staff about the wind down of my career, and the transition to new leadership at the OFAH. Many asked me what I thought my legacy would be as a result of the efforts of the OFAH during my tenure as Executive Director.

I have decided that it is not for me to determine what my legacy will be. That will be left to those who fish and hunt, and who carry on the rich traditions of this organization in the future. My legacy as Executive Director, if any, will be decided by those who continue the hard work of this Federation after I am gone.

I am comfortable in saying that I have had a remarkable and enjoyable career with the OFAH and wouldn't change a thing – not any decision, not any action taken or not taken. I have no second thoughts, for they would not resolve anything anyway.

I am pleased that the OFAH has seen such tremendous growth in all areas of our business, am pleased to be able to work with so many dedicated people on behalf of our membership, and am pleased and most grateful to be given the opportunity to lead the organization.

How many people can say over the course of their career that they have had the opportunity to meet and work with Canada's prime ministers, Ontario's premiers, federal and provincial cabinet ministers, deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers, and the list goes on? Quite frankly, when I think of it, it is a bit overwhelming.

This organization will continue to have a significant role to play in the future of fishing and hunting at provincial and federal levels, and it is paramount that the organization continues to garner the respect that it has worked so hard to earn.

I am proud of the fact that the OFAH has grown and developed so much over the past few years, and I believe that our success has positioned us to attract expertise to our ranks of its employees unlike any other time in its history; and with this comes the opportunity to continue to influence change at all levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal) to the benefit of today's anglers and hunters, and of course, future ones as well.

Someone recently asked me if it was easy to make the decision to leave, and I have to be honest in answering that, yes, it was. One needs to consider the ramifications of staying in a job like this too long. New blood, new ideas, new initiatives - these are good things for the organization. New energy is invigorating for staff, the Board of Directors, and the organization itself. As I leave, the organization is in a position of great strength on many fronts, all important in their own way. The expression "better to retire a year too early than a day too late," rings very true to me.

This job forces you to keep a hectic pace, and one that I admit I will not miss.

The OFAH is in good hands with the staff we have in place, and I am confident that they will continue to serve our members well under the direction and guidance of your new Executive Director, Angelo Lombardo. He has proven himself more than worthy of their respect and I know he will get the same support that I received in my eleven years at the helm.

I want to thank all of our staff for their efforts - they are all very much professionals in their given jobs. Every one of them plays an important role, every one of them has a job to do, and every one of them contributes to the day-to-day activities on behalf of our membership -- all of them I will miss. At the risk of unintentionally leaving out someone, (and I apologize in advance if I have), I really want to recognize a few staff members in particular who I have worked closely with over my career.

I need to thank Nancy Cator, my Administrative Assistant, for her unwavering support. Nancy retires at the end of 2012, and I wish her all of the best after her 35 years of service to the OFAH -- thank you, Nancy, from all of us, and for being there for me day in and day out. It has been a pleasure.

My thanks go to Jane Beggs, our Administration Liaison. Jane works closely with us in the administrative area of the office, and has always been there to give guidance and support.

I wish to thank Sue MacCallum for her generous contributions to the success of this organization, and also Dr. Terry Quinney and Greg Farrant for their tremendous contributions of time, something so precious to all of us, and for their ongoing professionalism, which I see day in and day out.

I would like to thank Lezlie Goodwin for her vision in communicating effectively to members, Robert Pye for his ability to put the OFAH first when delivering marketable material to the public, Stephen Bates for his enthusiasm in selling OFAH and OOD without compromise, and John Kerr, editor extraordinaire, for his editorial savvy.

I really wish to thank *all* OFAH staff, for their friendships, something that I hope will last well beyond my last day of work.

I certainly want to thank our Directors, past and present, for their tremendous contributions to the organization. I have had the opportunity to see these volunteers at their finest, and I know that the Board's hard work will continue.

I wholeheartedly give my best wishes to Angelo Lombardo. From what I know of Angelo's previous role with the OFAH, and from my observations over the last year and a bit, the transition from Executive Manager to Executive Director will be a smooth one. I know that Angelo Lombardo will succeed in spades. You can confidently put your faith in him; he is more than capable of growing the organization during his tenure.

I would like to thank my family for their understanding of the time commitment necessary to do this job -- especially to my wife, Judy, who now has her husband back. I thank her for helping me, and by extension, the OFAH, through some difficult times and for her own tremendous contributions to the organization. I am happy that she will now be relieved of the day-to-day stressors that come with being married to someone in this position. She knew when I took the job that it would have my full commitment and she was steadfastly supportive. I look forward to spending the quality time together that we have talked about for the last few years as we planned my retirement.

To my sons Jeff and Andrew, and my daughter Kelly, her husband Robin and my grandson, Alexandre, I am eager to enjoy more quality family time. I hope that I can make up for some of the absences, for missing those important days in their lives where business took me away. I will do my very best to be a greater part of their lives than I have been able to be in the past eleven years.

To my parents, Alex and Catherine Reader, I give thanks for instilling in me the values necessary to succeed. Without a strong work ethic, without practicing honesty and integrity, none of what I have been able to contribute would have been possible.

I thank our industry partners and our affiliates from coast to coast. Remain strong, and stay the course -- our fishing and hunting heritage and our traditions demand and depend on your commitment.

Lastly, to our members, thank you for being part of Team OFAH, the most incredible voice for anglers and hunters in Canada.

Yours in Conservation,



Lots to celebrate at our 84th Fish & Wildlife Conference

Bill Blackwell

President

I cannot think of a better way to start off my second term as president of the OFAH than by attending our 84th Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference in Mississauga this March. I am looking forward to renewing old acquaintances, getting informed about the issues we have been dealing with this past year, and enjoying a very special time with our Executive Director, Mike Reader, as he celebrates his 25th year with the OFAH and his impending retirement.

As you are packing for conference, please remember to include some nonperishable food. Ontario laws have made it very difficult to donate game (that is a topic for another column) so your federation has launched FoodShare, a nonperishable food drive, as part of our 84th conference. Please fill either the grocery bag or envelope which you will receive in the mail with your conference registration package and bring the food or donation along with you when you check in. Together, we can help many families in need.

I have been attending OFAH conferences for about 13 years now and have been involved with the Board of Directors for most of that time. Still, I am amazed by all that our Board and dedicated head office staff address over the course of a year, as detailed by Mike Reader in his "Year in Review." As an OFAH member, you do not want to miss this summary of our achievements and challenges.

The conference kicks off on Thursday afternoon with our Annual General Meeting, which culminates with a peer-selected director receiving the Jack O'Dette Conservation Leadership Award. In the evening, I will host my first President's Reception and look forward to giving away the first of many awards that will be presented to deserving OFAH zones, member clubs and individuals over the course of the weekend.

Can't make it to conference? You can still be part of the proceedings. All of Friday's daytime events will be available for viewing live via the Internet, beginning at 8:30 am (visit www.ofah.org/conference). If you have a computer and an Internet connection, there is no reason for you to miss out on what is arguably the biggest (and in my opinion, best) annual fish and wildlife conference in the country.

Friday morning we'll have our first opportunity to meet the new Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable Michael Gravelle, as he makes the traditional minister's presentation to conference attendees. OFAH members will have the opportunity to pose questions to Minister Gravelle, either in person or via email (send your questions to asktheminister@ofah.org). Mr. Gravelle may be new to the Ministry of Natural Resources, but he is not new to the OFAH, and we look forward to working with him.

Friday afternoon sessions include the Ministry of Natural Resources' new Licensing Automation System (LAS), moose management, and fish and wildlife law enforcement. We will also get all of the details about the upcoming National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress (hosted in part by the OFAH), which will be held in Ottawa at the end of May. The Congress is sure to be an historic event, with fish and wildlife conservation experts from across Canada and the United States in attendance.

Saturday is a full day, beginning with two morning sessions before the complimentary buses start shuttling us to the always exciting Toronto Sportsmen's Show. Come evening, it's all about Mike Reader, as OFAH members, partners and friends celebrate Mike's 25 years of service with the OFAH and his retirement. Mike will officially hand over the executive director reins to Angelo Lombardo on March 30, but not before Angelo and other associates of Mike's get the chance to recall some of the highlights (and other moments) of his long and illustrious career. This informal celebration, complete with the famous fish and wild game buffet, is reason enough to make plans to join us this year.

Fellow anglers, hunters and outdoor enthusiasts, I look forward to seeing you at the conference.

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Communicating our message

Mike Reader

Executive Director

In January, we relaunched the OFAH website (www.ofah.org) with a brand new look and feel. If you haven't had a chance to visit yet, I hope you will soon. The new site features a clean layout, easy to find topics and links to information that you want and need. No new site would be complete without social media, and we have that as well – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

I am still finding my way around the new social media tools, but I know that there is no looking back, and I am not sure that we would want to, even if we could. Social media is giving us 24/7 access to our members, and more importantly, our members (and the public at large) also have 24/7 access to us.

The OFAH has always placed a high priority on communicating—with our members, with government, with like-minded organizations, industry partners and sponsors, and even with those who hold quite different views on how best to manage our natural resources. When I started with the OFAH nearly 25 years ago, we were already in the publishing business, with *Angler & Hunter* magazine as our primary means of communications. More than one person has told me that they have stockpiles of the magazine in their basement, which speaks volumes about how important it was for our members to be informed about news and views related to their passion for fishing and hunting.

As effective as the printed word was for OFAH members, (and is to this day), some visionary thinkers realized that we needed to spread the word beyond our Federation. They brought forward a proposal to do a television show and *The Angler & Hunter* was born. Twenty years later and now in national syndication, today's *Angler & Hunter Television* with Host Mike Miller is as effective for sharing our love of the outdoors and conservation values as anything else we do. Viewers tell us that they have taken up fishing and hunting because of our program, and statistics tell us that we have a growing family audience. What a great way to spend Saturday morning with the kids or grandkids!

In 2008, we negotiated the purchase of *Ontario OUT OF DOORS (OOD)* from Rogers Publishing. What a great move that has been for the OFAH. *OOD* is a first-class magazine with some of the best writing and photography out there. Coupled with the members-only *Angler & Hunter HOTLINE*, we reach over 66,000 member households each issue, and that reach is extended again when you add the thousands of subscribers and newsstand purchasers. *OOD's* web presence has also been a fantastic vehicle, particularly the online forum, which is where annually, 200,000 anglers and hunters across the province (and beyond) weigh in on how they feel about our fish and wildlife, hunting, fishing and more. (If you haven't been yet, go to www.oodmag.com and choose the "community" link.)

Gone are the days when communication was mostly one-sided. Today, people expect to be kept in the loop; they want information to be instantly conveyed or nearly so, and they expect to be able to comment, without filters. We agree that open communication is the best route to a solution and we're embracing the changes in access and attitude. Communication is a two-way street – we want to share our views on issues as they unfold, and we need your feedback.

Thirty years ago, it was the *Angler & Hunter* in print; twenty years ago, we took *The Angler & Hunter* to television screens across the province, a decade ago, ofah.org went online and in 2011, *Angler & Hunter Radio* hit the airways. Today, social media means instant news and unfiltered feedback. What's next? As I prepare to retire, that is for others to decide, but I do know that your Federation will embrace any and all opportunities to share our conservation message and our passion for hunting and fishing as far and wide as possible.

Please let us know what you think; drop us a line, send us an email, comment on Facebook, tweet about it, or just call us.



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Where are the promised Algonquin Consultations?

Bill Blackwell

President

The Algonquin Land Claim is the only comprehensive land claim in Ontario, covering an area of roughly 36,000 square kilometers, or 14,000 square miles; with 59 percent in private land, 23 percent in parks, 14 percent in provincial Crown land and 4 percent in federal Crown land. The area in question is home to 1.4 million nonaboriginal residents, 10,000 Algonquin, 13 federal and 13 provincial ridings and 35 provincial parks (18 operational including Algonquin Park and 17 nonoperational). Since the early 1990's, the Algonquin, the federal government and the provincial government have been working toward a settlement of the claim.

The federal government has consistently maintained that public consultation must occur before an Agreement in Principle (AIP) is reached. The province's commitment to a comprehensive public consultation process before an AIP has been less clear, particularly when it comes to consultation prior to an AIP being reached. To date, meaningful discussions with stakeholder groups, local residents, cottage associations, hunters, anglers, trappers, municipalities, leaseholders and others potentially impacted upon by the Algonquin Land Claim have not materialized, and it's not clear when this might occur. Given the recent progress toward an AIP, and talk of a potential draft being ready by spring 2012, the absence of in-depth discussions with all affected parties is a profound concern.

Make no mistake, the stakes for all parties are high. With little federal Crown (public) land in the claim area, the federal contribution to a final settlement will be largely financial. The opposite is true for the province, which has extensive Crown (public) land holdings that will form the bulk of their contribution to a final settlement. This includes the 35 provincial parks within the claim area, some of which could potentially be on the table.

The list of outstanding issues of concern is long. The protection and conservation of habitat; ongoing public access to Crown land; the future management of Algonquin Park; the fate of hunt camps and land use permits; the need for species-specific harvest plans and development of a comprehensive science-based fisheries management plan before an AIP is ratified; overlapping claims; and enforcement throughout the settlement area are only a few of the issues that must be discussed openly to give stakeholders and the general public a stronger level of comfort than currently exists.

The OFAH has met several times with Algonquin leaders who have been engaged in open and frank discussions around our concerns. We expect nothing less than the same courtesy and willingness to consult from our elected provincial representatives, and have recently written to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs reminding them of previous Ministerial commitments to engage the public. Your Federation has recommended that a minimum of five public meetings should be held early in the new year, with Perth, Pembroke, North Bay, Bancroft and Peterborough being considered as potential sites. We will continue to press for these consultations, and encourage all of those living within the land claim to make their MPPs aware of the need for a fair and open dialogue around the issues before binding commitments are made.



If an access road is lost in the forest, does it matter?

Mike Reader

Executive Director



Join us at the OFAH conference this year and help a family in need.

We are introducing a food drive at the 84th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference, to be held in Mississauga in March.

In your registration package, you'll receive a bag which we ask you to fill with nonperishable food. We are also providing an envelope in case you prefer to make a cash donation or enclose a gift card from your favorite grocery store.

As anglers and hunters, we deeply appreciate the harvest we share with our families. Through OFAH FoodShare, we can support families in need. Please help if you can.

Since the Ministry of Natural Resources began producing its Annual Report on Forest Management in 1996, there has been a documented history of continual, alarming decline in the number of forest access roads that are being maintained and made available for public use. The government cites remote tourism, caribou management and ecological sensitivity as reasons for the restrictions and closures. Given the budget cuts the Ministry has long been challenged with, lack of funding is likely also a factor.

The OFAH recently analyzed the government's own statistics on forest road closures, and the results of that analysis were even more alarming than we had anticipated.

Since 1997, about 584 kilometers of forest access roads have been constructed annually, but beginning in 2003, that average dropped to 478 kilometers, and by 2008, new forest road construction had declined to almost half of 1996 levels.

The cumulative impact of forest road closures between 1996 and 2008 is shocking. We have lost public access to 11,746 kilometers of forest access roads due to decommissioning or restrictions. This is the equivalent of more than six round trips between Toronto and Thunder Bay.

Broken down annually, we lost an average of 991 kilometers of forest road each year between 1996 and 2008. This is significantly longer than the trip from Windsor to Ottawa. Since 2003, the average net loss has soared to 1,572 kilometers—every year!

It doesn't end there. Since 1997, on average, 872 kilometers of forest access roads have been restricted by access controls, but that number is actually escalating. If we look at the restrictions put in place since 2003, the annual average is 1,560 kilometers.

Even those roads that are being maintained are not as accessible as in the past. Restrictions established in 2008 represented a more than 13-fold increase over restrictions established in 1997. Where does it end?

We have always advocated for science-based decision making and we acknowledge the value of diversity in Crown land use. We fully understand the need to protect sensitive habitat for fish and wildlife populations. That said, can a sound scientific case be made for 15 years of restrictions and closures of this magnitude?

For years the OFAH has provided input to forest management plans on behalf of anglers and hunters, and we have been voicing our concerns about planning proposals throughout the area where Crown forest management occurs. We aren't alone in our concern. Recently NDP MPP Kenora-Rainy River, Sarah Campbell wrote in the NetNews Ledger that access to lakes and undisturbed areas is a way of life for northern Ontario residents, and they are frustrated by "this two-class system of public access to Ontario's Crown lands and lakes."

The public roads we have been using for generations to take advantage of incredible hunting and fishing opportunities are being lost to us. If we do nothing, we are going to see more of the same. You can get involved by participating in forest management planning in your district (i.e. attend an open house or provide comments to an EBR posting) or by talking to your MPP. If you aren't already a member, join the OFAH and add your voice to the largest fish and wildlife conservation organization in the province. We owe it ourselves, our children and their children to make sure our government maintains and enhances public access to Crown land so that we can continue to enjoy our hunting and fishing traditions.

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- Wild Turkey Restoration
- Bring Back the Salmon (Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration)
- Elk Restoration
- OFAH/MNR Invading Species Awareness Program
- Community Stream Steward Program
- Ontario Invasive Plant Council

Education and Outreach efforts

- OFAH Get Outdoors Leadership Camps
- OFAH Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre and Shimano Fishing Pond
- OFAH TackleShare
- Ontario Family Fishing Events
- Ontario Hunter Education Program
- Ontario Wild Turkey Hunter Education Courses
- Ontario Angler Awards
- Women's Outdoor Weekends

Campaigning for

- Hunting and fishing opportunities
- Fair sharing of fish and wildlife resources
- Bill C-19 to scrap the long gun registry
- Effective cormorant control programs
- Species conservation and enhancement
- New Sunday gun hunting opportunities
- Better black bear management and an early season hunt
- Reasonable "discharge of firearms" bylaws
- Improved moose and deer tag allocation
- Recognition of the value of hunting and fishing

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