



# 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.

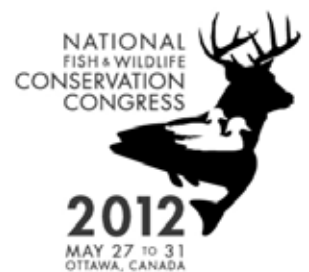
## Repeal of Gun Show Regulations

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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://facebook.com/OODMag)) friends and engaged 1,200 Twitter ([Twitter.com/OODMag](http://Twitter.com/OODMag)) followers. Remarkably, the OOD forum ([www.oodmag.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.ahradio.ca) and downloading the podcast. Angler & Hunter Radio is proudly sponsored by Canadian Tire, Yamaha, Valvoline, Thermacell, Alumacraft, and Tourism Toronto.