

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

# ANNUAL REPORT 2013



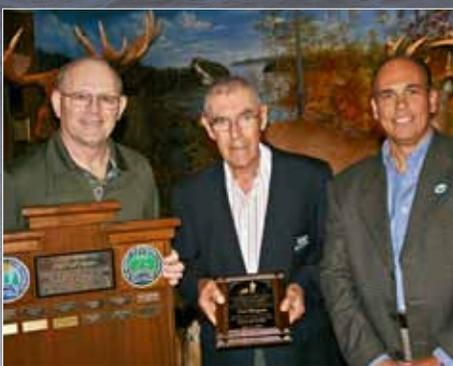
***The VOICE of Anglers & Hunters***



## 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

<b>Messages from the President and Executive Director .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>OFAH Board of Directors .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OFAH Head Office Staff .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Fish and Wildlife Conservation Management .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Fisheries Management .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Bring Back the Salmon (Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program)..12	
Community Hatchery Program .....	15
Community Stream Steward Program .....	16
<b>Wildlife Management .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Land Use Management and Access .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Invasive Species .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Invading Species Awareness Program .....	25
Ontario Invasive Plant Council .....	28
<b>Ontario Hunter Education Program .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Ontario Wild Turkey Hunter Education Program .....	30
<b>Education and Outreach .....</b>	<b>31</b>
OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre .....	31
<b>Membership .....</b>	<b>35</b>
85th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference .....	37
<b>Fundraising .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Government Affairs and Policy .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Communications .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Ontario OUT OF DOORS .....	45
Angler & Hunter Television .....	45
Angler & Hunter Radio .....	45
<b>OFAH President's Report .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>OFAH Zone Reports .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>OFAH Advisory Committee Reports .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Auditors' 2013 Financial Report .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>HOTLINE Editorials .....</b>	<b>64</b>

## **Annual Report Notice:**

This publication is subject to errors and omissions.  
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## Messages from the President and Executive Director



It has been an honour and privilege to serve as president of this wonderful organization for the past three years but, as they say, all good things must come to an end. It is now time to elect a new president to lead us forward. The one thing that has made the OFAH a great organization is the quality of people who sit on our board of directors and, of course, the very dedicated and hard-working staff at our head office. There are no “individuals” here — everything is truly a team effort and is something of which we should all be proud.

As usual, last year has presented us with some challenges, some ups and downs, wins and losses. Through it all, our board and staff have remained focused on our mission statement, which is “to ensure the protection of our hunting and fishing heritage, encourage safe and responsible participation, and champion the conservation of Ontario’s fish and wildlife resources that enrich our lives.” With our membership stable, and the number of affiliated clubs growing, the OFAH continues to be a major player and advocate for hunting and fishing on both the provincial and national stage.

Over the past year, we have seen some positive developments at both the federal and provincial levels of government. The province revamped the regulations to make hunting certain species easier, such as raccoon at night; to allow the use of leashed dogs to track wounded game; and replaced the former CFWIP program with funding through the OFAH for the community hatchery program. At the national level, we continued to advocate on behalf of OFAH members through our membership on the Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel (HAAP), the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee (CFAC) and two outdoor caucuses set up to advance the hunting and fishing agenda. The creation of the Recreational Fishery Partnership Program, which provided \$10 million in funding over two years in support of recreational fishing and fish habitat is a direct outcome of these efforts. That program has been an unqualified success and as of this writing, the government has announced a two year, \$15 million extension of the program.

Hunter education, which the OFAH delivers on behalf of the province, experienced its twelfth consecutive year of growth, with over 25,000 new hunters joining our ranks. The safety record that Ontario hunters enjoy is enviable, and it’s important as the number of students continues to increase that we remind them of the need for safety first, to ensure that we continue the outstanding safety record we’ve enjoyed in the past.

In closing, I thank everyone for the great privilege and honour of being president of the OFAH, and I look forward to working with our incoming president and the OFAH in the years ahead.



Bill Blackwell  
OFAH President



As I reflect on 2013, I’m extremely proud of our organization’s accomplishments. I am sure that after reading the pages of this report, you will agree that we are as committed as ever to our vision of the sustainable use of Ontario’s natural resources.

For almost 14 years, the OFAH has been tireless in our persistence to see the reinstatement of a spring bear hunt. Since 1999, no organization has spent more time or energy on this file than the OFAH, and it is finally paying off. The provincial government’s spring bear pilot program set to take place in eight northern wildlife management units this spring is a certain step in the right direction, and cause for celebration. We will continue to press forward on this issue, so that someday soon we will have a fully restored Ontario spring bear hunt.

This past fall, migratory bird hunters received great news with the creation of a mourning dove season in central and southern hunting districts. Many organizations, such as the OFAH, have pushed hard for this over the years and we are pleased that hunters now have another season to pursue in the outdoors.

The number of municipalities approving Sunday gun hunting now totals 159, thanks in large part to the efforts of the OFAH. We know hunters welcome this extra day to be afield with friends and family.

Our partnerships with the MNR, including the Invasive Species Awareness Program, the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, the Ontario Hunter Education Program and, most recently, the Community Hatchery Program, are achieving their goals and demonstrating the value of working together.

Whether it is through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, *Angler & Hunter Television*, *Angler & Hunter Radio* or the country’s leading outdoor magazine, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, the OFAH is constantly communicating the news and views that are important to anglers, hunters and conservationists.

Over the past 85 years, generations of outdoors enthusiasts have contributed to the Federation’s success — members, clubs, and zones, advisory committees and boards of directors, and of course, hard-working head office staff. Partners and sponsors have also provided immeasurable support. That grassroots loyalty, commitment, passion and dedication continues to make the difference, and with your support, we move into 2014 stronger than ever and ready to face the challenges that lie ahead.



Angelo Lombardo  
OFAH Executive Director

# OFAH Board of Directors



*\* denotes Director*

## Executive Committee

* President	Bill Blackwell	Port Elgin
* 1st Vice President	Glenn Rivard	Murillo
2nd Vice President	Kerry Coleman	Oxford Mills
* Treasurer	Frank Wick	Ajax
Executive Director	Angelo Lombardo	Peterborough
Past President	Rob Hare	Keswick

## Zone A

* Chair	Jeremy Funk	Sioux Lookout
* 1st Vice Chair	Bruce Hamilton	Fort Frances
2nd Vice Chair & Alt. Director	Dennis Kristjanson	Ear Falls
* Secretary/Treasurer	Roy DeCorte	Atikokan

## Zone B

* Chair	Debbie Rivard	Murillo
* 1st Vice Chair	Gilles Dumais	Thunder Bay
2nd Vice Chair & Alt. Director	Doug Rivard	Thunder Bay
* Secretary/Treasurer	Matt Wituluk	Gorham
2nd Alternate Director	Todd Robinson	Thunder Bay

## Zone C

* Chair	Robert Allen	Iroquois Falls
* 1st Vice Chair	David Allen	Larder Lake
2nd Vice Chair & Alt. Director	Robert Bartlett	Kapuskasing
Secretary/Treasurer & 2nd Alt. Director	Tom Woollings	Kirkland Lake
* Director	Peter Sword	New Liskeard

## Zone D

* Chair	Roy Polsky	Val Caron
* 1st Vice Chair	Felix Delongchamp	Lively
2nd Vice Chair & Alt. Director	Roy Warriner	Trout Creek
Secretary/Treasurer & 2nd Alt. Director	Debbie Halverson	Copper Cliff
* Director	Dan Polsky	Sturgeon Falls

## Zone E

* Chair	Gordon Trylinski	Pembroke
* 1st Vice Chair	Eric Smith	Arnprior
2nd Vice Chair & Alt. Director	Lori Pflanzner	Oshawa
Secretary/Treasurer & 2nd Alt. Director	Alan Fennell	Cannington
* Director	Brian Sheppard	Port Hope

*OFAH Board of Directors continued...*

# OFAH Board of Directors (continued)



## Zone F

* Chair	Ed Giffin	Inverary
* 1st Vice Chair	Kerry Coleman	Oxford Mills
2nd Vice Chair & Alt. Director	Wendell Crosbie	Balderson
* Secretary/Treasurer	Len Dickinson	Lanark
2nd Alternate Director	Merrill Elliott	Carleton Place

## Zone G

* Chair	Rob Hare	Keswick
* 1st Vice Chair	Stephen Huntley	Beeton
2nd Vice Chair & Alt. Director	Jim Kelly	Schomberg
* Secretary/Treasurer	Christine Finter	Schomberg
2nd Alternate Director	David Dixon	Port Perry

## Zone H

* Chair	Wayne Forgrave	Midhurst
* 1st Vice Chair	Jack Doherty	Owen Sound
2nd Vice Chair & Alt. Director	Michael Evers	Innisfil
* Secretary/Treasurer	Wally Motz	Kincardine
2nd Alternate Director	Glenn Meads	Priceville

## Zone J

* Chair	Jim Greenwood	Simcoe
* 1st Vice Chair	Brian Moore	Watford
2nd Vice Chair & Alt. Director	Cassandra Holtby	Chatham
* Secretary/Treasurer	Kathy Moore	Brantford
2nd Alternate Director	Randy MacPherson	Fergus

## Directors-at-Large

* Director-at-Large	Jim Magee	Drumbo
* Director-at-Large	Doug Ogston	Lively
* Director-at-Large	Scott Petrie	Simcoe
* Director-at-Large	Neil Wiens	Shuniah

## Provincial Directors-at-Large

* Provincial Director-at-Large	Gerry Haarmeyer	Mactier
* Provincial Director-at-Large	Tony Jackson	St. Pauls Station
* Provincial Director-at-Large	Jack Osadzuk	Owen Sound
* Provincial Director-at-Large	John Sullivan	Mount Brydges

# OFAH Head Office Staff



## Administration

Executive Director

Administrative Assistant

Administration Liaison

Member Services/Special Events/A&H TV & Radio Liaison

Special Advisor - Conservation Issues

Angelo Lombardo

Jane Beggs

Giselle Hatton

Melissa Taylor

Craig Selby

## Government Affairs and Communications

Manager of Government Affairs and Policy

Manager of Communications

Web Developer

Web Developer

Zone/Member & Club Services Liaison

Greg Farrant

Shannon Gutoskie

Jay Callaghan

Tim Gane

Brian McRae

## Finance and Accounting

Chief Financial Officer

Accounting Manager

Accounting Services Representative

Accounting Clerk

Human Resources Assistant/Planned Giving Officer

Sue MacCallum

Steve Doris

Diane McGrath

Shauna Giles

Sarah Shedden

## Ontario OUT OF DOORS

Publisher

Associate Publisher

Circulation/Financial Manager

Production Coordinator/Conference Coordinator

Subscriptions Clerk/Classified Sales Representative

Editor-in-Chief

Managing Editor

Art Director

Web Editor

National Sales Director

Sales Representative

Sales Representative

Angelo Lombardo

Steve Doris

Sheila Prophet

Mark Cousins

Janet Neale

Lezlie Goodwin

Ray Blades

Tamas Pal

April Scott-Clarke

Stephen Bates

Mike Miller

Linda Chick

## Fish & Wildlife Services

Provincial Manager of Fish & Wildlife Services

Assistant Manager of Fish & Wildlife Services/Fisheries Biologist

Land Use Specialist

Community Hatchery Program Coordinator

Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program Coordinator

Atlantic Salmon Habitat Technician

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Senior Wildlife Biologist

Invading Species Awareness Program Coordinator

Monitoring & Information Management Specialist/Aquatic IS Outreach Liaison

Terrestrial Invasive Species Outreach Liaison

Invasive Species Intern

Ontario Invasive Plant Council Coordinator

Ontario Invasive Plant Council Project Liaison

Community Stream Steward Program Coordinator

Dr. Terry Quinney

Matt DeMille

Chris Godwin

Shane Wood

Chris Robinson

Matt Burley

Dawn Sucee

Mark Ryckman

Sophie Monfette

Matt Smith

Alison Kirkpatrick

Emily Johnston

Hayley Anderson

Danielle Tassie

Lauren Sharkey

*OFAH Head Office Staff continued....*

# OFAH Head Office Staff (continued)



## Hunter Education

Hunter Education Program Manager  
Wild Turkey Hunter Education Program Coordinator  
Wild Turkey Seminar Registration Clerk  
Hunter Education Program Administrative Assistant

Dave Pind  
Randy Jennings  
Karla Lloyd  
Tammy Gunter

## Member Services, Corporate Relations and Marketing

Manager of Business Development & Corporate Messaging  
Graphic Artist  
Subscription Marketing Representative  
Conservation Outreach Programs Coordinator  
Conservation Education Coordinator  
Merchandise and Shows Liaison

Robert Pye  
Rachel Chatten  
Tracy Smith  
Rachel Pearson  
Meribeth Burley  
Tim Watts

## Office Services

Office Services Manager  
Office Services Facilities Maintenance Technician  
Office Services Facilities Maintenance

Denise Hetherington  
Dave Bonner  
Patrick Howe

## Membership Processing

Information Technology Manager  
Membership Services Coordinator  
Member Program Processing Clerk  
Individual Membership Clerk  
Membership Processing Clerk  
Membership Processing Clerk  
Club and Member Services Clerk  
Membership Processing Clerk  
Membership Processing/Shipping Clerk  
Membership Processing/Shipping Clerk

Mike McGrath  
Kimberly Staples  
Cathy MacKay  
Mary Ellen Hickson  
Gail Anderson  
Linda Hatton  
Nicole Bruce  
Krista Lake  
Kayla Stephenson  
Jenny Hennig

## TV and Radio

Executive Director  
*Angler & Hunter Television Host*  
*Angler & Hunter Radio Host*

Angelo Lombardo  
Mike Miller  
Tom Otto

### Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

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# Fish & Wildlife Conservation Management

Healthy fish and wildlife populations are the foundation of our outdoor heritage activities. In North America, anglers and hunters have always been at the forefront of fish and wildlife conservation management and the OFAH continues those traditions in Ontario. The management of our fish and wildlife resources has evolved into a highly technical and complex science-based system. The OFAH employs a team of highly trained professional staff to help ensure anglers and hunters have access to affordable and sustainable fishing and hunting opportunities. To represent the needs of anglers and hunters on behalf of OFAH members, staff have many important functions and duties.

## **A Champion for Conservation**

One of the ways we achieve our fish and wildlife conservation mandate is by reviewing, scrutinizing and providing comments on proposed projects, plans, policies, regulations and legislation that have the potential to impact the quality and quantity of fishing and hunting opportunities in Ontario. OFAH staff are involved with local and regional fisheries and wildlife management activities; however, we primarily focus our attention on provincial, national and binational scales. Working at these broader levels allows us to influence natural resource management policies and decisions in a way that will provide the greatest benefits for our members across the entire province. In addition, OFAH staff provide technical assistance on local fish and wildlife-related topics when requested by individual members, member clubs and OFAH Zones. Topics related to fisheries management, wildlife management, access to hunting and fishing opportunities, and the protection of our fish and wildlife resources from development and other threats (e.g. invasive species) are always on the OFAH radar.

## **The VOICE of Anglers and Hunters**

We often use public and stakeholder consultation opportunities to provide a voice for anglers and hunters, with the majority of our official comments on Ontario ministry-based postings occurring through the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry. We also provide comments using Environmental Assessment processes, federal government registries, and other public notices to represent the interests of our members. Whenever possible, the OFAH engages its members, member clubs and local representatives to further inform staff submissions, as well as encourage individual member input that will strengthen or complement OFAH initiatives. We accomplish this using many OFAH communications vehicles, such as Angler & Hunter Hotline in *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine, *Angler & Hunter Radio*, *Angler & Hunter Television*, media releases, social media and the OFAH website. When required, OFAH staff participate in, or even host public meetings to inform and engage our members on issues impacting their communities. There are anti-hunters, anti-anglers and animal rights extremists in Ontario working to diminish fishing and hunting opportunities, so the OFAH plays an important role in ensuring the voices of the angling and hunting community continue to be heard loud and clear by decision-makers.

## **A Leader in Advocacy**

The OFAH has a proud legacy and reputation of being at the forefront of natural resource conservation management in Ontario. Our successful track record of working with a diverse group of partners, including all levels of government, continues to afford us great opportunities to be involved with, and influence discussions related to fish and wildlife conservation management. We fully utilize these opportunities to advocate on behalf of our membership and our strong and effective advocacy role at municipal, provincial and federal levels contributes immensely to the overall success of the OFAH.

Local OFAH members and OFAH staff represent the interests of anglers and hunters on a wide variety of committees, boards and advisory groups discussing issues related to our fish and wildlife conservation mandate. This occurs in every corner of the province, throughout the Great Lakes Basin on both sides of the border and across Canada. For a complete list of committee representation by OFAH staff, please see the end of this section.

## **Restoring Fish and Wildlife**

The OFAH not only advocates for the conservation of our natural resources and protection of our hunting and fishing heritage, but also works with many partners on the ground to restore our fish, wildlife and their habitats. The work of the OFAH Community Stream Steward Program and Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program are on-the-ground examples of OFAH staff leading critical habitat restoration projects that directly benefit our fish and wildlife resources. The OFAH has made significant contributions to many conservation success stories in our 85 year history, including the reintroduction of wild turkeys and eastern elk to Ontario. The restoration of these species has provided important new hunting opportunities for Ontario residents. The OFAH builds on a restoration legacy through our program to bring back Atlantic Salmon to Lake Ontario.

## **A History of Partnerships**

The OFAH takes great pride in building strong partnerships. Our long-standing partnerships with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to deliver the Invading Species Awareness Program and Ontario Hunter Education Program show the success that can be achieved. In 2013, the OFAH and MNR partnered again to establish the Community Hatchery Program to provide targeted funding and technical support to community hatcheries. The OFAH is truly excited about this new partnership as it will help to ensure community hatcheries continue to play an important role in Ontario's fisheries management. All our partnerships are aimed at increasing the overall benefits for anglers and hunters in Ontario.

## **Investing in the Future**

The OFAH has always taken a science-based approach to natural resource management. This is not only evident in our fish and wildlife activities and advocacy efforts, but also our commitment

to assist in the education and training of Ontario's next generation of resource managers. For many years, the OFAH has awarded fish and wildlife research grants to graduate students who are carrying out research in fisheries, wildlife and conservation. In 2013, we were able to work with additional partners to secure funding for two more research grants. In 2014, the OFAH will award five research grants to deserving graduate students who are making valuable research contributions to Ontario's natural resources.

The year 2013 also marked the second year of a partnership with BrokerLink to offer an internship within OFAH's Fish & Wildlife Services department. This internship gives a recent post secondary graduate the opportunity to gain valuable experiences with many of OFAH's fish and wildlife programs.

In addition to investing in research and training that will improve the future management of our fish and wildlife resources, the

OFAH recognizes the importance of youth engagement in our outdoor heritage. The OFAH educates and engages youth through the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre, Get Outdoors youth conservation and leadership programs, and youth hunting events. Our investment in the future of fishing and hunting will take another step forward in 2014 with OFAH launching the National Archery in the Schools Program in Ontario.

The OFAH continues to be a leader in the field of fish and wildlife conservation, and we will continue these efforts on behalf of OFAH members to ensure that future generations enjoy our fishing and hunting heritage traditions.

The following sections of this annual report will provide greater details on the valuable contributions the OFAH has made to fish and wildlife conservation management in 2013.

## OFAH Staff Committee Responsibilities

OFAH staff are proud to serve on the following committees, councils, and boards (in addition to OFAH's own advisory committees- see pages 53 to 60) to promote the conservation of Ontario's fish and wildlife resources, and sustainable hunting and fishing opportunities.

*In alphabetical order:*

Algonquin Park Forest Certification Advisory Group;  
Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, Technical and Policy Work Groups;  
Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network;  
Black Sturgeon River Dam Structured Decision-Making Process;  
Boreal Landscape Guide Development Team;  
Brock Lands Master Plan Public Advisory Committee;  
Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Canadian Advisor on Recreational Fishing;  
Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network II;  
Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee;  
Cobourg Creek Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) Technical Team;  
Credit River FMP Implementation Committee;  
Economic Development Advisory Committee of the Municipality of Huron Shores, Elk Subcommittee;  
Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) 17 Advisory Council;  
FMZ 19 Advisory Council;  
FMZ 20 Advisory Council (west-basin);  
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement Advisory Panel;  
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Cities Initiative/Great Lakes Commission, Restoring the Natural Divide Advisory Committee;  
Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species, Information and Education Committee;  
Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) Aquatic Invasive Species Subcommittee;  
GLWQA Habitat and Species Subcommittee;

GLWQA Lakewide Management Subcommittee;  
Great Lakes Executive Committee to the GLWQA (observer status);  
Halton FMP Technical Committee;  
Humber Station Road Municipal Environmental Assessment Technical Advisory Committee;  
Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel;  
Invasive Species Centre, Board of Directors;  
Kawartha's Naturally Connected Scenario Planning Team;  
Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group;  
Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, Steering Committee Subcommittees;  
Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholders Committee;  
Lake Simcoe Lake Herring Working Group;  
McLaughlin Bay Restoration Strategy Steering Committee;  
MNR Bait Review Advisory Group;  
MNR Big Game Management Advisory Committee;  
MNR Hats for Hides Steering Committee;  
MNR Human-Wildlife Conflict Advisory Group;  
Ontario Biodiversity Council;  
Ontario Invasive Plant Council, Board of Directors;  
Ontario Trails Strategy Coordinating Committee;  
Ontario Waterfowl Advisory Committee;  
Ontario Wild Turkey Working Group;  
Pickering Airport Lands Restoration Opportunities Planning Team;  
Provincial Falconry Advisory Committee;  
Stakeholder Groups of the Kawartha Highlands;  
Sustainable Forestry Initiative External Review Panel; and  
Toronto Urban Recreational Fishing Plan Technical Team.



# Fisheries Management

*Healthy fish populations provide benefits for all Ontarians. In particular, Ontario's fisheries offer sustenance, recreation, tourism and enriching experiences through the heritage activity of fishing. Ontario's fisheries resources, especially in northern communities, are often linked with local economies, tourism and jobs. Working in partnership with all levels of government, nongovernment organizations and OFAH member clubs and individuals, the OFAH strives to sustain and enhance Ontario's fisheries to support high quality fishing opportunities.*

## **Binational**

### **Great Lakes Executive Committee**

The OFAH has "observer" status on the Great Lakes Executive Committee (GLEC) to the Canada-US Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA). The role of the GLEC is to help coordinate, implement, review and report on programs, practices and measures undertaken to achieve the purpose of the GLWQA. The GLEC meets biannually.

### **GLWQA Annex Subcommittees**

OFAH staff have representation on three of the Annex Extended Subcommittees: 1) Lakewide Management (Annex 2); 2) Aquatic Invasive Species (Annex 6); and 3) Habitat and Species (Annex 7). The Lakewide Management (Annex 2) Extended Subcommittee has discussed a proposed workplan which includes three key deliverables: 1) Establish Lake Ecosystem Objectives for the Great Lakes; 2) Develop an integrated Nearshore Framework; and 3) Develop/update and implement Lakewide Management Plans for all the Great Lakes.

Annex co-leads (Environment Canada and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) are required to provide an update on annex-specific implementation efforts to date as well as next steps related to time-bound commitments, at the Great Lakes Executive Committee (GLEC) meetings that take place in June and December.

### **Asian Carp**

The OFAH participates on numerous binational committees and project teams working to prevent Asian Carp from entering the Great Lakes. The OFAH has membership on the Great Lake Commission (GLC) Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance

Species; the Policy and Technical Committee of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee; and, the GLC and Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Cities Initiative co-sponsored Advisory Committee for Restoring the Natural Divide to prevent Asian Carp.

### **IJC - Lake Ontario-St Lawrence Plan 2014**

The OFAH has been participating for many years in the International Joint Commission's (IJC) process to change the water level management regime for the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River system and to incorporate fish and wildlife values as key criteria.

We provided support for Plan Bv7 last year, which was a more comprehensive approach than the current Plan 1958D, and strived to improve environmental conditions without causing any significant impacts to other interests (e.g. recreational boating, coastal property, and industry). We supported the implementation of Plan Bv7 which was based both on science and public input and designed to better address water level challenges, while providing new benefits (e.g. ecological, social, and economic). We also supported the IJC's proposal at that time to institute an adaptive management approach and believed appropriate effectiveness monitoring should be a critical component of Plan Bv7.

The IJC has since released Regulation Plan 2014, which is based on Plan Bv7 plus a provision for deviations to be made when Lake Ontario water levels are outside the range. The new plan is being proposed in response to concerns about the previously proposed Plan Bv7 from coastal and riparian homeowners both on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.

There is general support for Plan 2014 as it will still perform about as well as Plan B+ (which we previously supported adopting during the IJC's 2007 review) for the environment, and it performs better than B+ and much better than Bv7 alone for south shore erosion protection structures.

### **An Adaptive Management Plan for Addressing Extreme Water Levels across the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River System**

OFAH staff submitted a response to the IJC's Adaptive Management Plan for Addressing Extreme Water Levels across the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River System.

We see the adaptive management plan as an important tool for moving forward with more progressive management approaches

for the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River system (e.g. Plan Bv7) and trust the IJC will promptly implement these approaches, including the proposed adaptive management plan for addressing extreme water levels.

## **National**

### **Fisheries Act**

The OFAH continues to be involved with discussions related to the 2012 changes to the federal Fisheries Act. OFAH staff participated in workshops and meetings with other organizations, including the Canadian Wildlife Federation and OFAH's affiliates from across Canada. Since the changes to the Fisheries Act were announced, the OFAH has been advocating for an approach to policy development that will adequately protect and enhance recreational fisheries. The OFAH is particularly interested in determining how the new Fisheries Act will be implemented and enforced. The OFAH, along with other stakeholders, has experienced success in influencing the operational approach, as well as the development of regulations and policies under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Fisheries Protection Program. The OFAH will continue to work with our national and provincial partners, as well as DFO to ensure that our fisheries are well served by the changes to the Fisheries Act and DFO's Fisheries Protection Program.

### **The Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program**

The DFO announced the launch of the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (RFCPP) in 2013 to provide funding support for community-based restoration, rehabilitation and enhancement projects that benefit fish habitat, and recreational fisheries conservation. The OFAH Community Stream Steward Program received funding during the first year of the program. Following the initial call for applications, the OFAH expressed some concerns with restrictive criteria related to funding eligibility. Specifically, the requirement to have 50% matching funds from a "nongovernment source" prevented several projects from meeting the criteria. The OFAH offered a number of recommendations for modifying RFCPP criteria to address our concerns. The application period for the second year (2014-2015) of the RFCPP occurred in late 2013. Unfortunately, our recommendations to modify the funding eligibility criteria were not included. We will continue to stress the benefits of adjusting the current criteria to enable more worthwhile projects to be eligible in future years. Although the OFAH believes this funding program to be of great importance to recreational fisheries conservation, we will continue to work with the federal government to ensure DFO's Fisheries Protection Program as a whole provides the best possible protection of recreational fisheries. This includes the development of regulations, policies and guiding documents associated with recent changes to the Fisheries Act.

### **Experimental Lakes Area (OFAH Zone A)**

The Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) was a world-renowned DFO-run fisheries research facility in northwestern Ontario. Decades of aquatic research studies carried out at the ELA have provided significant and direct contributions to our understanding, management and enhancement of Ontario's freshwater fisheries. In 2012, the federal government announced the closure of the ELA. Since that time, the OFAH has advocated the importance

of the ELA to all levels of government. In 2013, we urged DFO to seek partnerships to maintain research capacity at the facility. We are extremely pleased that the Ontario Government announced their intention to step in with financial support to ensure the ELA will remain open.

### **Canada-Ontario Agreement for the Great Lakes**

The Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem (COA) is an important five year agreement between the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada. The COA outlines how the two governments will cooperate and coordinate their efforts to support the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem. COA also provides project funding to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to carry out work that will help meet Canada's obligations under the Canada-US Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Many OFAH programs receive COA funding that is used for restoration, education and outreach activities related to the Great Lakes. The OFAH has been advocating for both provincial and federal governments to increase their contributions to COA.

## **Provincial**

### **Black Sturgeon River (OFAH Zone B)**

For many years, the OFAH has been involved locally and provincially with the discussions surrounding the removal of the Camp 43 barrier dam on the Black Sturgeon River. In February 2013, the OFAH submitted a response to the EBR posting for the Initial Public Notice for the Decommissioning of the Camp 43 Dam on the Black Sturgeon River and Construction of a multi-purpose Sea Lamprey Barrier at Eskwanonwatin Lake. The OFAH recommended that additional analyses of potential trade-offs were necessary before proceeding further with the Environmental Assessment process. Further, we recommended that a structured decision-making process be used to evaluate which option provides a net benefit to the Black Sturgeon River, Black Bay of Lake Superior and the Great Lakes as a whole. The MNR listened to the concerns of the OFAH and other stakeholders by establishing a facilitated Black Sturgeon Structured Decision-Making Process. The OFAH was represented both locally (OFAH Zone B) and provincially (OFAH staff) during four, two-day meetings in Thunder Bay. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission, MNR, DFO, neighbouring US jurisdictions, First Nations, FMZ 9 and local stakeholders were also represented. The group developed a suite of potential management options and each participating stakeholder had an opportunity to provide comments, and select a preferred option. Given the current understanding of the potential costs and benefits of each management option, the OFAH's preferred solution was to include a trap and sort fishway at the Camp 43 dam site. In the absence of clear evidence to show that dam removal will accomplish fishery goals and objectives, the OFAH cannot support the removal of the Camp 43 dam at this time. The inclusion of a trap and sort fishway at Camp 43 would allow for passage of desired fish species upstream, and restrict invasive species (e.g. Sea Lamprey) passage upstream of the dam. In other words, this option would maintain Sea Lamprey control costs within the Great Lakes system and help with selective passage of fish without taking more drastic and permanent actions. A trap and sort fishway will also provide an opportunity to collect more information to fill data gaps to help

with long-term management of the Black Sturgeon River and Black Bay system. The outcomes of this process will be summarized by the facilitator and presented to the MNR, who will determine the next steps.

### **Lake Nipissing Walleye (OFAH Zone D)**

The MNR further restricted the Lake Nipissing Walleye recreational fishery in 2013. Angler limits were cut in half (from four to two for a sport licence and from two to one for a conservation licence). Unfortunately, the MNR did not impose any restrictions on Lake Nipissing's commercial gill net Walleye fishery. These restrictions had immediate and significant impacts on local tourism, as many clients cancelled their reservations upon hearing the news. No changes to the Lake Nipissing Walleye recreational fishing regulations are expected for 2014; however, there has been much speculation about what management action will be taken next, including potential options for size restriction changes. As long as there is an unregulated commercial gill net harvest of Walleye in Lake Nipissing, there are no size restrictions or other changes to the recreational fishing regulations that can help the population recover. The Nipissing First Nation reported a commercial gill net harvest of 26,000 kg of Walleye in 2012, which is lower than the previous five year average (40,075 kg), but remains well above the most risky harvest level (predicted by an MNR risk assessment) that is needed for a 10 or even 20 year recovery of the fishery to a "healthy" state. The average commercial gill net harvest in Lake Nipissing is more than double the level needed for recovery, whereas the recreational fishery continues to harvest at a level that is between ½ and ¾ below what is considered to be sustainable (i.e. well below any risk level). In addition to potential size-based regulations for the recreational fishery, the OFAH continues to seek answers from the MNR related to recent reports regarding to the commercialization of the Dokis First Nation Walleye harvest. If the reports are true, this commercialization could help to explain the continuing decline of the fishery despite recreational harvest reductions. The presence of two commercial Walleye fisheries on Lake Nipissing puts additional pressure on the resource and is compounded by the fact that there is limited harvest information available. How can we manage, let alone recover, a Walleye fishery in Lake Nipissing with such a high level of unreported commercial harvest? The OFAH will remain vigilant on these issues to make sure any new recreational fishing restrictions are scientifically justified and do not needlessly impact on anglers. We will continue to lobby the government to fully regulate the commercial gill net fishery for Walleye in Lake Nipissing.

### **Lake Simcoe (OFAH Zones G, H)**

The OFAH is represented by staff and local representatives on the Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee (LSFSC). In recent years, the OFAH has been advocating for a return of a Lake Herring recreational fishery in Lake Simcoe. Lake Simcoe anglers have been telling us for many years that Lake Simcoe could support an open Lake Herring fishery. Despite repeated recommendations by the OFAH and the LSFSC to open a limited recreational Lake Herring fishery, the MNR remained unsatisfied that the current knowledge of the fishery was sufficient to reopen a season. In 2012, the MNR established the Lake Simcoe Lake Herring Working Group to discuss this issue further. The working group was comprised of LSFSC representatives, including an OFAH biologist, as well as MNR technical staff. Through the LSFSC

and working group, the MNR made a commitment to develop a transparent process outlining the information requirements needed to open a Lake Herring season in Lake Simcoe. In 2013, significant efforts were made by MNR staff to develop evidence-based criteria and collect the appropriate information needed to make informed decisions using this tool. The OFAH is confident that MNR now has the necessary tools to make an evidence-based decision. We will continue to advocate for the return of a recreational Lake Herring fishery to Lake Simcoe as early as 2015.

### **Lake Erie (OFAH Zone J)**

The OFAH is an active participant in stakeholder consultation for Walleye and Yellow Perch management through the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group (LEPMAG). Following a thorough review and discussions regarding potential changes to the Walleye assessment model and harvest policy (used to determine the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for Walleye in Lake Erie), the OFAH and other LEPMAG members were given an opportunity to submit comments to the Lake Erie Committee (fishery managers from each jurisdiction). The LEC has made a decision to make changes to the Walleye assessment model and harvest policy that will begin to influence the Walleye TAC in Lake Erie in 2014. The new LEPMAG model is expected to evolve over time as we improve our understanding of the fishery. The OFAH will continue our involvement with the process to ensure our concerns are addressed and recreational anglers in Ontario are adequately represented. In 2014, the LEPMAG focus will turn to Yellow Perch; however, it is not expected that discussions will have an impact on the Yellow Perch TAC until 2015 at the earliest.

### **Greater GTA Urban Recreational Fishing Plan (OFAH Zones E, G & J)**

OFAH staff sat on the technical team for the Greater GTA Urban Recreational Fishing Plan, which met through the winter and spring. The plan extends as far west as the western border of Burlington. Previously it had only gone as far as the western border of Mississauga. Beginning in mid-October, five public meetings were held across the Greater GTA – Oshawa, Ajax, Pickering, Toronto, and Mississauga. At the public meetings, OFAH staff had display materials for: Atlantic Salmon restoration, Invading Species Awareness Program, Community Stream Steward Program (3/5 meetings), OFAH TackleShare, Ontario Family Fishing Events, Ontario Record Fish Registry, Ontario Angler Awards, and the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre.

### **Bait Review Advisory Group**

The OFAH has been asking for a provincial bait policy review in response to attempts by the MNR to establish regional policies on the use of bait. In 2013, the MNR Fisheries Policy Section initiated a bait policy review to examine the use and harvest of bait and its management framework in Ontario. The ultimate goal of the review is to develop a new system which better addresses ecological challenges associated with live bait use, while taking into consideration social and economic factors. The Bait Review Advisory Group (BRAG) will assist with the review and development of policy options during this bait policy review. BRAG consists of provincial stakeholders, such as the OFAH, with an interest in bait management. The OFAH participated in multiple meetings to discuss topics including angler use and movement of bait, as well as commercial and angler use and

movement of bait in protected areas. Through these meetings, the OFAH provided preliminary comments on potential management approaches, the criteria that MNR will use to evaluate management approaches, and the management options proposed to go forward for public consultation. Public consultation is expected to occur in early 2014 for those topics already discussed, while the BRAG discusses additional topics related to the commercial harvest of bait. The OFAH will continue to remain fully engaged throughout the review to ensure that our traditional use of bait for angling is not compromised during the development of policies.

## **Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) Advisory Councils**

The OFAH has been supportive of the development of Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) Advisory Councils to engage stakeholders in fisheries management decisions, and we value the continued opportunity for OFAH representatives to provide input into this process.

While councils have been established in FMZs 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, and 20, there are still several councils expected to form, including FMZ 7, 8, 15 and 16.

### **FMZ 4**

OFAH staff submitted comments on the Fisheries Management Plan for FMZ 4 (EBR# 011-7316). While we generally supported the recommendations proposed by the MNR (vetted through the FMZ 4 Advisory Council), we identified specific concerns with respect to proposed Northern Pike and Lake Trout regulation changes.

Following our submission to the draft Fisheries Management Plan for FMZ 4 we heard from a number of our members concerning the MNR's decision to further delay the removal of the exceptions to the fishing regulations on the Watcomb Chain of Lakes (Watcomb, Whiterock, Young and Elva Lakes). While we were pleased to see the removal of these unnecessary restrictions reflected in the draft FMP for FMZ 4, we did not agree with the proposed timeframe (delay) for implementation. Further, we strongly recommended that the exceptions on the Watcomb Chain of Lakes be removed by 2014.

### **FMZ 9**

The OFAH Zone B Executive and the Thunder Bay Salmon Association (TBSA) continue to have concerns over the future of Chinook Salmon stocking in FMZ 9, and consequently the operation of the TBSA Hatchery.

OFAH staff continue to work with the zone and club, and have encouraged the MNR to work with the TBSA to provide the club with greater certainty regarding their ongoing contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of a Chinook Salmon recreational fishery. The TBSA is committed to working with the MNR to establish clear stocking objectives and targets for Chinook Salmon.

### **FMZ 17**

OFAH head office staff continue to represent the OFAH on the FMZ 17 Advisory Council.

As part of the pilot put-grow-take (PGT) Walleye stocking program, OFAH staff joined the MNR, as well as members of the Crowe Lake Waterway Association and some other members of the FMZ 17 Advisory Council to stock 22,700 fall fingerlings into Crowe Lake. The program is aimed at diverting angling pressure

from lakes with self-sustaining Walleye populations, while enhancing angler opportunities in FMZ 17.

The MNR released a brochure inviting public comment (30 days) on proposed changes to coldwater fishing regulations for trout in FMZ 17. The proposed changes included catch and possession limits for Brook Trout and Brown Trout. The OFAH supported, in principle, a limit reduction for Brook Trout due to well-documented declines elsewhere within the Lake Ontario watershed; however, we recommended that any reductions must be accompanied by the management of stream habitat (as identified in the FMZ 17 Coldwater Stream Fisheries Management Strategy) and implementation of priority actions for protecting, maintaining, and enhancing Brook Trout habitat. The OFAH did not support a reduction in Brown Trout limit/possession in the absence of science and policy to justify changes to the current regulations.

### **FMZ 19 (OFAH Zone J)**

The OFAH is represented on FMZ 19 by staff and local representatives. A primary task of this committee continues to focus on reviewing the status of fish populations and discussing the allocation of fishery resources to the commercial and recreational fisheries. The OFAH is also represented on the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group (LEPMAG), a stakeholder group responsible for providing input and recommendations to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's Lake Erie Committee.

### **FMZ 20 (OFAH Zones E, G and J)**

OFAH head office staff continue to represent the OFAH on the FMZ 20 (West) Advisory Council, which met several times in 2013. This was the first year of new bass and Muskellunge regulations in the zone. In the early summer, the new Fish Community Objectives (FCOs) received final approval and became official policy. In the fall of 2013 the council began its next major initiative, building on the new FCOs, which is to assist MNR with the development of a draft stocking plan for the Lake Ontario watershed. The beneficial non-native (naturalized) species stocked for put-grow-take fisheries (Chinook and Coho Salmon, Rainbow and Brown Trout) are also required to undergo an Environmental Assessment screening, which will be covered under the stocking plan. The stocking plan is also an opportunity to review and optimize current stocking practices for those non-native species to increase and improve fishing opportunities. Public consultations will follow when the draft is ready for public review, likely in the spring of 2014.

## **Bring Back The Salmon**

### **Partnerships**



Ontario Power Generation (OPG) continued as the lead sponsor of the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program (LOASRP), for the third year of their current five-year commitment. The LCBO also remains a core sponsor of the program; their eighth year of involvement. The OFAH received \$65,000 from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation to support Atlantic Salmon habitat restoration projects; their third year as program partners. Additional private sector funding was received from TransCanada

Pipelines (\$9,500), and Greenside Up Environmental Services (\$1,000). The program was the successful recipient of \$25,000 from the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund to complete a second phase of the Brock Lands Reforestation Planting Plan in 2014.

A major event for the program in 2013 was the official re-opening of MNR's Normandale Fish Culture Station (FCS) after a three-year, \$18.5 million rebuild. The facility currently raises all of MNR's Atlantic Salmon (barring the broodstock still at Harwood FCS) as well as Chinook Salmon and Rainbow Trout for Lake Ontario. Program partners OPG, LCBO, Trout Unlimited Canada, DFO, and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) also attended the event with OFAH staff.

Two events for partners were held in the fall on Duffins Creek. In September, MNR and TRCA held an event at the Duffins Creek weir, which was attended by their staff, as well as the MNR deputy minister, OFAH staff, GLFC, and OPG staff.

In October, the OFAH hosted an event at TRCA's Rodar Property on Duffins Creek, with speeches, fish stocking, shrub planting, and a demonstration of electrofishing by MNR staff. At the event and speaking were TRCA, MNR, OPG, OFAH, and a local high school student. The Ajax mayor, a Pickering councillor, TRCA and MNR staff, OPG, LCBO, TD Canada Trust, Greenside Up Environmental, OFAH Zone G members, Fleming College staff, and more local students also participated.

### **Fish Production and Stocking**

In the fall of 2012, approximately three million green eggs were collected for 2013's production stocking. In early March, yearling stocking began from both the Normandale and Fleming facilities, and over eight weeks 87,000 Atlantic Salmon yearlings were stocked into four target tributaries. An additional 500,000 eggs were stocked directly into streams in January and roughly 65,000 non-feeding fry were stocked by the Belfountain and Islington club hatcheries in April.

During 15 days of April and May, approximately 423,000 feeding fry were stocked from Normandale FCS and Fleming College. The 57 classroom hatcheries the OFAH works with stocked their fry in the spring, in addition to another 45 classroom hatcheries mentored by Let's Talk Science, the Toronto Zoo, Ontario Streams, and MNR.

In October, 188,000 fall fingerlings were stocked from the Normandale FCS (MNR), Ringwood Hatchery (Metro East Anglers) and the Fleming College Hatchery. Normandale stocked 163,000 fish, Ringwood 17,000 fish, and Fleming College 8,000 fish. Roughly 48% of the fish were released into the Credit River and the remainder were split evenly between Duffins Creek and Cobourg Brook. Approximately 87-92,000 yearlings are expected to be stocked in March and April, 2014.

Production planning for 2013-15 occurred in September. In addition to eggs going to fish production at the various partner facilities, surplus eggs will be available to stock directly into streams in January, albeit in smaller numbers than previous years. In total, all facilities combined have a production target of 550,000 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.

The three-year-old broodstock (all strains) had their identification microchips (Passive Induced Transmitter tags) implanted

in September at the Harwood Fish Culture Station. Some broodstock are also now housed at Normandale, as the transfer from Harwood is now underway, but will take several years as most new broodstock are being raised at Normandale rather than being transferred at an older age.



### **Habitat Restoration and Water Quality Enhancement**

The past year was a busy one for habitat projects, with 17 completed and several large ones planned for 2014. As mentioned previously, we had secured \$25,000 from the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund in late 2012 for a pond decommissioning project on the Brock Lands (Duffins Creek), but permitting delays required the project to be postponed until 2014. To prepare for our work on the Brock Lands, in the winter Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program staff mentored a group of four Ecosystem Management students from Fleming College on a Credit-For-Product project to design a Reforestation Planting Plan for the Brock Lands project area. Four key planting areas were identified and price quotes for materials were sourced out.

Habitat projects began with a pre-Earth Week clean-up event at Brock Ridge Community Park, Pickering, on April 16th – the second such event for our program on Duffins Creek. Once again, OPG Pickering Nuclear Plant supported the event with student busing, a BBQ, and volunteers. A group of 38 Holy Redeemer Catholic Elementary School students cleaned up garbage along the stream shoreline in the park. Over 1.3 km of stream and parts of the park's trail system were cleaned by the students with the assistance of team leaders from OPG, TRCA, Fleming College students, and OFAH staff.

Later that week the program held its seventh annual Earth Week event in Cobourg, where 16 students and two teachers from Cobourg East High School cleaned the Cobourg Conservation Area of litter. By participating in a community-based improvement project, students learn the importance of a clean stream for both their health and the inhabitants of the stream. Also as part of the event, nine students from Cobourg West High School planted 50 potted shrubs along the stream edge to provide root structure to the bank and absorb salt and potential contaminants from the nearby road. Fleming College students and Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority staff also assisted with the event. Both Earth Week events concluded with the students stocking yearling Atlantic Salmon from Fleming College into the rivers – 304 into Duffins Creek, and 600 into Cobourg Brook.

In late May, we hosted a small tree planting (not included in our project count) in the Belfountain Conservation Area (Credit River) with material donated by Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) to the Dufferin-Northern Peel Anglers and Hunters Association. The planting was done by students from St. Leonard and St. Benedict Catholic Elementary Schools after they released the Atlantic Salmon fry they had raised in the classroom.

OFAH staff worked closely with our lead habitat sponsor, TD Bank, to organize and host five TD Tree Day events in the fall across the five LOASRP target tributaries; our second year partnering with TD on their annual initiative.

***The TD Tree Day events we coordinated with them were:***

- September 14 – Terra Cotta Conservation Area - Jacquith Property/Credit River (175 trees, 16 volunteers, 48 hours)
- September 15 – Lowville Park/Bronte Creek (55 trees & 117 shrubs, 28 volunteers, 56 hours)
- September 28 – Albion Hills Conservation Area/Humber River (560 trees, 50 volunteers, 200 hours)
- September 29 – Cobourg Conservation Area/Cobourg Brook (12 trees & 134 shrubs, 35 volunteers, 70 hours)
- October 5 – Greenwood Conservation Lands - Brock Lands North/Duffins Creek (650 trees, 70 volunteers, 105 hours)

***Other habitat projects this fall were:***

- October 11 – Brock Lands North (Duffins Creek) wetland planting with 72 Fleming College students planting 75 trees and 1,225 shrubs
- October 18 – Rodar Property (Duffins Creek) riparian planting of 50 shrubs as part of our event with program partners
- October 23 – Albion Hills Conservation Area (Humber River) buffer expansion planting of 90 trees
- October 29 – Upper Credit Conservation Area planting of 75 trees and 85 shrubs with 8 staff and students from Archbishop Romero Catholic Secondary School
- November 26 – Albion Hills Conservation Area Buffer Expansion Planting Part 2 (300 trees, 63 volunteers and 189 hours) with Palgrave Public School and Ontario Streams
- November 28 – Greenwood Conservation Lands Rodar Property Field Planting (370 trees, 78 volunteer and 234 hours) with Vimy Ridge Public School and the Community Stream Steward Program (CSSP)
- December 3 – Duffy’s Lane Live Willow Shrub Staking (750 shrubs, 1 volunteer and 3 hours) with Ontario Streams and CSSP
- December 3 – Albion Hills Conservation Area Wetland Live Willow Shrub Staking (250 shrubs, 1 volunteer and 1 hour) with Ontario Streams and CSSP

Transport Canada announced that the Pickering Airport would proceed with an estimated opening in 2027, and partitioned the existing Pickering Airport Lands. One portion has been added to the Rouge River National Park, another portion retained for the airport, and the third portion identified as being open for development. The latter two portions consist of significant portions of the upper reaches of Duffins Creek, and the “developable lands” are much of the river’s headwaters.

The OFAH and program partners have always recognized the potential likelihood of the airport proceeding, but were aware the footprint would likely be smaller than what was envisioned at the



time the lands were purchased in the 1970s. We are concerned about the additional development proposed outside of the airport, and provided comments to Transport Canada. We recommended that ideally these lands would be set aside for agricultural development and naturalization (including fishing opportunities) but if industrial/commercial development should occur, the OFAH requested the highest standards of protection for the watershed. We received a response in early December that the OFAH would continue to be consulted during the long-term planning process that will occur over the next decade.

Notwithstanding those long-term concerns, we continue to work well with Transport Canada staff on the Airport Lands. We applied to the federal Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (RFCPP) for a pond decommissioning project on the property, in partnership with Transport Canada and TRCA. We anticipate more partners will join in on this major effort, which is one of the largest projects the program has undertaken in its history.

**Research and Assessment**

The OFAH did not conduct any assessment in 2013, but still participates on the Science Team. MNR (Lake Ontario Management Unit, Aurora District), CVC, TRCA, and the NSERC Strategic Grant researchers are currently undertaking the majority of research and assessment.

With Canada-Ontario Agreement funding, MNR and CVC were again able to assess smolts on the Credit River from April to June using the rotary screw trap (numbers not yet available). The TRCA and MNR were able to get the resistance board weir installed in Duffins Creek in early May, and it began operations in June. Over the first 18 days, with some challenges as the new equipment was operated for the first time, six adult Atlantic Salmon were captured, processed, and released upstream. The weir was shut down during the warm weather in July and faced new challenges when it re-opened as the density of Chinook Salmon filled the trap and sections of stream below the weir. Eventually, the decision was made to only partially block fish passage with the weir, allowing excess fish past while trapping some, leading to an early estimate of a 10% fishing efficiency. During that time, at least three unmarked adult Atlantic Salmon were reported by anglers upstream. A full report on the 2013 assessment programs will be in the Lake Ontario Management Unit annual report.

MNR’s Credit River crew has continued operation of the Streetsville and Norval fishways to monitor for returns; nine adults were captured at Streetsville (which is operated for a shorter period now that the Norval fishway is in place). At Norval, 12 adult Atlantic

Salmon were captured; one being a recapture from Streetsville, and the other 11 having passed Streetsville while the fishway was open. There is also some likelihood that returning adults, having passed Streetsville, find spawning habitat below Norval and do not move further upstream (e.g. the eight fish from Streetsville not captured at Norval).

In October, an MNR crew working with CVC, electrofished the Credit River's spring stocking sites to assess in-stream survival and growth rates. They also marked the parr to assess survival to spring 2014, when the fish will be observed passing through the rotary screw trap located downstream in the river. Both assessment projects were funded through Canada-Ontario Agreement monies acquired by the Lake Ontario Management Unit.

The Science Team met, working towards a series of workshops in the winter and spring of 2014, the first one including participation from American researchers. OFAH staff are helping to organize the workshops, which are led by MNR and funded through the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

### **Education and Outreach**

Fifty-three classes and four education centres reared Atlantic Salmon in classroom hatcheries under OFAH head office guidance; up from 49 units in 2012. The geographic range was from Hamilton to Kingston. An additional 18 units were administered by the Toronto Zoo, and McMaster University's Let's Talk Science node oversaw another 12. The MNR (Aurora District) and Ontario Streams had 15 units in place, for an overall total of 102 units. Eggs were delivered from January to early February, and 34 presentations to classes/schools were made from February through April.

Again this year, to support the hatchery at the OPG Pickering Nuclear Plant, approximately 50 grade 6 students from a local school were invited to hear a presentation on the program, learn about other stewardship opportunities, and watch the eggs being loaded into the hatchery. Local media were out to cover the event and the program received additional media attention during the classroom hatchery stocking period, including Durham CHEX, CITY-TV, CBC TV (Toronto), and local newspapers.

Staff have made additional presentations to the Town of Ajax's Environmental Advisory Committee, the Ontario Society for Environmental Education, Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission, an Ocean Wise fundraising dinner, Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, TRCA Board, second year Ecosystem Management students, "Wild Toronto" course students at the University of Toronto, and the Centre for Social Innovation's Annex location as part of their environmental awareness program. Additional educational presentations were made to Brookside Youth Correctional Institute staff (twice), Equinox Holistic School grade 4 students, and students in the East Elgin Environmental Leadership Program. The program had displays at the OFAH conference, the Toronto Zoo's "Mad About Fishes" event on the Civic holiday long weekend, Trout Unlimited Canada Ted Knott Chapter's Family Fun Day in Lowville Park, Burlington, and five public meetings for the Greater GTA Urban Recreational Fishing Plan. A newsletter was also completed in the summer.

The program continues to be much more active in social media (Facebook, Twitter): [www.facebook.com/ontariosalmon](http://www.facebook.com/ontariosalmon) and <http://twitter.com/ontariosalmon>. The Facebook account recently passed 500 "Likes" (567 currently) and the Twitter account has 167 followers. The program will continue posting updates and

announcements of activities on both sites.

In the fall, independently of each other, two documentary filmmakers got in touch with us to film various aspects of the program, one on Duffins Creek, the other on the Credit River. To date they have filmed fish stocking, assessment, habitat restoration, and interviews with staff.

Other media coverage in 2013 included the re-opening of Normandale being profiled in the Toronto Star and local papers, and our two fall events received coverage in local Ajax/Pickering press and the local (Durham CHEX) television station. A number of other articles mentioning the program were published in the Toronto Star over the summer.

### **Community Hatchery Program**



In March 2013, the OFAH, in partnership with the MNR, launched the Community Hatchery Program (CHP). This new program will grant funding to eligible community hatcheries and provide strategic and targeted support for

Ontario's community fish culture and stocking efforts. The MNR will provide the OFAH \$250,000 annually over the next three years to administer this new program. The OFAH is truly excited to now offer a dedicated program that will sustain and enhance community-based fish culture operations in Ontario.

The OFAH hired a CHP coordinator to lead the delivery of this new program in May 2013. The CHP coordinator, in collaboration with the MNR, developed administrative and funding allocation processes for the initial year of the CHP operation. These processes involved the development of an application-based method to allocate funds to volunteer-based community hatcheries. Application packages were directly mailed to the 56 known community hatcheries across the province in June. A CHP Question and Answer document was included in the package to provide clarity to community hatcheries on how the CHP will transition from the former Community Fish and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP), and what roles and responsibilities the OFAH and MNR will each play in this new program.

In the program's initial year of operation, the OFAH received CHP funding applications from 42 community hatcheries rearing nine fish species (Walleye, Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Chinook Salmon, Brook Trout, Atlantic Salmon, Coho Salmon, Lake Trout, and Muskie) and projected to stock millions of fish (various life stages). Community hatcheries collectively applied for a total of \$204,637, with individual funding requests ranging from \$64 to \$23,000. The CHP awarded \$143,946 in total funding to community hatcheries in 2013 with individual hatcheries receiving an average \$3,428. Nine of the community hatcheries that received CHP funding in 2013 were not recipients of CFWIP funding in 2012.

The OFAH produced a CHP questionnaire to facilitate program feedback from community hatcheries regarding administration processes, financial details, technical support, fish production, community of practice, annual workshop, and licensing/permitting. The feedback gathered from the CHP questionnaire will provide valuable information and will be used in the development

of the program moving forward. In addition to obtaining feedback through the questionnaire, the CHP coordinator has visited a few hatcheries and participated in a production planning meeting and wild egg collections. Visiting and working with community hatcheries has further demonstrated the important role of community hatcheries in local communities and their contributions to local fisheries.

The OFAH is beginning to profile the CHP to highlight the importance of these community-based hatcheries in the conservation and management of local fisheries. The OFAH has developed a CHP webpage ([www.ofah.org/CHP](http://www.ofah.org/CHP)), designed a CHP graphic, and promoted the program through various media avenues.

## Community Stream Steward Program

### Program Evolution



Throughout 2013 the Community Stream Steward Program (CSSP) experienced a number of changes in operation and structure due to issues with funding availability and staffing. The program entered a temporary non-operational state in January with the loss of key funding sources, and a lack of available replacements. Key projects

were wrapped up, and the program continued to provide only existing resources and materials to partners as requested.

In April and May, the program became operational again with the approval of funding applications submitted in late 2012, and the development of a targeted outreach campaign in partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. A program coordinator was employed in May and an intern was hired from September to December to assist with project implementation.

A few key projects have been completed this year, but a key focus has been finding suitable funding and attempting to ensure the long-term longevity of the program. There was minimal monitoring or outreach education completed this year, with the exception of a successful Landowners' Guide to Ponds workshop held in November at the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) offices in Port Hope. This workshop, hosted in partnership with Ducks Unlimited and GRCA, drew 30 landowners and led to potential site visits and restoration projects in the area.

### DFO Funding

In August, the Community Stream Steward Program was chosen as one of the recipients of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Recreational Fisheries Community Partnership Program (RFCPP) funding. This contribution allowed us to complete a variety of fish habitat improvement projects in Northumberland, Peterborough, and Hastings counties, and provided the funding for an intern throughout the fall. Projects completed under this grant included two bank stabilizations, multiple planting projects, one fencing project, and two bed-level stream crossings.

### Harper Park Project

In September a large coldwater stream restoration project that had been in the planning stages for over a year, was realized in Peterborough. A section of Harper Creek located in a small municipal park was restored in partnership with the Harper Park Stewards and Otonabee Conservation. Work took place over three

project days and consisted of stabilizing the collapsing stream banks, planting native trees and shrubs, and removing garbage and debris from the area. A large number of volunteers came out to take part in the event, and efforts were featured in a segment on CHEX news. This project was funded through the MNR Land Stewardship and Habitat Restoration Program.

### TRCA Duffins Creek Equine Project

In May, the CSSP began an outreach program in partnership with TRCA to target small horse farm owners within the Duffins Creek watershed. This project was funded by the Ministry of the Environment in an effort to decrease the levels of organic pollution in the creek thought to come from this type of farm, due to the minimal regulations and incentives aimed at this demographic.

Outreach efforts began in August with a door-to-door campaign. All identified farms with less than six horses were approached, and landowners were provided with educational stewardship materials, an offer for a free site visit, and information on available incentives. Interested landowners participated in a tour of their farm with CSSP staff to identify potential project sites or changes in operation practices that could lessen their impact on adjacent waterways, while meeting the landowners' objectives. There has been discussion around continuing this project at a less intensive level in future years to build trust and participation in the watershed.

### Funding

CSSP activities were funded this year through a variety of sources in addition to the DFO and TRCA grants. Wildlife Habitat Canada continues to be a strong financial supporter of the program and provided funding for projects, staff support, workshops, and operations. The MNR Land Stewardship Habitat Restoration Program also provided funding to allow the program to complete coldwater stream enhancement projects throughout our operational area. While some of the local stewardship councils that supported the program in past years are no longer in operation, Northumberland Stewardship has provided significant financial support in 2013.

Approval was received in October for the CSSP application to the Lake Simcoe/Georgian Bay Clean-up Fund, which will support the completion of stream stewardship projects on agricultural properties in the south and west sections of the Lake Simcoe watershed. In addition, workshops and training opportunities will be provided to landowners and community members in this area, hosted in partnership with other stewardship groups in the area. This grant will continue until March 2016, and provides support for salary and operations.

The program continues to seek more sustainable funding options including private sources, and multi-year grants in an effort to ensure the long-term sustainability of operations.



# Wildlife Management

Photo: James Markou

*Healthy wildlife populations provide benefits for all Ontarians. In particular, Ontario's wildlife offer sustenance, recreation and enriching experiences through traditional activities such as hunting and trapping. Ontario's wildlife resources, especially in northern communities are often closely linked with local economies, tourism and jobs. Working in partnership with all levels of government, nongovernment organizations and OFAH member clubs and individuals, the OFAH strives to sustain and enhance Ontario's wildlife populations to support high quality hunting opportunities.*

## **Moose Management**

### **Moose Resource Reports**

MNR released a set of 67 Moose Resource Reports. The reports provide WMU-specific information about moose biology/ecology, hunter interest and harvest, and habitat. OFAH staff reviewed each report and provided feedback to the MNR.

### **Moose Management Presentation**

We made a presentation on moose management in Ontario at the OFAH Zone E and H annual general meetings. The presentation provided a detailed summary of the moose tag calculation process, an examination of the pros and cons of the current draw system, and a discussion of potential future changes to the moose hunting regime in Ontario.

### **MNR's Provincial Big Game Management Advisory Committee**

The OFAH is a member of MNR's Provincial Big Game Management Advisory Committee (BGMAC). BGMAC met only once in 2013 as opposed to the usual two meetings. The committee met in March to discuss the draft moose tag allocations. The OFAH reviewed the proposed allocations and provided our input. While we were successful in convincing MNR to increase tag allocations in certain areas, many of our suggestions were not accepted.

The committee was also given an update on the Moose Project. MNR has developed and distributed a questionnaire to quantify the socio-economic impact of moose hunting in Ontario.

Respondents were asked to estimate their expenditures related to moose hunting, preferred equipment and hunting methods, the importance of various types of hunting opportunities, and their opinion on the health of the moose herd in the WMUs where they hunt. The questionnaire also proposes various hypothetical regulatory changes intended to increase moose populations over the next 10-15 years. We are pleased that MNR is finally beginning to quantify the socio-economic importance of moose hunting and opinions of moose hunters. Unfortunately neither the OFAH nor BGMAC were afforded an opportunity to provide input to the structure or content of the questionnaire.

MNR's Northeast Region (NER) has developed and distributed a region-specific moose management questionnaire to hunters who hunted moose in a Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) within the NER during 2012. The Northeast Region is by far the most popular region for moose hunters, and experiences the highest application volume. It also experiences a consistently high and increasing level of calf harvest. The content of this questionnaire is specific to the problems that moose populations experience in NER. It does not attempt to quantify the socio-economic importance of moose hunting, but rather surveys hunter support for various regulatory changes to moose hunting in those WMUs. Examples included a calf tag allocation, shorter calf and/or adult seasons, shorter overall seasons, and various combinations of these. Again, we are disappointed that neither BGMAC nor OFAH were given the opportunity to provide input to the content of this questionnaire. To date, we have not seen the results of either questionnaire.

## **Elk Management**

The OFAH was invited to participate as a member of the Elk Subcommittee of the Economic Development Committee of the Municipality of Huron Shores. The subcommittee met in April 2013 to discuss ongoing elk-landowner conflicts in the Lake Huron North Shore (LHNS) restoration area. The MNR's Blind River area supervisor provided the committee with details about the elk trap and transfer program that occurred in February. The goal was to remove 20 elk from areas of intense conflict to an area north of Elliot Lake, where 18 elk were transferred in 2004. One day prior to beginning the capture program, a wet snow storm blanketed the area and created a hard crust on top of the existing snow. Over the course of three days, 10 elk were net-gunned and handled by the contractors. Two of these elk were asphyxiated by the net and

one elk died during its first day in the temporary holding pen. The cause of death was determined to be 'major muscle injuries' due to the stress and difficulty of running through deep snow that is covered in a hard crust. All surviving elk were released in April. The OFAH supported the distribution of harassment permits but not kill permits. Furthermore, we did not support the suggestion to transfer elk to another elk restoration area or into a completely new area. The OFAH recommended that the MNR prioritize the development of a population objective for the LHNS elk herd as the first step in calculating the sustainable harvest level that would be needed to establish a licensed hunt.

In June, we received word that farmers in LHNS had invited members of the local First Nation community to harvest elk on their properties. MNR confirmed that at least one elk had been harvested by an Aboriginal hunter. The elk was initially seized by a conservation officer, but was subsequently returned with no charges laid. We are awaiting further details.

At the invitation of the Sudbury Elk Restoration Committee (SERC), we attended a meeting between SERC and CN Rail executives to discuss potential methods to mitigate elk-train collisions in the Nipissing/French River (NFR) elk restoration area. We were successful in convincing CN Rail to establish a reporting protocol for all big game species struck by trains on CN-owned railway lines. The NFR area was chosen as the location for the pilot program due to the significant number of wildlife-train collisions.

In October, we contacted Bancroft District MNR to request an expansion of elk hunting opportunities in that area. Specifically, we requested an increased tag allocation for the current gun hunt as well as a one week bows-only season immediately prior to the gun hunt. MNR agreed to discuss the 2014 elk tag allocation with OFAH sometime in early 2014.

## **Bancroft-North Hastings Elk Hunt**

### **Draw**

Number of applicants: 2,286

Number of tags allocated: 70 (16 bull and 54 cow)

Number of tags purchased: 64 of 70 (6 cow tags not purchased)

Number of licenses purchased: 185 of an eligible 214

Distribution of Groups: 21% individuals, 10% pairs, 10% groups of 3, 59% groups of 4

### **Harvest**

A total of 23 elk were harvested in 2013; 9 bulls and 14 cows

All elk harvested were from Area 2 (WMU 57), and Areas 5 and 6 (WMU 61).

## **White-Tailed Deer Management**

### **Controlled Deer Hunt**

The OFAH requested that MNR complete a review of the controlled deer hunts in southern Ontario. We have collected comments and concerns from zones and will begin discussions with MNR early in 2014. The discussions will attempt to identify inconsistencies between WMUs and determine if controlled hunts are still required in many WMUs.

## **Woodland Caribou**

The OFAH submitted comments on the draft Range Management Policy in Support of Woodland Caribou Conservation in Ontario.

We reiterated our longstanding concerns with preliminary range boundaries and the prioritization of woodland caribou habitat management over other species (e.g. moose) in areas that will likely never support caribou again.

## **Black Bear Management**

We requested that the MNR analyze the potential for expanding black bear hunting opportunities into WMUs that do not currently have a fall bear season.

The provincial government announced the partial re-instatement of the spring bear hunt as a two-year pilot project in select northern communities. The OFAH believes that the proposed partial re-instatement of a spring bear hunt in some northern communities is a step in the right direction; however, we maintain our position that a full return of the spring bear hunt across bear country in Ontario is needed. The best management for Ontario's black bear resource requires a spring and fall hunt. The OFAH will work hard to ensure our members take full advantage of the partial spring bear hunt in 2014 and continue to advocate for the full return of the spring bear hunt across Ontario's bear country.

## **MNR's Modernization of Approvals**

As part of its three-year transformation plan, the MNR proposed a policy framework aimed at improving service delivery and reducing administrative burdens faced by individuals, businesses and government. The framework would also allow the MNR to refocus on its core mandate. To aid in this transformation, regulatory amendments were made to update requirements for approvals for various fish and wildlife-related activities under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. All of the proposed changes were accepted and will come into effect on January 1, 2014. Many of the regulatory amendments had been requested by the OFAH and will result in many favourable outcomes for OFAH members and clubs.

Resident hunters no longer require a Licence to Hunt Raccoon at Night or a Licence to Chase Raccoon at Night or Fox, Coyote or Wolf During the Day. Resident hunters can now export a black bear, white-tailed deer or moose that was legally harvested in Ontario without obtaining a permit.

Municipalities no longer require MNR approval to employ hunters to harvest problem furbearers. Fish and game clubs that serve wild harvested fish and game at charity events are no longer required to obtain a permit from MNR, but must continue to follow requirements identified by the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

Hunters and trappers no longer need a permit to send pelts to a tanner or to sell live furbearers to facilities that are legally permitted to purchase them. A permit is no longer required for businesses to buy or sell the hides of certain game mammals and cast antlers.

Individuals are now allowed to release up to 10 pheasants or chukar partridges on their own property for immediate put and take hunting activities during the open season without obtaining MNR authorization and can release birds to support dog training and field trial activities during the closed season.

Finally, individuals who acquire the carcass of certain game and furbearing mammals and wish to keep it for personal use must now register the possession through a registry system instead of obtaining a permit from MNR.

## Protection of Property Agent Authorizations

In 2012 the OFAH requested that the MNR develop a proposal to amend Ontario Regulation 665/98 (Hunting), 132 (1) to include licensed small game hunters to the classes of agents prescribed in the regulation. Under the Modernization of Approvals, amendments were made to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act under the Protection of Property 'Agent Authorizations' to allow licenced hunters to act as agents (at the request of a landowner) to harass or dispatch certain species of wildlife in protection of property.

### Use of Leashed Dogs for Big Game Retrieval

The OFAH initiated discussions with the MNR regarding the potential for changes to the regulations governing the use of dogs for big game retrieval. Subsequent to those discussions, the MNR posted a proposal in 2012 to allow for the use of leashed dogs to track and recover big game in WMUs where hunting with dogs is not currently permitted. The OFAH supported the proposal and was pleased when MNR made the amendment to Ontario Regulation 665/98 (Hunting) under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act in 2013.

### Sporting Dog Brochure

OFAH staff revised the Sporting Dog brochure. The brochure promotes the responsible uses of sporting dogs in the field and is available online ([www.ofah.org/hunting](http://www.ofah.org/hunting)).

### Hats for Hides

The Hats for Hides program underwent significant changes in 2013, as it was administered entirely by BRT Provisioners. Unfortunately, the program is no longer accepting bear hides. Despite being a member of the Hats for Hides Steering Committee, the OFAH was not made aware of these changes prior to their implementation. We wrote to MNR to express our disappointment at being excluded from the process.

### MNR's Human-Wildlife Conflict Advisory Group

The OFAH participates as a member of the MNR Human-Wildlife Conflict Advisory Group (HWCAG) which met three times in 2013. Topics of discussion included the impacts of wind power development on wildlife, game farming, and invasive species in Ontario. The OFAH went on record with the following positions: the cervid farming industry should be phased out with fair compensation for farmers; MNR must be more accountable when cervids escape or are released from farms; provincial and federal governments must make an effort to gather accurate statistics about the game farming industry, particularly the number of farms in existence; and, the MNR has been negligent in its duty to track, compile and distribute statistics about the number of cervid escapes that occur annually in Ontario.

### Chronic Wasting Disease

In late 2012, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) released a draft document entitled "Proposed Zoning Approach for the Control of Chronic Wasting Disease in Canada." The OFAH sent a letter to the minister of agriculture and agri-food outlining our concerns with the proposed approach and with the membership of CFIA's CWD Task Force (for which representation was heavily weighted in favour of the cervid farming community). We recommended that CFIA prohibit the interprovincial movement of live cervids except for the purposes

of science, research, and conservation. In mid-October, the CWD Task Force released the results of its discussions, "A Discussion of Options for Canada's Next Captive Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Control Program." Not surprisingly, elimination of the cervid farming industry was not considered by the Task Force. We supported the Canadian Wildlife Federation's letter of response to CFIA stating that the considered options are wholly inadequate to stop the spread of CWD in Canada.

## Wild Turkey



### Wild Turkey Management

The OFAH participates as a member of the Ontario Wild Turkey Working Group (WTWG), an advisory group to the MNR. The OFAH has made recommendations to the MNR for expanding both spring and fall turkey hunting opportunities.

### Youth Wild Turkey Heritage Day

Recognizing the need to promote hunting activities for the next generation, the OFAH recommended that the MNR designate the Saturday before the regular opening of the spring wild turkey season as a Youth Wild Turkey Heritage Day. In August, OFAH staff submitted a letter to the MNR requesting a Youth Wild Turkey Heritage Day. Youth Wild Turkey Heritage Day(s) are presently in effect in a number of US states and the province of Manitoba. The OFAH believes there are substantial benefits (similar to those being achieved through the Waterfowl Heritage Days) to initiating a Youth Wild Turkey Heritage Day in the province of Ontario.

## Changes to the Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations for Ontario - 2013

### Mourning Dove Hunting Season

The OFAH has long supported the creation of a mourning dove hunting season in Ontario because we were convinced it would provide new sustainable hunting opportunities. In September, Ontario welcomed a mourning dove hunting season to the Southern and Central hunting districts, with a daily bag limit of 15 and a possession limit of 45 (i.e. three times the daily bag limit).

### American Black Duck

The OFAH supported a proposal to implement the International Harvest Strategy for American Black Duck in Canada through prescribed regulatory packages. The strategy allowed for additional harvest opportunities for black ducks in 2013, as the harvest in Ontario was currently below the 'Moderate' regulatory package; liberalizing the hunting regulations for black ducks to 107 days with a daily bag limit of 2 black ducks in southern

hunting districts (increase from 1 to 2); and a daily bag limit of 4 black ducks in the Hudson-James Bay, northern and central hunting districts (increase from 2 to 4). The OFAH also supported the proposal to make the opening and closing dates for black ducks the same as for other duck species in Ontario.

### **Removal of possession limits for geese (i.e. Canada, Cackling, Snow Geese)**

The OFAH has been supportive of the Canadian Wildlife Service's efforts to manage overabundant species. Therefore, the OFAH supported the removal of possession limits for Canada Geese, Cackling Geese and Snow Geese in 2013.

### **Donation of Migratory Game Birds for Wild Game Fundraising Dinners**

The OFAH and affiliated partner clubs regularly hold wild game dinners to raise funds for conservation projects across the province for which a wide variety of wild game is donated and sampled. Money raised from these charity events has contributed significantly to conservation efforts across the province. Unfortunately, participants, including hunters and non-hunters alike, have been unable to sample and enjoy any wild migratory birds because of restrictive regulations.

In October, the OFAH requested that Environment Canada amend the Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations to allow migratory birds taken under a hunting permit and in accordance with all appropriate daily bag and possession limits, to be donated and used at fundraising events. At the very least, we believe overabundant species such as snow geese and Canada geese should be permitted to be donated and used at fundraising events.

### **Mute Swans**

The OFAH has been aware of the harm that invasive non-native mute swans have been causing Ontario's waterfowl resources for a number of years. The United States are now coordinating control efforts for mute swans. The OFAH requested that the Canadian Wildlife Service take an active role in participating with the appropriate US agencies (and the Province of Ontario) to ensure that mute swans are successfully managed, so that they are no longer damaging our valuable waterfowl resources.

### **Proposed Modernization of MBHR**

Environment Canada (EC) is proposing amendments to the Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations (MBHR) to improve the management of hunting. The proposed changes are in response to a collection of issues raised by hunters, outfitters, biologists, and enforcement officers over the past several years.

EC provided the Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel (HAAP), of which the OFAH is a member, with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposals prior to broader public consultation.

## **Other Wildlife Management Activities**

### **MNR Wildlife Research and Development Section**

We hosted two meetings with the MNR Wildlife Research and Development Section at OFAH head office to discuss current and future wildlife research activities that are relevant to our mandate. The following research topics were discussed: provincial elk monitoring; the Bancroft/North Hastings elk calving research study; DNA-based estimates of black bear populations; wild turkey research on the Bruce Peninsula; wolf-caribou interactions; coyote research in Prince Edward County and the current taxonomic

classification of coyotes and wolves in Ontario; the Hudson Bay Lowland Waterbird and Wetland Research and Monitoring Project; and, the Chronic Wasting Disease Risk Surveillance Model, which is used to allocate annual sampling effort.

### **MNR Website Review**

As part of the provincial government's transformation plans, all websites are being reviewed for content. By the end of 2013, all provincial government webpages will be changed from the current link-based design to a search-based design. Upon request from the MNR, we reviewed the Wildlife Management portion of the MNR website and provided a list of recommendations to MNR. We concluded that, since MNR is the only provider/repository of this type of information, all of the website's content was necessary and should be preserved in the new design. We also recommended that MNR expand the hunter activity and harvest reporting section to include more data and results.

### **Atlantic Flyway Technical Section**

The Atlantic Flyway Technical Section (AFTS) is made up of representatives from all jurisdictions in the Atlantic Flyway (Ontario eastward to the Atlantic Ocean, and U.S. states on the eastern seaboard). The group is responsible for flyway-specific harvest management and regulatory changes under the Migratory Birds Convention Act. The group's annual meeting was hosted in Peterborough, and we were invited to give a welcome speech and participate in the four-day session.

## **Supporting Students**

### **Fish & Wildlife Internship Award**



The OFAH/BrokerLink Fish and Wildlife Internship for 2013 was awarded to Katie Cook. For 18 weeks, (April 29 – August 30) Katie worked

directly with OFAH Fish and Wildlife staff on various program initiatives such as Atlantic Salmon stocking and habitat restoration, and Invading Species Awareness Program efforts. The practical work experience Katie gained through this internship will reap rewards both in her continuing studies and the workplace. BrokerLink has already confirmed their commitment to the internship for a third year, in 2014.

### **Two New OFAH Student Research Grants**

The St. Catharine's Game and Fish Association, an OFAH member club, will provide a student research grant of \$2,000 for five consecutive years, beginning in 2013/2014. The OFAH/St. Catharine's Game and Fish Association, Fish and Wildlife Research Grant will alternate annually between wildlife and fisheries research to reflect the club's mandate and support of both interests.

To commemorate the significant contributions made by OFAH past president, the late Dr. Dave Ankney an annual award of \$2,000 will be available to eligible graduate students for scientific research in the field of Avian Ecology. The award is named the OFAH/Dr. Dave Ankney/Sandi Johnson Award for Avian Ecology and will be presented for the first time at the 86th Annual OFAH AGM and Fish & Wildlife Conference.



# Land Use Management & Access

*Ontario's lands and waters support a diversity of fish and wildlife that offer high quality fishing and hunting opportunities. Access to these opportunities is one of the most important issues for OFAH members. Working in partnership with OFAH member clubs and individuals, we strive to ensure land use development does not compromise our fish and wildlife resources, or our access to them.*

## Parks & Protected Areas

### Ontario's Protected Areas Planning Guidelines

The OFAH reviewed Ontario's Protected Areas Planning Guidelines (EBR#011-7467) and provided comment. We outlined concerns related to the current draft wording and how it leaves little certainty for recreational uses such as hunting and fishing to be adequately considered during the planning process. Overall, the OFAH would like to see a more balanced approach to protected areas planning that includes greater recognition and utilization of sustainable resource management activities such as hunting, fishing and trapping. We also provided additional comments related to hunting being underutilized as a means to increase public participation, generate revenue and sustainably manage natural resources, without compromising ecological integrity and other park values. We emphasized the importance of public and stakeholder consultation in successful management of a public protected area, and we strongly encouraged meaningful consultation throughout the management planning process.

### Proactive Wildlife Management in Provincial Parks

In response to requests and concerns from our members, the OFAH prepared a letter to Ontario Parks explaining our concerns regarding the current passive wildlife management used in provincial parks and the resulting overabundant wildlife populations. We list the limitations of passive and reactive wildlife management and explain the difference between culling and hunting. The topic of Aboriginal hunting was addressed and the idea of fair sharing of our natural resources was promoted. We explained that hunting is a safe and compatible activity and highlighted that the use of licensed hunters provides ecological and socioeconomic benefits to the park and surrounding communities. We explain how proactive wildlife management using licensed hunters can help ensure healthy and sustainable populations and ecosystems, as well as promote and

conserve the rich culture, heritage, and tradition of hunting in Ontario. This letter serves as the initiation of a campaign to advocate for proactive wildlife management in Ontario's publicly accessible areas (e.g. provincial parks, conservation lands, municipal forests) to increase hunting opportunities for our members across Ontario.

### Addition to Coral Rapids Conservation Reserve (OFAH Zone C)

The OFAH submitted comments on the Addition to Coral Rapids Conservation Reserve (EBR# 011-8196). We supported the proposal for additional lands (1091.52 hectares) to allow for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing and other existing traditional uses (e.g. trails) to continue; however, we had several concerns regarding the consultation and how land users were, or were not, notified of the proposal. General users do not typically review EBR postings, nor do all users reside within the distribution area for local newspapers in which these notices are typically advertised. As such, we had concerns regarding what "appeal" mechanisms are in place if it is determined that an "existing use" has not been accurately captured within the policy report. We also expressed concerns that the policy will be built with the information gathered from desk-top exercises only, and that on-the-ground existing uses may not be adequately identified. MNR's response to our submission indicated that all resource users "in or near the addition" were in fact notified; that the addition is not accessible by road; that existing "trails" are thought to be mining transects; and that if a resource user finds an activity has not been adequately captured under current policy, then they can contact the Cochrane District MNR office to begin the process for an amendment for the activity to be included.

### The Shoals Provincial Park (OFAH Zone C)

The OFAH received some inquiries from members who were concerned that the closure of The Shoals Provincial Park would result in the gating of an access road to a boat launch. This would not only effectively cut off access to Prairie Bee Lake, but would also severely restrict access for moose hunters who use the launch to access hunting areas. The OFAH engaged in discussion with the Northeast Zone Management staff to discuss options available for this access point to remain open. The OFAH has been informed that staff are actively pursuing options for the access to remain open. We have offered our support with this issue and look forward to working with Ontario Parks staff to find a workable solution to this issue.

## **Balsam Lake Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan (OFAH Zone E)**

The OFAH submitted comments on the Balsam Lake Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan (EBR #011-8258). The current management plan would allow fishing to continue; however, hunting is not currently permitted, or proposed, within the park. The OFAH strongly encouraged the MNR to consider some level of licensed hunting to be permitted within the park. We believe licensed hunting would provide for sustainable wildlife management, the expansion of recreational opportunities, and revenue generation for the park at a time when visitor usage is typically low. We look forward to a response and additional opportunities to discuss this with park management staff.

## **Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan Amendments (OFAH Zone E)**

A decision notice for the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan Amendments (EBR #010-8824) was posted. The OFAH had previously expressed concerns regarding 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 on forest habitat availability, and the cumulative impacts of placing restrictions on forestry operations within the park. The proposal was generally approved as proposed, with some minor changes based on the comments received. The OFAH was pleased to see that some of the changes were as a result of efforts made by the planning team working with the Algonquin Forestry Authority staff; however, we still have concerns about what impacts these changes will ultimately have within the park and the surrounding landscape.

## **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). The OFAH supported the policy's proposal to allow for leases to be extended for another 21-year term; however, 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 also expressed concerns on how the Algonquin Land Claim may impact current or subsequent lease renewals. The EBR posting received over 11,000 comments (the second highest ever received for an EBR posting), with many being in favour of extending the leases. An Environmental Assessment for extending the term for private cottage tenure in Algonquin Park will be carried out in 2014.

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

The OFAH continues to be 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 Restoration Strategy

report was distributed for review and the OFAH was encouraged to see our input incorporated into the report. The OFAH commends the efforts of the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, as well as the other stakeholders and partners who have contributed to the success of this project to date. This project certainly has the potential to enhance the biological and recreational components of the bay, and we believe that these two objectives are not exclusive of each other. As part of the restoration activities, an amendment to the Darlington Provincial Park Management Plan was posted on the Environmental Registry to provide the flexibility needed to allow for future restoration options to be completed within McLaughlin Bay. OFAH comments were largely in support of the amendments, although an emphasis was placed on ensuring that recreational aspects are thoroughly considered. In addition, the OFAH also again expressed interest in remaining engaged as the project moves forward.

## **Darlington Provincial Park - Waterfowl Heritage Day (OFAH Zone E)**

The OFAH has been working with Darlington Provincial Park to establish a Waterfowl Heritage Day hunt in association with the annual controlled waterfowl hunt (administered by OFAH Zone E). Unfortunately, the request has been denied due to the fact that this weekend typically receives high visitor usage. As such, Darlington Provincial Park did not entertain this hunt in 2013. The OFAH will continue to advocate for the initiation of a Waterfowl Heritage Day at Darlington Provincial Park in the years to come.

## **Inverhuron Provincial Park – New Boat Launch Facility (OFAH Zone H)**

The OFAH was contacted by Inverhuron Provincial Park requesting a letter of support for a funding opportunity available through Ontario Power Generation. The purpose of the funding application was for the construction of a new boat launch facility at the park. A letter of support was provided by OFAH because the boat launch is an important access point for boaters and recreational anglers in Lake Huron. The lack of suitable launch locations in the local area emphasizes the need for this site to remain accessible, especially considering the often unpredictable weather that boaters can face on Lake Huron.

## **Quetico Provincial Park Management Plan Review**

The OFAH provided comments on the preliminary Quetico Provincial Park Management Plan (EBR# PB06E2023). The OFAH supported the proposal to increase access in the northern portion of the park; however, the OFAH was disappointed that proactive wildlife management was still not included as a management option. The OFAH acknowledged that hunting is not generally permitted in wilderness class parks; however, we also believe that adaptive management in wilderness class parks can incorporate strategies such as hunting, especially where it can be used to “protect significant features, yet allow opportunities for recreation and heritage appreciation.” Hunting is a safe and compatible activity that helps ensure proactive wildlife management, and provides ecological and socioeconomic benefits to the park and surrounding communities. The OFAH recommended that active wildlife management, using licensed Ontario hunters, be presented as a management option in the Quetico Provincial Park Management Plan.

## **Access Issues**

### **Botha Creek Bridge Removal (OFAH Zone C)**

The OFAH became aware of a situation near New Liskeard in which a bridge, owned by Ontario Power Generation (OPG), was planned for removal in 2014. An OFAH affiliated club, the Temiskaming Anglers and Hunters Association (TAHA), had been in contact with OPG and expressed some concerns regarding the removal of this access point and the impacts it may have on property owners and access to hunting and fishing areas. OFAH wrote a letter of support for TAHA, encouraging discussions to continue between OPG and local stakeholders, and offering technical support in the decision-making process. An on-site meeting was held between OPG and local stakeholders (including TAHA). Discussions are ongoing and it appears promising that a mutually beneficial solution can be reached prior to the planned removal of the bridge.

### **Madawaska Highlands Land Use Plan – Letters of Support (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 MNR to review options that will allow some form of access for these long-term Land Use Plan (LUP) holders. Two camps in particular have written several letters to the MNR requesting 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 proper consideration for and consultation of these LUP holders. The OFAH has provided letters of support for both of these camps and will continue to assist them in finding a solution to this issue.

### **Navigable Waters Protection Act**

The OFAH remains concerned with the amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) because of potential public access restrictions to our lakes, rivers and streams. Although it appears the changes to the NWPA were not specifically intended to restrict public access, the fact remains that we will potentially lose access to thousands of lakes, rivers and streams across the province. We can now expect an even greater impact on anglers and hunters than was originally anticipated. With all of the public lands and lakes that will be lost through the Algonquin Land Claim, and the public hunting and fishing opportunities that will go with them, the major changes in federal navigation laws will leave non-Algonquin anglers and hunters with even fewer opportunities once the dust settles. The draft Agreement-in-Principle for the Algonquin Land Claim has 117,500 acres scheduled for transfer to the Algonquins of Ontario when a final treaty is signed. Previous protection of navigation by Transport Canada meant that all accessible waters would remain publicly available regardless of whether the adjacent lands are privatized. Last year's changes to the NWPA by the federal government will shut the door on future public navigation of hundreds, if not thousands, of waters in the land claim area beyond the lands and waters being directly transferred. The OFAH remains on the front lines of a battle to maintain public hunting and fishing opportunities in the Algonquin Land Claim area.

### **Shale Beach (OFAH Zone H)**

An OFAH member and long-time angler at Shale Beach informed us that the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) had closed the

vehicle entrance to Shale Beach from Highway 26 and installed “no parking” signs near the entrance. This effectively removed access for traditional users of the beach for low impact heritage activities such as angling. The OFAH strongly advocates for the maintenance and enhancement of public access opportunities for recreational heritage activities and wrote a letter of support for continued use of the beach by anglers, including recommendations to the MTO outlining potential solutions.

## **Resource Extraction & Development**

### **Osisko Hammond Reef Gold Project (OFAH Zone A)**

The OFAH provided comments on the Osisko Hammond Reef Gold project, which is a large-scale gold mine proposed near Atikokan. The OFAH is deeply concerned that a development of this scale will result in significant impacts to fish and fish habitat. We expressed concerns about impacts to changes in groundwater and surface waters, as well as the discharge of effluent and contaminants and the subsequent accumulation of contaminants in fish. We did not believe that sufficient pre-construction information had been collected or that the proposed compensation and mitigation measures would be adequate for the protection of fish, fish habitat and other important recreational fishery values within the area. Osisko Mining Corporation initiated further dialogue with OFAH to discuss our concerns.

### **Rainy River Gold (OFAH Zone A)**

The OFAH provided comments on the Rainy River gold project, which is a large-scale gold mine proposed near Fort Frances. The OFAH is concerned that a development of this scale will result in significant impacts to fish and fish habitat. We expressed concerns about impacts to changes in groundwater and surface waters, as well as the discharge of effluent and contaminants and the subsequent accumulation of contaminants in fish. In a response addressing our comments and concerns, Rainy River Resources Ltd. stated that priority was given to avoiding impacts. They stated that the company has worked diligently with MNR and DFO to avoid or minimize environmental impacts, and acknowledged the importance of recreational fishing. As part of the development they will be required to conduct an intensive Environmental Effects Monitoring program, as well as other types of provincially and federally required monitoring programs. The OFAH has requested to remain involved as the process moves forward.

### **MNR-71 & MNR-74 Declaration Orders Consolidation and EAA Coverage for FMPs**

The OFAH provided comments on the proposed revisions to the current Forest Management Planning (FMP) process and the consolidation of two (71 and 74) declaration orders (EBR # 011-9374). The OFAH supported the revision of the current FMP process to provide greater clarity; however, we were concerned with the proposed reduction of formal public comment opportunities. The OFAH provided comments to ensure anglers, hunters and other key stakeholders did not lose, or have a diminished role in the forest management planning process.

## **Other Land Use Issues**

### **Temagami Land Use Plan Amendments (OFAH Zone C)**

A Crown Land Use Policy Atlas (CLUPA) Amendment #2011-011 was posted to complete minor administrative corrections, add clarity to the wording of the CLUPA reports, and to re-designate

29 management areas from General Use to Enhanced Management Areas associated with the Temagami Land Use Plan (TLUP). The OFAH submitted a response with concerns about having public consultation occurring through the CLUPA instead of the TLUP. The OFAH received a response from MNR indicating that no further changes will be made to the TLUP document itself. In addition, we had requested an additional opportunity for the public to participate in the 10-year review of the plan. Despite being assured that the amendment proposal was “minor” and “administrative in nature only,” the OFAH was informed that the amendment posting met the requirements of public consultation for the 10-year “scoped” review of the plan and no further consultation will be completed.

### **Proposed Amendment to the Greenbelt Plan (OFAH Zone J)**

The OFAH provided comment on the Proposed Amendments to the Greenbelt Plan – Glenorchy Lands and Urban River Valleys (EBR#011-6331). We were supportive of the proposal to add an additional Urban River Valley designation to the Greenbelt Plan to provide more protection to these important river systems. The proximity to large urban areas poses many challenges in protecting the ecological integrity of these systems, but could also allow for these areas to provide substantial social and economic benefits. We are concerned that the addition of 255 hectares (630 acres) of provincially-owned lands (currently part of the Glenorchy Conservation Area) to the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt Plan will result in an overall weakening of protection for natural resources. The changes in land use designation could provide opportunities for development (which were previously prohibited) that may negatively impact natural heritage features and functions and/or result in access restrictions for anglers.

### **Strengthening Ontario’s Trail Strategy**

The OFAH provided comments on Strengthening Ontario’s Trail Strategy (EBR #011-9565). The OFAH agreed that there should be a new term for a trail type in Ontario, “designated recreational trail.” We cautioned that the term “trail” has a different meaning for each user group, and can also be different depending on the socioeconomic priorities of a given region and specific local land uses. We recommended the definition be flexible enough to encompass everything from urban walking trails to remote or semi-remote forest access roads. The OFAH recommended that long-term public access to trails/roads be preserved and requested an increase in the frequency of reviews of land use/management plans currently employed for provincial public lands and protected areas. We also recommended that private land liability protection, easements and incentives should be addressed. The OFAH noted that there was little support/consideration for recreational vehicle use in the trail use strategy. Currently there is a negative stigma associated with trail use by motorized vehicles and for traditional heritage purposes (hunting, fishing, and trapping). We requested more focus on education and outreach about hunting and fishing as compatible activities with other trail uses, and noted that some users require recreational vehicles to access natural resources due to age and mobility issues, as well as to transport gear, and retrieve big game animals.

### **Perth County Rail Trail (OFAH Zone J)**

The OFAH received concerns from members regarding the proposed leasing of former CP Rail lands in Perth County as part of the Goderich to Guelph (G2G) recreational trail system.

Concerns were related to potential changes in permitted activities should the lands be leased, including the prohibition of hunting and ATV use. Public meetings were attended by several representatives of OFAH Zone J. OFAH will remain engaged in this matter to ensure that hunting opportunities are not lost in this process.

### **MNR’s Modernization of Approvals – Proposed Changes to the Endangered Species Act**

The OFAH reviewed and commented on changes to the Endangered Species Act proposed through MNR’s Modernization of Approvals. In a later decision notice posted to the Environmental Registry, we were pleased to see that Safe Harbour measures were in fact incorporated into the regulation; however, we were disappointed that our recommendations for extending Safe Harbour provisions beyond property boundaries was not incorporated. We remain concerned that there is the potential for neighbouring property owners to be impacted because they may not be encompassed by the Safe Harbour provision. In addition, we acknowledge that many best practices were incorporated into the regulation, which may still result in an overly onerous process and limit the number of proponents who would uptake this restrictive provision (i.e. timing restrictions and relocation of species costs may result in proponents simply opting for outright removal of species/habitats through Overall Benefit Permits instead of utilizing the Safe Harbour provisions). Given the broad nature of the proposal it was difficult to fully assess what the implications of the changes may be, therefore we could not yet fully support the proposed approaches until specific changes to the Act can be reviewed.

### **MNR’s Modernization of Approvals – Proposed Regulatory Amendments to Work Permits**

The OFAH provided comments on EBR#011-7669 that were generally positive. The OFAH supports a more efficient and cost-effective approach for the approvals process, as long as it does not come at the expense of Crown land resources. The proposal to replace Work Permits with Rules in Regulation or Registration with Rules in Regulation, is a proposal that the OFAH is willing to support in principle. These proposed changes should help lessen the regulatory burden for individuals or groups wishing to undertake minor maintenance activities (e.g. minor maintenance to trails or roads). We also expressed our opposition to the decommissioning of roads. We recommend that opportunities should be made available for member clubs or groups to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to maintain portions of the road whenever decommissioning is proposed.

### **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. The CLUPA can be challenging to use effectively, so we created a free electronic CLUPA guide to assist members in searching for Crown land hunting and fishing opportunities. In 2013, the MNR updated the appearance of the CLUPA, and we changed the guide to match the look of the new site. Despite having distributed well over 700 guides, there remains a steady demand.



# Invasive Species

*Harmful invasive species can have devastating impacts on our aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. This in turn can impact our fish and wildlife populations and the quality of our fishing and hunting opportunities. Working in partnership with others, the OFAH strives to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful invasive species in Ontario to ensure our lands and waters can continue to support healthy fish and wildlife populations.*

## Invading Species Awareness Program



ONTARIO'S  
**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 2013, in collaboration with hundreds of community groups, nongovernment organizations, and all levels of government, the ISAP reached millions of Ontarians and engaged the public's participation in preventing the spread of invasive species.

## Partnerships

In 2013, the OFAH and MNR continued the successful joint delivery of the ISAP, with OFAH staff working collaboratively with staff from the MNR's Biodiversity Branch, as well as numerous district offices and provincial parks across the province. Funding was also received from Environment Canada's Great Lakes Management and Reporting Section, the Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre, and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Canada Summer Jobs Program.

Numerous organizations made valuable in-kind and financial contributions to the ISAP in 2013. These organizations included: MNR, Ontario Invasive Plant Council, Environment Canada, Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre, Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network, Algonquin Provincial Park, Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, Credit Valley Conservation Authority, Kids for Turtles Environmental Education, Killbear Provincial Park, Kirkland Lake District MNR, Lower Trent Conservation Authority, Manitoulin Streams, Manitoulin Area Stewardship Council, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, Nipigon District MNR, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation

Authority, Pinery Provincial Park, Plenty Canada, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Rondeau Provincial Park, Sibbald Point Provincial Park, South Nation Conservation Authority, University of Windsor, Voyageur Provincial Park, Wasaga Beach Provincial Park, Wheatley Provincial Park, OFAH Zones, Federation of Ontario Cottager's Association, Lake of the Woods District Property Owner's Association, Thunder Bay District Stewardship Council, University of Georgia, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Conservation Ontario, Toronto Region Conservation Authority, City of Mississauga, County of Renfrew, York Region, University of Toronto, Sault College, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Kawartha Conservation, Sir Sandford Fleming College, Big Al's Pet Store, Ontario Streams, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council and the Minnesota Sea Grant.

## Capacity Building

Program staff participated as members of several committees formed to address the threats posed by invasive species. Committee membership for 2013 included: the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species Technical Committee, Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network II, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Annex Six Aquatic Invasive Species Extended Subcommittee, Lake of the Woods International Multi-Agency Working Group on Aquatic Invasive Species, Ontario Invasive Plant Council Communications Committee, Ontario Invasive Plant Council Horticulture Outreach Collaborative, Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network, Emerald Ash Borer Task Force Communications Committee (Thunder Bay) and the Ontario Phragmites Working Group.





## Communications

Program staff were successful in attracting media interest regarding invasive species. Their efforts resulted in over 40 media/promotional contacts with the program being profiled in newsprint, radio, and television, reaching millions of people. Highlights include stories on *CBC Radio* (Sudbury), *Peterborough Examiner*, *Orangeville Citizen*, *Chatham Daily News*, *CBC News (Thunder Bay)*, *Angler and Hunter Radio*, *CHEX TV*, a local Rogers cable television show (Orillia), and numerous profiles in *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* and *Angler and Hunter Hotline*.

## Program Outreach Overview

The ISAP conducted outreach to a broad audience in 2013, including anglers, hunters, recreational boaters, gardeners, ATV users, aquarium hobbyists, educational institutions, landowners, and the general public. Staff attended more than 210 events, including the Lake Simcoe Science Forum, A.D. Latonnell Conference and Symposium, Toronto Sportsmen's Show and the International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species. Numerous workshops and presentations were delivered, and strategic initiatives were developed and coordinated by staff. As a result, hundreds of thousands of pieces educational material were distributed province-wide, and program staff fielded direct calls/requests from over 795 people to the Invading Species Hotline.

## Educational Materials

### Interactive Display at Algonquin Park

With funding support from the Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre, program staff developed and coordinated the installation of an interactive invasive species display at the Algonquin Park Visitor's Centre. The display includes invasive species profiles, information on how to help prevent the spread of invasive species, issues specific to Algonquin Park, and a game that illustrates the impacts of invasive species.

### Lake Superior Aquatic Invasive Species Guide

Program staff are working with staff from Environment Canada, MNR, and the Minnesota Sea Grant to produce a binational Lake Superior Aquatic Invasive Species Guide.

### Aquatic Invasive Species Billboards

Two new billboards were installed along Highway 11 in Rainy River, Ontario. The billboards are intended to educate non-resident anglers on the Ontario regulations pertaining to the movement of live baitfish into Ontario.

### Invasive Species Website & Social Media

Program staff continue to utilize Facebook and Twitter to reach a broader audience with invasive species messaging. The program

has 558 followers on Facebook and 547 followers on Twitter. Program staff maintain the ISAP website ([www.invadingspecies.com](http://www.invadingspecies.com)) and distribute an e-newsletter to over 120 subscribers. The ISAP website was visited over 165,000 times in 2013.

## Targeted Education & Outreach

### 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 Whitney, Oshawa, Mississauga, Orillia, Nobel, Kirkland Lake, Trenton, Manitowaning, Lanark (2), Nipigon, Utopia, Peterborough, Grand Bend, Manotick, Morpeth, Sutton West, Finch, Windsor, Chute a Blondeau, Wasaga Beach and Wheatley. The summer was extremely successful for the Invading Species Hit Squad. Following a two day training workshop held at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre, our team of 22 summer staff, working in partnership with ISAP program staff, MNR district offices, stewardship councils, conservation authorities, provincial parks and nongovernment organizations, hit the ground running, attending more than 150 community events across Ontario. Events included boat launch/watercraft inspections, presentations, attending meetings, setting up booths at community events and delivering interpretive programs in provincial parks.

### Invasive Species Intern

With funding assistance from the Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre, the ISAP hired an Invasive Species Intern in 2013 to assist with the delivery of numerous projects. Projects included assisting program staff with the development of a promotional/marketing plan to promote the availability of the EDDMapS system in Ontario; assisting program staff with the coordination, scheduling and promotion of training workshops and volunteer monitoring events to engage Ontarians in using EDDMapS (on-line and mobile); working with program staff, MNR, and DFO to engage the public and generate awareness of Asian Carps (e.g., development of a radio public service announcement); working with OFAH and MNR staff to develop a fact sheet and web content; and utilizing social media to educate the public on the existence of the new aquatic invasive species regulations being developed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

### Live Release Project

Staff worked with the MNR, the University of Toronto, and French Planning Services Inc. on a project focused on better understanding the cultural motivations behind the live release of organisms into natural environments. The project involved a literature review, telephone interviews with experts and practitioners, and a stakeholder workshop. Twenty-eight interested and knowledgeable representatives from provincial, municipal and federal levels of government, conservation authorities, ENGOs, industry and academia participated in the workshop and provided excellent feedback on the issue. The results demonstrated that cultural live release occurs in Canada and may contribute to invasive species introductions. However, better data is needed on the extent and nature of this practice, the types and numbers of animals released, and the viability of alternatives.

## Lake Simcoe Outreach

A series of on-ice outreach events promoting awareness of invasive species during the ice fishing season on Lake Simcoe continued this winter in partnership with staff from the Aurora District MNR office. This program, "Operation Bait Bucket," was successful in distributing over 945 educational lures. In total, staff travelled over 300 km by snowmobile to reach anglers on Lake Simcoe. Program staff also launched "Operation Boat Clean" at the Barrie Marina, in partnership with Aurora District MNR. Staff assisted with the installation of a boat wash station at the marina to raise awareness about the importance of cleaning your boat after it is taken out of the water to prevent the introduction/spread of invasive species. Staff also delivered "Operation Boat Clean" resources (educational signs and post cards) for installation and distribution to 28 marinas in the Lake Simcoe watershed.

## Invasive Species Workshops

Program staff delivered Aquatic Invasive Species Training Workshops to the staff and students at Sault College. Over 70 individuals were trained in invasive species identification, sampling and reporting. Program staff also delivered an Invasive Plant Management Workshop for Landowners in partnership with York Region, the Ontario Invasive Plant Council and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. The workshop included both presentations and hands-on activities for removing Common Buckthorn, Garlic Mustard and Dog-strangling Vine. A total of 60 participants were present for the workshop.

## Pet Store Outreach

With funding support from the Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre, program staff worked with key partners including Big Al's Pet Store, Ontario Streams and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC), to coordinate a pilot project with pet stores to encourage pet owners to not release unwanted pets into the wild. It was identified that PIJAC's Habitattitude campaign aligned with the goals and objectives and there was an opportunity to combine resources and work together to deliver a joint message to the public. As a result, staff worked with PIJAC Canada to amalgamate the Habitattitude campaign with ISAP's "Keep. Care. Be Aware." messaging in order to create a unified campaign targeting the release of unwanted pets. Campaign resources were promoted and/or distributed to Big Al's Pet Store, as well as numerous pet stores in the Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes area, including Pet Valu, Pawz 'N' Clawz, Paulmac's Pet Foods, PetSmart and PJ's Pets.

## Invasive Species Information Management

### Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System

There's an app for that! (or there will be). With funding provided by the Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre, ISAP staff worked with the University of Georgia's Centre for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health and the MNR to create a smartphone application that will allow anyone with a smartphone to take a picture of a suspect invasive species and upload it to the Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System for Ontario (EDDMapS Ontario). In 2013, OFAH staff worked to develop EDDMapS Ontario. EDDMapS is an innovative, web-based mapping tool which is used to document the distribution of invasive species and help identify the leading edge of new invasions.

## Invading Species Hotline

In 2013, program staff received over 795 calls to the Invading Species Hotline to report a sighting, request materials, or to seek more information on invasive species. This resulted in the distribution of hundreds of thousands of pieces of educational material. Hundreds of sighting reports for a variety of invasive species were received as a result of the contacts made directly through the Invading Species Hotline and EDDMapS Ontario.

## Invasive Species Monitoring & Control

### Invading Species Watch

Interest in the Invading Species Watch Program continued to be strong in 2013. Over 31 volunteers participated in the program with over 120 lakes monitored across the province for the presence of zebra mussel veligers and spiny waterfleas.

### Garlic Mustard

Program staff, in partnership with the Ontario Invasive Plant Council, Kawartha Conservation, and members of the public, teamed up to rid Ken Reid Conservation Area in Lindsay, Ontario of invasive Garlic Mustard. Efforts resulted in the removal of 30 yard waste bags of the plant, totaling 728 lbs. Funding for this event was provided by the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network in celebration of International Biodiversity Day.

### European Water Chestnut

Efforts to control European Water Chestnut in the Ottawa River continued in 2013. A member of the Invading Species Hit Squad was based out of Voyageur Provincial Park and assisted with this control project. A team of 10 people worked together to remove populations from the Ottawa River via manual removal and the use of specially designed boats that cut and collect the plants. In addition to removal, monitoring was conducted to ensure that the populations were not spreading to new locations.

### Water Soldier

Program staff, in partnership with Trent University and Sir Sandford Fleming College, monitored the Trent Severn Waterway above and below Healey Falls for the presence of Water Soldier. No new populations were found outside of known infested waters.

## Canada Summer Jobs Program

In 2013, the OFAH provided university, college and high school students with summer employment. In total over 9,300 hours of student labour were made possible through over \$95,000 in funding from the Canadian government.

In partnership with several organizations, the OFAH employed students in the communities of Chute a Blondeau, Finch, Grand Bend, Kirkland Lake, Lanark, Manitowaning, Manotick, Mississauga, Morpeth, Nipigon, Nobel, Orillia, Oshawa, Peterborough, Sutton, Trenton, Utopia, Wasaga Beach, Wheatley, Whitney and Windsor.

The Invading Species Awareness Program, Get Outdoors summer camp, OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre, OFAH TackleShare program, and OFAH Communications welcomed students, whose efforts attracted excellent media attention for the program initiatives.

# Ontario Invasive Plant Council



The Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC) is an incorporated non-profit organization. It is hosted within the OFAH building and the OFAH provides office space and

administrative support for OIPC staff, as well as contributing to the OIPC Board of Directors. OIPC's mandate is to provide leadership, expertise and a forum to engage and empower Ontarians to take action on invasive plant issues. The OIPC works closely with the OFAH and the ISAP on provincial initiatives related to invasive plant species. In 2013, the OIPC was involved in numerous activities, media and workshops across the province.

## OIPC Committees

The OIPC has always worked to meet its objectives through its five committees. These include Policy, Communications, Research/Control, Fundraising, and Horticultural Outreach Collaborative. In 2013, the OIPC partnered with the already established Ontario Phragmites Working Group (OPWG) to provide infrastructure and administrative support to help the OPWG continue their work and meet their goals.

## Grow Me Instead Nursery Recognition Program Expansion

The Grow Me Instead Program consists of two guidebooks (one for northern Ontario and one for southern Ontario), a canned presentation, and a nursery recognition program. The program focuses on providing information on potentially invasive garden plants, while giving some ideas for non-invasive plant alternatives. Since it began, this program has expanded in stages across Ontario, including this summer, through our local coordinator partners. There are now 33 nurseries in southern Ontario signed on to the program. A full list can be found on the OIPC website.

## Look Before You Leave

The Look Before You Leave Campaign began in 2009 as a tool to educate cottagers, campers, and outdoor enthusiasts about how they can avoid inadvertently bringing invasive species from home to their summer activity destinations. This year, OIPC relaunched the 24 for 24 cartoon campaign on the OIPC Facebook and Twitter pages, and ads were put in the Hunting Regulations Summary and Ontario Parks tabloids. The Look Before You Leave campaign also expanded its reach by providing messaging in the Ontario Parks "Learn to Camp" program curriculum.

## Workshops: Clean Equipment Protocol, Landowner Control, and Giant Hogweed

The Clean Equipment Protocol was developed to establish a standard for cleaning vehicles and equipment, and to provide a guide for its application where current codes of practice, industry standards or other environmental management plans are not already in place. Clean Equipment workshops were held in various locations across Ontario, and a Clean Equipment demonstration was held at the Ontario Vegetative Management Association fall meeting. Workshops targeted Ontario Parks' staff, industry workers, and municipalities.

The OIPC also helped organize a Giant Hogweed training workshop for municipality workers, health unit employees, and others in the Sudbury area.

The OIPC partnered with York Region, Lake Simcoe Region

Conservation Authority, Aurora District MNR, and the ISAP to offer a landowner workshop on managing invasive plants.

## Invasive Species Monitoring and Management Projects

This year, OIPC partnered with Voyageur Provincial Park to assist the park in its efforts to eradicate invasive Water Chestnut (*Trapa natans*). Park staff did additional monitoring and removal of plants outside the park boundaries along the Ottawa River, and worked to clear five bays of Water Chestnut using a cutting boat and a mechanical harvesting boat. They also initiated volunteer days, where members of the public could join in to assist in monitoring and manual removal, as well as seed collection along the beaches. The project will continue next summer.

The OIPC continues to participate on the Early Detection Distribution (EDD)MaPS steering committee, and work with Credit Valley Conservation to assist them in their efforts to start a local early detection and rapid response network for their region.

## Best Management Practices (BMP) Documents

The OIPC, along with partners, has had success with the Best Management Practices series which provide information on the biology, identification features, distribution, habitat, control measures, prevention and restoration efforts (once invasive plant has been removed) of various species. In 2013, OIPC completed BMPs for Japanese Knotweed, Garlic Mustard and Reed Canary Grass which can be found on the control information page of the OIPC website, along with five other BMPs.

## OIPC 7th Annual General Meeting and Invasive Plant Symposium

The OIPC hosted its 7th AGM and Invasive Plant Symposium at Geneva Park, near Orillia. The event boasted 22 speakers focusing on invasive plant species, brainstorming sessions for OIPC committees, networking opportunities and field tours. Over 100 people were in attendance and it was very well received.

## Social Media/ Newsletter

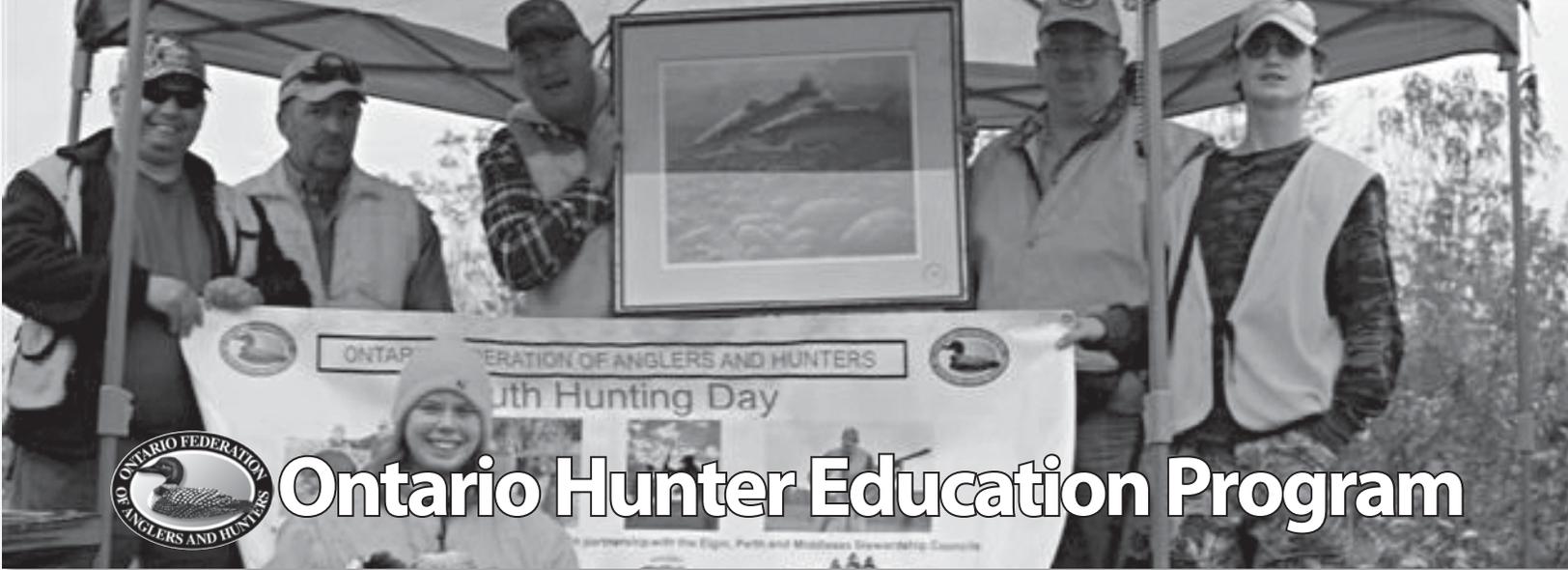
The OIPC distributes monthly updates to a large network of individuals, who receive information about invasive plant research, control projects, educational material, job postings, conferences, etc., that are being conducted across the province.

The OIPC website [www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca), provides users with up-to-date information including: downloadable educational materials, strategic documents, an events calendar, links to other invasive plant sites, board activity notes, and more. The OIPC also provides daily updates to followers through its Facebook and Twitter presence at [www.twitter.com/OIPC1](http://www.twitter.com/OIPC1) and [www.facebook.com/ontarioinvasiveplantcouncil](http://www.facebook.com/ontarioinvasiveplantcouncil).

## Partnerships

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

For information about the OIPC, including our annual report, visit [www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca) or join our mailing list by emailing [info@oninvasives.ca](mailto:info@oninvasives.ca).



# Ontario Hunter Education Program

The Ontario Hunter Education Program continues to see strong growth, and 2013 was another great year for recruitment. A total of 1,893 courses were run, with 3,935 more students participating than in 2012. We have experienced 12 years of consecutive growth from 2001 to 2013. In fact, we are the only jurisdiction in all of North America seeing this kind of consecutive growth. Annual student program registration has increased by 162% during this time span.

## Hunter Education by the 2013 Numbers

Total # of courses..... 1,893  
Average # of courses per instructor..... 7  
Average # of students per course .....12.9  
Total # of students ..... 25,235

## Staffing

Joe Reid, who has been with the MNR for 37 years, retired in August. For the last number of years he was the Hunting Program Administrator and OFAH staff worked closely with him on a daily basis. We wish Joe well in his retirement. William Johnson replaced Joe on an interim basis.

## Student Survey

We are happy to report that the student survey, designed to gauge course satisfaction, is up and running. This survey was a long time in the works with the MNR but it is finally completed. There are a total of 20 questions which will take the student less than five minutes to complete. This audit includes an online student survey that is completed using survey software called "Survey Monkey."

The survey will be promoted in the student kits, on the outside of the student kit envelope, and on the Hunter Education website at [www.ohep.net](http://www.ohep.net). All survey results will be tabulated by the software which will produce reports that will give us a clear idea of student satisfaction, and whether the course is being taught to course standards. First indications look very good for student satisfaction.

## Instructor Training

We have approvals to do more instructor training. This means that applications on file will need to be scored for the selection process. In 2014, we will train 12 to 14 instructors. Those chosen will teach in areas of need and where current instructors feel

they require more help to meet the demand. Some long-time instructors have recently expressed an interest to have someone trained in their area as they would like to retire soon. Training will likely begin in March or April. Approximately two-thirds of the instructors that took their instructor training in early 2013 have successfully delivered their first course. We have followed up with the remainder to see if they require anything in order to fulfill their requirements. Many of the new instructors are doing well and have put on several courses.

## Instructor Audit

We continue to audit instructors to ensure that all are adhering to course standards, and to take appropriate action where standards are not being met. As always, we monitor feedback from students.

## Other OHEP News

We were happy to hear that some of our stand-alone Hunter Education instructors have been approved to be trained to become firearms instructors. Training is expected to begin in the winter of 2014.

A new supply of manuals arrived in September. The only big change was that a page was added on the mourning dove. The book now has the Safe Food Handling Fact Sheet printed inside the back cover for students to review. There were 22,000 manuals printed.

Many instructors promote their courses on the OHEP website, so please forward any course date enquiries to the hunter education website at [www.ohep.net](http://www.ohep.net).

We continue to meet with the MNR with regard to renewing the agreement for administering the Hunter Education Program, and



are confident a new agreement will be in place before the current one ends on March 31, 2014.

Our annual financial audit was prepared in July and submitted to the MNR in August. As always, we were fiscally responsible and came in below the work plan budget.

## Hunter Education Conference

The 22nd Annual OFAH Hunter Education Instructors Conference was held in Peterborough in May, and by all accounts was a great success. Approximately \$6,000 was raised to further promote hunting heritage at the OFAH|Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre.



The 23rd OFAH Annual Hunter Education Conference will be held in London the first weekend in June, and promises to be action-packed.

## Young Hunter Education Scholarship (YHES)



The Youth Hunter Education Scholarship (YHES) fund continues to be in a healthy position due to the recent donation of \$5,000 from the Safari Club International Foundation in Arizona. Once again Len Dickinson, secretary/treasurer for OFAH

Zone F, was instrumental in getting this application in and approved for the future of young hunters here in Ontario.

Many instructors still quietly offer discounted or free courses to students in need in their community, which helps the program as well. The YHES fund helps families by not letting financial barriers deny a youth's interest in becoming a hunter. Youth who come from single-parent, low-income homes are the priority recipients, but other factors, such as disabilities, etc., are also considered.

An application for the YHES fund can be downloaded at [www.ohep.net](http://www.ohep.net) under **programs**.

## Ontario Wild Turkey Hunter Education Program

### Wild Turkey DVD Program

The Wild Turkey home learning DVD has played a big role in making this a record year for new licence applicants. In 2013, the OFAH processed over 11,300 wild turkey hunter licence applicants. Of these, close to 8,800 were DVD orders, while the remaining nearly 2,500 students took their course at one of 28 seminars held across the province.

We will once again promote the DVDs at the 2014 Toronto Sportsmen's Show, but because most new hunters are taking their wild turkey testing as part of their Hunter Education Program, we can expect diminished seminar numbers.

### 2014 Wild Turkey Courses

Based on 2013 attendance (2,452) we expect to average about 70 to 100 people per course. Due to smaller class sizes and an additional hunter education instructor on site, only one wild turkey instructor is being used per course in 2014. There will be one course offered at the Toronto Sportsmen's Show.

Visit [www.ofah.org/seminars](http://www.ofah.org/seminars) for more information about the Wild Turkey Hunter Education course.





# Education and Outreach



THE O.E.A.H. | MARIO CORTELLUCCI  
**HUNTING & FISHING**  
*Heritage Centre*

## OFAH | Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre

On April 15, 2013 the OFAH|Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre (HFHC) celebrated two important milestones. Not only had the HFHC been in operation for three full years, but we also welcomed our 5000th student visitor!

We have continued our partnership with the Quinte Elk Restoration Committee who has offered to pay for the bus and admission cost for schools to visit from the Quinte region. A partnership like this allows us to highlight first hand the efforts of hard-working local stewardship groups.

The HFHC once again qualified for funding to support three 10 week summer student positions through the federal government's Canada Summer Jobs program. Our summer staff play an integral role in promoting, planning and delivering unique HFHC programming all summer long.

Our Get Outdoors Summer Day Camp program is now in its 4th season. This year our Bass (campers aged 8 to 10) had the chance to travel to a local farm to learn about waterfowl hunting and watch award-winning retriever dogs hard at work. Our Muskies (campers aged 11 to 13) had the chance to participate in a one of a kind ATV safety program sponsored by Canadian Tire. Thanks to financial support from OFAH Zone E, the camp will continue to run for the next two summers.

The Stoeger Airgun and Excalibur Archery Ranges have been open to the public for a full year. In addition to private range rentals by families or community groups, the ranges are also utilized through our birthday parties, youth programs, field trips and open house events. A total of 1,695 users had the chance to learn the responsibility behind safe shooting and practice their aim on the ranges.



In 2013, the HFHC saw a total of 2,008 walk-in visitors with admission rates now at \$5 per person. The HFHC is open Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with additional weekend hours posted online. These additional weekend hours of operation coincide with other events that are occurring at the HFHC.

## Shimano Fishing Pond

The pond underwent minor re-construction in July as the wooden railway ties surrounding the pond were replaced with large limestone blocks. For the first time ever, we hosted two Cops and Kids fishing events. This was in partnership with the local Big Brothers and Big Sisters chapter and provided the HFHC with some unique media coverage and promotion through the local police detachment. In 2013, a total of 1,598 anglers from community groups, field trips, birthday parties and special care agencies made use of the Shimano Fishing Pond.



## Ontario Family Fishing Events



During the months of February and July, the province of Ontario declares licence-free fishing opportunities. During this time, Canadian residents do not require the otherwise mandatory fishing version Outdoors Card. This is a great opportunity for new and young anglers to discover the fun of fishing and is prime time

for families to share an experience in the outdoors together. The OFAH supplies promotional and educational material to those who plan to host an event in their community, including information booklets, posters, participation certificates, colouring draw entries and other items for children to take away from the event. This year's dates were February 16-18 and July 6-14.

Ontario Family Fishing Events (OFFE) has celebrated 20 years of summer events. Through mainstream media and diligent marketing, we have received significant impressions via the OFFE Facebook page, Facebook advertisements, and The Weather Network advertisements. Each year we look to increase the number of impressions to create awareness of the program and the opportunity for families. There were over 70 community events entered across the province in 2013 which received excellent feedback. We also received an overwhelming volume of colouring draw entries, with 10 enthusiastic winners.

In 2013, the OFAH hosted a winter event in Peterborough during the winter OFFE weekend which drew in over 1,200 participants; both local and from the GTA. We look to expand this event as participation in OFFE continues to grow all across the province.

We will continue our partnership agreement with the MNR to continue delivering winter and summer Ontario Family Fishing Events on behalf of the province.

To learn more, visit [www.ontariofamilyfishing.com](http://www.ontariofamilyfishing.com) or the program Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/onfamfish](http://www.facebook.com/onfamfish).

## OFAH TackleShare



**OFAH TackleShare**

The OFAH TackleShare program continues to provide education and practical experience to new and young anglers out on the water and continues to grow interest from participants and loaner

sites. In addition to the established loaner sites across Ontario, the program has welcomed eight new loaner sites as well as re-established the program at several sites that were previous participants. These loaner sites include Ontario Parks, public libraries, Conservation Authorities, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and other community organizations. Ontario Parks and public libraries continue to be the strongest locations which provide the greatest amount of loans throughout the summer. With financial support from lead sponsor Ontario Power Generation (OPG), OFAH TackleShare has distributed hundreds of rod and reel combos and fully stocked tackle boxes to various loaner sites throughout the province. OFAH TackleShare also proudly supported the new Learn to Fish program through the MNR at four Ontario Parks. These parks were each supplied with 30 rod



and reel combos, 5 fully stocked tackle boxes, a rod holder, OFAH TackleShare bobbers and learning material.

The OFAH Travelling TackleShare program brings fishing gear to a variety of events in different locations during the summer. With a hands-on educational workshop, children learn about fish identification, invasive species, conservation and basic fishing techniques, followed by the opportunity to cast a line. The travelling component was delivered at seventeen events across the province and was well received. The OFAH TackleShare program also loaned its Travelling TackleShare rods and reels out to member clubs and other organizations for additional events this summer.

OFAH Travelling TackleShare was continuously promoted via media releases, the new updated TackleShare website, community events websites and local radio/TV shows and social media with new Facebook and Twitter accounts. Not only does this program break down barriers for new and young anglers to go fishing at no cost, it also reaches out to urban families who discover that the OFAH is important in leading environmental programs throughout Ontario. Visit [www.tackleshare.com](http://www.tackleshare.com) to learn more, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

## Women's Outdoor Weekend

For the past 19 years, the OFAH has been actively supporting women's growing interest in hunting, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits through our Women's Outdoor Weekend program. Many women have expressed interest in making the outdoors a greater part of their personal and family lifestyle, but did not know how to get started. The OFAH initiated the Women's Outdoors Weekend to break down this barrier, and is the only provincial program of its kind.

In 2013, 80 women participated in a three-day weekend of archery, fishing, fly tying, trap range, rifle range, high ropes course, wood carving, game calling, orienteering, outdoor survival, guest speakers, and evening entertainment at the Kinark Outdoor Centre near Minden. Many of these women were new to the outdoor activities that were available to them during the weekend, and have now taken them and applied them in their own lives.

The success of this program has been due to the sponsors and volunteers who help to make this weekend a truly memorable one.

## OFAH Get Outdoors

### Summer Leadership Camp

From all across Ontario, 180 youth participants leave their world of technology behind and come together for an equal purpose – discovering their place in the outdoors. Through actively participating in an incredible program provided by the OFAH,



campers enjoy kayaking, canoeing, archery, fishing tournaments, swimming, fly tying, .22 range, wild game calling competitions, wolfhows, night hikes, conservation initiatives, sunset campfires and the most recent addition, ATV education and riding. Such a wide combination all in one

place creates the experience of a lifetime – OFAH Get Outdoors Summer Leadership Camp. In addition to skill development and sports instruction, the OFAH incorporates the most valuable aspect which children will take with them everywhere they go; the true appreciation of our rich outdoor heritage, to the Get Outdoors Summer Leadership Camp. OFAH successfully accomplished the goal of projecting the ‘voice’ of young anglers and hunters through this outdoor experience.

To even further the enjoyment of campers, OFAH worked alongside the Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs (OFATV) to provide a youth rider educational program, DVD material and practical riding training. Through an ATV education training manual and Powerpoint presentation, riders understood their responsibilities, Ontario laws and regulations pertaining to ATVs, proper attire, safe operation as well as hand signals, and preparation suggestions to ensure all riders are fully educated. With the assistance of Canadian Tire’s generous donation of eight E-Ton Viper 90 Youth ATVs, campers had the opportunity of their lives out on the course and scenic trail. With the success of this year’s program, the OFAH will continue to use this activity for future programs.

In 2013, all 180 registrations were filled in just minutes and created a large waiting list of campers. Volunteers are the heart and soul of this camp and are the key to its twelve years of success. We appreciate their giving of their personal and family vacation time to deliver this one-of-a-kind program. Visit [www.getoutdoors.org/camp](http://www.getoutdoors.org/camp) to learn more or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



## Youth Leadership Conference

In March, 80 enthusiastic youth conversationists came together at the Youth Leadership Conference, held in conjunction with the 85th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference in Mississauga. The youth participated in a diverse and engaging trip to the Toronto Zoo, a partner in the Bring Back the Salmon program. Zoo educational staff were prepared with a program tailored to our youth, focusing on North American wildlife and conservation efforts across the country.

The Dufferin Northern Peel Anglers and Hunters Association also opened their club doors to host the youth for a day of hands-on activities including fly tying, wilderness survival and archery, as well as one-on-one instruction from qualified instructors on both the trap shooting and rifle ranges.

This year’s registration also resulted in a waiting list of youth. Visit [www.getoutdoors.org/conference](http://www.getoutdoors.org/conference) to learn more, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

## Youth Hunting

The OFAH in partnership with the Elgin, Perth, and Middlesex Stewardship Council continues to build youth hunting events throughout Ontario in an effort to recruit youth who want to try hunting, but have no one to mentor them. The following are a few highlights from 2013:

### The 1st Annual OFAH Youth Wild Turkey Hunt

This inaugural event was hosted by Bird’s Eye View Pheasant Farm on May 28 where four youth apprentice hunters got the chance to experience a day of spring wild turkey hunting with some of the best guides in Ontario. Our thanks go to Martin Ackerman, Brian Sheppard, and Kevin Bartley from Gobble Stalker calls for taking the time to mentor this new event.

### The 5th Annual Youth Hunting & Conservation Course

This event is held at the Long Point Research & Education Centre in Long Point from July 20 to 25. Thirty youth, ages 12 - 16 years, from across Ontario attended six days of classroom hunter education and firearms certification, hands-on activities, hunting demonstrations and FUN!

### The Second Annual DELTA/OFAH Waterfowler Heritage Day Hunt

This event was held on Rice Lake and provided youth with an opportunity to experience some premium hunting on September 21, Waterfowler Heritage Day. The OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre hosted the orientation meeting on the evening of Friday, September 20 where 14 mentors met their 14 apprentice hunters and topics such as safe gun handling, swing through and lead techniques were presented. The group as a whole managed to bag 19 birds, mostly wood ducks, mallards, and black ducks. Participants also learned about cleaning and cooking the ducks along with decoy placement and retriever dog handling. “Despite all the rain I think we had a very good day,” said Brian Sheppard, one of the 14 mentors who generously gave their time and equipment to this annual event.

### Second Annual OFAH/Bird’s Eye View Youth Pheasant Hunt

This event was held on Saturday, October 19 near Colborne. Seven newly certified youth apprentice hunters ages 12 to 15 enjoyed a day

of skeet shooting, hunting pheasants and wild game cooking. The mentored event provided one-on-one training for these aspiring hunters. Bird's Eye View Pheasant Farm once again generously donated guides, birds and skeet shooting opportunities. The apprentices gained important hands-on experience in shooting, harvesting, processing and cooking game.

### **Middlesex Stewardship Council Youth Pheasant Hunt**

On November 3 this council aimed to educate youth about conservation and wildlife management through the hunting experience. This annual pheasant hunt educates youth about wildlife management, stewardship and the development of good landowner relations. Congratulations on another successful event.

### **8th Annual Elgin Stewardship Council Youth Hunting Day**

This event was held on November 30. Connecting with nature through the hunting of game birds is the basis of the youth hunting day events. The stewardship councils consider this the start of the process of creating new ethical and responsible hunters who also appreciate the important role that hunting has in sustaining the province's natural resources. The Elgin Stewardship Council has won many awards for their tireless efforts and for developing the tool kit that we base our youth hunting day events on today.

### **Youth Hunting Tool Kit**

OFAH clubs wishing to host a youth hunting event can order a tool kit that includes everything needed to get started. This kit includes a DVD copy of the Ontario Stewardship's "how to" guide on successfully planning and implementing a youth hunting day event. It doesn't matter how big the event is — it's the quality of the experience that counts. Call or email the OFAH any time to start planning your OFAH youth hunting event.

## **OFAH Wild Turkey Registry**

The 2013 pin design featured a wild turkey tom in a classic black and copper glossy finish. It was available to those who registered their turkey and paid a nominal fee. The top scoring typical entry for 2013 was a 25-pound tom with 1.5 inch spurs taken by Paul Jewiss on April 29 at approximately 6:20 a.m. in Chatham-Kent. The top atypical bird was harvested by Chris Szewczyk in

Clarington on May 30, the second last day of the spring hunt. His entry tipped the scales at 21 pounds with 1-inch matching spurs and six beards that measured as follows: 9.25 inches, 6.75 inches, 6.00 inches, 5.50 inches, 5.50 inches, and 5.00 inches.

The OFAH thanks those who registered 130 turkeys in the Wild Turkey Registry in 2013.

To learn more, visit [www.ofah-cps.com/wtreg/](http://www.ofah-cps.com/wtreg/)

## **Ontario Angler Awards**

Our main goal for the Ontario Angler Awards (OAA) is to establish new sponsorships and create increased program awareness. To date, more than 9,000 people have visited the OAA website, and over half of these visitors were new visitors, showing that program awareness is growing exceptionally. As of June 2013, entry numbers were down slightly from 2012 due to a late rainy spring, but entries for July were back on track. Season entry totals for 2013 will again land over 3,000. Thanks go to our sponsors: Government of Ontario, Toronto Sportsmen's Show, SAIL Outdoors and *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* for supporting this great program.

## **OFAH Ontario Record Fish Registry**

With diligent marketing and promotion we are pleased to announce the Ontario Record Fish Registry program's latest achievements. A new record Fallfish and Longnose Gar were accepted by the registry in March.

The Fallfish was caught by Tony Baldassarra on the St. Lawrence River weighing 3.16 lbs, and the Longnose Gar was caught by Rob Jackson on the Ottawa River weighing 20.10 lbs.

In addition, we have received two potential new records for 2013 for a Mooneye and Coho Salmon, however they will not be declared until they are confirmed as records in March 2014.

We continue to promote the program via records on display for public view at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre. The display has recently been expanded with an additional six species.

Visit [www.ofah.org/fishing](http://www.ofah.org/fishing) for a current listing of record fish acknowledged by the OFAH Ontario Record Fish Registry.





# OFAH Membership

## Membership Growth

West of Upsala, a half-ton truck shows off an OFAH membership decal all the way across Highway 17. Pull into the Boots & Blades Restaurant, and a table full of Owen Sound fishermen are sporting OFAH hats, jackets, and our latest pin. At the checkout line of the Thamesville TSC Store, a customer digs for her OFAH member discount card. High above the city, a Bay Street investment broker spins his chair to refer clients to open dates on his OFAH Ontario Wildlife Calendar. And towards the nation's capital, a crowd of Carleton Place secondary students are spending cafeteria time flipping through *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazines, and talking about the hunting season.

These casual OFAH membership moments happen every day, and all across the province. The reach and frequency of OFAH membership impression points are absolutely immeasurable but positively vital for the membership growth and reputation of our organization. OFAH brand power increases with every new or renewing OFAH membership we achieve.

As we look back upon 2013, the OFAH can be very proud of its success in membership growth and branding, particularly on the heels of our most successful fall membership campaign season. Due to overwhelming response, we placed "sold out" signs on every major membership campaign that we originally forecasted would take us into 2014. The 2013 OFAH Annual Report delivers the kind of year-end membership results that our organization has grown to expect over the past five consecutive years... that is, precedent-setting membership retention along with hard-earned membership growth.

Indeed, we value each and every one of those members, not only for their contribution to conservation, but for the promise of more great OFAH membership moments that build our brand power and membership strength across the province. Congratulations to every OFAH member.

## Member Services

### Monthly Giving

Through the OFAH monthly giving program, just under 2,900 OFAH members keep their membership current and contribute to conservation in Ontario. In 2013, the total contributions from this program exceeded \$450,000. In addition to the convenience of

automatically donating a fixed amount monthly, all participants in this program receive a tax receipt for the donation amount that exceeds their membership fee.

In 2013, monthly giving and expired member calling campaigns generated over 650 new donors to the monthly giving program, with an increase in donations of \$9,000 per month.

In July, we mailed a keychain to our 2,900 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 contribution; 29 donors responded and increase their donations by a total of \$1,600 a year.

### Expired Membership

In 2013 we contacted over 9,500 expired members, which included over 2,500 members who lapsed in 2011. As a result of these campaigns, we renewed over 1,500 single memberships and 200 family memberships.

### 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 2013; we now have 560 Life Members.

## Member Club Growth

The OFAH currently has over 710 affiliated member clubs across Ontario. The "no-cost" primary club comprehensive general liability coverage that hunting, fishing and conservation clubs receive when they join as a 100% affiliated club with the OFAH, continues to be the number one reason and benefit for enrollment.

If you are part of, or know of a hunting, fishing or conservation club/camp that is looking for insurance coverage, an OFAH club membership is the answer.

## Member Benefits

### BrokerLink Insurance

Our partnership with BrokerLink Insurance in 2013 was very successful. OFAH members continue to reap the benefits of fantastic savings on their home and auto insurance policies (up to 30% off) through their OFAH membership. We continue to encourage any OFAH member to call for a no obligation quote and take advantage of some great savings. If you are tired of

## OFAH Connected with Zones and Member Clubs in 2013

The presence of the OFAH Zone/Member and Club Services Liaison at OFAH zone and member club meetings was well received throughout the year.

### We attended the following club meetings:

Bluewater Anglers	Sarnia
West Carleton Fish and Game Club	Kinburn
Belleville & District Fish & Game Club	Belleville
Outdoors Club	Wheatley
Thunder Bay Fish & Game Club	Thunder Bay
South Central Ontario Fish & Game	Oshawa
Cornwall Handgun Club	Cornwall
Napanee and District Rod & Gun Club	Napanee
Osgoode Fish and Game Club	Osgoode
Barrie District Hunters & Anglers Club	Barrie
Sioux Lookout Anglers & Hunters	Sioux Lookout
Thunder Bay Salmon Association	Thunder Bay

### We attended the following zone meetings:

Zone J meeting	Blenheim	January
Zone H meeting	Durham	January
Zone D meeting	Sudbury	January
Zone B meeting	Thunder Bay	January
Zone F meeting	Perth	February
Zone E meeting	Port Hope	March
Zone J meeting	London	April
Zone C meeting	Kirkland Lake	April
Zone F meeting	Perth	April
Zone A meeting	Dryden	May
Zone D meeting	Trout Creek	May
Zone B meeting	Thunder Bay	May
Zone H meeting	Barrie	August
Zone A meeting	Sioux Lookout	August
Zone E meeting	Bancroft	August
Zone B meeting	Thunder Bay	October
Zone G meeting	Ajax	November

### Additional meetings attended:

Ontario Crown land meeting –  
Wodehouse Karst Property, Kimberley  
Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular Media Day –  
Owen Sound  
Darlington Provincial Park Waterfowl Hunt meeting –  
Oshawa  
Great North Wildlife Affiliates Insurance AGM –  
Moose Jaw, SK

paying too much for insurance, contact your local BrokerLink office or call toll free 1-888-769-0030.

The OFAH is also pleased to announce that for the third straight year, BrokerLink Insurance has committed to the \$5,000 OFAH/BrokerLink Fish and Wildlife Conservation Internship program.

This is a great opportunity for a student who is currently enrolled in a post-secondary fish and wildlife program to gain valuable fish and wildlife work experience while still in school. More details are available through OFAH head office.

### Mark's Work Wearhouse

Although 2013 was a tough year in retail, OFAH members still spent over \$500,000 in Mark's stores across Ontario. As we enter into 2014, OFAH head office would like to remind all members about the importance of showing your OFAH/Mark's Work Wearhouse discount card at the time of purchase even if the item you are purchasing is already on sale. This will ensure that these figures are included in the overall sales at year end, which results in a larger donation back to the OFAH towards the conservation of fish and wildlife in Ontario.

Additional or replacement discount cards can be requested through OFAH head office.

### 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 help ensure that you have the coverage that you seek.

A quick reminder that the \$4,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment Policy that is included in your membership provides some coverage for you, in the event that you are severely injured or worse. Please contact OFAH head office for details.

### BMO

As 2014 will mark the final year of our current agreement with the Bank of Montreal, OFAH head office is confident that a new agreement will be finalized shortly. 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.

A reminder to all OFAH members to use their OFAH/BMO MasterCards. The annual donation from BMO is based on total sales generated over the course of a year. If more purchases are made with that card, it could mean a greater contribution back to the OFAH. It is important for all cardholders to use their OFAH/BMO MasterCard as often as possible. If you currently don't have the OFAH/BMO MasterCard, please apply today. Visit [www.ofah.org](http://www.ofah.org) and click on the BMO MasterCard.

### TSC Stores

The third anniversary of our partnership with TSC Stores occurred in 2013, and in-store sales show that OFAH members continue to shop and save at TSC Stores across Ontario. On top of the 15% discount that OFAH members receive on a variety of products (see reverse side of discount card for more information), they are also eligible to take advantage of great monthly specials; products often 25% - 30% off normal retail price. Be sure to check out [www.ofah.org](http://www.ofah.org) or the *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine for the latest offers. Simply show your TSC discount card to take advantage of these great offers.

Finally, visit your local store to check out the “Team OFAH” products. Exclusive to TSC Stores, these great products also directly support the conservation of fish and wildlife in Ontario as the OFAH receives a royalty payment with the purchase of any product, regardless of who purchases it. Be sure to visit your local store and take advantage of some great deals.

### **The Brick**

OFAH members can save anywhere between 10 - 40% off your purchase of home appliances, televisions and furniture. OFAH head office would like to remind members to call the 1-800 number on the Brick discount card prior to their purchase to ensure that they are receiving the best possible deal. The Brick’s annual donation is based upon the total sales volume made by OFAH members.

Remember, when you take advantage of the OFAH discount program at the Brick, your purchase directly supports the conservation of fish and wildlife in Ontario.

### **The UPS Store**

OFAH members can save from 5 - 15% off a variety of products/services at any UPS Store in Ontario. Simply show your OFAH membership card when checking out at the cash register to take advantage of some great savings.

### **Manulife Financial**

A reminder to all OFAH members that if you are looking for great health or dental coverage and looking to save on costs, Manulife Financial may have what you are searching for. They offer everything from health and dental plans to life insurance policies.

## **Affinity Partner Recruitment**

The OFAH is continuously searching for new quality retail/service partners who can offer our members discounted prices on products or services that they regularly purchase or use.

If you know of a company that would be a good fit with the OFAH, please contact OFAH head office.

### **Great North Wildlife Affiliates (GNWA) - Individual Coverage**

No changes were made to individual insurance coverage in 2013.

### **Great North Wildlife Affiliates (GNWA) - Club Coverage**

The OFAH was pleased to learn that there was a reduction in cost for an Additional Insured Certificate issued through the Great North Wildlife Affiliates (GNWA) in 2013. Many of our clubs host a variety of events throughout the year where this certificate is required by their municipality.

We are reminding OFAH 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 Vincent Press Ltd.; W.I. Villager Ltd.

## **85th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference**

The 85th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference welcomed over 450 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.

New at this conference were three interactive workshops on falconry, coyote and coyote hunting tactics, and trapping; all delivered by experts in the field. At Thursday evening’s President’s Reception, Joe Dickson, parliamentary assistant to the minister of Natural Resources and Tim Hudak, leader of the Official Opposition, addressed delegates. Friday afternoon featured Andrea Horwath, leader of the New Democratic Party.

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.



*Canada’s former Environment Minister, Peter Kent, delivered Saturday’s keynote address.*



# Fundraising

## 39th Annual OFAH Conservation Lottery

The OFAH Conservation Lottery is our largest fundraiser other than membership dues and is a terrific way to support the OFAH and conservation programs across the province. Once again, lottery winners took home fantastic prizes while supporting conservation efforts in their communities and beyond. The 39th lottery grand prize winners hailed from Fenelon Falls, St. Catharines, Ottawa, North Bay and Waterford.

A complete list of winners was posted at [www.ofah.org/lottery](http://www.ofah.org/lottery) and was printed in the August HOTLINE. The line-up of prizes totaled more than \$302,000. Thanks to Dodge (Chrysler Canada), our major vehicle sponsor; G3, who provided our 1st grand prize boat; and Lund, who provided our 5th grand prize boat along with a Mercury motor. Yamaha also continued its contribution and was a major sponsor with ATVs and outboard motors. For a price of only \$2 per ticket there were some fantastic prizes to be won!

Anyone selling more than five books of tickets was eligible to order "Algonquin Moose Study," a beautiful limited edition print by Michael Dumas; 325 framed prints were sold.

Our 2013 lottery ticket sales totalled 37,293 books sold. Thanks to all those who purchased and sold tickets; what a great way for you to support the OFAH and conservation!

## OFAH Ontario Wildlife Calendar and Christmas Cards

The 2013 OFAH Ontario Wildlife calendar was mailed in October 2012 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 financial reports for the first three quarters of 2013 have been filed with the Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario. We are operating under a two-year licence for the period of October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2014 and we are offering just one game with a fifty cent ticket and a moderate prize board. Our number of open and active locations remains quite steady at eighteen outlets.

We have purchased 74 and sold 75 boxes of tickets in the first nine months of this year, resulting in net proceeds to date of \$14,009.25. These results are similar to those from the same time last year so we are hopeful that the slide in sales and popularity of these games in recent years has levelled off.

We have been able to transfer the approved budget amounts from 2012 and 2013 to the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre in support of education programs at the facility.

We are poised to enter into discussions with the Ontario Charitable Gaming Association about project options and funding streams that are available to provincial charities like ours to enhance sales at a location of our choice.

The OFAH has been involved in break open ticket fundraising since 1993 and even though our current activity is nowhere near the returns we were receiving twenty years ago, it is a fairly streamlined program from a management and reporting perspective, and it is a great way to provide additional funding to programs of the OFAH that need financial support to fulfill their valuable mandates to our members and the public at large.

## Conservation Dinners

In 2013, OFAH head office assisted the dedicated volunteers of two long-standing fundraising dinner committees by providing hundreds of like-minded conservationists with a fun evening of entertainment, great food, and exciting auctions and raffles. These two events raised a total of almost \$44,000 in funding for community-based fish and wildlife projects.



# Government Affairs & Policy

## Aboriginal Fishing and Hunting

The OFAH recognizes that the Supreme Court of Canada, in the Sparrow decision, ruled that certain aboriginal people in Canada are entitled to a priority allocation of fish and wildlife for food, social, and ceremonial purposes; however, the Sparrow decision also ruled that this priority allocation is subject to conservation. This means that fishing and hunting conservation management regulations must accommodate the aboriginal right to a priority allocation, and regulations may only infringe upon the priority allocation and access to it, if justifiable.

Fish and wildlife conservation management is a cooperative societal undertaking. Its success is dependent on the long-term sustained commitment of all towards the greater benefits for society as a whole.

The OFAH continues to seek assurances that fish and wildlife conservation management approaches in Ontario produce allocations for aboriginals and all other Canadians. We strive to ensure that public hunting and fishing opportunities and public access to those opportunities continue, so that injustices for any Canadian do not occur.

The information provided here is for the benefit of OFAH members and all of those committed to the best possible management for our collective and invaluable fish and wildlife resources. Hopefully, this demonstrates why the OFAH devotes significant attention to current issues as the Algonquin Land Claim, Williams Treaty court case, Lake Nipissing Walleye commercial gillnet fishery, the Saugeen Ojibway fishing agreement with Ontario, and the aboriginal harvest of the Lake Huron North Shore and Bancroft/North Hastings elk.

## Fish and Wildlife Conservation Management

Conservation is the use, management and protection of natural resources to supply benefits at optimal sustainable levels to present and future Ontarians. The principles of conservation are the basis for fish and wildlife management, and include:

- Sustainability of resource stocks;
- Optimum supply of benefits from the resource;
- Maintenance of ecosystem function and stability, genetic diversity and biodiversity;
- Management of, and provision for risk and uncertainty;

- Monitoring and assessment of fish and wildlife related activities, such as fishing and hunting; and
- Evidence-based management plans.

Successful fish and wildlife conservation management lends itself to a financial analogy: a resource stock (the principal/balance in a savings bank account) should be managed to achieve the optimum balance, thus producing maximum annual interest. The annual interest can then be allocated and used (spent) without diminishing the principal (the resource stock). Unlimited and unregulated harvest (withdrawals from the bank account) will deplete the resource stock and lead toward collapse (bankruptcy). The lessons from unregulated harvest have been learned from, for example, the Lake Nipissing Walleye commercial gillnet fishery, where the stock/population is on the verge of collapse, and will take decades to recover even if immediate, emergency management actions occur.

Resource stocks are public resources to be managed on behalf of the people of Ontario by their governments. So, the government must optimize the principle within, and the annual interest from the savings bank account to maximize the benefits for Ontario residents.

Optimizing the principal in the savings account is a valid conservation and resource management objective as described by the Supreme Court of Canada in its Sparrow decision that respects the priority allocation (from the annual interest) to aboriginal people for food, and infringes upon that priority allocation (and access to it) only if justified.

## Williams Treaty

The validity of aspects of the Williams Treaty is being challenged in the Federal Court of Canada. We met with both levels of government, but were unable to secure an answer to the question: what has changed since 1994 and 1996, when Canada, Ontario and the OFAH successfully argued at the Supreme Court of Canada that the validity of the Williams Treaty of 1923 should be upheld.

One of the most significant consequences of the Williams Treaty is that it extinguished any and all special hunting and fishing rights. Since 1923, everyone who fishes and hunts in south-central Ontario abides by the same hunting and fishing regulations under one unified fish and wildlife conservation management regime dictated by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, Fisheries Act, and Ontario Fishery Regulations.

Conservation and people have both been well served as a result of the Williams Treaty. All fish and wildlife resource users pay reasonable licence fees to ensure our successful fish and wildlife conservation management regime is sustained into the future. We all share the benefits from our fish and wildlife resources in times of plenty and share the pain when nature dictates lower levels of those benefits.

As a result, the OFAH has been “seeking to intervene” in the court case to ensure the Supreme Court of Canada’s prior decisions in 1994 and 1996 are fully respected, given that such decisions are the law of the land. Additionally, the Province of Ontario, with the agreement of the Federal Government of Canada, has extended use of the Ministry of Natural Resources Interim Enforcement Policy (IEP) to the First Nation bands signatory to the Williams Treaty (Mississauga of Rice Lake; Mud Lake; Scugog Lake; Alderville; Chippewas of Christian Island; Georgina Island; and Rama). This too, is in direct contravention to the Supreme Court of Canada’s previous Williams Treaty decision in the Howard case of 1994 because the IEP largely exempts aboriginals from following the fishing and hunting regulations.

The Federal Court Judge is scheduled to issue a decision on whether or not the OFAH receives Intervenor Status early in 2014. At the same time, the OFAH is seeking what is known as Declaratory Relief in the Superior Court of Justice, against the province implementing the IEP for the seven signatory bands of the Williams Treaty.

## **Algonquin Land Claim**

The Algonquin Land Claim continued to occupy a great deal of staff time and resources in 2013.

Following years of negotiation by the three parties (Canada, Ontario, Algonquins of Ontario) behind closed doors, a draft Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) was released to the public in late 2012. The lack of an open and transparent negotiation process was evident in the response of Ontarians to the AIP. The reaction of those who live, work and recreate in the land claim area was particularly strong. In response to the federal and provincial government’s lack of meaningful public consultation, the OFAH looked for ways to better engage and inform the public about the land claim and its impact on Ontario residents.

In February and March, the OFAH, in partnership with the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association and the Federation of Ontario Cottagers’ Association hosted a series of five public meetings (Perth, Stittsville, North Bay, Pembroke and Bancroft). These meetings were extremely well attended, and featured speakers from the three groups, question and answer sessions, large map displays, and literature handouts. More than 1,500 people attended these meetings, many of whom subsequently contacted their local political representatives to demand answers. Subsequent to the meetings, the OFAH created a website devoted to the land claim ([algonquinlandclaim.ca](http://algonquinlandclaim.ca)) which contains maps, briefing notes, speeches, mail lists and other related material. The OFAH produced a webcast for the website to engage those who were not able to attend one of our five public meetings.

On April 6, the OFAH co-hosted a public meeting for municipalities in Madawaska, at the invitation of the Municipality of South Algonquin. Again, the meeting was well attended, with over 35 municipal councillors, local mayors and concerned residents forming part of the audience. Since that time, the Municipality of

South Algonquin has petitioned the Association of Municipalities of Ontario to represent the interests of all affected municipalities with this issue at the province.

Throughout our decades of dedicated work on the Algonquin Land Claim, the OFAH has advocated for fairness and equality in the negotiation process to reflect the long and storied tradition of non-Algonquin settlement and participation in outdoor recreational activities in the land claim area. This requires more open and transparent consultation of resource users in the land claim area with a clear explanation of how their input was used in the negotiation process. The OFAH has attempted to bring a conservation-based approach to the Algonquin land claim negotiations; however, the Harvesting Chapter of the AIP does not adequately reflect Ontario’s existing and successful fish and wildlife management model. OFAH staff carried out a thorough review of the draft AIP and provided extensive comments to both Ontario and Canada.

The OFAH was informed that a revised draft AIP would be posted on the website of the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in September, with a vote on the document to be held by the Algonquins of Ontario in December. This timeline was not met.

## **Federal Firearms Issues**

On April 24 and 25, the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee (CFAC) met in Ottawa with the federal minister of Public Safety, the parliamentary secretary, the RCMP, and staff from the Firearms Centre.

In broad terms, the focus of the meeting was on licensing, the United Nations (U.N.) Marking Regulations and mental health issues. The federal government is considering a proposal to make several changes to the licensing system. It is expected that these changes will occur in the spring of 2014. CFAC appointments expired in September. Public Safety Canada is re-aligning the committee, its mandate and terms of reference; expect re-appointments to occur early in the new year.

## **United Nations (U.N.) Marking**

The federal government, through the CFAC, continues to pressure the firearms community for a definitive answer regarding the marking program. The current sticking point relates to the difference between markings that currently appear on new firearms imported from the United States, and the ongoing importation of firearms dated prior to 1962, many of which have no markings at all. 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 in 2012, CFAC rejected the government’s suggestions, but did not propose alternative wording at that time, given CFAC’s opposition to the UN proposal.

Last fall, 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 committee 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 be prohibitively expensive.

In December, the government announced that they were deferring a response on the marking system for two years.

## **New Federal Tariffs on Firearms**

The federal government applied a new tariff on 1,300 classes of goods, including all firearms and parts being imported into Canada, with the exception of firearms and parts coming from the United States, which are covered under NAFTA. The tariff impacts lower cost, entry level firearms from other countries, including Turkey and China, which export a fair number of firearms to Canada. The level of the tariff is 3.5% to 7%, and has resulted in the higher cost of importing these items being passed along to the consumer. The OFAH expressed a concern over this new “tax” during discussions with the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO).

## **Seized Firearms – Disposition for Conservation/Educational Purposes**

The OFAH has continued to push for the repeal of Section 15.1 of the Firearms Act, which states that seized firearms can only be offered to the Chief Firearms Office (CFO) for destruction or for any scientific research or educational purpose, or for preservation as a historical firearm. This section of the Act came into force in 2008 as one of the remnants of Bill C-68. Prior to that time, firearms seized by provincial enforcement officials (COs) could be turned over to conservation organizations that could auction/sell them off to raise funds for various projects.

There is an interest in changing that section of the Act to allow for the diversion of these firearms into support for conservation and education programs. This is supported by the CFO in British Columbia and Saskatchewan and, more recently, the Ontario CFO. Discussions with staff in the federal Public Safety minister’s office are ongoing on this issue, as well as with the Ontario CFO, and it is expected that an amendment to the regulation may be achieved in 2014 as part of a larger package of firearms reforms.

## **Interjurisdictional Violations and Enforcement**

In the U.S., 38 member states have joined together to form the Interstate Wildlife Violators Act, which allows participating states to share information regarding fishing, hunting, and trapping violations. In essence, it provides the member states with the capability to honour each other’s suspensions. A violator convicted in one jurisdiction would be barred from participating in hunting, fishing, or trapping in another.

OFAH has been pressing for the creation of a federal database that would allow all provinces to access information about fish and wildlife violators, which in turn, could prevent those same violators from accessing licenses to hunt or fish in other jurisdictions. On September 10, the OFAH met with senior staff in the minister’s office at Environment Canada and the director general of the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) to discuss this and several other matters. At that meeting, the OFAH suggested that the required database to give this measure effect should reside within the CWS. If such a database has not been created by 2015, the OFAH could include this on a list of items for inclusion by the various political parties in their election platforms.

## **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)**

On April 17, the OFAH and six provincial affiliates wrote to the federal minister of Agriculture, outlining our collective concerns over the government’s approach to Chronic Wasting Disease. On May 27, the OFAH wrote to the minister again to recommend a ban on the interprovincial movement of live cervids. On June 14, the minister responded by suggesting that a CWD task force had been formed to review the current program, and look at alternative control strategies and future options for controlling the spread of the disease. The OFAH wrote back on July 12 to reiterate our request for a meeting with the minister on this issue, and to express our profound concern over his reliance on the task force, which is largely composed of industry representatives and no one from any of the provincial wildlife affiliates. The lack of a response by September prompted another letter requesting a meeting.

In October, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) released a discussion paper on options for a CWD control program, that came out of the discussion with the Task Force. The OFAH and other affiliates who previously asked the federal Agriculture minister for inclusion on the Task Force continue to oppose the findings of the report given the absence of meaningful input from the outdoor community.

## **Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel**

The Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel (HAAP) met on May 3, 2013.

*The panel has identified the following issues as priorities:*

- 1) Access/protectionism;
- 2) Aquaculture impact on fisheries;
- 3) The socioeconomic impact of fishing and hunting;
- 4) The need for better communications from the federal government;
- 5) The Species at Risk listing process;
- 6) The National Conservation Plan;
- 7) The implementation of recommendations from the National Fish & Wildlife Congress Committee (NFWCC);
- 8) Fish and wildlife diseases, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD);
- 9) Invasive species;
- 10) Conservation and sustainable use;
- 11) A definition of conservation;
- 12) Funding for fish and wildlife;
- 13) National Fish Habitat Action Plan;
- 14) National Habitat Bank;
- 15) National Fish and Wildlife (Conservation) Act; and
- 16) National Fish and Wildlife Heritage Act.

## **Wildlife Habitat Canada – Price Increase on Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp**

At the HAAP meeting in May, Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) sought approval to increase the price of the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp portion of the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit. The price has not been raised since 1991. Proceeds from the stamp are directed by Environment Canada to WHC, which uses the money to support conservation projects across the country.

WHC was seeking an immediate increase of \$4.00, followed by

annual increases of either \$2.00 per year for six years or \$4.00 per year for three years (total new cost: \$24.50).

No consensus was achieved at the HAAP meeting, and a subcommittee was struck to review the issue and provide possible solutions. The OFAH was appointed to the subcommittee, and advocated for an incremental increase tied to inflation/cost of living index or a flat 2% increase annually. No decision has been made.

Other issues discussed at the HAAP meeting included changes to the Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations, the Algonquin Land Claim, Species at Risk and the National Conservation Plan.

### **Meeting with Prime Minister's Office (PMO)**

On May 2, 2013, the OFAH met with staff at the Prime Minister's Office to continue a long-standing dialogue between the Federation and PMO on issues of interest to the outdoor community.

### **Federal Minister of Public Safety Visits OFAH**

On September 26, the Honourable Steven Blaney, minister of Public Safety, visited the OFAH and met with staff before touring the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre. Among the topics discussed with the minister were changes to licensing, gun marking, the U.N. Arms Treaty, amendments to the Firearms Act and the need for mandatory firearms training for all first-time firearms users/owners. The minister indicated that action on several fronts could be coming early in the new year.

### **Federal Throne Speech**

On October 16, the OFAH attended the federal speech from the throne at the invitation of the government. Although there was nothing specific to the outdoor community in the speech, it afforded the OFAH with an opportunity to speak to several government officials about key concerns and issues during those events, which will set the stage for future meetings.

### **Meeting with Environment Canada/CWS**

On October 16, the OFAH met with the acting director general of the Canadian Wildlife Service to discuss a number of issues including mute swan control, the donation of waterfowl to conservation dinners, the Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay Protection Fund, the National Conservation Plan, migratory bird hunting and associated fees, and proposed changes to the Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations and interprovincial suspensions.

### **Meeting with Ontario Chief Firearms Officer**

On October 18, the OFAH met with the Chief Firearms Officer (CFO), their crown counsel and the manager of the Firearms Safety Education Service of Ontario in Orillia. A number of topics were discussed, and the OFAH has agreed to pursue some changes to the national firearms database with the federal minister of Public Safety that would benefit firearms owners, in particular new applicants, and the CFO.

## **Wild Game and Fish Reception on Parliament Hill**

On October 28, the OFAH, along with provincial and territorial affiliates, hosted a wild game and fish reception for all Members of Parliament and the Senate. Similar to the successful Queen's Park event which the OFAH and partners have run for nine years, the evening provided the OFAH and representatives of our provincial and territorial affiliates from across Canada with an opportunity for one-on-one interaction with MPs and senators. Over 145 Members of Parliament and the Senate attended, including nine cabinet ministers and many senior staff. Given the success of the evening, the OFAH and our affiliates intend on making the reception an annual event.

### **Bill 114 – The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (Spring Bear Hunt)**

On October 8, Bill Mauro, MPP, Thunder Bay-Atikokan, introduced a bill to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (FWCA) to provide for a return of the spring bear hunt. The bill passed Second Reading before Christmas and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. The OFAH has notified the clerk and chair of the committee that we wish to appear in support of the bill once public hearings have been scheduled.

### **Bill S-202 – An Act to amend the Payment Card Networks Act (credit card acceptance fees)**

On October 17, Liberal Senator Paulette Ringuette introduced a bill in the Senate that would exempt charities from most credit card fees. This would benefit the OFAH considerably. The bill did not receive Second Reading before Christmas, but was expected to be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce. The OFAH has contacted the committee clerk and asked to appear in support of the bill once public hearings have been scheduled.

### **Bill C-501 – National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Act**

This is the third version of the bill introduced by Rick Norlock, MP, Northumberland, which will provide for the creation of a national day recognizing the importance of fishing, hunting and trapping. Once the bill has passed Second Reading, the OFAH will appear in support of the legislation at committee.

### **MNR Special Purpose Account (SPA) Revenue Generation Initiative**

In 2012, the MNR initiated a revenue generation project in response to an identified near-term decrease in funds flowing into the SPA resulting from declining fishing and hunting licence sales. This initiative continued in 2013 with an aim to develop a five-year revenue generation strategy. Based on the results of stakeholder surveys which included the OFAH, MNR identified revenue generation ideas to undergo a feasibility analysis. The OFAH is focused on ensuring that no ideas will place undue hardships on anglers and hunters, and any new revenue generated for the SPA by this initiative will not result in diminishing funds to fish and wildlife programs from the consolidated revenue fund.

## Sunday Gun Hunting

OFAH correspondence to a number of municipalities in southern Ontario directly resulted in responses from 18 different municipalities and 12 council meeting appearances.

***The OFAH was pleased to attend meetings and make presentations to the following councils in support of Sunday gun hunting:***

Seguin Township - no decision

Douro-Dummer - approved

City of Hamilton - no action - rejected by council (no public meeting or input)

Township of Malahide - approved

Municipality of Southwest Middlesex - no action - rejected by council (no public meeting or input)

Township of Enniskillen - approved

Township of Oro-Medonte - no action

Municipality of Brighton - rejected

Carling Township - no action - rejected by council (no public meeting or input)

Township of Georgian Bay - no action - rejected by council (no public meeting or input)

Haldimand County - deferred at request of local hunters

Township of Muskoka Lakes - approved for spring of 2014

Township of the Archipelago - approved for spring of 2014

Township of Asphodel-Norwood - approved for spring of 2014

Beckwith Township - approved for spring of 2014

## Discharge of Firearms

Discharge of Firearms bylaws was also an extremely active file in 2013. Often arising from urban residents moving into rural areas, municipalities are constantly fielding complaints about the sound of gunshots or concerns that hunting is a public safety issue.

Either directly or indirectly, the OFAH was involved in no less than 12 municipal bylaw reviews resulting in over 23 appearances at committee of the whole meetings, council meetings, meetings with the deputy clerk or public meetings. As municipalities come forward to amend their current discharge of firearms bylaws, the OFAH will work to ensure that the rights of Ontario hunters and recreational shooters are represented.

***The OFAH was engaged in this issue in the following communities:***

Whitby - countered negative amendment and was successful in re-instating hunting in parts of Whitby

Township of Wainfleet - successful in ensuring no changes

City of Woodstock - removed police proof restriction

Township of Uxbridge - successful in ensuring no restrictions to hunting

Municipality of Brighton - no changes

Township of King - OFAH proposed changes in language, size of properties, type of hunting, etc. (to be completed in 2014)

Town of Essex - no changes

Town of Greater Napanee - prohibit discharge where there are municipal services (water and sewer)

County of Brant - expansion of prohibited area where individual complainant lives

Township of Wilmot - changes mirror developed urban areas

Municipality of Kincardine - in progress

## Queen's Park Wild Game and Fish Reception

The 9th 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 MPPs attended the event along with their staff, and many called it the most successful event to date.

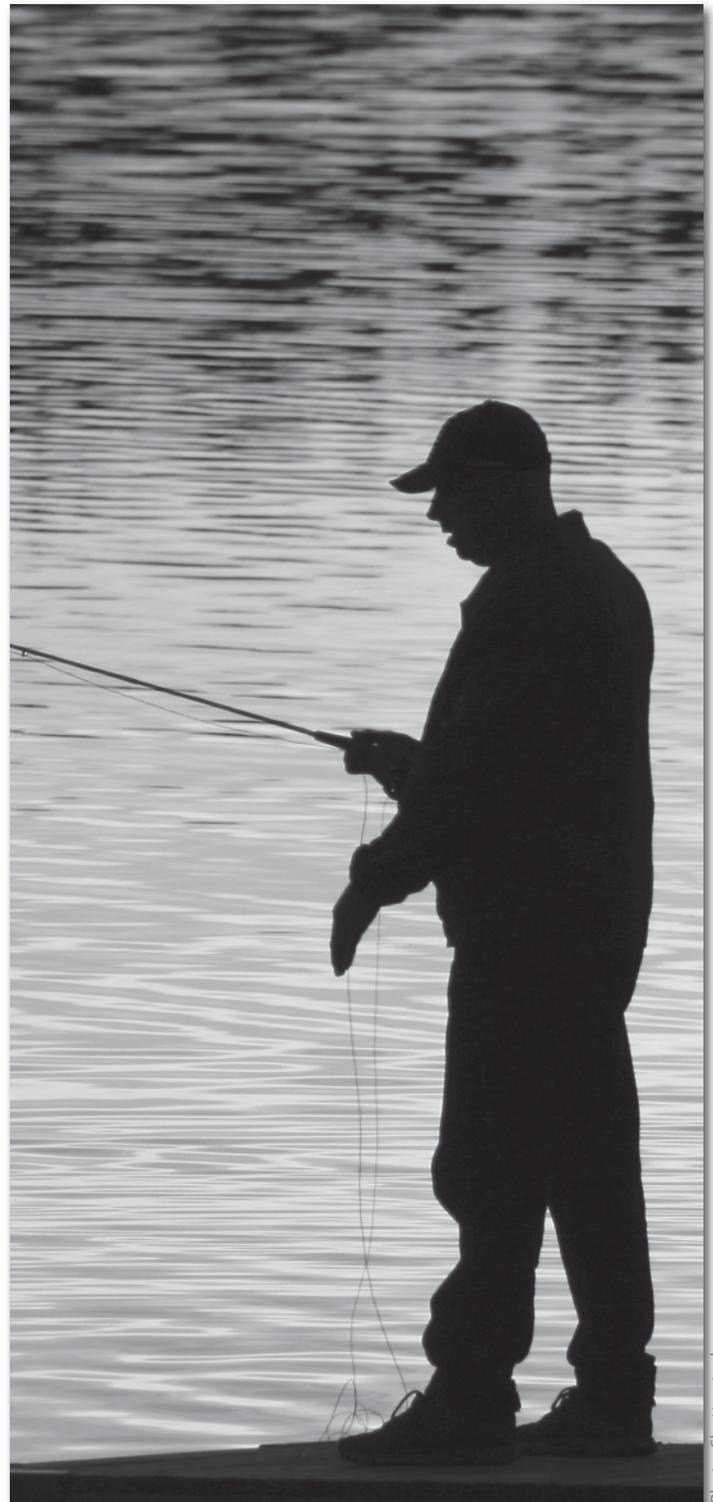


Photo: Shutterstock



# Communications

## In the News

In 2013, the Communications department issued a total of 50 media releases and advisories, which were simultaneously posted to [www.ofah.org](http://www.ofah.org) and OFAH social media sites including Facebook and Twitter. OFAH e-news and RSS subscribers (Rich Site Summary), a format for delivering our changing web content, also received our releases through e-mail or web browser.

Throughout the year, we partnered with several organizations, including the OPP, the Ontario Conservation Officers Association (OCA) and Kawartha Lakes Fire and Rescue on joint public safety messaging.

Communications staff monitor the *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* forum ([www.oodmag.com/community](http://www.oodmag.com/community)) to stay current with hot topics in the online hunting and angling community.

## HOTLINE

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 in order to provide our members with timely information on a wide variety of topics through the 16-page Angler & Hunter Hotline section of *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine. This magazine, with HOTLINE insert, is produced 10 times per year and is included with an OFAH membership.

## Media Draws

Over the course of the year, a number of major issues generated considerable media interest and coverage for the OFAH. A spate of bear attacks in northern Ontario resulted in major media attention, which was highlighted with the introduction of Bill 114, a call to re-establish a spring bear hunt, by Bill Mauro, MPP for Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

The inception of a mourning dove hunt also generated a number of media stories and opportunities for OFAH fish and wildlife staff to comment. The creation of this new hunt generated a considerable amount of attention on both mainstream and social media.

Another issue that attracted media attention was the growing interest and participation in hunting. This provided Hunter Education staff with the opportunity to share the reasons behind

the increase in the number of hunter education participants, and the many positive aspects of hunting.

## Communications Support

The Algonquin Land Claim was the focus of a comprehensive communications and policy campaign throughout the year that included public meetings (which attracted over 1,500 participants), news releases, information packages, and a webinar that was available to the public on the dedicated website [www.Algonquinlandclaim.ca](http://www.Algonquinlandclaim.ca). OFAH also appeared on the Aboriginal People's Television Network to provide our perspective on the claim. This episode aired in October.

In addition to assisting with the planning and implementation of a major Atlantic Salmon event in Pickering, communications staff provided support to OFAH education and outreach, the Invading Species Awareness Program, the Ontario Invasive Plant Council and the Community Stream Steward Program.

## Online Presence

A key priority for communications staff was the new *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* website, along with updates on several other departmental websites, and the start of a revamp of the main OFAH website, which will be completed in 2014.

In total, OFAH websites received almost 3 million visits during 2013, and over 14 million page views.

Social media continues to be an increasingly important means of reaching our members, the media and the general public. In 2013, the OFAH had almost 15,000 followers on Facebook and over 7,500 on Twitter.

## Ontario OUT OF DOORS



Under the OFAH banner, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* (OOD) magazine celebrates fishing and hunting with news, features, and photos. Ranked Canada's "Best Read" outdoors publication by the Print Measurement Bureau, OOD is a major presence in print and online, in Ontario and beyond.

OOD publishes 10 issues a year, and is available on newsstands and at major retailers across the province. OOD also delivers Federation news to members through the exclusive 16 page Angler & Hunter HOTLINE insert, which is produced by OFAH communications.

### Online Initiatives

A grant from the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) enabled OOD to step up its online presence in 2013. A web editor was hired in the early spring and the website was redesigned and re-launched in July under a new URL, [www.oodmag.com](http://www.oodmag.com).

Over the course of the year, the site received approximately 12 million page views, with more than 651,000 unique visitors. The OOD forum remained a major hub for anglers and hunters in 2013, with 12,000 members and millions of hits.

OOD also significantly increased its reach through social media channels, an achievement that was recognized with a prestigious Silver award from the Canadian Online Publishing Awards in the "Best Use of Social Media" category.

On average, OOD received approximately 6,000 referrals a month through Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, and Pinterest.

The OOD video library grew to over 166 clips, the most popular of which topped 66,000 views! All videos are accessible on the OOD website ([www.oodmag.com/videos](http://www.oodmag.com/videos)) and YouTube channel ([www.Youtube.com/OODMag](http://www.Youtube.com/OODMag)).

Throughout its 46-year history, OOD has published outstanding content created by some of the best outdoor writers and photographers in the industry, and that quality has consistently delivered results.

OOD is in the top 7% of all Canadian magazines sold. Even in a declining magazine market, OOD numbers rose. To the end of October, subscriptions sold were up 20% over the same period in 2012.



## Angler & Hunter Television



*Angler & Hunter Television* (AHTV) reached new heights this season, and compiled an impressive list of sponsors and supporters from across North America.

The show is more popular than ever, and Mike Miller has become synonymous with the OFAH and AHTV name, through heavy exposure to over eight million Canadians in the Canadian Tire flyer and countless appearances in support of show sponsors and the OFAH.

Through 2013, we captured exciting fishing and hunting adventures on film, including a feature on the new mourning dove season in Ontario and a sub-arctic caribou hunt with the editor-in-chief of *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine. We also caught countless giant fish — Rainbow Trout, Walleye, Pike, Muskellunge and bass.

The Outdoor Life Network (OLN) has proven to be an excellent home for our national broadcast, and has taken a leading role in supporting hunting on television. Our YouTube page and the Wild TV website offer online access to current and past episodes and Wild TV subscribers can tune in as many as five times a week. AHTV is available via satellite on Bell ExpressVu, Rogers Digital, and Shaw Direct. Visit the website at [www.ahtv.com](http://www.ahtv.com) for a current list of episodes and local air times.

AHTV has never had as strong a list of sponsors as it enjoys today, including Canadian Tire, Mercury Outboards, Lund Boats, Browning Canada, Winchester Ammunition, Minn Kota, Humminbird, Yamaha ATVs, Normark (Rapala), Yukon Gear, Wildgame Innovations, Camillus Knives, Excalibur Crossbow, and JJ Stewart Motors (RAM). Supporting sponsors also make a big contribution and include, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, Bushnell Optics, DT Powersports, and Lucky Strike nets.

The outdoors is one of the fastest growing segments of television in North America, and we intend to keep AHTV at the top, as one of Canada's best-produced outdoor programs.

Visit [www.ahtv.com](http://www.ahtv.com) for tips, episodes and more.

## Angler & Hunter Radio



*Angler & Hunter Radio* (AH Radio) is an established success, with three seasons fully wrapped. Once again, we received many positive comments from our listeners.

AH Radio delivers OFAH messaging in a timely fashion on issues that are important to members, as well as all residents of Ontario. Season three also saw AH Radio promote the "Win *Angler & Hunter Radio* Host Tom Otto's Alumacraft/Yamaha Boat Package," which proved to be a very popular draw.

AH Radio officially signed off for the season on December 1, but season four will launch on March 1, 2014.

In 2013, AHRadio was proudly sponsored by Canadian Tire, Yamaha, Thermacell, Alumacraft, Kingfisher, Kijiji, Wildgame Innovations, Land O'Lakes, *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, and Nikon. Visit [www.ahradio.ca](http://www.ahradio.ca) to learn more or listen to archived shows.

# President's Report

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This past year has once again proven to be busy and full of challenges for the OFAH Board of Directors and head office staff. It is impossible to tell you everything that your Federation has been working on in such a short space so please take the time to read the full annual report and share it with your family and friends.

I realize that some people may be getting tired of hearing about the Algonquin Land Claim and the Williams Treaty court case, but it is imperative that all our members, as well as all Ontarians, realize that these are precedent-setting cases for all who fish, hunt and enjoy the outdoor opportunities this province has to offer. It is critically important that we keep these issues in the forefront of everyone's mind and in front of our federal and provincial legislators, as it is they who will ultimately make the decisions that will impact on us all. To lose focus on these issues would be, in my mind, paramount to saying "we don't care, we give up," and there is too much at stake to do so. We urge you, our members, to be as diligent about these issues as our head office staff and our board members are. When it comes to land claims, all we want is a fair deal that recognizes First Nations and non-Aboriginal access to and use of our valuable natural resources, and the fair sharing of those resources.

Despite the downsizing that has occurred at the MNR, there have been some positive changes. The grants administered by the OFAH through the Community Hatchery Program have provided volunteer hatcheries across the province with badly needed funding to carry on their valuable work. New regulations governing the use of leashed dogs to track wounded game, the elimination of the special licence to hunt raccoon at night, and a reduction in the amount of paperwork required to hold wild game dinners are all positive developments on the provincial front. The OFAH Board of Directors also took part in an MNR Special Purpose Account (SPA) exercise by providing input to proposals for new ideas for additional revenue generation. We look forward to seeing the results of this consultation.

As a hunter education and firearms instructor, I was delighted to see the continued increase in the number of people taking the hunter education course. In 2013, we trained over 25,000 new hunters, which represents a 25% increase over 2012 and is the 12th consecutive year of growth of hunter education students trained. The introduction of a new southern Ontario mourning dove hunt by the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the creation of a spring bear hunt pilot project in eight northern wildlife management units was also encouraging in terms of new hunting opportunities. I urge everyone who is able to take advantage of these new seasons and opportunities to do so.

There is so much more to talk about, but as I mentioned in my opening, it is all covered in other sections of this annual report, so please take the time to read it.

I would be remiss if I did not mention once again, like every president before me and likely after me, how thankful I am for the entire dedicated and hard-working staff we have at our head office. Each person at our head office gives new meaning to the term "multi-tasking." On behalf of our board of directors, our 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters and 720 member clubs, I want to thank you for all the long hours, dedication and hard work you put in to make this one of the greatest conservation organizations anywhere. We are what we are because of what you do, and we sincerely thank you for that.

As my term as president of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters comes to an end, I look forward to supporting and working with our incoming president. I also want to thank the board of directors for all of the work that they do in their zones, at the board table and on the various advisory committees, and for their faith and confidence in allowing me to serve this great organization as its president for these past three years. It has been an honour and privilege to do so, and an experience I will never forget.

*Bill Rackwe*

# OFAH Zone A Annual Report



Chair – Jeremy Funk

OFAH Zone A's annual general meeting was held in Ear Falls on January 26 and saw long-time executive committee member Bruce Hamilton move from the position of chair to 1st vice chair.

The January meeting also saw the presentation of the two zone awards. The first was the OFAH Zone A Fred Aaron Trophy for conservation, which is awarded to the OFAH Zone A club deemed to have done the most for conservation that year. The Sioux Lookout Anglers & Hunters won this award for their work in the previous year. The second award was the OFAH Zone A Larry Nault Award for the person in our zone who promoted conservation the most. This award was presented to the president of the Sioux Lookout Anglers & Hunters, Cory Lago.

The members present at this meeting were pleased to have an opportunity to meet and talk with the OFAH President and the OFAH Zone/Member & Club Services Liaison. We have had the opportunity to have the liaison attend all of our 2013 zone meetings, and we thank the OFAH for creating this position.

The second zone meeting was held in Dryden on May 4. Due in part to a freak storm, attendance was less than we would have liked but, as always, it was still nice to hear about all of the activities, issues, and programs the clubs of our zone have and are working on. It was also at this meeting that we presented our membership with the 2012 OFAH Bob Pope Memorial Award for the OFAH zone with the highest membership growth in the previous year.

Our third zone meeting took place in Sioux Lookout on August 17. As much as we had looked forward to our May meeting to see what the clubs had planned, at our August meeting we got to review what the individual clubs had done throughout the year so far.

The following are some of the topics we dealt with in 2013, as well as some club highlights:

## Big Game

Moose Aerial Inventories (MAI) were carried out in WMUs 2, 9A and 12B. Unfortunately, we do not have the results from WMU 2. Results from 9A showed a slight increase in the population from the 2009 MAI — 1,184 animals up from 1,150. Populations in 12B have declined about 25% in the same time frame from 2,450 animals to 1,833.

The MNR has finally accepted the population estimate numbers from the Northwestern Elk Restoration Coalition. Previously believed to be lower, the MNR now acknowledges the 50 to 70 animals the coalition has been monitoring.

# OFAH Zone B Annual Report



Chair – Debbie Rivard

At this time, I would like to acknowledge and thank the OFAH Zone B executive for their hard work and dedication during the past year.

## Fisheries

Both FMZ 4 and FMZ 5 councils have completed changes to their fisheries management plans. It has been a long haul, but our fisheries representative feels things went well on both committees.

In early August, the Fort Frances Sportsmen's Club was involved in a research project to determine the crappie population in Big Sawbill Lake. The number of fish caught was 460; not one tagged fish was recaptured.

The Atikokan Sportsmen's Conservation Club applied for two grants, one from the Community Hatchery Program (CHP) to survey spawning beds, and the second from FedNor to repair some walking trails.

## Club Events

The Dryden District Conservation Club ran archery and trap shooting events and competitions which brought in new members, and the same tournaments are bringing competitors from as far as Manitoba and other parts of Ontario. The club was also approached about organizing a fall hunting sports show in 2014.

The Sioux Lookout Anglers & Hunters took the challenge of bringing OFAH activities to the zone. In 2013, they held a Women's Outdoor Weekend (WOW) event that was a huge success, and are already planning two more WOW events for 2014.

Plans are in the works for a mid-January open house in Kenora to try to re-establish the OFAH affiliate club there.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Dryden, Fort Frances, and Sioux Lookout clubs, all of which have made a dedicated effort to offer programs/events for families, and specifically for children. Supervised kids are given opportunities to be active in fishing, hunting, archery, and shooting, all while learning about conservation and respect for the environment.

The clubs of OFAH Zone A stay active and current on all of the issues facing our area; access to roads and trails, land claims, mining operations, fish and wildlife populations, and habitat issues. Zone and club members fight for the rights of hunters and anglers across northwestern Ontario.

Although 2013 was a busy year for our clubs we started to see a slow decline in membership near the end. It is only through our members that we, and the OFAH, are able to keep up with events and programming so, if you are a member, suggest membership to a non-member. If you are not a member, think about supporting a group that is working hard for your right to hunt and fish.

I would like to thank all zone members, clubs and the executive committee for all of their help and support for our zone in 2013.

## Shows and Events

The Central Canada Outdoor Show was once again a success, and had another increase in the number of memberships sold. Bill Blackwell, president of the OFAH, attended this show in Thunder Bay, and OFAH members from the northwest appreciated the opportunity to meet and talk to Bill. The Kam River Reel-In was

held in September with 60, mostly underprivileged, kids taking the opportunity to fish. Rods and reels were provided by the local TackleShare programs at the libraries. The zone also co-sponsored a 3D shoot with D & R Sports at the Lakehead Archery Club. Without the dedicated volunteers who continue to give their time at these events, it would be impossible for the zone to have a presence at these events.

The fall of 2013 saw the second urban bow season for deer inside the city limits of Thunder Bay. There were no changes to the regulations from last year. The positive news for 2013 was that we know a number of deer were taken, there were no public safety incidents, and all was quiet in the media with regards to the hunt.

The Black Sturgeon River Dam has been a long-standing and emotional issue for OFAH Zone B members. Comments were submitted to the MNR through an EBR posting earlier in the year. Due to the number of concerns expressed, the MNR established the Black Sturgeon River Structured Decision-Making Process. Representatives from US jurisdictions around Lake Superior, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, First Nations, FMZ 9, local stakeholders, as well as the assistant manager of fish and wildlife services from OFAH head office, and Deb Rivard, chair of OFAH Zone B, participated. At the end of the final meeting, all participants were expected to present their position with the rationale with regards to the dam.

Late in the fall, the MNR invited us to attend a meeting with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and other local stakeholders with regards to declining moose populations. The meeting was postponed until February 2014. The basis of the

meeting is for the Minnesota DNR to discuss what is happening with their moose populations, new regulations Minnesota has implemented, and studies they are currently undertaking regarding moose populations. Debbie and Glenn Rivard will attend this meeting when it is rescheduled.

The zone partnered with other stakeholders on a rehabilitation project on a small creek inside the City of Thunder Bay that supports naturally reproducing Brook Trout. It is a tributary of the Current River.

OFAH Zone B was approached to fill a vacancy on the Northwestern Ontario Emerald Ash Borer Committee. Doug Rivard, 2nd alternate director on the zone executive, volunteered to fill the position. With his background as an arborist, this is a good fit.

Bill Mauro, MPP for Thunder Bay/Atikokan, attended our zone meeting in October. He gave members a short update on his private member's bill that would see a return of the spring bear hunt, and answered questions. He feels that bear management is an important issue for the constituents in his riding.

***Other topics discussed at our zone meetings included:***

- elk hunt;
- mandatory reporting;
- Community Hatchery Program (CHP);
- Special Purpose Account Revenue Generation (SPA);
- Moose Aerial Inventory (MAI);
- moose survey;
- moose questionnaire; and
- salmon stocking in Lake Superior.

## OFAH Zone C Annual Report



*Chair – Robert Allen*

OFAH Zone C held an executive meeting in Cochrane on January 27, which mainly dealt with determining venues for the upcoming zone meetings in April and September. A zone meeting was held in Kenogami on April 7. It was decided that the zone donate to Long Point Waterfowl for sandhill crane research, as well as the OFAH Hunter Education Conference.

The zone attended the Kirkland Lake Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee meeting on March 4, and again in December. The meeting dealt with moose tag quotas for WMU 28 for 2013, and an upcoming moose survey. The MNR initially proposed lowering the tag quota for 2013 based on a lower success rate last fall. It was later decided to leave the tag quota the same as 2012.

The Northeast Regional Advisory Committee meeting was held on April 30 in South Porcupine, with a presentation on the Moose Program Review by Peter Davis, a State of the Forest Report by Bill Dalton, and a Tenure Modernization Report by Jim Duncan.

Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) 12 met several times over the past year. More meetings were scheduled but some were delayed/cancelled; the process appears to have slowed. Open houses to present the Draft Fisheries Plan have not been scheduled.

OFAH Zone C commented on an EBR Posting regarding Smallmouth Bass and Lake Trout in FMZ 10.

In addition, the zone commented on the federal proposal to delist Aurora Trout from the endangered species list.

The zone has now received a response to comments submitted to the 10-Year Review of the Temagami Land Use Plan last year.

The OFAH Zone C annual general meeting was held in Kapuskasing on September 29, hosted by the Kapuskasing Rod and Gun Club. There were 27 members present, with the election of officers and directors, including a change in the zone chair.

Peter Davis, regional biologist for the MNR, provided an overview of moose hunting initiatives in the northeast. Some of the strategies the MNR have reviewed include scenarios to limit calf hunting. Peter expressed considerable interest in pursuing the option of opening WMUs outside of the core moose range for more intensive hunting. This could lessen pressure in the core area.

Waterpower projects in the zone continue to proceed through the planning process. As a result of public consultation, the Third Falls Project on the Ivanhoe River was changed from a modified run of the river project, to a run of the river project. The Chute Project, upstream, was left as a modified run of the river project. Unfortunately, no zone member could attend the last open house, hosted by proponent Xeneca Power Development Inc.

The draft environmental reports for the Marter Project on the Blanche River, and Wanatango Falls Project on the Frederick House River have been made available to the public.

# OFAH Zone D Annual Report



*Chair – Roy Polsky*

The past year was a busy one for zone executives and members alike, with access and road restrictions, road closures and abandonment, Forest Management Plan amendments, new hunting and fishing regulations, and a range of wildlife issues.

The zone held three meetings during the course of the year. In January, the OFAH Zone D annual general meeting was held in Sudbury. In May, our spring meeting was held in Trout Creek, and was hosted by Commanda and Area Anglers & Hunters. In September, our fall meeting was held in Dunchurch, and was hosted by Whitestone Rod & Gun Club. Our guests during those meetings were the OFAH President, OFAH Zone/Member & Club Services Liaison, OFAH Assistant Manager of Fish and Wildlife Services, and Personal Insurance Manager for BrokerLink from their Sudbury office, Jessica Young.

In April, the zone, along with Doug Ogston from the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee, and the OFAH senior wildlife biologist, attended a meeting of the Elk Subcommittee of the Economic Development Committee of the Municipality of Huron Shores. The MNR provided an update of what had transpired during the course of the winter to help alleviate the nuisance elk problem in the area. The MNR had tried to do a trap and transfer program, but due to weather conditions, was not very successful. Some members of the committee tried to table a resolution that the MNR remove all of the elk from the area if a suitable solution was not found. They were advised that this was not an option. The OFAH did not support the resolution as such. It has come to our attention that some farmers were in contact with local aboriginal communities to help them deal with the situation.

The United Walleye Clubs held a workshop in Sudbury in April. It was very well attended by a wide variety of groups and guest speakers, including George Morgan, Bruce Kilgour, John Casselman, and Mark Holmes from Xeneca Power Development Inc.

In the early part of May, the Manitoulin Deer Management Advisory Committee had their meeting. An update of the deer population and conditions, along with the result of the fall hunt was provided by the MNR. The antlerless deer quota was established. The committee voted to keep the status quo even though MNR staff had recommended an increase of antlerless tags in WMU 43B. From all reports received, the fall hunt does not seem as successful as in previous years, with many groups having limited success or none at all.

The Provincial Wild Turkey Working Group has not met for over a year and a half. The West Arm/French River Wild Turkey Group, along with the zone, have requested a spring hunt for wild turkeys in WMU 42. The zone is also recommending that a season be established in WMUs 47, 49, and 50.

We still have to be diligent with regards to the Spanish Arm Road, north of Sudbury. The gate was removed during the last Sudbury Forest Management Plan with some restriction on using the road to access certain lakes. Some cottagers are still trying to have the road gated, and have threatened the MNR with legal action, stating that the Area of Concern (AOC) prescription is illegal.

There is mounting opposition from local groups that oppose the use of pesticides in the forest to control unwanted vegetation. They would like the MNR to ban the use of the herbicide glyphosate (used in Round Up and Vision). The herbicide is used to control the growth of deciduous trees and shrubs after evergreen trees have been planted.

At the end of September, Xeneca notified stakeholders that a Notice of Completion for the Wabagishik Rapids Hydro Project was being published in local papers, and that there was a 33 day review period from September 30 to November 1, 2013. There is still opposition to these hydro dams on local waterways.

There is a new opening day for bass season in FMZ 10. The zone has representation on FMZs 10, 11, 13, and 14. Lake Nipissing and the decline of the Walleye population is still an ongoing issue; there has been no movement to suspend or regulate commercial gillnetting.

***The zone provided funding to member clubs and organizations to help them carry out their fish and wildlife projects:***

- Gore Bay and District Fish & Game Club - \$2,500 for the mini fish farm project;
- Manitoulin Area Stewardship Council - \$2,500 for the Youth Trapping Course (the funds provide six trapping kits and OFAH youth memberships);
- Manitoulin Streams Improvement Association - \$2,500 for stream restoration;
- Trailsmen Rod & Gun Club - \$2,500 towards electrical upgrades to the hatchery and ponds;
- United Walleye Clubs - \$2,500 for the purchase of trap nets;
- Espanola Game and Fish - \$1,000 for the Black Creek boat launch; and
- 85th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference - \$1,000.

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

# OFAH Zone E Annual Report



*Chair – Gord Trylinski*

In 2013, OFAH Zone E had a busy year. The first meeting was held on March 24 at the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) in Port Hope. Ongoing and new issues were discussed that needed to be dealt with. We were disappointed to learn that the Pembroke Outdoor Sportsman's Club shut down the jar hatchery that was funded by the OFAH/MNR Walleye Put-Grow-Take Partnership.

The latest issue that has been reported concerns the Petawawa Power Project. Xeneca Power Development Inc., the project proponent, has been issued a lease cancellation notice by the Department of National Defence (DND). This location (DND property) was the proposed site for the project.

***On the brighter side, the zone had some very good results with other activities:***

- Renfrew County Youth Hunting Mentorship Program saw 20 youths, ages 12-17 years old, receive their firearms training and hunter education courses, a one-year OFAH membership, a mentored waterfowl hunt, and the understanding of the importance of wildlife conservation.
- The Ontario Family Fishing Event had a great turnout, with approximately 150 participants from the Department of

National Defence linesman group. This was their 15th Annual Fishing Derby at Cory Lake in Petawawa.

- The Bancroft District Fish & Game Protective Association celebrated its 50th anniversary.
- The Darlington Family Fishing Day had over 250 kids participate.
- The Peterborough Children's Water Festival was, once again, a huge success.
- South Central Ontario Fish & Wildlife Association Inc. had a successful Family Fishing Day event.
- The Griffith & Matawatchan Fish and Game Club also held a Family Fishing Day event in July.

***Donations from our zone were distributed to the following:***

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

# OFAH Zone F Annual Report



*Chair – Ed Giffin*

OFAH Zone F held four meetings in 2013. All of the meetings were held in Perth at the Perth Royal Canadian Legion. The OFAH zone/member & club services liaison attended the February 24 meeting, as well as Silvia Strobl, MNR SPA Revenue Generation Project manager, who gave a presentation on the Special Purpose Account (SPA) which included suggestions and options for generating more revenue for the SPA.

The liaison attended the April 24 meeting. Also in attendance was Area Biologist, Mary Garvey who provided the attendees with updates on deer, moose, and a coyote study in the Kemptville District of the MNR. As well, Joff Cote, MNR management biologist, gave a presentation on the progress of FMZ 18's Fisheries Management Plan, new regulations for Walleye and bass, and the broadscale netting program for 2014-2015.

The meeting on August 29 was an evening meeting with a business agenda. The OFAH Zone F annual meeting was held on November 24. Our guest speaker was Dr. Bruce Tufts, from Queen's University, who also sits on the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee. He

provided the attendees with an interesting presentation on the fisheries biology programs offered at Queen's, research that is and has been done on freshwater fisheries, particularly in eastern Ontario, and the excellent facilities which Queen's provides its students for studying conservation, fish and wildlife.

***OFAH Zone F is represented on the following committees:***

- OFAH Executive Committee – Kerry Coleman
- OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee – Len Dickinson
- OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee – Wendell Crosbie
- OFAH Firearms/Recreational Shooting/Hunter Education Advisory Committee – Len Dickinson
- OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee – Ed and Shirley Giffin
- OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee – Kerry Coleman
- OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game/Migratory Birds/Wetlands Advisory Committee – Kerry Coleman
- Kemptville District 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 Advisory Committee – Doug Huddle
- Mississippi River Watershed Management Advisory Committee – Len Dickinson
- Mazinaw Area Fish & Wildlife Advisory Committee – Ed Giffin
- FMZ 12 Council – Pierre Boucher and Don Pajot
- FMZ 18 Council – Wendell Crosbie and Merrill Elliott
- FMZ 20 Council – Dr. Bruce Tufts
- Lanark Stewardship Council – Wendell Crosbie and Kerry Coleman
- Leeds Grenville Stewardship Council – Kerry Coleman
- South Nation Conservation Authority Advisory Council – Cyril Holmes

OFAH Zone F continues to support a variety of conservation projects by OFAH affiliated clubs including: Grenville Fish & Game Club's special events trailer; the Ottawa Region Walleye League's Annual Kids' Ice Fishing Derby; the Kingston Fish & Game Club's annual ice fishing and perch fishing derbies; Perth Kids' Fishing Derby; Crimestoppers; Ottawa Beagle Club for cedar trees to improve habitat for snowshoe hares; Lanark Stewardship

Council for spawning shoal improvement work on the Mississippi River near Dalhousie Lake; MNR Elk Inventory Study; Westport Area Outdoor Association to purchase a new pump for their fish hatchery; and Ottawa Valley Fishing Show booth space.

The OFAH and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) have signed an agreement to allow OFAH affiliated clubs and their members hunting access to NCC properties. To date, the Grenville Fish & Game Club, the Osgoode Township Fish, Game, and Conservation Club, and the Giles Gang have taken advantage of this opportunity. It is hoped that other clubs will have an opportunity to participate as more land is made available by NCC. OFAH Zone F welcomed the following newly affiliated clubs: RD Hunt Club; Community Stewardship Council of Lanark County; Sugar Bush Country Club; Blue Swamp Hunt Camp Inc.; South Eastern Ontario Archery Club; Jellyby Gamers; Hastings Stewardship Council; Scott's Island Deer Camp; and Partridge Lake Hunt Club.

Our zone continues to provide plot mules which are conveniently located in Brockville, Cloyne, Cornwall, Lanark, Osgoode, and Sydenham to OFAH members and clubs.

The zone continues to maintain an OFAH Zone F website as part of our commitment to provide information to all OFAH Zone F members and clubs.

## OFAH Zone G Annual Report



*Chair – Rob Hare*

OFAH Zone G is enjoying another successful year. Our membership is at approximately 11,000 members.

Our January quarterly meeting was hosted by the Canadian Croatian Hunters & Anglers Club, at their clubhouse in Mississauga. Our guest speakers were the owner and her first mate from the Salmon Express Fishing Charter. If you watch *Angler & Hunter Television*, you will have seen various shows throughout the years that have been filmed on these chartered boats. They gave a great talk about the fishing charters they offer, and their experiences on Lake Ontario.

The OFAH Zone G April meeting was hosted by the Islington Sportsmen's Club, at their facility in Caledon Hills. The guest speaker for that meeting was Greg Bennett, a pro staff member from Quaker Boy Game Calls. Greg's talk was geared to be a tune up for the upcoming spring turkey hunt.

The August OFAH Zone G meeting was hosted by the Georgina Sportsmen's Alliance. This meeting was held at District #3 of the York Regional Police Station in Sutton. The guest speaker for that meeting was Mike Pallotta from Pine Ridge Pudelpointers & Hunting Preserve. Mike spoke about hunting pheasants and quail on his farm. He also talked about the history of pheasant releases in Ontario.

At the November OFAH Zone G Annual General Meeting,

hosted by the Ajax Rod and Gun Club, the guest speaker was Keith Munroe, who was the recipient of the 2012 OFAH/ Zone G Wildlife Research Grant. Keith presented the results of his project titled "Application of Risk and Refuge Effects to Hunting as a Tool for Managing White-Tailed Deer Populations."

Our zone, again this year, has contributed funds to help offset the costs associated with the very popular Uxbridge Huck Finn Fishing Day. In past years, upwards of 2,000 youth have participated in this event. This year's fishing day took place on Saturday, April 27, and ran from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Once again, our zone contributed funding to partially sponsor a five-person MNR Stewardship Ranger Crew. This crew worked out of the Aurora District MNR office this past summer on various conservation-related projects in and around the GTA.

The OFAH Zone G Youth Adventure Camp was held in July at the Islington Sportsmen's Club and was a huge success. Twenty-four young ladies had the opportunity to attend this adventure camp for one week, and were able to experience a variety of outdoor activities. This camp could not have achieved the success it did without the tremendous efforts of Christine Finter, Jim Kelly, Stephen Huntley, and the volunteer youth counsellors. Next year's camp will be for boys and Christine, Jim, and Stephen are looking for adult help to operate the adventure camp. I would be remiss in not thanking the Islington Sportsmen's Club for donating the use of their wonderful facility for the week.

Last fall, the zone committed \$1,500 to help fund the reintroduction

of wild rice into historical locations around Lake Simcoe.

### Discharge Bylaws

After numerous meetings with the City of Whitby municipal staff and councillors, a new discharge bylaw passed in September. This new bylaw replaced a poorly conceived bylaw, which totally banned the discharge of firearms within the city limits.

Municipal staff from the Town of Uxbridge worked very closely with OFAH head office staff and OFAH Zone G executive members to resolve what essentially amounted to a noise complaint issue. Very early in the process the municipal staff realized there were two very separate and distinct issues. The first issue was complaints from local residents concerned about the noise generated by a local shooting club. The second issue was related to firearms discharge. The municipality separated the two issues and the discharge bylaw, as it relates to hunting, was only slightly impacted.

The Township of King is reviewing their current discharge bylaw. Our zone and the OFAH have reviewed the proposed changes and have no objections to the bylaw changes. There are some concerns with the wording in the bylaw. The OFAH is working with the municipal staff to address our concerns, and officials at the municipality have been receptive to OFAH suggestions.

### Fisheries

Muskies Canada and their partners have now entered into the monitoring phase of the Muskie reintroduction project on Lake Simcoe. The MNR issued angling-only collection permits to Muskies Canada and their partners. As you know, Muskies are notoriously hard to catch and, as a result, not many have been caught.

At the last Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee meeting, a presentation was made reporting on the results of an ongoing hydro-acoustic study showing improved Lake Herring populations in Lake Simcoe. This, in combination with results from index netting study results, is encouraging for the prospect of reopening the Lake Herring fishery on Lake Simcoe.

Two Lake Ontario GTA Urban Recreational Fisheries meetings have been held in the zone. These meetings were held to seek input on the recreational fishery and to focus on the shore-based angler. By all reports, waterfowl and deer hunters have had successful seasons. Access issues continue to be problematic.

## OFAH Zone H Annual Report



*Chair – Wayne Forgrave*

The Sydenham Sportsmen's Association (SSA) collected 120,000 salmon eggs this fall for the hatchery, as well as the Lake Huron Fishing Club which collected their salmon egg allotment at the Mill Dam in Owen Sound. The SSA had a research team from Western University collecting eggs for a follow-up study on salmon. The fishing was very good this year in Owen Sound Bay, and the salmon run was excellent.

The MNR recently released 140,000 fingerling Whitefish into Lake Simcoe -- 70,000 at Jackson's Point and 70,000 at Hawkstone.

The Kempenfelt Bay Fall Fishing Festival, sponsored by the Barrie-Huron Rotary Club, was a great success with nine of the 71 tagged perch being caught (tags ranged from \$500 to \$10,000).

On October 22, the Dufferin Northern Peel Anglers and Hunters dedicated five fishing/observation piers to the Island Lake Conservation Authority (five more piers to be built), with one being sponsored and dedicated by OFAH Zone H.

The closure of Springwater Provincial Park by the MNR remains a hot subject. The Friends of Springwater are trying to get the MNR

to reopen the park and run it with volunteer help. They have a meeting set for early 2014 to discuss plans for reopening.

The policy for the Wodehouse – Karst Forest, near Kimberley in the Beaver Valley, is still in the early stages of production, with discussions taking place with all user groups, including representatives from OFAH Zone H.

The SSA led an extensive project on Kilsyth Creek, a coldwater trout creek that is a major coldwater source for the Pottawatomi River, to clean up and fence it so that cattle can no longer frequent the creek. This will help to reduce nutrient loading and the deposition of silt downstream on gravel spawning beds which should improve fish spawning conditions.

The Midhurst Secondary Plan, which would push the population of Midhurst from 3,000 to 30,000, is still a very hot subject. The plan calls for 1,868 acres of prime farm land to be used for residential growth. The project plan also calls for sewage system affluent to be discharged into Willow Creek, which would impact the Minesing Wetlands, an area that is of great significance due to the large number of at risk and endangered species that call it home. The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) manages the Minesing Wetlands.

# OFAH Zone J Annual Report



1st Vice Chair – Brian Moore

We certainly feel that this past year was successful in many ways, and we give thanks to the great support we receive from our clubs, other OFAH zones, head office staff, and our individual members. Despite the fact we continue to see large job losses in various industries, we are maintaining a strong membership.

As you will read through the various reports, there are many issues and concerns. At the same time, we continue to have success on many fronts working to create new or improved opportunities for anglers and hunters and the protection of our natural resources. As an example, we continue to see municipalities adopt Sunday gun hunting. Central and southern Ontario have also seen the implementation of the mourning dove season, which is an opportunity that many of us took part in.

Getting young apprentice hunters into the outdoors continues to be a priority. The youth pheasant hunts are now a nine-year success story, having originated in Fingal, and are now successfully taking place in several locations. Volunteer and see the success that, as mentors, we can be proud to be a part of. The Youth Trappers Program is a new opportunity to help us introduce youth to the outdoors.

Another event of recognition significant in our zone was the 25th anniversary of the OFAH Zone J Youth Campout that was hosted at the Wellington Street Sportsmen's Club. It was the Wellington Street Sportsmen's Club that held the inaugural camp in 1988. With 115 youth in attendance, and support from a multitude of partners, such as Bass Masters, this year's camp was the largest ever held. During the opening ceremonies on the Friday evening, we honoured some long-time members, heard from OFAH Executive Director, Angelo Lombardo, and keynote speaker Mike Miller, host of *Angler & Hunter Television*. Many thanks to our long-time supporters - Greg Balch and Tri-County Bass Masters. Greg supports this program with his excellent travelling hands-on educational display which explains the lifecycle, purpose, and value of various species, including our part in that matrix, both as stewards and consumptive users. The Tri-County Bass Masters donates supplies, manpower, and expertise to teach youths how to make bass lures, a prized possession for participants to take home.

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

Although we are supportive of multi-use trail systems, our understanding and others' perception of what are acceptable activities is often different. For example, a trail that is managed by the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) had posted signs that stated "Firearms Prohibited." A portion of this trail is used by hunters to access a remote portion of the Grand River for

waterfowl hunting. We were given the opportunity to speak with the GRCA, and the signs have since been removed.

OFAH Zone J is concerned, and this is another reason to support our engagement with any new community trail initiatives. If we are not engaged early, we have a much larger and difficult challenge to protect our rights and access.

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

Solar and wind turbine installations are now an added landscape issue changing rural landscapes. The zone is especially aware and concerned with a multitude of onshore and offshore Industrial Wind Turbine (IWT) sites planned without due regard for their impact, not only on the landscape, but also wildlife, waterfowl, and offshore fisheries. Migration corridors of several species are directly impacted, and the IWT will also affect feeding habits.

All OFAH Zone J executive members have been very active with fisheries management, land access, hunting issues, club meeting presentations, and municipal council presentations. With respect to fisheries, we are actively engaged in FMZ 19, the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group, Grand River Fisheries Management Plan and implementation, the Lower Grand River technical committee, Hamilton Harbour restoration groups, Misner and Springbank Dam issues, and many others.

## ***OFAH Zone J membership concerns include:***

- wind turbines (IWTs) and large solar farms;
- coyotes;
- land access, restrictions or fees for access;
- Grand River watershed issues;
- relationships with First Nations;
- changing white-tailed deer populations;
- invasive species (i.e. Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Carps);
- securing additional Sunday gun hunting opportunities;
- pushing forward with the Misner Dam decommissioning; and
- changes to the MNR (limited printed Hunting and Fishing Regulations Summaries, area offices closing, etc.).

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

# OFAH Agriculture Liaison Advisory Committee Annual Report



*Chair – Jim Magee*

The OFAH continues to be a member of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' (OMAFRA) Conflict Working Group. There continues to be a problem with wildlife damage to crops and livestock.

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association released a report in June 2013 outlining horticultural crop losses due to wildlife. They estimated that the total losses are over \$24 million per year.

**Growers believe the factors causing increased losses are as follows:**

1. increasing number of predators;
2. decreased hunting;
3. prevention tools that are less effective;
4. habitat expanding; and
5. expansion of crops.

Some of the species causing problems are hunted or trapped, such as deer, turkeys, geese, and raccoons. Other wildlife causing problems are rodents, song birds, etc.

Livestock damage continues with mainly sheep and cattle being killed. The main predator is coyotes. The damage varies from area to area with some counties having significant losses.

A new project is ongoing to enable farmers and trappers to use relaxing cable restraints. These would be used in the parts of the province where snaring is not allowed. These devices will allow the release of non-target animals, but give farmers another tool to remove problem predators.

Losses to bee hives continue with the most damage due to bears and raccoons.

The committee wishes to put on one or two coyote hunting workshops, and hopes to encourage more hunting of coyotes. This would, perhaps, help to keep the numbers in balance with natural food supplies, and decrease livestock predation. It would also be of benefit if farmers and municipalities had skilled coyote hunters to call upon to deal with livestock killers in particular problem areas.

Farmers do make an effort to protect livestock and crops, where practicable, but wildlife often find ways around these defenses.

We thank the members of the committee for their dedication, and OFAH staff for all of their assistance during the past year.

# OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee Annual Report



*Chair - Neil Wiens*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee members and head office staff who so selflessly dedicated their time and knowledge to the committee.

Over the past year, we have dealt with a number of issues that will/are impacting our ability to maintain access to our traditional hunting activities.

## **Bear**

With the introduction of a Private Member's Bill by MPP Bill Mauro to bring back the spring bear hunt and the government's decision to implement a "pilot project" to allow for the spring hunting of bears in a select few wildlife management units (WMUs) in 2014, our committee spent time discussing this important big game animal. We have long recognized that a spring bear hunting season is sustainable, contributes to the health of bear populations, and provides for a reduction of bear/human conflicts. Additional benefits of reducing predator-prey interactions between bears and moose calves will also be welcomed. The OFAH has advocated for the return of the spring bear hunt across the province since its cancellation in 1999. The "pilot project" is a good first step, but our committee feels that a full spring hunt would provide increased benefits all around. Consultation around the new, proposed spring hunt is underway with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) soliciting comments from municipalities in or near the WMUs affected by the pilot project. Public consultation is expected to take

place through an EBR posting in February 2014.

In addition to the spring bear hunting issue, the committee has also reviewed bear hunting opportunities as a whole and found a number of wildlife management units, with expanding bear populations, which currently have no open season. We have recommended that our organization press for the opening of fall hunting seasons for bear where populations will support them, especially in those units adjacent to areas in which a season currently exists.

## **Caribou**

Even though licensed hunters do not have an open season for caribou in Ontario, our committee does allocate time over the course of the year to discuss caribou issues. At the forefront of our concerns is the current focus that the MNR is affording to these animals at the expense of other wildlife, particularly moose. We have reviewed a number of documents developed by the MNR and have commented on the draft "Range Management Policy for Boreal (Woodland) Caribou." The negative impacts of the management plan on moose populations and moose hunting opportunities in what has been designated as caribou range (both continuous and discontinuous) is concerning to us.

## **Deer**

In general, deer populations across the province are in good shape. The committee still feels that there are some opportunities for improvements to the provincial deer management policies. We have requested a review of the "Controlled Deer Hunt" management

tool, as we feel hunting opportunities are being missed. We continue to ask the province to allow licensed hunters to help maintain sustainable deer populations in parks, so that we do not experience the negative ecological impacts of an overabundance of deer. We have had discussions around the MNR's use of antlerless tags and additional seals as tools for population management and harvest control. Hunting seasons as a whole and firearm-specific seasons receive attention from the committee in an effort to attempt to maximize opportunities for our members.

### **Chronic Wasting Disease**

We are pleased to see that the MNR continues to be vigilant in its monitoring efforts to keep ahead of the threat of Chronic Wasting Disease by testing harvested deer. We are, however, disappointed that positive action to reduce the threat of this disease from captive cervids (eliminate deer farms) is not receiving the attention it deserves from both the provincial and federal governments.

### **Elk**

We continue to push for expanded opportunities to hunt elk in Ontario. The licensed hunt in Bancroft/North Hastings has been held for three years. Harvest rates have been steady but the tag fill rate has not been as high as initially expected by the MNR. The total number of tags has remained at 70, with harvests coming in at 22-23 animals annually, even though the length of the season increased from one week to two weeks. The committee feels that an increase in tags is warranted, and a bowhunting season should be added to the season that currently exists.

We are anxious to see an elk management plan developed and implemented for the Lake Huron North Shore elk population. Some of the same human/elk conflicts that surfaced in the Bancroft area have become a reality in the Lake Huron North Shore region as well. Requests from landowners for elk removal permits and trap and transfer of nuisance animals tell the tale of a population that needs to be more thoroughly managed. Hunting opportunities is a potential tool that can be useful and must be part of the final management plan.

We had been apprised of an ongoing issue related to elk mortality along the railway line in the Sudbury elk restoration area. Reports of killed and injured animals, as a result of train/elk interactions, have been documented. Our assistance in helping to develop some protocols with CN Rail to allow for the study of ways to curtail these negative interactions, and to have the railway company advise the Sudbury Elk Restoration Committee when an animal is hit, resulted in a positive meeting between our head office staff, the Sudbury Elk Restoration Committee, and officials from the railway company.

### **Moose**

Moose management across the province is always an integral part of our committee's discussions. Assessment of moose population status in each individual WMU is an important component, along with hunter harvest statistics, that forms the main data set for calculating tag distribution on an annual basis. In the winter of 2012/2013, the MNR managed to conduct moose aerial inventories (MAI) in only six units. We continue to press for surveys to be completed on a three-year rotation, and are concerned with any reductions in the number of sample plots that are flown in each WMU. Scheduled flights for the 2013/2014 winter have been set for an ambitious 19 surveys along with three contingency surveys. With the onset of early winter snows and good conditions, MAI

flights started in December. The MNR introduced the online moose status reports, which provide some useful information to hunters on the ministry's website. We have recommended that the MNR refresh the information on these reports on a regular basis so that the information contained remains relevant and up to date. The MNR distributed two individually-focused surveys to moose hunters this past year, and the committee has been anxiously pushing for the opportunity to review survey responses with the MNR and to be able to make recommendations for the next stage of moose management in the province. We have been advised that response rates from survey recipients have been very good (60-70% range). Questions being asked of the randomly selected hunters are intended to gather information on hunter characteristics, motivation, activities, impressions of moose populations, preferences for harvest strategies, and expenses incurred during moose hunting seasons.

### **Modernization of Approvals**

As well as focussing on individual species, the committee engages in discussions on such topics as the Modernization of Approvals that the MNR unveiled this year. While we readily accept that any reduction in red tape and paper work can be a good thing, there are some downsides. Concerns have surfaced about the new process developed for the authorization to possess game animals that have been killed by such things as automobiles. Access to the requisite forms and notifications is done online (not universally accessible), and is proving to be cumbersome.

### **Hunting Regulations Summary**

Our concerns about the limited number of printed copies of the Hunting Regulations Summary for 2013 proved to be right on the mark, and the MNR ultimately did a second printing of 100,000 more copies for broader distribution to satisfy hunter demands. Suggestions for a multi-year approach for hunting regulations has been made at both the provincial and federal (migratory birds) level. The committee looks forward to deliberations on this subject, as there are potential impacts to be considered.



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



Chair – Len Dickinson

The OFAH Firearms/Recreational Shooting/Hunter Education Advisory Committee was renamed, but the committee will still be responsible for issues concerning bowhunting, muzzleloading, recreational shooting, The Canadian Firearms Safety Course and hunter education. We have dealt with numerous issues this year and the following is a summary of some of our hard work.

## Hunter Education

This has been another outstanding year for hunter education in Ontario. We have put through more than 3,900 students above last year's numbers, making it an all-time record number of students in one year of 25,235. This accounts for a great number of hours our instructors have put in to promote hunting in Ontario, and we thank these individuals for taking that much time out of their own busy schedules to benefit us all.

Since the removal of the long gun registry, statistics show that there has been a 20 percent increase in the number of people enrolling in firearms-related courses such as hunting, and there is also a significant rise in the number of firearms being sold across North America.

The MNR has increased the cost for hunter education student manuals by \$2 to \$20 each, and the cost of exams by \$6 to \$10 (plus taxes).

Students who have passed the Ontario Hunter Education Program must go to an MNR/ServiceOntario centre to purchase their first Outdoors card and licences. The OFAH is trying to convince the MNR to allow any dealer to issue these documents, making it easier for new hunters to get into the field. The committee also worked diligently all year to draft a Hunter Education Policy, which was passed by the OFAH Board of Directors in December.

## Firearms

A minor who has been through the apprentice program and has a "Minor's Licence to Possess" has no license on his 18th birthday. The current Firearms Act does not allow for the person who is about to turn 18 to apply for a Possession & Acquisition License (PAL) until his/her 18th birthday, and if he/she submits an application prior to that, the Chief Firearms Centre in Miramichi will send it back. The OFAH believes that a person who will turn 18 who has already taken their course should be able to apply within 3-5 months of their actual birthday and receive their PAL, which will only become effective on their 18th birthday. The OFAH is pursuing this through the Federal Firearms Advisory Committee, the minister's office, and with the CFO.

The issue of the time span that students must wait to get their paperwork back before applying for a firearms licence is years old. We question the need to continue to have paperwork sent to the Chief Firearms Office/Firearms Safety Education Service of Ontario (CFO/FSESO). They have said they are trying to create an electronic site so paperwork could be returned within 24 hours directly to the student; however, it is not their top priority at this time. The CFO/FSESO also use the extra steps to check the eligibility of instructors. The OFAH is working with the CFO

and the minister's office on a means of eliminating this step. The OFAH will continue talks with CFO/FSESO to help sort this out.

## Seized Firearms

The committee discussed the issue of firearms that are seized as evidence in fish and wildlife investigations, and ordered forfeited by the court and slated for destruction. Before Section 15.1 of Bill C-68 was enacted in 2008, these firearms could be given to organizations, such as the OFAH, to be used to raise money for other conservation projects or in hunter education classrooms. Section 15.1 means that this can no longer occur. In our discussions with the CFO, and talks with the minister, it appears that the government could support changes to the regulation to allow this to happen again. The OFAH will continue to work on this initiative for the necessary changes.

## Bowhunting During Controlled Deer Hunts

Back in the early 1970s, the original intent of not allowing bowhunting during controlled hunts was a safety issue. As hunter numbers are controlled during these hunts, we see no reason why, as long as a person who has applied to hunt during a controlled hunt wants to use bowhunting gear rather than a shotgun or muzzleloader, and is willing to comply with the hunter orange requirements while using his/her firearm of choice (bow), he/she should be prevented from doing so.

## Youth Apprentice Hunter Game Seals

The proposal is to allow youth (ages 12-14) apprentice hunters to buy game seals, so that when they hunt deer, moose, bear, or turkeys with their mentor, the mentor does not have to use their game seal to tag the animal. We feel this is a win-win situation for everyone, as it will generate more revenue for the MNR through licence sales, and it will allow the mentor to hunt and take their own animals; this also allows them to mentor more than one person, etc. It was agreed that youth apprentice hunters would not be allowed into the lottery for game seals for deer and moose.

## Hunting in Parks

We are concerned about the fact that licensed hunting has not been utilized in our parks and other places to prevent scenarios where deer become serious threats to our flora and fauna. Allowing hunting would provide more opportunities for licensed hunters and revenue generation for parks and the MNR (through game seal sales). The OFAH position is if public safety is a legitimate concern, or if deer are so conditioned to humans that they essentially appear tame, initial culling of deer should be conducted by the MNR or cooperating wildlife control agents. Once populations are at a sustainable level, then annual hunts should be implemented to provide optimal benefits.

## Quebec Long Gun Registry Challenge

The Quebec Court of Appeal has ruled that the information contained in the long gun registry system is the property of the federal government, and they can destroy it if they want. The Quebec government is now taking their fight to the Supreme Court of Canada, which has agreed to hear the case.

# OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee Annual Report



*Chair – Debbie Rivard*

I would like to thank the members of the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee (FAC) for their commitment, dedication, and knowledge offered to the committee and to the OFAH. The FAC meets three times annually to discuss fisheries management activities in Ontario; however, many committee members represent the OFAH on external committees and advisory groups, such as Fisheries Management Zone Councils, that meet throughout the year. The dedication of time and expertise by committee volunteers enables the OFAH to have representation across the province, and to have input at every stage possible during the fisheries management decision-making process.

At each FAC meeting, a significant amount of time is dedicated to allowing members, who represent the OFAH on FMZ councils, to provide an overview of council activities and raise issues or topics that require further discussion. This presents an opportunity for OFAH representatives from the different FMZ councils to share their experiences and knowledge. Councils for FMZs 7, 8, 15, and 16 have still not been formed. As some of the existing FMZ councils begin to wind down their activity, it is expected that the MNR will initiate some of the councils yet to be formed. Although many issues are raised and addressed through FMZ councils, there are some topics that require more in-depth discussion by the FAC. Other fisheries regulations discussed by FMZ councils included multiple lines in the Great Lakes, barbless hooks, proposed changes to trout regulations in FMZ 17, and new regulations for FMZs 4, 5, and 10 that will come into effect January, 2014.

The MNR's Lake Ontario Management Unit (FMZ 20) presented on the Lake Ontario Fish Stocking Program Review. It is hoped that there will be a final stocking plan in the fall/winter 2014. The development of stocking plans in each FMZ has been a priority for the OFAH. This presentation generated significant discussion from committee members on how fish culture and stocking plans can be developed and implemented on a provincial, regional, and FMZ basis. The committee will continue to pursue this topic.

The Black Sturgeon River Dam has been a long-standing issue in FMZ 9. Comments were submitted to the MNR through an EBR posting early in the year. Due to the number of concerns expressed, the MNR established the Black Sturgeon River Structured Decision-Making Process. Representatives from U.S. jurisdictions around Lake Superior, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC), First Nations, FMZ 9, and local stakeholders participated. The OFAH was represented by Deb Rivard, chair of OFAH Zone B, and the OFAH assistant manager of fish and wildlife services. This topic generated significant discussion among the committee on issues related to obsolete dams, fish passage, invasive species, and the trade-offs that must be considered for conflicting fisheries management objectives.

The Toronto & Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) provided the committee an update on their urban fishing, habitat creation, and restoration efforts relating to the rehabilitation of coastal wetlands, including the installation of carp barriers and aiding the resurgence of plant growth. The TRCA has been involved in fish

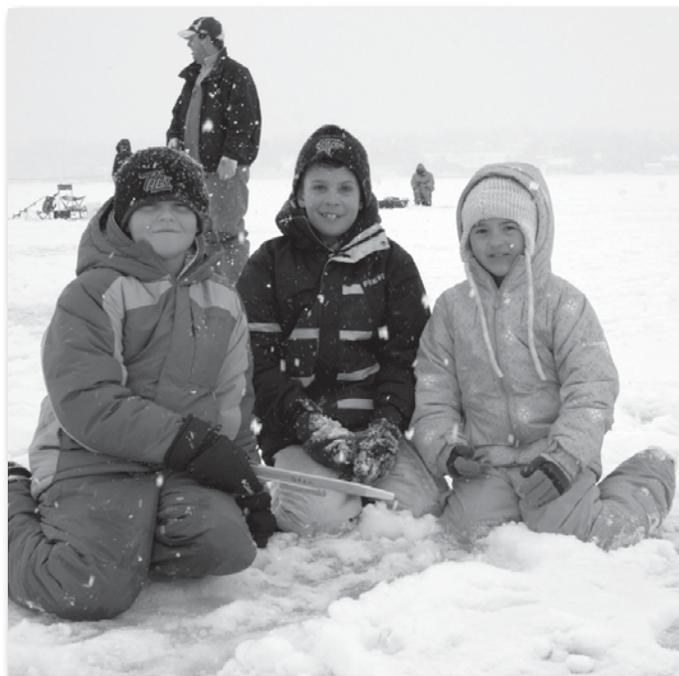
studies and efforts to promote Toronto's angling opportunities, including the OFAH TackleShare Program.

Staff from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) attended an FAC meeting to present on the implementation of the new Fisheries Protection Provisions under the Fisheries Act, and the new DFO Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program. They thanked the OFAH for being a significant contributor of credible and valuable input to the changes in the Fisheries Act, which included adding "recreational fishers" to the definition of fisheries in the Act.

The MNR Fisheries Policy Section staff attended an FAC meeting to present a draft of the MNR's future "Provincial Fish Strategy," and to discuss other topics relevant to fisheries management in Ontario. Having MNR staff attend meetings offers an opportunity for committee members to provide the MNR with feedback regarding FMZ councils.

## ***Other topics of discussion at the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee meetings in 2013 included:***

- Provincial Bait Policy Review;
- Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group;
- Lake Nipissing Walleye;
- Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) Commercial Fishing Agreement;
- Community Hatchery Program (CHP);
- DFO administered Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program;
- Grass Carp in Lake Erie; and
- Policy Reviews.



# OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Roy Polsky

The OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee has representation on every OFAH zone. This committee deals with many issues that are relevant to other committees, such as the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee and the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee.

Access issues are still a major concern throughout the province. Most are dealt with during Forest Management Plans. The five-year review will commence shortly for some Forest Management Plans. Some of the roads and road strategies will be reviewed and revised, if necessary. Also, Areas of Concern (AOC) strategies will be reviewed for compliance and restrictions implemented, if necessary. Members are advised to monitor local papers for when and where the reviews will take place, and let their intentions be known of any amendments that restrict access. During these reviews, the MNR will be using the new Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales manual. In the south there is limited Crown land; residents deal more with restricted access on private property.

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

## **Crown Land Use Policy Atlas Guide (CLUPA)**

The MNR recently updated their CLUPA guide, making the OFAH CLUPA quick reference guide on how to navigate the tool no longer useful. Head office has revamped the guide to deal with the changes. OFAH members can receive a copy of the guide by contacting OFAH head office.

## **McLaughlin Bay Restoration Project**

The restoration strategy has been finalized. Options will be reviewed and selected in the next phase of the project. The OFAH, as a key stakeholder, has received acknowledgement that hunting and fishing will continue. We have requested to remain engaged during the next phase of the project.

## **Algonquin Land Claim**

The Agreement-in-Principle draft provides for land transfer of no less than 117,500 acres of Crown land. Hunt camps and Land Use Permit (LUP) holders within the transferred land area will have to negotiate access with the Algonquins.

## **Temagami Land Use Plan**

A decision notice was posted regarding the administrative amendments to correct errors and capture the original intent of the plan. There should be no changes to land use; however, the MNR will not provide any further opportunity to provide comment on the Temagami Land Use Plan until the next review period.

## **Madawaska Highlands Land Use Plan**

A few camps are being impacted by access restrictions and they have been unable to come to an agreement with the MNR for temporary access to their camps. The OFAH has been working with these camps to try to resolve these issues.

## **Perth County G2G Rail Trail**

The trail presently runs from Guelph to Millbank, but it is to be extended to Goderich on an old CNR rail line. Presently, there are restrictions on usage of ATVs and horseback riding, and hunting is not allowed. There are concerns that this will extend to the rest of the trail.

## **Hunting on Nature Conservancy of Canada Land**

The OFAH has signed an agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to administer hunting on seven of their properties. The OFAH Zone/Member and Club Services Liaison is coordinating with local clubs to administer the agreement. You must be a member of the OFAH and the local club to participate, and mandatory reporting is a requirement. ATVs are not allowed and only hunting for deer and wild turkeys is permitted.

## **Botha Creek Bridge Removal**

Ontario Power Generation (OPG), which planned for the bridge removal in 2014, has agreed to meet with stakeholders to see if a mutually beneficial solution can be reached. Botha Creek is located in OFAH Zone C.

## **Shoals Provincial Park**

The park had been slated for closure; however, Ontario Parks agreed to keep the gates opened for 2013 from May 17 to September 2. The OFAH has requested to remain engaged to investigate options for continued access in 2014 and beyond.

## **Clear Lake and Dawson Pond Conservation Reserve**

The final plan has been approved, and it included only minor changes to the additions of trails and boat caches. When the OFAH commented on the draft management plan in 2012, we had concerns regarding the omission of some traditionally used trails and boat caches.

## **Navigable Waters Protection Act**

The federal Act applies to specific waters, but there is no clear understanding of the Act, and what constitutes navigable waters.

Zone issues are also discussed during committee meetings such as applications for quarries, herbicide use, road decommissioning, wind turbines, hydro water dams on local rivers, bridge and culvert removals, etc.

The committee has discussed numerous other EBR postings and land use issues during the course of the year, such as Balsam Lake Management Plan, Coral Rapids Conservation Reserve Management Plan, Osisko Gold Development, Modernization of Approvals (Endangered Species Act [ESA] and Work Permits), Cottage Lease Policy in Algonquin Park, Quetico Provincial Park Management Plan, Strengthening Ontario's Trail Strategy, the MNR's Draft Request for Amendments to its Class Environmental Assessment for Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects, and Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves.

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

# OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee Annual Report

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*Chair – Gerry Haarmeyer*

The 2013 OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee consisted of Chair, Gerry Haarmeyer, Vice Chair, Ed Giffin, Vice Chair, Dan Elliott, and committee members Felix Delongchamp, Jack Doherty, John Sullivan, and Shirley Giffin. Our in-house staff contact is the manager of government affairs and policy. The committee formally met and reported to the OFAH Board of Directors three times during the year.

As in the past few years, the Algonquin Land Claim has been our main topic of discussion and concern. We believe the release of a draft Agreement-in-Principle between the federal and provincial government negotiation team and the Algonquins in December 2012 has serious implications to all who may fish, hunt or recreate on Crown Lands in the claim area. We believe that both levels of government have failed to have meaningful consultation with the public and stakeholders in the claim area, and to listen to their concerns and needs. The OFAH had issued news releases, written articles in *Ontario OUT OF DOORS*, and conducted many media interviews to express this concern regarding the lack of true consultation. Further to this, the OFAH partnered with the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association (CSIA) and the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA), and held a series of public meetings (Perth, Stittsville, North Bay, Pembroke, and Bancroft) in an effort to get the public involved in the issues that will affect their use of Crown lands and fishing and hunting as we know them today. A webcast was prepared and posted on [www.ofah.org](http://www.ofah.org) with the same message as was presented at the public meetings in an attempt to reach a wider audience. The posting is still available on the website.

Your Federation has been front and center on this issue, and staff have spent a great amount of time and effort presenting our

views across the province. For all Ontario residents, we want to maintain: 1) public fish and wildlife conservation management; 2) public fishing and hunting opportunities; and 3) public access to fishing and hunting opportunities. We want to maintain our culture, our heritage, our way of life, and our quality of life. The OFAH Board of Directors and staff should be complimented on championing this cause on behalf of the residents of Ontario.

At the beginning of the year we were also confronted with an appeal of the extinguished harvesting rights under the Williams Treaty. Both the federal and provincial governments served notice that an appeal was being launched by the Williams Treaty First Nations, with support from government, to challenge two previous Supreme Court decisions which upheld the decision that fishing and hunting rights had been extinguished for the Williams Treaty area and its members. The OFAH is seeking intervenor status on this issue (we acted as intervenors in the two previous cases). We were in court in December and are now awaiting the decision. This portfolio also took a great deal of staff time.

OFAH members of Fort Frances and in OFAH Zone A have kept us up to speed on the Stanjikoming claim in that area, and are monitoring and keeping us apprised of the situation as it develops. Fishery issues around Lake Huron were relatively quiet this year.

The committee also dealt with the issue of First Nation-only hunts in provincial parks as outlined in the report of the OFAH Firearms/Recreational Shooting/Hunter Education Advisory Committee.

As this is my final report as chair of this committee, I would like to express a heartfelt thank you to all of the members I have served with over the years; it has been a pleasure working with you. Thank you to our hard working and dedicated staff. It has been a privilege to have worked with you on some very challenging files that may have far-reaching effects on our members and the public in general.

# OFAH Past Presidents Advisory Committee Annual Report

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*Chair – Rob Hare*

Provincial directors-at-large (PDAL) are elected by the membership for a two-year term to serve on the OFAH Board of Directors. In 2013, a call for nominations took place and the successful candidates will commence their positions as PDALs on the OFAH Board of Directors at the OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference in March, 2014.

Two very dedicated and extremely knowledgeable PDALs chose not to seek re-election for this term, and I would like to thank both

Gerry Haarmeyer and John Sullivan, who truly were an asset to the OFAH Board of Directors. Their wisdom and experience will be missed.

The OFAH has an uncanny ability to have the right people with the right skill set at the right time on its board. This year is no exception. Our PDALs come from diverse backgrounds, and their skills and knowledge will be an asset.

I would also like to thank the members of the PDAL nominating committee, Frank Wick and Glenn Rivard, as well as staff at head office, for all of their help.

# OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee Annual Report



Chair – Jim Greenwood

## Kawartha Lakes Kennel Bylaw

The OFAH, with input from the OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee, submitted comments on the proposed bylaw amendments to the City of Kawartha Lakes. Initially, 37 amendments were included, raising a number of questions and concerns by kennel owners and clubs; in particular, record-keeping requirements and privacy concerns.

## Revised Sporting Dogs Brochure

With input from the OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee, the OFAH Sporting Dog brochure was revised this year and can be downloaded from the OFAH website ([www.ofah.org/hunting](http://www.ofah.org/hunting)). The brochure promotes our sporting dog heritage, and highlights the ongoing work of the OFAH and sporting dog clubs across the province.

## Use of Leashed Dogs to Recover Big Game

A regulatory amendment was made to allow the use of leashed dogs for big game retrieval in areas where the use of dogs for hunting is currently prohibited. The ability to use well trained dogs for tracking and retrieving big game benefits wildlife conservation, and enhances the overall hunting experience.

## Protection of Property Agent Authorizations

Licensed hunters are now permitted, at the request of a landowner, to harass or dispatch certain species of wildlife in protection of property (effective July 1, 2013). As a result, this will facilitate the use of a licenced hunter to act as a wildlife agent in routine as well as urgent circumstances involving coyote and/or wolf depredation.

## Wild Turkey Heritage Hunt

OFAH staff, through the recommendation of the OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee, respectfully requested that the MNR designate certain days as a Youth Wild Turkey Hunt (e.g. weekend two-day hunt) before the regular opening of

the spring wild turkey hunt. Youth wild turkey hunts are presently in effect in a number of U.S. jurisdictions (and the Province of Manitoba) to increase hunter recruitment and retention, and enhance youth hunting opportunities. Likewise, we believe there are substantial benefits to initiating a youth wild turkey hunt in the Province of Ontario.

## Additional Wild Turkey Hunting Opportunities

Discussions on additional wild turkey hunting opportunities are ongoing. There are still some WMUs without open spring seasons (e.g. WMU 42) for wild turkey. We also believe that there are WMUs that can support fall seasons, but do not currently meet the MNR's criteria for opening a fall season.

## Apprenticeship Hunters

Currently, apprenticeship hunters (ages 12-14) must hunt under their mentor's licence and seal; the exception being migratory game birds. The OFAH Sporting Dogs/Small Game Advisory Committee recommended that OFAH staff explore options for apprenticeship hunters to purchase and hunt under their own licence(s) and seal(s), which would generate Fish & Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA) revenue, and increase opportunities for apprenticeship hunters.

## OFAH Sporting Dogs Policy

The committee completed a review of the OFAH Sporting Dog Policy. To maintain the policy's relevancy, certain sections have been revised and will be presented to the OFAH Board of Directors for approval in 2014.

## Coyote/Wolf Hunting

The committee was provided a paper (Wheeldon and Patterson) that summarizes the work they did on wolves/coyotes in the Little Claybelt area. The findings from their work suggest there may be rationale for proposing separate management of wolves and coyotes where the physical differences between them can be easily distinguished.



Photo: Randy Therrien

# OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Birds Advisory Committee Annual Report



*Chair – Scott Petrie*

The OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Birds Advisory Committee consists of the following members: Scott Petrie, John Sullivan, Kerry Coleman, Roy Polsky, and the OFAH fish and wildlife biologist. This committee was involved with a number of migratory bird- and wetland-related issues in 2013. A brief update pertaining to the most important issues is provided below.

## **Opening of a Mourning Dove Season in Ontario**

The OFAH and Long Point Waterfowl (LPW) conducted research and promoted the opening of a mourning dove season in Ontario for several years. In response, the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) completed an extensive mourning dove population and harvest assessment report. The main conclusion of that report was that the Ontario breeding population is expected to produce a fall-flight that can accommodate anticipated harvest with minimal impact.

In the fall of 2013, the CWS opened a mourning dove season in the southern and central zones of Ontario. It was agreed that the season opener would coincide with the early Canada goose opener to simplify the regulations, and to avoid the increased enforcement that would be necessary if the season opened on September 1. The season remains open for 70 days, the bag limit is 15 birds, and the possession limit is 45 birds.

The CWS reported that, while they did receive some letters complaining about the mourning dove season, there were no complaints from landowners, and no other issues were identified. While we currently do not know how many hunters participated, the fact that many retailers ran out of non-toxic dove loads suggests that many hunters took advantage of this new opportunity.

## **Tundra Swan Season**

There continues to be limited pressure for a tundra swan season in Ontario. This comes from a very small, yet very vocal group of individuals. The CWS recently prepared a report showing that an Ontario tundra swan season would be biologically sustainable; however, members of the Ontario Waterfowl Advisory Committee (which includes OFAH representatives), and the members of the OFAH Wetlands/Migratory Birds Advisory Committee, continue

to believe that there would be considerable social opposition to opening such a season, and that hunters may have more to lose than to gain from such a season. It was, therefore, decided that we would continue our position of not supporting such a season at this time.

## **Mute Swans**

A mute swan workshop was recently held in Michigan, and representatives from the OFAH, LPW, and the CWS attended. There are now approximately 25,000 invasive mute swans in the Great Lakes Basin, and the population is rapidly expanding. There are 3,000-4,000 mute swans in Ontario. The United States is now coordinating control efforts but, with the exception of providing control permits to landowners, the CWS is not taking an active role in mute swan control. The OFAH continues to promote the control of invasive mute swans within the province.

## **Donation of Waterfowl to Conservation Dinners**

The CWS is presently amending the Migratory Bird Regulations, and have proposed to allow birds taken under damage and danger permits to be donated to conservation dinners. Our committee agreed that this was not satisfactory, as it would result in a very limited number of birds being donated. The committee has requested that the CWS make provision for all legally harvested waterfowl (or at least overabundant geese) to be donated to conservation dinners.

## **CWS Recently Adopted the International Harvest Strategy for American Black Ducks**

The CWS adopted the International Harvest Strategy for Black Ducks and, in 2013, this resulted in a lengthening of the season (107 days), and an increase in the bag limit to two birds in the southern hunting district, and four birds in the central, northern, and Hudson-James Bay hunting districts. Unfortunately, the 2013 breeding population estimates have triggered a change from a liberal to a moderate regulatory package for black ducks, as presented by the International Black Duck Harvest Strategy. As the CWS is obligated to honour the terms of this agreement, it is anticipated that either the length of the season or the bag limit will be reduced for the 2014 waterfowl season.



Photo: Michelle McCann-Rowan



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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, 2013, 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, 2013. We expressed a qualified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated February 19, 2014 (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, 2013.

### *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, 2013 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, 2013.

The misstatement of the audited financial statements is described in our qualified audit opinion in our report dated February 19, 2014. 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, 2013, 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 19, 2014

**THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS INCORPORATED**  
Year Ended December 31, 2013

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 2,032,791	\$ 1,339,850
Investments	1,677,683	1,951,074
Accounts receivable	1,144,458	1,567,568
Inventory	306,898	318,270
Prepaid expenses	<u>520,324</u>	<u>412,853</u>
	5,682,154	5,589,615
<b>LAND, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT</b>	<u>2,690,723</u>	<u>2,975,443</u>
	<u>\$ 8,372,877</u>	<u>\$ 8,565,058</u>

<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 408,520	\$ 603,464
Deferred revenue	<u>1,540,398</u>	<u>1,411,269</u>
	<u>1,948,918</u>	<u>2,014,733</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Invested in land, buildings and equipment	2,690,723	2,975,443
Internally restricted	539,856	408,618
Unrestricted	<u>3,193,380</u>	<u>3,166,264</u>
	<u>6,423,959</u>	<u>6,550,325</u>

**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Membership fees	\$ 3,479,035	\$ 3,427,927
Program fees	1,926,891	2,736,268
OOD magazine revenues	3,956,034	3,826,822
Sales	227,448	272,165
Fundraising	1,292,539	1,389,211
Donations	745,060	811,118
Interest and investment income	47,412	67,971
Solar panel revenues	29,446	29,041
Foreign exchange gain	23,980	-
Gain on sale of land	<u>136,500</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>11,864,345</u>	<u>12,560,523</u>

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Salaries and employee costs	1,845,560	1,914,038
Membership	1,957,557	2,127,399
Programs, public information and education	2,114,966	2,568,835
OOD magazine expenses	3,512,038	3,517,636
Office, general and professional	675,289	765,885
Cost of sales	243,146	300,702
Legal/policy	112,514	24,392
Informational programs	5,500	14,500
Fundraising	1,205,131	1,188,030
Amortization	<u>319,010</u>	<u>303,116</u>
	<u>11,990,711</u>	<u>12,724,533</u>

**EXCESS OF EXPENDITURES OVER REVENUE**

\$ (126,366) \$ (164,010)



## Reinstating the spring bear hunt is the obvious answer

### Bill Blackwell

President

The spring bear hunt has been anything but a dead issue since it was cancelled nearly 15 years ago. Every year since, Ontarians have been living with the consequences of a decision that was based on emotion, not sound wildlife management, and this year is no different. Between May and September, there have been five bear attacks (at least that we've heard about in the media) across the province. A man required 300 stitches after being mauled by a 400-pound black bear near Cochrane; a biologist doing surveying work near Foleyet was able to fend off a persistent bear by using repellent spray; a man walking two dogs in Sand Bar Provincial Park near Ignace was attacked from behind and later stalked by a bear; again in Cochrane, a bear made its way into a family's home while they were sleeping; and a woman credits her two dogs for saving her life when she was mauled by a bear near Peterborough in September.

Thankfully none of the attacks were fatal, but they serve as an important reminder to people and provincial politicians in particular, (because bear management is a provincial responsibility) of the benefits of a spring bear hunt. And some politicians are realizing it. There has been a recent increase in discussions about bringing back the spring bear hunt, fostered in part by the introduction of Bill 114 by Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Bill Mauro. We urge you to call, write or email your MPP to let them know that you support the bill and the reinstatement of a spring bear hunt.

Ontario's spring bear hunt was a successful wildlife population management tool to assist in maintaining the abundance and density of bears at levels that minimized dangerous encounters between people and bears. On average, about 4,000 bears were harvested annually in the spring bear hunt, and about 70% of these were male bears. Used in combination with a fall bear hunt, this two-pronged bear management system reduced bear densities, particularly male bears, and assisted in the control of the size of the bear population. This in turn reduced aggression and cannibalism by male bears on other bears, predation on other species such as deer fawns and moose calves, and reduced bear interactions with people.

The spring bear hunt provided benefits to people and society, and minimized costs associated with problem bears. It was an excellent, proven example of sustainable development in practice, where the benefits from a renewable natural resource were being maximized and costs to people and society minimized.

With no spring bear hunt, there are now more problem bears in the spring, summer, and early fall because there are more bears in the population. There are more aggressive, cannibalistic males in the woods that cause other bears to avoid them and thus, for example, seek food in other areas near people such as towns and cities. Berry crop shortages or failures worsen these effects.

Other methods to try to address problems with bears have failed. For example, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), trapping and relocation of problem bears has a failure rate of 80% for adult bears of either sex. So, proper wildlife management requires a spring hunt to reduce harmful interactions with humans, supplying benefits to people and society, but also to maintain bear populations at levels more consistent with long-term average food supplies for the bears themselves.

The cancellation of the spring bear hunt was not only bad for people and public safety, it was also bad for the bear population. The hunt provided wholesome food, valuable hides, and rewarding hunting experiences for thousands of hunters each year. It generated over \$40 million every year and sustained many jobs (all of which have flowed to our neighbours in Manitoba and Quebec because they continue to have spring bear hunts).

Your Federation is unwavering in its position to have the spring bear hunt reinstated. This, among other issues, will continue to be front and centre in 2014 and beyond.

As I reflect back on what has been a very busy and hectic year, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of myself, our Board of Directors and Head Office staff to wish you all a safe and successful hunting season. Thank you for your continued support of the OFAH, happy holidays and nothing but health and happiness in 2014.



## The importance of harvest reporting

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

With approximately 105,000 moose, 400,000 deer, 105,000 black bears, and over 1,000 elk, Ontario is blessed with an abundance of huntable game populations. Each year, licensed hunters pour hundreds of millions of dollars into the provincial economy as they spread out across our majestic land base to take advantage of some marvelous hunting opportunities. In order to ensure the wise use of our resources, wildlife managers need access to high quality data in order to make informed decisions.

There is a common misconception among hunters that reporting results is merely a means for the MNR to cut back on game seals and to limit hunting opportunities. The reality is that hunters are the only source of two vital pieces of information needed for wildlife management: when and where animals are harvested. This and other information is used to monitor wildlife populations, develop regulations such as changes to seasons and bag limits, and to ensure harvest is sustainable.

Accurate hunter reporting can lead to better wildlife management, which should in turn help to optimize the quantity and quality of our hunting opportunities. And yet, despite their importance and simplicity, some hunters do not submit harvest reports. Reasons range from forgetfulness and indifference, to a general distrust of the government and resentment that aboriginal people are not required to report their harvest.

Current reporting requirements are as varied as the species we hunt. Licensed hunters are legally obligated to submit harvest and/or hunting effort information for wild turkey, elk, bear, wolf/coyote (in select WMUs) and for many moose and deer seasons. Additionally, reporting is voluntary for a random sample of moose adult validation tag and deer licence holders.

Turkey hunting provides a concrete example of how harvest reporting can help create hunting opportunities. The Wild Turkey Management Plan for Ontario states that a fall turkey season will only be considered in a WMU when spring turkey harvest exceeds 200 birds for three consecutive years (or 3 out of 4 years). Although spring harvest results are only one of the criteria used to open a fall turkey season, accurate reporting helps wildlife managers identify potential opportunities. If hunters do not report their harvest, regardless of turkey population size in their WMU, it could take much longer to open a fall season (if it happens at all).

As a growing segment of Ontario society, hunters continue to face challenges in preserving the heritage and traditions that we hold dear. It is our duty as responsible hunters to demonstrate that we take seriously our role as conservationists. Cooperation in the game management process is an important element in maintaining credibility and preserving our hunting heritage. It is easy for us to sit back and criticize the government for poor wildlife management decisions; however, we cannot make things better if we do not participate in the process. And who knows – with a little more effort on the part of licensed hunters, we may just see better wildlife management and more hunting opportunities.

Does the current reporting system contribute to wildlife management? Yes. Could it be more efficient and cost-effective? Absolutely. The OFAH will continue to push for improvements to our reporting system to make sure it is easy and convenient for hunters to submit reports. We also want to ensure it is cost-effective, and that only the required information is collected and utilized in a way that will maximize the benefits for wildlife populations and hunters, alike.

As our big game seasons wind down and we celebrate another fall hunting season, please take some time to report on your hunting seasons and remind your friends and family to do the same.

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Shannon Gutoskie, Manager of Communications, OFAH, P.O. Box 2800, Peterborough, ON K9J 8L5

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## More opportunities await hunters and trappers this fall

### Bill Blackwell

President

Fall is in the air, and I for one couldn't be happier. As the days get shorter and the nights get cooler, there is so much to look forward to, especially this year with new and expanded hunting opportunities.

It's been nearly 60 years since the last Mourning Dove hunt took place in Ontario. Now, thanks in part to ongoing advocacy by the OFAH and Long Point Waterfowl, a Mourning Dove hunt has been established in southern and central zones. Falling under the Migratory Game Birds Hunting regulations, the season opened on the same day as the early goose hunt and extends for 70 days. The bag limit is 15 birds/day, the possession limit is 45 birds and only non-toxic shot can be used. The new Mourning Dove season will provide economic, ecological and recreational benefits to the residents of Ontario. It is also a great opportunity for young hunters in the province.

I can't talk about increased hunting opportunities without mentioning Sunday gun hunting. Since 2005, when the MNR developed a Sunday gun hunting policy, 155 municipalities across southern Ontario have passed resolutions in support. The most recent additions to the list include Douro-Dummer, Malahide, and Enniskillen. Despite these successes, we still have more work to do in proving to some municipalities the benefits of Sunday gun hunting. It is a cost-effective wildlife management tool; it's a public safety issue (the Ministry of Transportation says there is a motor vehicle/wildlife collision every 38 minutes in the province, 90% of which involve whitetail deer); it's of major economic importance (hunting activity in Ontario represents \$1.5 billion in annual economic activity); and it gives families one extra day (and, for some, the only day) to spend time together, mentor a youth and enjoy the great outdoors.

Given all of the opportunities now available, we can only assume the number of students taking the Ontario Hunter Education Program will continue to increase. The program has seen 11 consecutive years of growth and, as it looks now, 2013 won't be any different. The increase in numbers can be attributed, in part, to the success of the Hunter Apprenticeship Safety Program and a variety of mentoring opportunities across the province. Today's youth are becoming increasingly interested in spending time outside rather than in front of the television. They realize hunting is a healthy recreational activity that provides them with a lifelong connection with wildlife.

Hunting, however, isn't the only opportunity to engage youth in the province's rich outdoor heritage. Recently, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and the Ontario Fur Managers Federation rolled out a new youth trapping program. Now, youth between the ages of 12 and 15 will be eligible to obtain a trapping license. The license will permit youth to possess, prepare and sell pelts commercially. To qualify, youth must successfully complete the Fur Harvest, Fur Management and Conservation Course (FHFMC) and be accompanied by a licensed trapper 18 years of age or older. The FHFMC provides training with an emphasis on safety, humane trapping techniques, and sustainable wildlife management practices. The OFAH is pleased that the MNR recognizes that a youth trapping program will not only provide recreational and outdoor benefits, but also pass along knowledge of an activity that is part of the cultural fabric of Canada.

As I head out this fall to enjoy the many hunting opportunities that await me, I can't help but reflect back on the many accomplishments of our organization and the gratitude that I feel towards each and every OFAH member. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to the future well being of this province's fish and wildlife. I wish you nothing but a safe and enjoyable hunting season.

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## New navigation laws will be a double whammy in the Algonquin Land Claim area

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

The land settlements of the Algonquin Land Claim are a major concern for OFAH members who live, work and recreate in eastern Ontario. Until now, concerns have focused on the land portion of the 117,500 acres that is scheduled to be transferred when the treaty is signed. This is likely due to the fact that ownership of property is generally only tied to the land itself and because there has been federally legislated protection for the public right of navigation under the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA). This protection applies to all navigable waters; defined as those waters capable of being navigated by any type of floating vessel for transportation, recreation or commerce. This would mean that all accessible waters would remain publicly available regardless of whether the adjacent lands are privatized. Although this may have been true during the first 20 years of the Algonquin Land Claim negotiations, last year's changes to the NWPA by the federal government will shut the door on future public navigation for hundreds, if not thousands, of waters in the land claim area. We can now expect an even greater impact on anglers and hunters than originally anticipated.

Many environmental organizations sounded the alarm last year when Bill C-45 was tabled and passed by the Government of Canada. Although the NWPA may have been responsible for flagging an environmental issue, it was not a main line of defense by any stretch of the imagination. The NWPA is, and always has been, intended to protect the Canadian right of navigation. It was never intended to be used as an environmental law.

Let's face it. If navigation laws were the only thing standing between development activities and the protection of our aquatic resources, then there are obviously bigger problems we need to address. While other groups were spending time and energy on environmental concerns, the OFAH sounded the alarm on the NWPA for an entirely different reason: public access to our lakes, rivers and streams.

We often only stop to think about the importance of something once it is gone, or in the case of the NWPA, is on its way out. I think many of us take the public right of navigation for granted because it has been in place for more than 130 years. The new Navigation Protection Act will only protect our right of navigation in 162 oceans, lakes and rivers across the entire country. What will happen to navigation in the hundreds of thousands of other Canadian waters?

In my April column, I highlighted many of our specific concerns with the amendments to the NWPA contained in Bill C-45 and talked about what it means for anglers and hunters. As anglers and hunters, we have experienced fences, wires and other obstructions across our favourite trout streams or canoe routes as they pass through private lands. These obstructions are a public safety concern and are illegal. Although Transport Canada claims this type of activity will remain an infringement on the public right of navigation under Common Law, it will now be up to an individual to fight this through a court of law. How many everyday Ontario anglers and hunters have the time or the money to fight a court battle to maintain our right of navigation? Most of us will likely move onto the nearest unobstructed water. The bottom line is: we should not have to.

The changes to the NWPA will be felt wherever there are private lands nearby Ontario waters. With all of the public lands and lakes that will be lost through the Algonquin Land Claim, and the public hunting and fishing opportunities that will go with them, the major changes in federal navigation laws will leave non-Algonquin anglers and hunters with even fewer opportunities once the dust settles.

The potential for the Algonquin Land Claim to impact on anglers, hunters and other Crown land users has been known from the very beginning. Although it appears the changes to the NWPA were not specifically intended to restrict public access, the fact remains that we will potentially lose access to thousands of lakes, rivers and streams across the province. The OFAH remains on the front lines of a battle to maintain public hunting and fishing opportunities in the Algonquin Land Claim area. Rest assured that your Federation will not stand idly by while our hunting and fishing heritage is eroded by new navigation protection laws.



## Land claims in Ontario - What does the future hold?

### Bill Blackwell

President

For the past five years I have spent the third week of July teaching youth at the Long Point Waterfowl Youth Camp. During the week I, along with 3 other instructors, have taught young people between the ages of 12 and 16 the Canadian Firearms Safety Course, the Ontario Hunter Education Course and the Wild Turkey Hunter Education Course. Nothing can match the joy and pride on the kids' faces as they proudly display their certificates after completing an intense week of classroom and outdoor instruction. I know they are all looking forward to their future as anglers and hunters and their role as conservationists.

However, as I spent the week surrounded by all of those eager young faces, I couldn't help but reflect upon all of the challenges facing us and wondering what kind of hunting and fishing opportunities await those kids and my three young grandchildren, given the competing pressures of government reductions in natural resources funding and involvement, increasing numbers of native land claims, expanding access restrictions and a host of other issues that we are currently grappling with.

The Algonquin Land Claim and a court challenge to the Williams Treaty are two examples of native claims that have the potential to drastically affect our access to natural resources, impact on fish and wildlife species and affect our ability to hunt and fish as we have done for generations. We do not dispute that First Nations people have rights under Section 35 of the Constitution, nor do we dispute their right to harvest fish and wildlife for sustenance and ceremonial purposes. These rights are enshrined in law and have been reaffirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada. However, somewhere along the line, the government negotiators, the courts and our politicians seem to have overlooked the fact that many of our forefathers fished and hunted for the same reasons as First Nations peoples, and that for them, the right to do so was an equally important part of their collective heritage. The right to hunt and fish, and the ability to access our natural resources to engage in these activities is a part of our history, a fact that is often overlooked by negotiators who sit at the table representing the government, and supposedly, all Canadians.

For over twenty years, the OFAH has been involved with the Algonquin Land Claim. Throughout the process, we have been repeatedly told that the negotiations were being conducted in good faith, and that there was considerable common ground between the Algonquin and the 1.4 million non-aboriginals who live as neighbours. Unfortunately, when you read the Agreement in Principle (AIP) released last December, it is clear that all of the input and expert advice offered by stakeholders like the OFAH, the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations, the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association and thousands of residents who live and work in the area of the claim, largely fell on deaf ears.

Since Day one, the OFAH has sought to ensure that above all else, the AIP would be based upon conservation of our natural resources and principles like fair sharing. We provided a conservation definition for inclusion in the AIP that reads as follows, "Conservation is the protection, use and management of natural resources to supply benefits at optimal levels for present and future generations of Ontarians." However, thus far, conservation has taken a back seat in the negotiations. The courts have repeatedly recognized that conservation trumps all, but to date, the AIP is not reflective of this.

Anglers and hunters, through their license fees, currently pay for roughly two thirds of all fish and wildlife programs in Ontario. If, however, our governments and our political representatives do not recognize that the AIP and its contents deserves more discussion, more consultation, more fairness, and most importantly, the enshrinement of conservation principles in the AIP, the very real possibility exists that the resources that we pay for today will be lost tomorrow.

As part of the negotiations process, we have sought to ensure that the AIP, while providing for the resolution of longstanding grievances on the part of the Algonquins, also ensures that the rights of non-aboriginals are respected. This is not a land claim that exists in a barren landscape in the far north where populations are scarce. It is a modern agreement that will exist in a settled landscape where existing resource uses are fully allocated and the interests of all occupants of the land must be considered.

The Algonquin Land Claim is only one of many in Ontario, but given the size and magnitude of the claim, the speed at which the AIP is moving forward, and the apparent lack of any plans for further public consultation, you can't help but wonder what the future holds. We understand that despite the input provided to the two levels of government during public 'information' sessions earlier this year, there are no plans to go back to the public to tell them how their input was valued or incorporated into the negotiation process. We also understand that the time for further discussions is limited, given the governments' intent to have the Algonquins ratify the AIP by the end of the year.

Over a century ago, anglers and hunters in both Canada and the U.S. recognized the need for a new way of conserving our natural resources. What resulted is the North American Model for Wildlife Conservation, which has served as the underpinning of our fish and wildlife resource policies, and is responsible in part for the restoration and enhancement of countless fish and wildlife species that otherwise would have been endangered. That legacy, and the commitment of all anglers, hunters and others to the conservation of our resources must not be negotiated away. Land claim settlements elsewhere in Canada have recognized the importance of conservation of the resources and the concept of fair sharing. That needs to be the case here as well, if we are to guarantee that future generations, both Algonquins and non-aboriginal, will have anything left to enjoy.



## Conservation Officers on the frontline of fish & wildlife protection

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

If you hunt or fish in Ontario, chances are that at some point in time you have had contact with an MNR Conservation Officer (CO).

For more than 100 years, CO's have been charged with the responsibility of preserving and protecting our valuable natural resources. In the process, they cover over one million square kilometers and over 250,000 lakes, rivers and forests while enforcing over 27 pieces of provincial legislation and four federal laws; conducting investigations; educating the public; and appearing in court as expert witnesses. At any given time they could be involved in investigations related to fires, parks, off road vehicles, boats, aggregates, fish and wildlife and species at risk.

Working out of 25 MNR districts and three Great Lakes management units, they are also involved in canine, special investigations and training/education. In synch with changing times, CO's also spend an increasing amount of time using the internet as an investigative tool to track down individuals involved in the illegal trafficking of fish and wildlife.

Despite all of these activities and the growing demands on their time, the number of CO's in Ontario continues to slowly but inexorably decline. There are currently 291 positions in the Enforcement Branch, down from 310 positions in 2006/2007. More alarming is the fact that over the same span of time, the number of 'boots on the ground' officers slipped from 191 to 180. The loss in terms of numbers may not seem like a lot, but considering the amount of territory that CO's must cover and their involvement in investigations that may take them hours from the nearest community, and you can appreciate why the OFAH has always held CO's in high regard and considers them to be one of the most effective services provided by the MNR.

Take it from me; even if you haven't seen a CO in the course of your daily activities, they are out there. From making visits to hunt camps in the fall to appearing at council meetings on discharge bylaws and Sunday hunting, CO's are around. What we need is more of them; to ensure adequate protection of our natural resources and ongoing safety of the public and the officers.

We can appreciate that the Ontario government, like governments everywhere, is engaged in a restraint exercise and is seeking to cut fat from the budget. In doing so, however, the province should exercise caution in terms of what it cuts, and consider the long term impact of those cuts before proceeding. As noted by the Environmental Commissioner, the Ministry of Natural Resources receives only a tiny amount of the overall provincial funding envelope and suffers from drastic underfunding, a situation that has been ongoing for years and has resulted in cuts to virtually every program, including enforcement and other critical 'on the ground' services.

Fishing and hunting, both in Ontario and across the country is big business. In 2012, resident and non-resident anglers and hunters in Ontario purchased almost two million hunting and fishing licences, and for the first time in a long time, purchases of migratory bird permits have increased. Anglers and hunters contribute several billion dollars to the provincial economy each year, and Canada-wide the total is over \$13 billion. In Ontario, proceeds from fishing and hunting licences fund roughly two-thirds of the entire provincial fish and wildlife budget. For ten years straight, the Hunter Education program has graduated more new hunters than the year before; an encouraging trend. These are positive signs for the outdoor community, and will hopefully result in more anglers and hunters than ever on the water and in the field.

OFAH members and the vast majority of anglers and hunters in Ontario are scrupulous in their compliance for the laws that protect our resources. Unfortunately, there will always be a few who show nothing but disdain for seasons, limits or boundaries. For the future well-being of our natural resources, and in the interests of providing expanded opportunities for all anglers and hunters to pursue their passion, it is important that we maintain a strong and stable enforcement regime.

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## Federation members go that “extra-extra” mile

### Bill Blackwell

President

When your Federation talks about that “extra-extra,” we’re talking about membership and donations—in that order!

The first “extra” is the most proactive step. It represents the difference between let’s wait and see versus let’s make it happen. Today, nearly 85,000 motivated members make it happen for our hunting and fishing future. They also make it happen for our hunting and fishing friends who may never fully appreciate the extra effort OFAH members put into opportunities that non-OFAH members will automatically enjoy. If they are excited about elk, wild turkey, and other new hunting and fishing opportunities, imagine what we could achieve if we had their “extra” support too.

The second “extra” represents OFAH voluntary donations that drive our success. Simply stated, OFAH membership dues fund our core conservation mandate and provide outstanding benefits, but it will never be enough to keep up with the high standard we set for OFAH projects and programming. Your Federation asks more of its members when its members asks more from its Federation. In lesser hands, grassroots conservation programs would have died a thousand deaths. We salute OFAH members who, as always, deliver the “extra-extra.” You put your money where your passion is and find solutions when others don’t even understand the need for grassroots contributions.

Today, Federation members have never been more prepared to volunteer their time and donate dollars to support our programs that protect lakes from invasive species, stock fish, restore native species, improve habitat, provide fish and wildlife research, and teach kids about conservation. The roll-up-the-sleeves and make-it-happen fortitude to carry the conservation workload reflects the volunteer spirit so deeply woven into the OFAH culture.

Travel anywhere in Ontario to find OFAH members volunteering at the local fish hatchery, spending late nights at conservation club meetings, mentoring new hunters and teaching outdoors safety, selling OFAH/Conservation Lottery tickets at the local mall or driving around the community to find prizes for kids’ fishing events. Many OFAH members simply cannot get the time from busy work and family schedules to stand shoulder to shoulder with fellow volunteers and that’s why participation in OFAH fundraising programs is another way to lend a hand.

If we didn’t personally know how hard OFAH members work to support their outdoors future, it might be too easy to take that membership, donations and hands-on volunteer work for granted. Rest assured, your “extra-extra” does not go unnoticed by your Federation.

I smiled when I read a message penned to an OFAH fundraising campaign letter. “Just a drop in the bucket,” said an OFAH member who made a donation of what his family budget could afford, knowing that every “extra-extra” bit helps.

We hope that every OFAH member shares that spirit as we approach a couple of our most successful conservation fundraising programs, which if you haven’t seen them yet, you will shortly. There’s never an obligation to donate and we sincerely appreciate every dollar you can afford to contribute, if you choose to help beyond your OFAH membership support.

As your OFAH president, it’s been my pleasure to personally chat with thousands of OFAH members at various fish and wildlife events and outdoor trade shows. OFAH members come from all walks of life. We work hard for our money and invest it wisely. While some of our members appreciate more ways to receive OFAH charitable receipts, some members are on severely fixed incomes. Family priorities come first. That’s why it’s so heartening to hear members say “although we can’t always donate, we always find a way renew our OFAH membership.” What more can your Federation ask?

Thanks for going the “extra” distance for conservation and your family’s outdoors way of life.

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## Sustainable fisheries benefit all Ontarians

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

I recently heard about Waterhen Lake, and not for the reason you might expect. I do not have any plans to wet a line in Waterhen Lake, but I am following the changes on this Manitoba lake with great interest. The Walleye and Northern Pike commercial gill net harvesters of Waterhen Lake are seeking sustainability certification from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). You might be wondering how a Manitoba lake can help our fisheries here in Ontario. It sets a critically important precedent.

If successful, Waterhen Lake will become the first freshwater fishery in North America to obtain MSC certification. It has already helped to open the door for Ontario's commercial fisheries to pursue sustainability certification. On June 19, it was announced that Ontario's Lake Erie commercial fisheries for six species, including Yellow Perch and Walleye, has entered into MSC assessment. The assessment is expected to be completed by the summer of 2014, meaning Ontario could have certified sustainable fish products in the very near future. The Ontario Commercial Fisheries' Association (OCFA) should be commended for initiating this process, but we must not overlook the fact that the Lake Erie fisheries are already fully licensed and regulated. Sustainability certification would have the most effect in Ontario where there is currently little or no government-enforced regulations: Aboriginal commercial fisheries.

What makes the Waterhen Lake case even more interesting is the fact that the 22 licensed commercial fish harvesters are also members of local First Nations communities. This is not a situation where the Manitoba Government is forcing certification on the First Nation commercial harvesters. The harvesters themselves want to be certified. Not only to help them be more competitive in the market place, but also to ensure they will have a sustainable and productive fishery in the future.

The need for sustainability certification for Aboriginal commercial fisheries is becoming more and more apparent in Ontario. The unregulated Lake Nipissing commercial gill net fishery is just one example of the government's increasing unwillingness to regulate Aboriginal commercial fisheries. The obvious benefit of a market that demands sustainable fish products is that it forces fish harvesters to get certified and therefore comply with a set of criteria that ensures a fishery is sustainable. A less than obvious by-product of sustainability certification is that it compels government agencies (i.e. MNR) to do their jobs without being swayed by political agendas. Through the certification process, the MNR would be accountable to carry out a full evaluation, through monitoring and assessment, of the fishery. The criteria for certification itself would establish a set of rules and regulations that are often absent from Aboriginal commercial fisheries in Ontario. We could avoid the loss of benefits that has occurred in Lake Nipissing.

The presence of certified sustainable freshwater fish products in the market may push more and more Ontario commercial fisheries to seek certification in order to stay competitive. We can only hope that sustainability certification will become a necessary cost of doing business for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal commercial fisheries and becomes the norm in Ontario. For this to become a reality, it will require us as consumers, to support sustainable fish products. If your buddy considers buying fish from the back of a truck, make sure he understands the connection between his "roadside grocer" and the reason local fish stocks have declined.

MSC certification will not solve all of Ontario's commercial fishery issues. It would however, represent a monumental step towards ensuring their sustainability. The success of Waterhen Lake will prove that sustainability certification can be done for a freshwater commercial gill net fishery. Perhaps most importantly, it will show us that sustainability certification can be done for a First Nations commercial gill net fishery. The bottom line is that it can be done and should be done because the sustainability of our fisheries will depend on it.

If the Ontario government is not willing to do something about unsustainable Aboriginal commercial fisheries, then I suggest we start to push the agenda. We can start by encouraging our friends and families to buy certified sustainable fish by looking for the MSC symbol during their next trip to the grocery store or local fish market. Regardless of whether you are Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, a commercial harvester or a recreational angler - if we conserve our fisheries resources, everybody wins.



## Hunting heritage alive and well in Ontario

### Bill Blackwell

President

**Fall hunting season will be here before you know it.**

**Are you ready?**



Don't wait until hunting season starts to sign up for your Ontario Hunter Education and Firearms Safety courses. Classes fill fast, and the paperwork takes several weeks.

**Register today!**

**www.ohep.net or call Call 705-748-6324 ext. 224**

We are right in the heart of summer, but I'm already thinking ahead to fall; when the air turns cooler and the leaves begin to change colour. To me, that means one thing: hunting. I'm especially looking forward to this year's fall hunt because I missed out on my other favourite time of year, which is spring turkey season. I had knee replacement surgery at the end of March, and thought for certain I'd be in the field in time. Was I wrong! Instead of venturing out in the hopes of taking a bird, I had to listen to other people's success (or lack of success) stories while sitting on the sidelines.

As OFAH President and as a Hunter Education and Firearms instructor, one of my greatest pleasures is teaching young people interested in hunting for the first time. I'm also a passionate supporter of new opportunities for youth hunting, like the recent hunt experienced by three eager youth who visited Bird's Eye View Pheasant Farm for a day of turkey hunting with a mentor. This is a wonderful example of the work that the OFAH and its partners do to introduce and engage youth in this heritage activity.

Today's youth do not have the same access to hunting opportunities that my generation and my son's generation enjoyed. Many may want to try hunting, but lack the tools, knowledge or access to huntable properties to get started. Providing opportunities for young hunters to gain the expertise, licenses and skills they need to hunt safely is an increasing priority for the OFAH, our member clubs, and other stakeholders in the outdoor community. Waterfowl Heritage Day is a perfect way to introduce new hunters to the outdoors, so please try to take advantage of this phenomenal opportunity. Upcoming youth hunting events include the Longpoint Waterfowl Youth Event; the OFAH Delta Waterfowl Youth Heritage Day; and the OFAH Bird's Eye View Youth Pheasant Hunt in October. Be sure to check [www.ofah.org/hunting/youth-hunting](http://www.ofah.org/hunting/youth-hunting) for new announcements.

Hunter Education instructors from across the province recently visited the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre for the 22nd Annual Hunter Education Instructor Conference. The weekend featured a number of interesting speakers, and was capped off by the Saturday night dinner which saw former OFAH/MNR Hunter Education Program Coordinator Pat Hogan, former MNR Ontario Coordinator for Hunter Safety Bill McKittrick, and former instructor and past OFAH President Terry Smeltzer inducted into the Ontario Hunter Education Hall of Fame.

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 in cooperation with the MNR, the OFAH administers this important program, which last year alone processed over 21,000 students. In fact, the number of students has increased every year for the past eleven years. Clearly, rumours that suggest hunting is on the decline are greatly exaggerated.

Hunting is part of the cultural fabric of Canada. Our nation was founded on the opportunities that hunting, fishing and trapping afforded our ancestors and indigenous peoples. Even today, recreational hunting activities contribute billions of dollars to the provincial economy every year. There are roughly 440,000 trained and licensed hunters in Ontario celebrating our hunting heritage each year. If you can, I encourage you to engage our youth, and take a kid hunting.



## A bright future for Lake Ontario's fisheries

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

We can accomplish great things when we work together. This is clear when you look at the Normandale Fish Culture Station, which opened its doors last month (see page 4 for highlights).

The OFAH has always believed that fish culture is a key program area for the Ministry of Natural Resources – it provides put-grow-take fisheries, it protects vulnerable fisheries and waterbodies by providing fishing opportunities elsewhere, and it supports species rehabilitation and biodiversity initiatives. Several years ago, the OFAH supported the long-term commitment of the province to rebuild Normandale and we worked with the MNR to operate the Ringwood Fish Culture Station with the Metro East Anglers to raise Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout and Atlantic Salmon for Lake Ontario while Normandale was being renovated.

The Lake Ontario Management Unit and Normandale Station staff also worked with several Lake Ontario-based clubs, some of which are OFAH clubs, on Chinook Salmon pen-rearing projects; helping young Chinooks imprint on local waters to support the nearshore fishery. The continued success of the province's Chinook Salmon program, secured in this new hatchery, is another cause for celebration. It is a fishery worth over a hundred million dollars annually to the economy, and it supports thousands upon thousands of hours of recreation for anglers, including many tournaments (both local ones and large ones such as the Great Ontario Salmon Derby).

Normandale has played a key role in the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program (LOASRP), which the OFAH and the MNR have been working on together since 2006 as lead partners. Back then, we began full-scale restoration, knowing it was a long-term project requiring years of planning and commitment. Now, we're celebrating the fruits of that labour, with the new Normandale now playing a greater role in the Atlantic Salmon program as it houses both broodstock and production fish.

Fish production is just one of the four components of the restoration program along with habitat rehabilitation, assessment and research and education. Normandale will be playing a role in education, through the new visitors' centre.

None of this would be possible if it weren't for the support of key sponsors such as Ontario Power Generation; lead sponsor of phase two of the LOASRP. In the beginning of the program, our first corporate supporter was the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, and they have remained steadfast partners for almost eight years now. Some of the original stakeholder partners in the program were the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association and Trout Unlimited Canada. Other key partners include the Toronto Dominion Friends of the Environment Foundation, which supports our habitat restoration efforts, and Fleming College, whose teaching hatchery in Lindsay is the other main fish production site for the program. All in all, the success of the program is based on the strength of partnerships, which is forty-plus strong. I also wish to recognize our phase one lead sponsor, Banrock Station Wines of Australia, whose initial support got the program off the ground in 2006. We wouldn't be where we are today without this support.

On behalf of its 100,000 members, supporters and subscribers, and 710 member clubs, the OFAH would like to congratulate MNR staff, contractors, suppliers, engineers, and architects who worked so hard to make this day happen – your efforts are appreciated by us all, and I look forward to what we can accomplish in the future.

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## Aboriginal commercial fisheries setting a double standard for conservation

### Bill Blackwell

President

In March, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) signed a new commercial fishing agreement with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) to commercially fish in the areas of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay that flank the Bruce Peninsula. The OFAH was extremely disappointed that the Ontario Government negotiated and signed the agreement on behalf of the people of Ontario without prior consultation. Following a review of the agreement, the OFAH is having trouble determining where and how the perspectives of recreational anglers were negotiated into the agreement. Although this is the third consecutive SON-MNR agreement, it is the first time SON commercial fishing efforts will be expanded into Owen Sound and Colpoy's Bays. The agreement also has new provisions that allow for the netting of fish in close proximity to the mouths of tributaries, which could negatively affect the spawning runs of several fish species. These new provisions are concerning because of potential threats to public safety and conservation of the resource. In addition to these new issues, the OFAH continues to be concerned about a lack of consideration in the SON-MNR agreement for other fish species harvested as by-catch by the commercial fishery. You can read all of the OFAH's questions and concerns about specific details in the agreement in the April 19 OFAH Media Release: [www.ofah.org/news](http://www.ofah.org/news).

Conservation is the protection, use and management of natural resources to supply benefits at optimal sustainable levels for present and future generations of Ontarians. Regardless of whether you are an angler, a commercial harvester or an aboriginal harvester, we all have a vested interest in the conservation of our fishery resources. We need to recognize that sound harvest limitations are science-based and intended to uphold the principles of conservation. It is not about limitations. It is about conservation.

As anglers, we are not strangers to following a complex set of rules and regulations. Abiding by these regulations is just one of the ways that licensed and law-abiding anglers in Ontario are directly contributing to the conservation of our fishery resources (buying a license is another). Read through your copy of the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary (if you were lucky enough to get your hands on one - see page 2) and you will see that anglers in Ontario are restricted by seasons, gear, creel limits, size limits, and geographic restrictions. The principles of conservation are not unique to the management of recreational fisheries and, therefore, the rules of conservation must be applied universally across all users for the benefit of the fishery.

When conservation is not prioritized over other social, cultural, economic or political considerations, we all lose. We only need to look at the current state of the Lake Nipissing Walleye population to see the devastating effects of unregulated commercial fishing. One hundred years of fish and wildlife conservation management in North America tells us that unregulated harvest is not compatible with conservation. Although the SON-MNR agreement is more formal than what we see for the Lake Nipissing Walleye gill net fishery, it still obliges us to pause and ask: does this agreement place conservation as the utmost priority?

In Ontario, non-aboriginal commercial harvesters are required to have an Ontario Commercial Fishing Licence (OCFL) before they can even put a net in the water. The terms and conditions of an OCFL sets limits on the species, size of fish, gear, persons who may fish, locations, periods and times of day when fishing can occur, as well as the loading, landing, handling and transportation of fish. This high level of regulation on commercial fishing is imposed for the purpose of conservation and, therefore, is a necessary cost of doing business to ensure we maintain a productive and sustainable fishery.

If we have an existing commercial fisheries management regime in Ontario (i.e. OCFL) that is science-based and designed to uphold conservation, then why do we choose to manage aboriginal commercial fisheries under a different and often incompatible management regime?

For the sake of future generations, conservation cannot continue to have this double standard.

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To review of OFAH's position on the Lake Nipissing Walleye situation, visit [www.ofah.org/nipissingwalleye](http://www.ofah.org/nipissingwalleye)



## CWD: The single greatest threat to Ontario's wild cervid populations

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has been a concern of the Federation's since its discovery in 1967, in a captive mule deer in Colorado. Canada's first case of CWD in a wild cervid (such as deer, moose, caribou or elk) was discovered in Saskatchewan in 2001, where it has persisted in free-ranging herds despite huge and costly eradication efforts. To date, CWD has been found in at least 18 US States and 2 Canadian provinces, including in a moose in Alberta.

In the early days of Canada's CWD eradication program, positive cases were directly linked to the presence and movement of captive cervids. Academics and wildlife managers now agree that the cervid farming industry is responsible for the introduction and spread of CWD.

The disease is always fatal. There is no live test for CWD, and no vaccine. Symptoms include emaciation, drooling, abnormal behaviour, deteriorating body condition, and pneumonia. Due to its long incubation period, infected animals may not show symptoms of CWD for years. CWD is thought to be caused by an abnormal protein (called a prion) that accumulates and causes lesions in the brain of infected animals. Prions can be transmitted between animals through saliva, urine and feces, and can persist in certain soils for years.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has operated the Ontario Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance Program since 2002. Thanks to the cooperation of Ontario deer hunters, 9,414 white-tailed deer have been tested for CWD to date. Fortunately, CWD has not yet been detected in Ontario. In 2005, the MNR released the CWD Surveillance and Response Plan that outlines the province's proposed response to the detection of a positive case of CWD in Ontario. Unfortunately, the surveillance program fails to protect our wild cervid populations by continuing to permit the inter-provincial movement of live cervids, native and otherwise, and by allowing the continued existence of cervid farms.

The picture isn't any brighter on the federal side. In late 2012, we were informed that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is proposing a zoning approach as their plan to control the spread of CWD in Canada. The zoning approach is widely used in Europe and has successfully halted the spread of many wildlife diseases. CFIA proposes to group provinces together based on the presence of CWD in their wild and captive cervid populations. Movement restrictions and CFIA's responsibilities would differ between zones, allowing CFIA in some cases to abdicate its authority. The zone approach continues to permit the inter-provincial movement of live cervids.

The CFIA has formed a CWD Task Force to brainstorm methods of controlling the spread of CWD. Unfortunately, 10 of the 17 positions have been reserved for representatives from industries and government ministries that fervently support cervid farming. This biased membership will make it difficult to generate a complete and objective list of options, which must include the elimination of the cervid farming industry. OFAH has long fought for the elimination of cervid farms, with proper compensation to farmers. With the support of our sister organizations in five provinces and one territory (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Yukon), we have written to the Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, requesting, as a first step, a complete and immediate prohibition on the inter-provincial movement of live cervids. We also requested a re-examination of the membership of the CWD Task Force to include representatives from all Canadian provinces and wildlife conservation organizations.

Given the importance of this issue, your Federation will continue to petition government to establish effective methods to prevent the spread of CWD and to eliminate the industry that continues to expose our wild cervid populations to unacceptable risk.

*Darrell Rowledge, President of the Alliance for Public Wildlife, recently spoke at the 85th OFAH Fish & Wildlife Conference about CWD. Visit [www.ofah.org/conference](http://www.ofah.org/conference) to view his presentation.*



## Another successful conference in the books

### Bill Blackwell

President

What a whirlwind this past month has been. We're winding down from the OFAH's 85th Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference; another successful one for the books. More than 450 attendees from all corners of the province and even south of the border gathered at the Delta Meadowvale Resort and Conference Centre in Mississauga for three days of timely discussions, good friends and great food. My wife Rose and I haven't missed a conference in more than a decade and you can be sure that we are already looking forward to next year's event.

Brand new this year was a trio of workshops on Saturday, in lieu of the traditional trip to the Toronto Sportsmen's Show. These were a hit, to say the least. We were pleased to have Martin Gelenyse with Ontario Hawking Club Inc. to speak about falconry as an exciting hunting opportunity; Darcy Alkerton of Wildlife Technologies Canadian Expert shared his tips and tricks for coyote hunting; and Robin Horwath and Ed Skrabek with the Ontario Fur Managers Federation highlighted one of Canada's oldest traditions: trapping.

One of the things I enjoy most about conference is the platform it offers attendees to ask some tough questions to government and industry representatives, including Deputy Minister of Natural Resources David O'Toole and MNR staff. Many questions were asked, and several concerns were raised over the new Saugeen First Nations Commercial Fishing Agreement, the Williams Treaty, and the Algonquin Land Claim. Although the Algonquin Land Claim has been a significant file for the OFAH for years, the public is now beginning to realize how the transfer of no less than 117,500 acres of Crown land could impact not only them, but also future generations. For the latest information, and to view a webcast featuring presentations on the land claim made by the OFAH, Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association and Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association, visit [www.algonquinlandclaim.ca](http://www.algonquinlandclaim.ca). The site also includes maps, a questionnaire, contact information for MP's and MPP's, as well as a letter to both Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne.

Our 85th conference also featured many dynamic and engaging speakers. OFAH Executive Director Angelo Lombardo delivered his inaugural Year in Review, which looked at all of the achievements and challenges the Federation faced in 2012; OFAH Assistant Manager of Fish & Wildlife Services/Fisheries Biologist Matt DeMille discussed the sustainability of commercial fisheries in Ontario; Rob Southwick, President of Southwick Associates provided a lesson in hunting and fishing economics; Solicitor Tim Danson spoke about the Williams Treaty; Director of the Biodiversity Branch and Renewable Energy Program with the MNR Eric Boysen brought attendees up to speed with MNR's Transformation Plan; Retired Algonquin Park Superintendent John Winters gave his perspective on the Algonquin Land Claim; and President Darrel Rowledge of Alliance for Public Wildlife gave an eye-opening presentation on Chronic Wasting Disease.

If you were unable to attend conference this year, or want another opportunity to listen to one of the speakers, be sure to log onto [www.ofah.org/conference](http://www.ofah.org/conference) for all of the highlights.

I'm proud and privileged to be serving my third year as President of this wonderful Federation, which is celebrating its 85th anniversary this year, and still going strong. I know we have a tough road ahead, but if those three days back in mid-March are any indication, I am confident in our efforts as an organization of 100,000 members, supporters and subscribers strong, that we can achieve great things over the next year.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank each and every staff member at OFAH head office for their hard work and dedication in the months and weeks leading up to conference and the event itself. It's a big job but if anyone can pull it off, OFAH can.



*Falconry workshop*



*Coyotes and coyote hunting tactics*



*Trapping workshop*



## Fish stocking is an investment in conservation

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

For decades, local volunteers have offered countless hours of their time and energy to collect, rear and stock fish in Ontario's waters. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is pleased to have recently partnered with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to deliver a new Community Hatchery Program (CHP) that will help ensure this valuable work will continue.

Fish stocking, community involvement, and volunteerism are all incredibly important components of successful fisheries management in Ontario. Community hatcheries have enabled members of the public to actively participate in fish culture projects that stock millions of fish annually and provide direct benefits to Ontario's recreational fisheries. The new CHP will use a more targeted approach to help strengthen community-based stocking efforts by offering greater certainty and enhanced support for Ontario's community hatcheries.

In the past, the MNR's Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) offered funding to community fish culture and stocking projects. The CHP will use the funds that would have been allocated to community fish hatcheries through CFWIP to provide a new delivery process and support system specifically for community fish culture and stocking projects. The new Land Stewardship & Habitat Restoration Program (administered entirely by the MNR) along with the new CHP will replace CFWIP as the government funding sources for community-based fish and wildlife projects in Ontario. See page 2 for more information on these two new programs.

Ontario's community-based fish hatcheries are only one component of the province's total fish culture and stocking efforts. Community-based stocking efforts complement the MNR's provincial Fish Culture Program, which is responsible for a large share of fish stocking in Ontario. Of the almost nine million fish produced by nine provincial MNR hatcheries, over 80% are stocked directly by MNR into Ontario waters. The remainder of MNR fish production helps support community hatchery rearing and stocking.

The millions of fish produced and stocked by MNR are critically important for offering more and better quality recreational fishing opportunities throughout Ontario. The Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association has estimated that recreational fishing generates \$4 billion annually in Ontario. Creating new fishing opportunities and enhancing existing opportunities using fish stocking will provide enormous socioeconomic benefits, particularly as a mechanism for generating revenue for the MNR's Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). The SPA is the primary funding source for fish and wildlife management in Ontario and, therefore, maintaining or enhancing the current level of fish production of recreationally-fished species should be considered by the government as an investment in fish and wildlife conservation.

We would like to compliment the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, David O'Toole, for confirming that MNR's Fish Culture Program "will remain a core function of activity" and is "absolutely fundamental to the future of our responsibilities in the province" at the recent 85th OFAH Fish and Wildlife Conference. We assume this strong commitment from the Deputy Minister means that there will be no financial cutbacks to MNR's Fish Culture Program and that MNR will continue to invest in fish production and stocking at levels that will contribute to the enhancement of Ontario's recreational fisheries.

The OFAH looks forward to working with the MNR and Ontario's community hatcheries to deliver a program that will complement the MNR's Fish Culture Program to offer enhanced ecological, social and economic benefits for our recreational fisheries.

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## Something old is new again

### Bill Blackwell

President

In some of my recent columns, I have outlined our concerns about the process followed during negotiation of the massive Algonquin land claim, including the appalling lack of public consultation before and after the release of the draft Agreement-in-Principle last December.

Unfortunately, this is not the only large aboriginal issue facing the OFAH and anglers and hunters at the moment, nor is it the only aboriginal issue that could potentially have a major impact on our ability to hunt and fish in some areas of the province.

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 re-affirmed 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, when 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. The letter indicated 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 and involves thousands of pages of documentation and the testimony of almost two dozen 'expert' witnesses whose documents alone will be over 4,000 pages. The OFAH has learned that evidence collection in support of the case actually began in May 2012 with hearings in the affected First Nations communities.

The Deputy's letter also indicated that while the trial is proceeding, the province has adopted an Interim Enforcement Policy. The Interim Enforcement Policy stipulates that aboriginal people 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 is pre-judging the outcome of the trial in favour of the First Nations, undermining a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada and seeking to wipe out years of equal treatment of all anglers and hunters, including those from Williams Treaty First Nations.

When asked why the province would not have discussed this dramatic turn of events with the OFAH before going back into court, the province replied that it was part of its litigation strategy NOT to tell the OFAH. That response speaks volumes. In order to prevent the OFAH from participating fully in the court case, at a stage in the process where we could have challenged the evidence presented in court, the province intentionally kept the information secret until the case had started. I find it disturbing that our own government, who previously took the opposite point of view at the Supreme Court, has not only reversed its position, but has done so behind closed doors.

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## NWPA: What does it mean for anglers and hunters?

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

In December of 2012, the Government of Canada passed Bill C-45 (Jobs and Growth Act) as a means to implement the federal budget. Bill C-45 contained a number of amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) that would not only change its name to the Navigation Protection Act, but would also change the scale and scope of its application.

The NWPA is one of Canada's oldest laws. Its origin dates back to 1882 and reflects a time when Canada's waterways remained among our primary means of transportation. Although the societal demand for water-based transportation may have declined during the past century, the value of maintaining safe and navigable waters remains critical for accessing hunting and fishing opportunities.

Despite Transport Canada's insistence 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 existing NWPA applies broadly to all bodies of water capable of being navigated by any type of floating vessel for transportation, recreation or commerce. The new NPA, however, only applies to 162 of Canada's waters (oceans, lakes and rivers) that are listed under Schedule 2 of the Act. This means that the right of navigation in all waters not listed in Schedule 2 will no longer be protected under the new Act (as they were under the NWPA).

The changes to navigation laws will reduce certainty for continued access to our waterways. First and foremost, we are concerned that access to traditional fishing and hunting opportunities will be restricted because gaps in legislation could allow for obstructions to navigation within unlisted waters. Even if other existing laws are able to fill in some of the gaps, there are no guarantees that another agency will have the resourcing or expertise to effectively deal with navigation concerns. Other federal agencies, provincial agencies and municipalities have relied on Transport Canada for their expertise and advice related to navigable waters to effectively implement their own laws and regulations. As an example, some in-water obstructions to navigation (e.g. dams) are subject to Ontario's Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act. The OFAH is not aware of similar legislation that prevents out-of-water obstructions (or in-water obstructions that do not necessarily disrupt water flow or level) to navigation (e.g. fences, wires, etc.).

The changes also have the potential to be a serious public safety concern. Fences, wires, and any other obstruction across waters can be extremely dangerous, especially in running waters.

Although Canadians still have a public right of navigation, the changes in navigation protection laws will result in reduced prevention of infringements on this right. For anglers and hunters who use waterways that flow through private lands, the changes will be especially troubling because landowners now have more latitude to obstruct public access to our lakes and rivers.

In addition, the changes in navigation protection laws will also result in a much more challenging means of recourse for infringements on the Canadian public right of navigation. There are thousands of waters in Ontario not listed under the Act, where the Canadian public right of navigation will now only be protected under Common Law. This means that infringements on your navigation rights would now need to be addressed through the courts (e.g. private or public nuisance complaint, Canadian public right of navigation). Unfortunately, relying on Common Law puts an undue onus on the angler and hunter to identify and challenge infringements on their rights to navigation, not to mention that very few of us can afford the time or money that is needed for this process.

For the OFAH, the changes in navigation protection laws represent a marginalization of recreational angling and hunting. For anglers and hunters, the smaller rivers, streams and lakes that have been delisted by the federal government provide essential fishing and hunting opportunities in Ontario. The focus on commercial interests and lack of consideration for how important navigation is to recreational fishing and hunting works to devalue the enormous socioeconomic value of the recreational fishing and hunting industry in Canada. Recreational fishing alone is worth more than \$8.5 billion across Canada.

The OFAH will continue to seek greater clarity from the federal government on what these changes will mean for anglers and hunters.



## Coming to a hunt camp near you

### Bill Blackwell

President

What comes to mind when you hear the words "Algonquin Land Claim?" I imagine it means different things to different people. For residents living within the claim area, the question may be, "how will the claim impact on my home and property values?" For anglers and hunters, the question might be, "how will this affect my favourite fishing and hunting spots, or my right to hunt and fish on public land?" For anyone who owns a cottage on lakes that lie within parcels of land selected by the Algonquin as part of the settlement the question might be, "will this affect my ability to access my cottage?" For snowmobile or ATV riders, the question may be, "will this impede my use of traditional trails that once were part of Crown land?" Local municipalities, businesses, campers, hikers, boaters and others who live, work or recreate within the land claim, and in particular in areas which have been selected by the Algonquin as settlement lands, will no doubt have their own list of questions and concerns, given the lack of public information and consultation thus far.

On December 24, hunt camp owners and land use permit holders throughout the land claim received a letter from the province that read in part:

*"We have determined that your recreation camp is on Crown land that may be transferred to the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) in the future. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the proposed transfer of Crown land to the AOO, and to schedule a meeting with you. The discussion will assist in identifying considerations and exploring options that may be available to you. The Algonquins will negotiate agreements for hunt camps with those holding Crown land use permits for hunt camps. Ontario would like to begin working with you now to find approaches that best meet your needs and the needs of the AOO."*

I can't help but wonder why the government would send out a letter before the draft Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) has been signed, and before any public consultations have been held. It states in the letter that "comments and information provided to the Crown during this consultation will be considered and used to finalize the Agreement-in-Principle and to inform the environmental assessment process for the Algonquin Land Claim." This suggests that what they hear from hunt camps and land use permit holders, and at any upcoming public meetings may impact on what the final AIP looks like. However, last summer, the Chief Provincial Negotiator was asked at a meeting in Bancroft whether changes would be made after the draft AIP was released, and his answer was, "we don't anticipate much changing after the fact."

The government has recently released a tentative public information meeting schedule which is supposed to begin in March. Take note of the fact that the meetings are being billed as public information meetings, NOT consultation meetings. The OFAH, along with a number of other stakeholders that have been involved in discussions around the land claim for many years, repeatedly demanded that public consultation take place BEFORE the draft AIP was released, or at the very least, before it is signed by the three parties. Whether the comments made at these meetings will alter what the final product looks like is open to question. Regardless, it is important that people attend the meetings, ask questions, demand answers and get informed. Encourage everyone you know who is affected to go and let their concerns be known.

Fast forward ten years down the road, when 117,500 acres of Crown land is private; when some public lakes are private; some access/use of remaining Crown lands and waters have been restricted; and that what was once Crown lands have become provincial parks. Ask yourself, did I do enough to have my concerns heard? I know for my sake, my children's sake and my grandchildren's sake, I would not want the answer to that question to be "no."

No one said it better than the late Rick Amsbury, a dedicated OFAH member and former Executive Director of the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association, "at the end of the day in the land claim process, anglers and hunters will get what they settle for, and therefore, we will deserve what we get."



## Celebrating 85 years of conservation

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

Who would have thought that 85 years ago, when a group of anglers concerned for the future of the province's fish populations formed the Ontario Federation of Anglers, that it would lead to what is known today as the oldest and largest nonprofit, charitable fish and wildlife conservation organization in the entire province? This didn't happen by accident. Conservation is the cornerstone of the OFAH. Wise, science-based management of Ontario's fish and wildlife and the lands and waters they inhabit is the focus of everything we do.

Immediately, the Federation took on initiatives that were important to its founding clubs, including a petition to undertake a survey of Ontario's game fish. The government appointed a Special Fish Committee to study the fishery, and its findings were published in 1931. Following that important study, the Federation urged the government to conduct a similar survey of provincial game, which was completed in 1933. The Federation's recommendations to these and other committees helped forge a constructive and strong working relationship with all levels of government that continues to this day.

In 1947, several hunting organizations joined forces with the Federation to become the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters Incorporated (OFAH). Over the next thirty years, an ever-increasing number of outdoors enthusiasts recognized the value of the conservation organization, and threw their support behind the OFAH.

Since that time we have been instrumental in improving deer, moose and black bear management; we worked closely with the Ministry of Natural Resources to restore wild turkey; we made significant financial and volunteer contributions to the restoration of elk; we contributed to the restoration of the wood duck and trumpeter swan, and our Bring Back The Salmon program and its partners have been successful in releasing more than 4.5 million Atlantic Salmon into Lake Ontario and its tributaries in an effort to restore a self-sustaining population; the list is endless.

As you know, the Federation is the voice of anglers and hunters. That's why we, on behalf of 100,000 OFAH members, supporters and subscribers, represent your interests at all levels of government on matters related to fishing and hunting, fish and wildlife conservation, management, restoration and protection. We weigh in on everything from firearms legislation to access issues, and all points in between. This is communicated through *Angler and Hunter Television*, *Angler and Hunter Radio*, and *Ontario OUT OF DOORS* magazine, all properties of the OFAH.

The OFAH is more relevant now than it was eight and a half decades ago, and we're continuing to gain momentum. Membership is at an all time high; the number of students taking the OFAH administered Ontario Hunter Education Program on behalf of the MNR, which OFAH member clubs helped initiate in 1960, has been on the rise consecutively for the past 11 years; and, the opening of the OFAH | Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre in 2010 provides a unique place for volunteer anglers and hunters to proudly reflect on and share our conservation success stories with generations young and old.

These are accomplishments we can all be proud of. That's why if you haven't already registered, I invite you to attend our 85th Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference March 14 to 16. It will give you the opportunity to help celebrate our achievements, hear from industry experts about the issues that affect you as an angler and hunter, and you'll meet our OFAH Board of Directors and head office staff, who strive to ensure the protection of our hunting and fishing heritage and the enhancement of hunting and fishing opportunities in this province. You will not want to miss this 85th anniversary celebration, so be sure to register soon.

It's amazing to reflect back on what has been done over a span of 85 years; and I know we can only continue to achieve great things for future generations to enjoy. On behalf of our Board of Directors and head office staff, we look forward to seeing you in March.



### Conference Details

#### Dates:

Thursday, March 14-  
Saturday, March 16

#### Location:

Delta Meadowvale Resort  
& Conference Centre,  
Mississauga

#### Register online:

[www.ofah.org/conference](http://www.ofah.org/conference)

#### Register by phone:

705-748-6324 ext. 232

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## Algonquin Land Claim: the next phase

### Bill Blackwell

President

#### Did you know...?

- The claim covers 14,000 square miles (36,000 square kilometres).
- It is composed of 59% private land; 23% provincial parks; 14% provincial Crown land; and 4% federal Crown land.
- The area of the claim is home to 1.4 million non-aboriginal residents and approximately 8,000 Algonquin.
- 150,000 licensed hunters live in the claim area.
- The area also includes 13 provincial ridings and 13 federal ridings.
- Located within its boundaries are 35 provincial parks, 18 of which are operational and 17 are non-operational.

A new year is upon us but, in some cases, old issues remain front and centre. An example is the Algonquin Land Claim. The history of the claim dates back to 1991, when the province agreed to enter into negotiations with the Algonquin; the federal government joined the negotiations in 1992.

Over the last two years, the level of intensity around the negotiations has increased considerably, as the provincial government sought to have a draft Agreement in Principle (AIP) in place before the last provincial election. This did not occur, but the pace of negotiations has continued to accelerate.

Since the early 1990's, representatives of several stakeholder groups impacted by the land claim have sat on one of two groups: the Committee of External Advisors (CEA) or the Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC). Over the years, these groups have met dozens of times with federal and provincial negotiators and provided advice on the claim from the view of non-aboriginal anglers, hunters, trappers, cottagers, municipalities, and others who will be impacted by the claim. Unfortunately, most of the advice provided by these groups, particularly the CEA, has not been heeded.

In 2012, a smaller stakeholders focus group from the CEA was involved in more in-depth discussions with the two government negotiators and a cadre of federal and provincial staff. The focus of these meetings was the harvest chapter of the AIP. The OFAH and others in the smaller stakeholders group have argued for inclusion of several core principles in the AIP, including: a definition of conservation; fair sharing of resources; designated or allocated species; a fisheries management plan for Algonquin Park and other areas in the claim; cooperative vs. comanagement of resources and, above all else, full public consultation before an agreement is signed.

In early December, a final version of a harvest chapter was presented to the focus group. For the first time, the group was given a slide show on the parks component of the AIP. Each time a version of the harvest chapter has been presented to the group, the OFAH has provided an in-depth response, based on a promise made by the provincial negotiator that these concerns would be taken to the negotiating table, and feedback given. It is clear that the majority of concerns raised by the OFAH and others have gone unheeded.

More disturbing is the commitment within the parks chapter to the creation of a large, new Environmental Class Park in the claim area for the protection of historic and cultural values that the Algonquin are seeking. It's unclear what the creation of this new park will mean for the maintenance of traditional uses such as hunting and fishing in the area. Also included in the parks chapter is a commitment to transfer three non-operational parks and parts of four other protected areas to the Algonquin, a guarantee of representation on the Parks Board for the Algonquin, and a commitment that will see the Algonquin participate in developing management and strategic plans for 16 other parks and protected areas within the claim area.

A draft 20 chapter AIP was released in mid-December 2012, with public consultation slated to finally begin in mid-February. Both levels of government need to understand the dramatic impact that the AIP and final Treaty will have on the lives of all those who live in the area of the claim. Because of this, nothing less than a full public consultation process will do, BEFORE either level of government signs on the dotted line.

For further information on the claim, to read the draft Agreement in Principle, and for background information on the claim itself, go to [www.aboriginalaffairs.gov.on.ca/english/negotiate/algonquin/preliminary-draft-aip.asp](http://www.aboriginalaffairs.gov.on.ca/english/negotiate/algonquin/preliminary-draft-aip.asp).

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## A new year brings new challenges

### Angelo Lombardo

Executive Director

It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone. I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and holiday season. As we start a new year, I can't help but reflect on the one that just passed, and wonder what lies ahead given some of the momentous changes that have recently taken place. 2012 had its fair share of ups and downs. On a positive note, in April the Harper government honoured its commitment to the firearms community and scrapped the badly flawed long gun registry. Later in the year, all of the records contained in the registry were destroyed, with the exception of Quebec's, which are the subject of an ongoing court battle between the province and the federal government.

In May, the first ever National Fish & Wildlife Conservation Congress, spearheaded by the OFAH, brought together governments, policy and program managers, fish and wildlife experts, nongovernment organizations (NGO's), academics and others from across Canada and the United States to chart a course for the future conservation of our nation's fish and wildlife resources. The Congress also provided a venue for Prime Minister Stephen Harper to announce the creation of a national Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel to provide advice to the government on a wide range of federal policies that impact on hunting and fishing and conservation.

On the other hand, there are a number of federal issues that still demand our attention. Changes to the fisheries act were introduced as part of the federal budget in May, 2012. The OFAH has been engaged in consultation with the federal government and other stakeholders since that time, and will continue this year. The federal government has also recently introduced changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The OFAH has provided comments and outlined our concerns around the potential impact of these changes on the outdoor community. Other issues of note at the federal level that will occupy our time during 2013 include changes to the Species at Risk Act, and the National Conservation Plan (NCP).

We were pleased to sign a new five-year funding agreement with the province in support of the Invasive Species Awareness Program, a flagship OFAH program. The Ontario Hunter Education Program (OHEP), administered by the OFAH, continued its amazing run of success. For the eleventh straight year, the number of people taking the course increased, which suggests that the demise of hunting is greatly exaggerated. Unfortunately, not all of the news on the provincial front was good. The marked drop in walleye numbers, particularly spawning walleye in Lake Nipissing, caused a major upheaval. Using the MNR's own data, the OFAH was able to demonstrate how the decline of the stock was related to the commercial gill net fishery. Regardless, the province chose to ignore its own science and blame recreational anglers for the decline. The Ministry has announced that as of January 1, 2013, the daily limit will be reduced from four to two fish within the current slot size. The commercial gill net fishery will not share in the reduction of fish taken, which promises to undermine efforts to rebuild the walleye stock.

Another issue we will continue to deal with in 2013 is the Algonquin Land Claim. For the latest on this, see our President's column on page 3.

In 1994, both the federal and provincial governments, as well as the OFAH, appeared before the Supreme Court in support of the 1923 Williams Treaty, under which the seven First Nations signatories to the Treaty gave up their traditional harvesting rights. The Supreme Court concluded that the Treaty was valid, and that the harvesting rights claimed by the signatories had been extinguished. In 1996 the Supreme Court reaffirmed that decision and refused to hear the case again. So what's changed? Fast forward to October 2012, when the OFAH was suddenly notified that the federal and provincial governments had returned to court on the Williams Treaty, this time in support of the First Nations' fight to regain their traditional harvesting rights. The outcome of the case could have profound implications for anglers and hunters, and the OFAH will be seeking ways to participate in the legal process as it winds its way through the system.

Another major challenge in 2012 was the announcement in May of major cuts to the provincial budget, and cuts to a range of ministries, including the Ministry of Natural Resources, which must trim \$70 million from its budget over the next three years. This will result in office closures, job losses, program cuts and a new way of doing business for the MNR. Unfortunately, this new approach appears to be heavy on regulation but light on program and service delivery.

This March 14-16, your Federation will celebrate 85 years of conservation success. Please plan on attending our Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference. For more information or to register online please visit [www.ofah.org/conference](http://www.ofah.org/conference).

Although we may face some challenges in 2013, I know that with the support of our Board of Directors, our hard working and committed head office staff, and our valued 100,000 members, supporters and 675 member clubs, we will continue to have a positive impact on the well being of this province's fish and wildlife. All the best in 2013.



# As an OFAH member, you support our work across Ontario.

## Conservation Programs

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

## Education and Outreach Efforts

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

## Campaigning for

- Hunting and fishing opportunities
- Fair sharing of fish and wildlife resources
- Effective cormorant control programs
- Species conservation and enhancement
- New Sunday gun hunting opportunities
- Better black bear management and a fully restored early season hunt
- Reasonable "discharge of firearms" bylaws
- Improved moose and deer tag allocation
- Recognition of the value of hunting and fishing
- Amendments to firearms laws
- Protection of wildlife through elimination of game farms

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