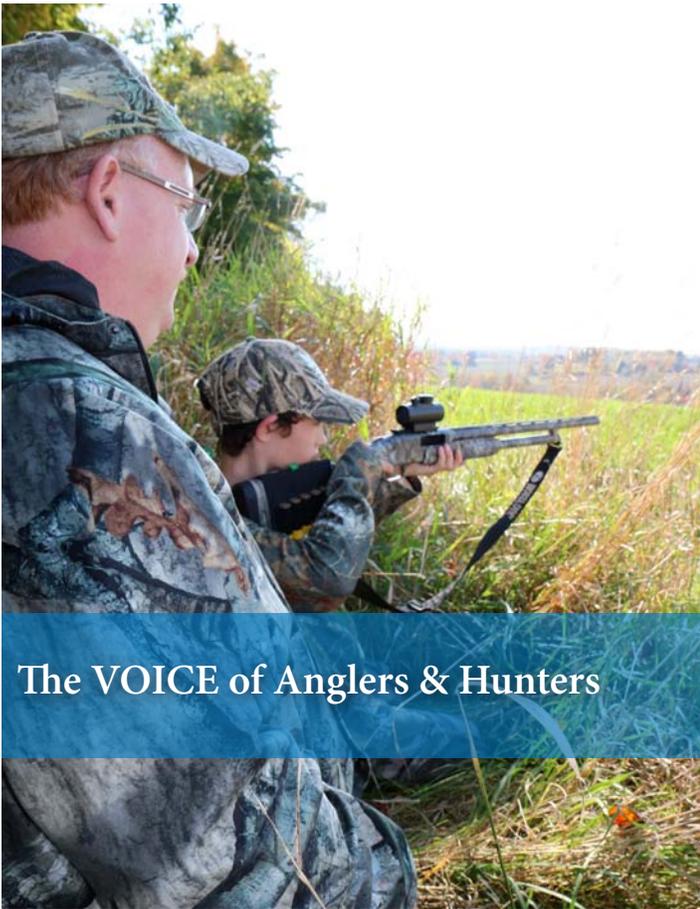




Annual Report

The VOICE of Anglers & Hunters



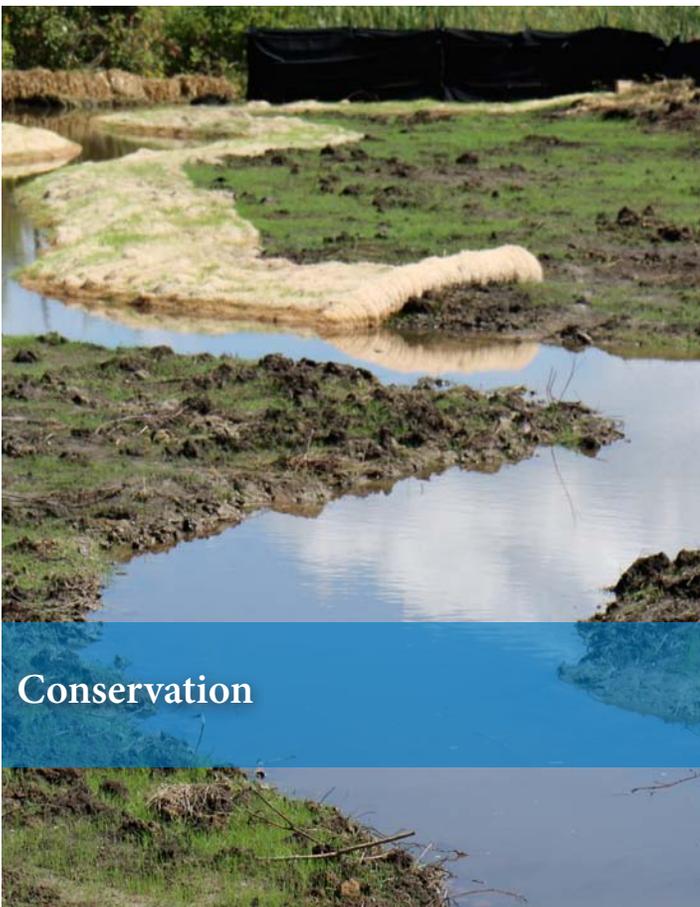


The VOICE of Anglers & Hunters



Hunting & Fishing Heritage

Our Core Values



Conservation



Proactive Management

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Annual Report Notice:

This publication is subject to errors and omissions.
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With over 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters and 725 member clubs, the OFAH is Ontario's largest non-profit, fish and wildlife conservation-based organization.



**BOARD
PRESIDENT**
Glenn Rivard



**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**
Angelo Lombardo

As I reflect on my first year as president, I can't help but think about the opportunities we have as anglers and hunters in Ontario. So many fishing and hunting opportunities, so little time. Although I wish there was a way, I can't possibly experience it all every year.

It wasn't until I became more actively involved with the OFAH that I truly appreciated the critical role this organization plays in protecting and enhancing the hunting and fishing opportunities we all enjoy. These day-to-day accomplishments are highlighted in the pages of this 2014 report.

Anti-hunting and anti-fishing groups mount continual slander campaigns against hunting and fishing. There is public and political pressure to cut government spending on fish and wildlife programs and make decisions that will negatively impact anglers and hunters. Society's growing demand for space and resources continues to put pressure on our fish and wildlife. Urbanization is disconnecting more and more people from nature and this results in a diminished understanding and appreciation of hunting and fishing.

As Ontario's population continues to grow and urbanize, it will become increasingly important for the OFAH to not only defend our hunting and fishing heritage, but also to promote the important role of anglers and hunters in fish and wildlife conservation.

Fortunately, the OFAH is making our education and outreach programs stronger than they've ever been. We introduced the National Archery in the Schools Program to hundreds of youth this year, our Get Outdoors Summer Leadership Camp sold out in minutes, and the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre continues to provide top-notch conservation education to students and the broader public.

We have more quality hunting and fishing opportunities than ever before in Ontario and it didn't happen by accident. Your Federation has worked tirelessly to defend our hunting and fishing traditions. Our voice is loud, it is respected and, most importantly, it is effective. As OFAH members, we should be extremely proud of what we have achieved for the hunting and fishing community.

We should be proud, but not complacent. There will always be work to do. You can give back to the hunting and fishing community by getting involved with a local OFAH club or OFAH zone. The next time you are at the hunt camp or out in the boat, I urge you to share the importance of an OFAH membership with your fellow anglers and hunters. It all goes a long way to helping the OFAH achieve what's best for the province's fish and wildlife.

Glenn Rivard
OFAH President

Being the VOICE for anglers and hunters has always been a core OFAH value. For 86 years we have continued to find innovative ways to defend our hunting and fishing traditions, while putting a spotlight on our many successful initiatives.

We here at the OFAH know, however, that resting on one's laurels is the fastest way to become obsolete. What worked yesterday and today may not work tomorrow. Communication is no different. That's why the OFAH is constantly changing and adapting how we deliver our message to our members, the broader public and the policymakers who make the laws that govern us.

As you flip through the pages of this 2014 report, I hope you'll enjoy the new look. We've packed in as much information as we have in the past, but our goal was to present the material in an engaging, easier to read format.

The revamped annual report is part of a year of change for our major communication strategies. Viewers in 2014 enjoyed a new look to Angler & Hunter Television, a series that continues to stand out as the most comprehensive outdoors program of its kind. *Ontario OUT of DOORS* magazine, the province's leading outdoors magazine, launched its digital platform in 2014 and designed its first new cover logo since 1977 to help it stand out on the newsstands.

OFAH staff worked tirelessly on the complete re-design of **OFAH.org** in 2014, with a launch date set for 2015, and our increased social media outreach garnered us a 40% increase in online followers. We're putting more emphasis on leading the conversation online and exposing a new audience to the benefits of membership. We're imagining new ways to share our great programs via social media and engage a younger generation heading to hunt camps and wetting lines across the province. (Make sure you're following us on Twitter @ofah and on Facebook at www.ofah.org/facebook).

We've also re-designed *Angler & Hunter HOTLINE*, our direct communication line to our dedicated members, to make it more interesting to read and visually compelling.

In 2010, the OFAH launched its five-year strategic plan (2011-2015), an important tool outlining key goals for the organization. It's no surprise nearly half the goals identified in the report relate to communications. We will continue to use all means at our disposal to reach as many people as possible because being the VOICE only works when you are heard.

We want to make sure we're heard loud and clear for years to come.

Angelo Lombardo
OFAH Executive Director

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Randy Jennings

Our Conservation Mandate

The fish and wildlife conservation successes of the OFAH are built on a foundation of hard work and dedication by volunteers and professional staff. The OFAH represents anglers and hunters and

protects our fishing and hunting heritage for today and for future generations to enjoy. Our staff and volunteer representatives participate on more than 50 committees and advisory groups, respond to govern-



We are the VOICE for anglers and hunters on

- **Protect** the rights and traditions of anglers and hunters
- **Promote** the wise use of our fish and wildlife resources
- **Enhance** the quantity and quality of sustainable fishing and hunting opportunities
- **Engage** youth and the public in fishing and hunting
- **Educate** and provide awareness on the benefits of fishing and hunting
- **Encourage** safe and responsible participation in fishing and hunting



ment proposals and support our membership in issues related to fishing and hunting.

The OFAH is also home to important conservation programs such as the Invading Species Awareness Program,

Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, DeerSave, Community Stream Steward Program and the Community Hatchery Program to benefit fish and wildlife in Ontario.

all issues related to fishing, hunting, and fish and wildlife conservation management to...

- **Lead** the fishing and hunting community as champions of conservation
- **Restore** fish and wildlife populations and the habitats that support them
- **Support** grassroots community involvement in conservation
- **Communicate** conservation issues
- **Advocate** for evidence-based fish and wildlife conservation management
- **Influence** government decisions to benefit anglers, hunters and conservation



The OFAH works hard to conserve Ontario's fisheries, which offer sustenance, recreation, tourism and enriching experiences through the heritage activity of fishing.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Ontario's 250,000 lakes and extensive network of rivers and streams are home to our valuable fisheries. This resource provides countless recreational and angling opportunities while providing a source of food, jobs and tourism experiences. The OFAH works in partnership with all levels of government, organizations and individuals to conserve the fisheries we currently have while increasing angling opportunities for the future.

Fishing Heritage

The OFAH promotes fishing to a broad audience to encourage as many people as possible to participate. We work to create fishing opportunities and engage Ontarians through youth education programs, providing fishing equipment through OFAH/OPG TackleShare and promoting Ontario Family Fishing Events. (See pg. 32).

The OFAH also promotes recreational fishing to ensure the non-angling public fully understands the social, economic and ecological benefits. We capitalize on every opportunity to use the media, OFAH communications and government advocacy to spotlight the benefits angling provides in Ontario and clarify any misconceptions the general public has about fishing. This is critical for fostering a positive image of anglers and angling and maintaining our fishing heritage.

Through our conservation programs, public and government advocacy campaigns, partnerships and grassroots activities, the OFAH demonstrates time and time again the critical role we play in fisheries conservation.

Policies/Regulations

Bait Review

The OFAH participated for a second year in the Bait Review Advisory Group (BRAG), a stakeholder group the MNRF established to review provincial bait management policies and provide advice on managing bait. The OFAH offers a voice for anglers at the table so the interests of the fishing community are incorporated into any decisions related to Ontario bait management. The OFAH opposed



the banning or severe restriction of bait use in Ontario during BRAG discussions, in the media and in official submissions. We are seeking the continued and long-term use of live bait for recreational anglers in Ontario.

Fish Strategy

The MNRF posted a draft of Ontario's Provincial Fish Strategy on the Environmental Registry (EBR). The strategy will replace the Strategic Plan for Ontario Fisheries II (SPOF II) and provide broad provincial direction for fisheries management.

The strategy will influence the future of fisheries conservation in Ontario, including the quality and quantity of fishing opportunities.

That's why the OFAH dedicated significant resources to reviewing it and making sure angler interests were considered and incorporated. In general, the OFAH supported the strategy because its primary purpose is "to improve the conservation and management of fisheries and ecosystems on which fish communities depend, and to promote, facilitate, and encourage fishing as an activity that contributes to individual well-being and social, cultural and economic well-being of communities in Ontario." We also supported the strategy's recognition and policy direction for restoring Lake Ontario's Atlantic Salmon, but recommended the strategy do more to recognize the great benefits and opportunities provided by naturalized species such as Chinook Salmon and Rainbow Trout.

Fisheries Management Zones (FMZs)

The OFAH is well represented by staff and local volunteer representatives on all established Ontario Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) councils. In 2014, the OFAH was involved with FMZ council discussions regarding fisheries management plans, regulation changes, stocking plans, commercial allocations and other decisions that impact local and regional fishing activities.

The OFAH took every opportunity in 2014 to remind MNRF of the benefits of stakeholder involvement and asked it to establish FMZ councils where they do not currently exist. We want to make sure fisheries management decisions in those areas have adequate stakeholder input.

Lake Simcoe Lake Herring

The OFAH is well represented on the Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee, which provides advice to MNRF on Lake Simcoe's fisheries. The OFAH and members of the committee have been leading the charge to bring a Cisco (Lake Herring) fishery back to Lake Simcoe for years. In December 2014, that hard work and perseverance paid off, when the MNRF announced the re-opening of a Cisco fishery after 13 years of closure.

Lake Erie Perch

For the past five years, the OFAH, its members and partners have been requesting an increase

in the daily possession limit for Yellow Perch in Lake Erie. This goal was finally realized when it was announced in 2014 that Lake Erie anglers would now be able to catch 50 Yellow Perch per day and be in possession of 100 Yellow Perch on a sport fishing licence. This is another great example of the OFAH working with partners through FMZ councils to make fishing regulation changes that benefit Ontario's anglers.

Watershed and Local Fisheries Management

Some lakes, rivers, regions and watersheds in Ontario have their own advisory groups that discuss fisheries issues on a more localized scale. The OFAH is represented on many local fisheries management advisory groups throughout the province, especially where FMZ councils have not been established. In 2014, the OFAH participated on many committees and groups discussing the Kawartha Lakes, Cobourg Creek, Credit River, Grand River and Halton Region among others.

Black Sturgeon River Dam

Some local fisheries management issues require more OFAH involvement because of the potential for broader impacts and/or the precedent it may set for the rest of Ontario. An example of this in 2014 was the discussion surrounding the removal of the Black Sturgeon River dam.

This is an important local fisheries issue in the Nipigon area, but also impacts the Great Lakes basin. The MNRF initiated an environmental assessment (EA) for the removal of the Camp 43 dam on the Black Sturgeon River. The proposal called for a Sea Lamprey barrier to be constructed upstream about 50 kilometres at Camp 1.

Due to the significant opposition to the proposal, the MNRF and Great Lakes Fishery Commission brought stakeholders together for a structured decision-making (SDM) process. In 2014, the OFAH submitted comments on the options developed during the four SDM meetings in Thunder Bay. Given the current understanding of the potential costs and benefits of each management option, our preferred solution was to include a trap and sort fishway at the Camp 43 dam site. In the absence of clear evidence to show dam removal will accomplish fishery goals and objectives, we couldn't support the removal of the Camp 43 dam.

The inclusion of a trap and sort fishway at Camp 43 would allow for passage of desired fish species while restricting the passage of invasive species such as Sea Lamprey upstream.

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 would also provide an opportunity to collect more information and fill data gaps to help with long-term management of the Black Sturgeon River and Black Bay system. In late 2014, the MNRF announced it would proceed with the EA as originally proposed despite considerable opposition from the OFAH and other important stakeholders.

Fish Habitat Protection & Restoration

Fish habitat is critical for providing healthy and productive fisheries. The OFAH works in a variety of ways to make sure fish habitat is protected, and we make every effort to restore degraded ecosystems.

Federal Fisheries Act

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) made amendments to the federal Fisheries Act in 2012. Since then, the OFAH has taken a lead role among a group of our provincial and territorial affiliates and other national conservation organizations to determine what these changes will mean for fisheries conservation. In 2014, the collaborative continued to discuss issues related to fish habitat and the Fisheries Act, including two workshops with DFO staff participation.

During these workshops, we were able to seek clarification on questions and express our concerns about the implementation of regulations and policies supporting the Act. The OFAH has made this a priority issue to ensure the implementation of the new Fisheries Act will benefit fisheries conservation. To date, the OFAH and our conservation partners have been successful in influencing the operational approach, as well as the development of regulations, policies and a funding program for fisheries habitat protection and enhancement.

Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program

The federal government established the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (RFCPP) in 2013 to support projects aimed at improving the conservation of recreational fisheries habitat. Many of these projects are led by recreational fishing groups, as well as conservation organizations. OFAH staff have been helping OFAH affiliated fishing and conservation clubs with RFCPP applications and providing technical advice on conservation projects. Several clubs received funding for 2013-2014, as well as the OFAH Community Stream

Steward Program and the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program.

Habitat Restoration

OFAH programs continued their commitment to habitat restoration in 2014. The Community Stream Steward Program (CSSP) used on-the-ground restoration work combined with education and outreach to help improve fisheries habitat in coldwater streams. (See pg. 15).

Habitat restoration remained a pillar of the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program (LOASRP) in 2014. The LOASRP carried out numerous projects that helped to restore degraded habitats in Lake Ontario tributaries that will ultimately benefit many aquatic species. (See pg. 16).

Fish Culture & Stocking

Fish culture and stocking is an important tool used in Ontario fisheries management. Fish culture and stocking includes the MNRF provincial fish culture program and community hatcheries. In 2014, the OFAH sustained our push for the development of a provincial fish stocking plan to help maximize the benefits supplied by fish culture and stocking in Ontario.

This plan would help to identify angler and government priorities for fish stocking in Ontario and determine how to maintain a provincial fish culture program to support them.

The OFAH partnered with the MNRF to administer the second year of the Community Hatchery Program (CHP). This program provides funding and technical support for Ontario's volunteer-run community hatcheries. (See pg. 21).

Fishing Access

Access to fishing opportunities remains a primary concern for the OFAH. The OFAH speaks out against access restrictions at every opportunity to ensure anglers are not unnecessarily prevented from enjoying fishing.

On a daily basis, we help our members maintain or enhance their access to fishing by supporting projects related to boat launches, fishing piers and other angler access points.

In 2014, we voiced concerns with proposed access restrictions to forest access roads, local boat launches, provincial parks and municipal bylaws that limit fishing opportunities.

There are many great fishing areas within or close to urban areas, but access can be challenging. The OFAH has been working to resolve these issues through involvement in initiatives such as the GTA Urban Recreational Fisheries Plan. As a member of the committee

responsible for developing and implementing the plan, the OFAH has helped to promote education, habitat enhancement and access to fishing in the GTA.

Water Quality

The OFAH continues to build on its legacy of championing Ontario water quality issues. Historically, we led the charge on issues like acid rain and remain committed to ensuring pollution does not jeopardize our aquatic ecosystems and fisheries.



In 2014, the OFAH endorsed the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's call for a ban on the sale of products that use plastic microbeads, such as facial scrubs, body washes and toothpastes. Studies have shown microplastics are bypassing wastewater treatment plants and polluting our lakes and rivers. The material potentially has serious negative impacts on fish and aquatic ecosystems.

In addition to pollutants, factors such as water temperature, dissolved oxygen content, water levels and nutrients all influence water quality and the overall productivity of our fisheries. Harmful algal blooms and extreme fluctuations of water levels in managed systems made headlines in 2014.

These and other water quality issues can significantly impact our fisheries and remain an OFAH priority. We advocated for water management plans that benefit fisheries, nutrient levels that consider fish productivity and incorporation of climate change into fisheries management decisions.

This advocacy occurs through fisheries management planning, environmental assessments and environmental impact studies for aquatic and terrestrial development proposals.

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) is a treaty between Canada and the U.S. to protect and restore the Great Lakes. In 2014, the OFAH participated on three binational subcommittees that help fulfill obligations under the GLWQA.

The OFAH has representation on the Lakewide Management, Habitat and Species and Aquatic Invasive Species annex subcommittees. The OFAH also participates as an observer on the Great Lakes Executive Committee to the GLWQA, which looks at all of the annexes.

In 2014, the OFAH also pushed for Canada and Ontario to renew and increase their contributions for the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health (COA).

The COA establishes shared Great Lakes priorities and provides a mechanism to fund projects that support GLWQA obligations. The 8th COA was signed late in 2014.

Water Levels

For the past 14 years, the International Joint Commission has been developing a process for regulating water levels and flows of the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River system.

Through scientific study and public engagement with agencies like the OFAH, Plan 2014 has been picked as the best option. This is the plan the OFAH supports because it incorporates more natural fluctuations in water levels. The OFAH will continue to be involved throughout the implementation.

Aquatic Invasive Species

For more than 20 years, the OFAH has partnered with the MNRF to deliver the Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP). This partnership uses education and awareness of invasive species to help prevent their introduction and spread in Ontario.

The OFAH continues to invest in the ISAP to help ensure we minimize the threat posed by aquatic invasive species and maintain healthy and productive fisheries. In 2014, the OFAH partnered with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to deliver a targeted outreach campaign on Asian carps.

We also participated on the Annex 6 subcommittee to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to work on implementing aquatic invasive species objectives as well as the Chicago Area Waterway System Advisory Committee to discuss strategies for keeping aquatic invasive species from moving between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River system. (See pg. 18)

Commercial Fishing

The OFAH supports MNRF-licensed commercial fisheries. We continue to work with the industry, MNRF and other partners to ensure fisheries are managed in a way that optimizes the overall use of the resource.

In 2014, we continued our involvement with the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group to ensure angler interests would be

properly incorporated into analytical tools and management decisions for waters where recreational and commercial fisheries share the resource.

The OFAH supported the Ontario Commercial Fishing Association's efforts to get sustainability certification for its Walleye and Yellow Perch catches in Lake Erie and pushed politically and publicly for this to be required for all commercial harvest in the province.

Lake Nipissing

Not all commercial fisheries in Ontario are licensed or properly regulated. For many years, the OFAH has been calling on government for full regulation of all commercial fisheries to ensure harvests are appropriate and sustainable for a given waterbody.

In 2014, the OFAH continued to push for government intervention in commercial operations on Lake Nipissing. The Walleye population continued to decline and the MNRF implemented minimum size limits for the recreational fishery that functionally made it a catch-and-release-only fishery for anglers.

The OFAH spoke out against this unnecessary and inappropriate action and pushed for the MNRF to properly regulate all harvest on the lake, including commercial catches.

The OFAH was vocal on the issue of abandoned gill nets or "ghost nets" found across the province this past spring and summer. At least a dozen abandoned gill nets were found in Lake Nipissing during 2014.

Abandoned gill nets full of dead and decaying fish are a waste of our valuable fisheries resources and the OFAH will continue to take action.

Saugeen Ojibway Nation

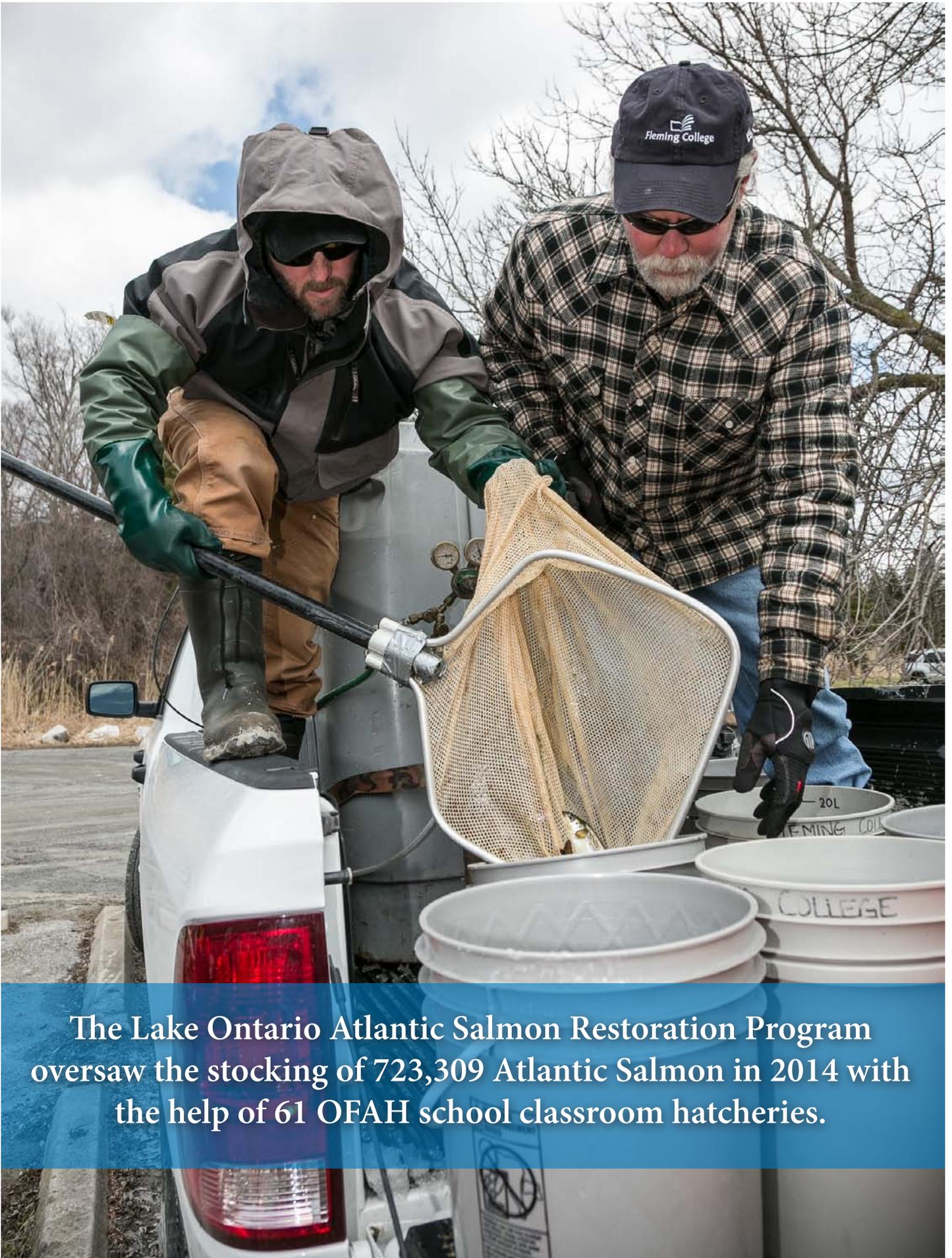
The OFAH continued to monitor and raise questions about the implementation and enforcement of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation-MNRF commercial fishing agreement signed in 2013. OFAH members have expressed concerns with commercial harvesting activities, illegal harvest and the status of fish stocks in southern Georgian Bay.

Community Stream Steward Program (CSSP)

Through its extensive network of partners in stream conservation, the CSSP provided advice, support and tools to conduct coordinated activities along streams this year.

While there were many accomplishments in 2014, the CSSP has entered a period of retirement for the immediate future due to uncertain long-term funding options.

As a result, any ongoing restoration projects or community initiatives were transferred to partnership agencies for completion.



The Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program oversaw the stocking of 723,309 Atlantic Salmon in 2014 with the help of 61 OFAH school classroom hatcheries.

ATLANTIC SALMON

Restoring a lost species is a long and challenging process. Atlantic Salmon were among the first fish species in the Great Lakes to be eliminated by human activities, becoming extinct in Lake Ontario by the turn of the 20th century. But today there is good news. More than a century after our once-thriving population of Atlantic Salmon were last seen in Lake Ontario, the OFAH and the MNRF, together with Ontario Power Generation and many other partners, have reached important milestones in the effort to bring Atlantic Salmon back to the lake and its tributaries.

In 2014, the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program (LOASRP) marked its ninth year, culminating in numerous accomplishments and a new direction on the heels of a comprehensive science report.

The OFAH has remained a key partner in this long-term program focusing on production and stocking, habitat restoration, research and education and outreach. The LOASRP involves more than 40 partners with the OFAH and MNRF heading the initiative and support from lead sponsor Ontario Power Generation. The LCBO and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation are also major contributors.

Production and Stocking

A total of 723,309 Atlantic Salmon were stocked in 2014 by classroom hatcheries, clubs, Fleming College and the new MNRF Normandale Fish Culture Station, which was able to produce larger fry (two to six grams) for stocking.

Habitat Restoration

Highlights included the creation of a 420m bypass channel to improve headwaters habitat for Atlantic Salmon at Duffins Creek and the decommissioning of an online pond in the Greenwood Conservation Lands property.

The LOASRP received \$250,000 in funding support from TD Bank, federal Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program and the provincial Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund. It hosted six TD Tree Day events where trees and shrubs were planted



Photos: images to the left and above courtesy of OPG Highbush Public School students help clean up the stream banks of Duffins Creek in Pickering as part of the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program Earth Day event in April.

along shorelines of coldwater streams targeted for Atlantic Salmon restoration.

Research

The MNRF has released a major scientific report reviewing the results of the science-based LOASRP over the past eight years.

This science review, which can be viewed at www.bringbackthesalmon.ca, took the information learned through the program's monitoring and research programs and put it through a critical evaluation, bringing in outside Atlantic Salmon experts to provide their expertise and advice.

The study showed the LOASRP has exceeded benchmarks for in-stream survival and growth of juvenile Atlantic Salmon through their first summer; extremely important indicators of stream health and restoration progress.

Other positive signs the study notes are the presence of Atlantic Salmon nests and wild juveniles in the rivers. The study also points to some challenges, however, such as the low observed numbers of adults returning to the rivers, particularly from fish released as older juveniles. This challenge is being addressed with changes in fish culture.

The LOASRP partners will respond to the science advice and management implications

in the report through a five-year plan (in development).

The program partners will continue to conduct the science needed for success in the complex modern Lake Ontario.

Education & Outreach

Highlights include:

- 61 OFAH classroom hatcheries participated in raising and stocking Atlantic Salmon
- 49 stocking field trips for students
- 46 classroom and public presentations
- 17 habitat projects completed
- LOASRP exhibit at the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE)
- Involvement in two documentaries "Making Waves: Battle for the Great Lakes" and "The Forgotten Salmon"
- 753 Facebook likes (www.facebook.com/ontariosalmon)
- 255 Twitter followers (@ontariosalmon)





The OFAH partners with the MNRF to operate the Invading Species Awareness Program that addresses the increasing threats posed by invading species in Ontario.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Invading species are one of the greatest threats to the biodiversity of Ontario's waters and woodlands. The Invading Species Awareness Program's mandate is to generate public education and awareness of aquatic and terrestrial invading species, address key pathways contributing to invading species introductions and spread and facilitate monitoring and tracking initiatives for the spread of new invaders found within Ontario.

ISAP

The Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP) has been busy in 2014 with the official launch of EDDMapS (Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System) and delivering on a number of invasive species funding grants. The Ontario Government introduced the Invasive Species Act in 2014, the first stand-alone piece of invading species legislation in Canada.

ISAP highlights for 2014 include a major Asian carps outreach and awareness campaign, in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the record participation of 26 ISAP summer "Hit Squad" students, who attended over 150



Getting the Word Out in 2014



- over **200,000** visitors to www.invadingspecies.com
- 91** downloadable resources online
- sit on **7** different committees (provincial to bi-national)
- over **50** media events
- 124** ISAP newsletter subscribers
- over **600** web inquiries
- over **150** community events

951 likes 1175 followers

events across Ontario to promote invading species awareness and education.

Monitoring

From a monitoring perspective, 2014 proved to be a busy year for the ISAP program. With the launch of EDDMaps, the program is now currently tracking 152 species and received 5,313 confirmed invasive species sightings. The Invading Species Watch (volunteer zooplankton sampling program) sampled 124

lakes for aquatic invasive invertebrates and the Invading Species Hotline serviced more than 800 calls.

ISAP staff also spent the summer monitoring and tracking North America's only known swath of the invasive water soldier plant on the Trent-Severn Waterway.

Control

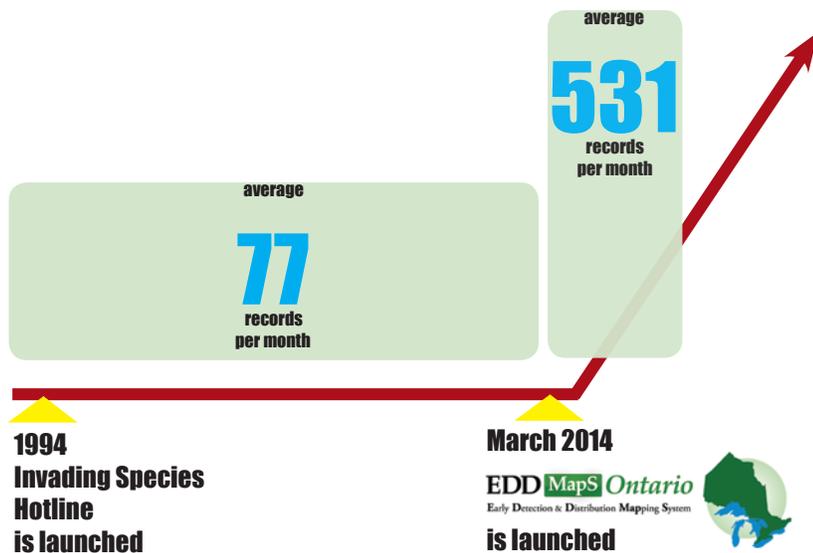
ISAP's Operation Boat Clean prevented the spread of aquatic invasives from Lake Simcoe by washing hundreds of boats and making thousands of contacts with boaters and anglers.

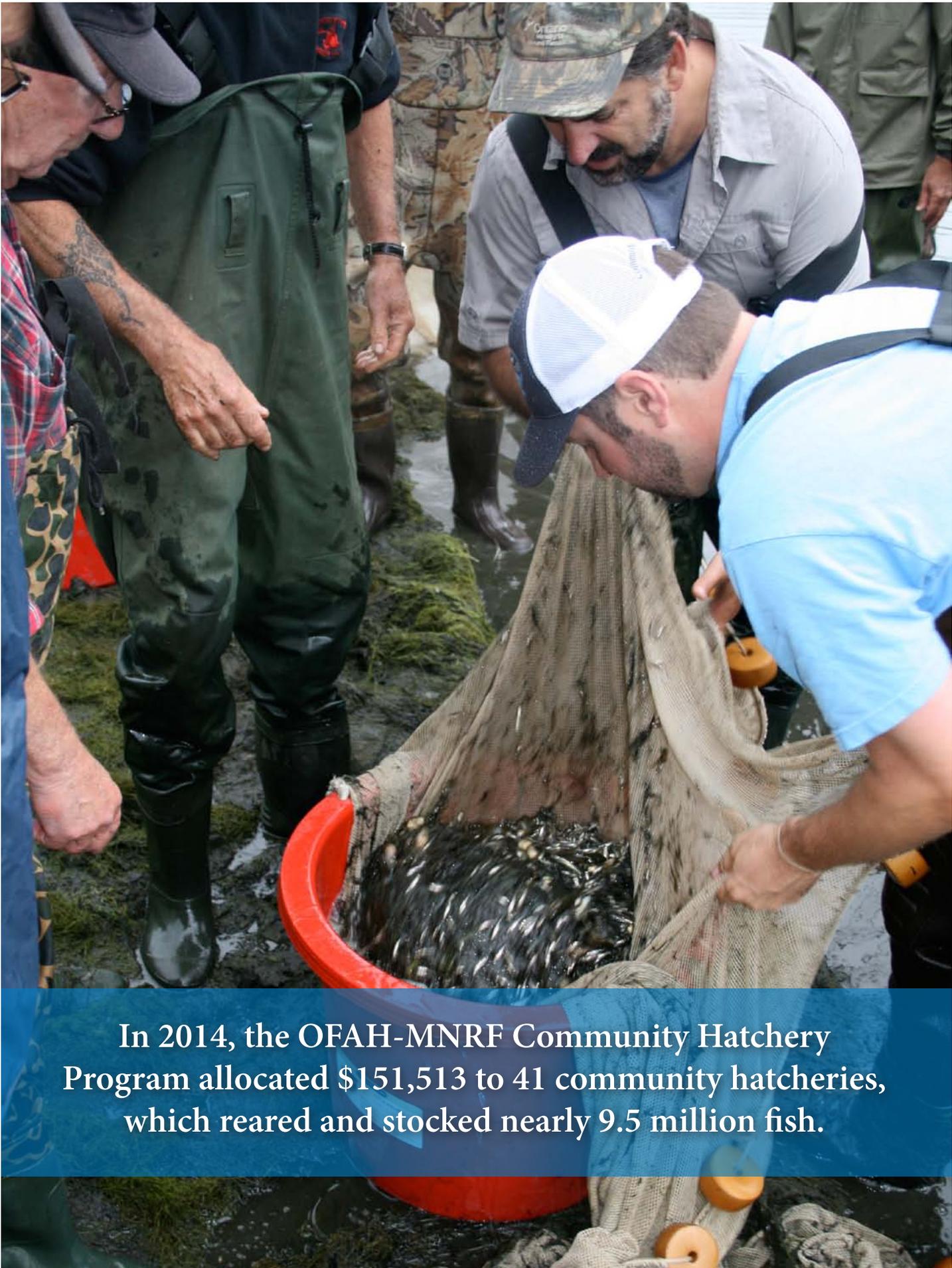
Other initiatives included water chestnut control at Voyageur Provincial Park and Bayfield Bay, near Wolfe Island; the treatment of 50 hectares of water soldier on the Trent River; and the removal of more than 1,000 pounds of garlic mustard at Ken Reid Conservation Area in Lindsay, Ont.

Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC)

The OIPC, which is not an OFAH program, partners with over 100 stakeholders and provides leadership and action on invasive plant issues in Ontario. OIPC works closely with the ISAP to collaborate on provincial initiatives related to invasive plant species.

In 2014 the OIPC expanded its program resources with a number of new developments and initiatives.





In 2014, the OFAH-MNRF Community Hatchery Program allocated \$151,513 to 41 community hatcheries, which reared and stocked nearly 9.5 million fish.

COMMUNITY HATCHERY PROGRAM

Fish stocking is an important management tool used to manage fisheries in Ontario. The MNR provincial fish culture program operates nine provincial fish culture stations that stock fish into over 1,200 waterbodies each year. Ontario's community hatcheries complement the MNR's stocking efforts by raising and stocking additional fish each year to support fishing opportunities through put-grow-take fish stocking while helping to rehabilitate native fish populations and conserve unique local genetic fish strains.

Community-based fish culture is built on a foundation of passion, dedication and genuine concern for resource management. The OFAH, in partnership with the MNR, administers the Community Hatchery Program (CHP), which grants funding and provides strategic and targeted support to Ontario's community hatcheries.

In its second year of operation, the CHP continued to evolve and achieved some important benchmarks in 2014.

New Funding Formula

A new and improved funding formula was implemented, resulting in a record amount of funding given out this year, with \$151,513 in funding support allocated among 41 different hatcheries for operational and capital improvement expenses.

CHP funding is awarded to help offset the general operational costs of rearing fish and the CHP also grants funding support to community hatcheries to complete capital improvement projects that will improve their operations and help support their longer term operations (e.g. new tanks, infrastructure, aquaculture equipment).

CHP-funded hatcheries raised nine fish species and stocked nearly 9.5 million fish into Ontario's public waters in 2014. Rearing and stocking 9.5 million fish is no small endeavour; it took 900 dedicated hatchery volunteers and over 70,000 volunteer hours to accomplish.

Communication

Promoting the program and highlighting the

important benefits that community hatcheries provide was a priority in 2014.

The CHP launched a website www.communityhatcheries.com featuring an interactive Google map of all the community hatcheries, a resource center for hatchery volunteers (including a hatchery volunteer forum), and an events calendar to promote community hatchery organized events (e.g. fundraisers, fishing derbies, open houses). The CHP also launched a Facebook page this year.

Each year the CHP hosts and supports community hatcheries to host workshops and other events, helping to transfer knowledge, experience and resources among community hatcheries.

In September, the CHP hosted a fish disease workshop at the University of Guelph where hatchery volunteers received hands on training on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of fish pathogens.

The CHP also partnered with the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association to host the annual Lake Huron's Hatchery Mangers Meeting that was held in April in Owen Sound.

The CHP also received its first financial

contribution from a non-program partner. Shellout Productions hosted a Match the Hatch charity golf tournament in April and donated the \$1,600 in proceeds to the CHP.

Highlights

- 41 community hatcheries were allocated \$151,513 in 2014 CHP funding support
- The 2014 CHP set the historical high for funding support provided to community hatcheries by a funding program.
- Community hatcheries stocked nearly 9.5 million fish into more than 100 public waterbodies
- 900 dedicated hatchery volunteers spent over 70,000 hours raising and stocking public fish for public waters





The OFAH supports and will seek to enhance Ontario's rich hunting tradition and the quality of life it represents across the province.



WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The OFAH works to ensure decisions made at all levels of government help protect and conserve our wildlife resources, while providing enjoyment and sustainable benefits for all. Using the best available science, the OFAH advocates for enhanced sustainable hunting opportunities.

Deer

The reduction of both antlerless deer tags and additional deer seals in 2014 left members frustrated with the deer tag allocation process.

The OFAH responded by voicing concerns to the MNRF regarding a lack of public and stakeholder consultation, questioning the consistency of the allocation process, and suggesting the OFAH be involved at the local and provincial level in reviewing allocations.

DeerSave

During the harsh winter of 2014, OFAH DeerSave funds were allocated to volunteer groups who packed trails, cut browse and provided emergency feed in deer yards across the province. Through the DeerSave program, the OFAH provided \$10,000 to three different clubs: the Whitestone Rod and Gun Club near Parry Sound, Manitoulin Area Stewardship Council and the Espanola Deer Save group. Hundreds of volunteers were mobilized to assist in winter deer conservation, which impacted thousands of deer in 2014. The OFAH has been working hard to replenish the DeerSave fund to be ready for tough winter conditions in the future.

Moose

In response to the decline in adult validation tags available for licensed moose hunters in the fall of 2014, the OFAH spoke out on MNRF moose management and called for changes. The OFAH is pushing for the ministry to manage moose populations and not rely on licensed hunters as the only management tool. The OFAH is recommending the MNRF re-evaluate populations, give resident hunters priority over non-residents, better manage predators like bear and wolf, ensure quality habitat through forest management and



manage deer more effectively as the full suite of tools in moose management. The OFAH participated in MNRF-hosted Moose Project meetings to discuss these issues and potential harvest strategies.

Elk

The OFAH has been a keystone partner in Ontario's elk restoration efforts. In 2011, the first modern elk hunt in Ontario occurred in the Bancroft/North Hastings area. To date, this is the only elk herd in Ontario able to sustain a regulated hunting season. The OFAH responded to elk tag reductions in 2014 by providing alternative strategies to the MNRF and keeping members and the public informed on the topic.

The OFAH was informed that elk were being harvested by Aboriginal hunters on private property in the Lake Huron North Shore

restoration area. The OFAH pressured the MNRF to provide information on the number of elk harvested by Aboriginal hunters in 2013 and questioned how any harvest can be deemed sustainable in the absence of a population objective for this herd.

Establishing elk population objectives for each herd is key to successful restoration of this species. In 2014, the OFAH provided official responses to the MNRF Environmental Registry postings regarding population objectives for the Nipissing/French River and Lake Huron North Shore herds. The MNRF-proposed population objective for the Lake Huron North Shore herd is well above current population estimates and reinforces our concerns with any harvest of elk in this area. The MNRF has made a commitment to establish a committee, which will include the OFAH, to deal with the issues for this herd.



Bears

Fifteen years of tireless work by the OFAH was realized with the arrival of a two-year spring bear hunt pilot project in some areas of the province.

The OFAH undertook a massive campaign to ensure the proposed pilot received public support through the Environmental Registry. Animal rights activists attempted to block the pilot by challenging the government in court.

On April 29, a panel of Superior Court judges dismissed their challenge and the pilot continued as planned.

Between May 1 and June 15, 2014, eight different wildlife management units in northern Ontario saw the return of an early season hunt, and hunters had the opportunity to harvest spring bears for the first time since 1999. OFAH staff are awaiting the results of the hunter surveys from this past spring.

The OFAH will continue to do everything possible to turn this pilot into a full reinstatement of the spring bear hunt.

Wolves & Coyotes

A recent study concluded that hunters in northeastern and northwestern Ontario can distinguish between wolves and coyotes based on their physical differences.

As such, the OFAH is calling for the MNRF to review current wolf and coyote regulations. The OFAH made recommendations on changes to season lengths, party hunting and

seal requirements to the MNRF including a year-round season and no seal requirement for coyotes north of French River; longer wolf hunting season with no limit on wolf seals for resident hunters; and permitting party hunting for wolves north of the French River and where coyote seal requirements remain.

Wild Turkey

The reintroduction of wild turkeys is one of Ontario's greatest conservation success stories.

More than 25 years after the OFAH, the MNRF and other partners helped return wild turkeys to Ontario, sustainable populations have allowed for additional spring and fall hunting

opportunities in 2014.

OFAH members continue to express a demand for new turkey hunting opportunities.

In response, the OFAH requested the expansion of spring and fall seasons where it is sustainable to do so.

Our request resulted in the MNRF introducing new spring turkey hunting seasons in Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) 42 (Sudbury district), and WMUs 47, 49 and 50 (North Bay and Parry Sound districts). A new fall hunting season took place in WMU 59 (Pembroke district). The OFAH will continue to advocate for new hunting opportunities.

Wild turkey harvest reporting was down



significantly in the spring of 2014. While this could be attributed to the harsh winter conditions, MNRF deer hunter sightings data suggest that wild turkey populations are fairly stable.

The OFAH communicated the importance of wild turkey mandatory reporting to our members so that managers can make informed decisions about current wild turkey populations.



Migratory Birds

The OFAH commented on changes to the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Regulations (MGBHR) in 2014.

Many of our suggestions were incorporated by Environment Canada. The MGBHR also changed to a two-year cycle in 2014. OFAH representatives continue to work through the Ontario Waterfowl Advisory Committee to provide input for policies and regulations.

The OFAH continues to advocate for the control of mute swans in the Great Lakes Basin, requesting that the MNRF work collaboratively with the Canadian Wildlife Service and appropriate U.S. agencies.

As a result, the MNRF has indicated it will continue to discuss the issue (and possible solution) with the CWS and participate in future discussions with U.S. agencies.

Sporting Dogs

The OFAH strongly supported the introduction of Multi Use Radio Systems (MURS) technology for handlers to track their hunting dogs.

This advanced technology was expected to be introduced in June of 2014, however, Industry Canada claimed there was not a great enough need and deferred its use in Canada.

The OFAH reached out to its members to have them contact Industry Canada to demonstrate that MURS products are, in fact, in demand.

OFAH staff also contacted Industry Canada directly to question the decision process in deferring MURS in Canada. The OFAH participated in a MURS working group to determine how this technology can be introduced in Canada.

“I am very thankful to be given this opportunity and I’m sure this internship will open the door for future opportunities in fish and wildlife conservation.”

– Jenny Fulton, 2014
Brokerlink Fish & Wildlife
Intern



Fish & Wildlife Student Opportunities

The OFAH continues to support fish and wildlife research and student employment opportunities through an internship position and a variety of grants.

In 2014, the OFAH offered five different graduate student research grants valued at \$2,000 each as well as the OFAH/Mike Reader/Toronto Sportsmen’s Show/Fleming College Scholarship and the OFAH BrokerLink Fish and Wildlife Conservation Internship.

Throughout the summer of 2014, the OFAH hosted Jenny Fulton as the OFAH BrokerLink Fish and Wildlife Conservation Intern.

Jenny participated in a variety of activities with the Invading Species Awareness Program, Lake

Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program and assisted fish and wildlife staff.

Scholarships/Internships

- OFAH|Dr. Dave Ankney|Sandi Johnson Award for Avian Ecology (\$2,000)
- OFAH|OFAH Zone G Wildlife Research Grant (\$2,000)
- OFAH|Oakville & District Rod & Gun Club Conservation Research Grant (\$2,000)
- OFAH|St. Catharines Game and Fish Association Wildlife Research Grant (\$2,000)
- OFAH|Toronto Sportsmen’s Show Fisheries Research Grant (\$2,000)
- OFAH|Brokerlink Fish and Wildlife Conservation Internship (18 weeks)
- OFAH|Mike Reader/Toronto Sportsmen’s Show/Fleming College Scholarship (\$2,000)



The OFAH reviews all relevant plans, strategies, guides, regulations and legislation that have the potential to impact fish and wildlife conservation and fishing and hunting access.



LAND USE and ACCESS

The OFAH represents the interests of anglers and hunters on land use management issues using a full-time land use specialist and our Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee. The OFAH seeks to ensure that proposed land use activities in Ontario consider, maintain, and enhance fishing and hunting opportunities. During 2014, the majority of land use issues we tackled were related to access, forestry, resource extraction and development and protected areas.

Access

Access issues are faced by many anglers and hunters throughout the province every year. For anglers and hunters, access can mean many different things depending on the location, season, and the types of fishing and hunting activities you enjoy. In southern Ontario, the OFAH helps to promote access to private lands and fights for angling and hunting to be permitted in the relatively few remaining publicly accessible areas. In central and northern Ontario, the OFAH focuses on ensuring public access to Crown lands and waters.

In 2014, the OFAH continued to develop resources to help anglers and hunters access fishing and hunting opportunities. We updated our Crown Land Use Policy Atlas

(CLUPA) Guide that has helped hundreds of OFAH members successfully find Crown land for fishing and hunting using the MNR's online CLUPA mapping system. We also created two new fact sheets to assist novice hunters in getting out in the field: *Where Can I Legally Hunt in Ontario* and *Information for Waterfowlers*.

Access restrictions result from the physical elimination of access points or through prohibitions in legislation, regulations and policy. At the root of many access issues is an underlying misconception about angling or hunting. Overly restrictive land use policies, the belief that fishing and hunting are incompatible with other recreational activities or perceived liability and safety issues are some of the most common reasons anglers and hunters are denied access.

The OFAH works extremely hard to prevent barriers to angling and hunting and to help our members resolve access issues when they do occur. In 2014, the OFAH pushed for better access for anglers and hunters on forest access roads and trails, to public boat launches and fishing areas and in protected areas.

Species at Risk

Overly restrictive policies and regulations associated with species at risk management continue to concern the OFAH and our members. In particular, habitat management measures for species such as the woodland caribou continue to result in diminished access

for anglers and hunters in northern Ontario. The OFAH monitors federal and provincial activities related to species at risk and voices the concerns of anglers and hunters whenever necessary.

Abitibi Trestle Bridge

Resolute Forest Products closed the Abitibi Trestle Bridge near Iroquois Falls after an engineering report found it was no longer safe for public use. Resolute no longer requires the bridge for forestry practices and is not interested in paying for the required repairs. The bridge provided direct access to the Abitibi River, Lake Abitibi and the surrounding Crown lands. A 10-minute trip across the bridge is now a two-hour trip for local anglers, hunters and Crown land users. The OFAH wrote a letter to the minister of natural resources and forestry recommending that all possible solutions be explored to help maintain this key access point to Crown resources.

Sapawe Forest

Fort Frances district MNR posted a sign restricting access to three different lakes in the Sapawe Forest near Atikokan in response to remote tourism concerns. Traditionally, anglers could access these lakes by driving to a trail leading to the lakes or by portaging in. The placement of the MNR sign restricted public access by trail and portage, leaving no alternative for access. Through consultation, the MNR agreed to change the geographic location of the sign to allow for access via

ACCESS DENIED!
CROWN LAND IS PUBLIC LAND.

Printing and distribution of this bumper sticker was made possible by contributions for this purpose.



traditional trail and portage routes.

Trout Lake Forest

Red Lake district MNRF posted an oddly specific sign restricting any access from April 15 to November 30 via road, connecting trails or portages on the South Bay Mine Road in the Trout Lake Forest, northeast of Ear Falls. The intent of the sign is to limit public access to the identified tourism lakes. Traditionally, the public was permitted to access tourism lakes by trail or portage in the absence of an access road. The OFAH expressed our concerns to the MNRF and will continue to ensure traditional access to Crown resources is maintained and enhanced where possible.

MTO

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has an important role in determining when and where access points from provincial highways can be used by anglers and hunters. In 2014, the OFAH was actively involved in two MTO access issues. The MTO plans to close a number of highway entrances to Crown land near Thunder Bay. There is currently no permit holder for these entrances, and therefore no one is responsible for maintaining Crown resource access from these points on the highway. The OFAH has a history of working with the MTO and the MNRF to ensure there is communication between the two ministries. We are urging both parties to find a way to protect and maintain these valuable Crown land access points for the public.

Traditional access to Shale Beach (near Creigleith Provincial Park) was closed by the MTO pending its environmental assessment of their highway work. The MTO restricted access to anglers by closing the entrance to Shale Beach as well as posting no parking signs. The OFAH wrote a letter to the regional MTO identifying these concerns and providing recommendations to allow for continued access during the environmental assessment process. The OFAH also urged the MTO and MNRF to increase their communications to protect and maintain this valuable access point for the public.

Ontario Trails

Ontario's trail systems play an important role in providing anglers and hunters with access to fishing and hunting areas. Trails in Ontario take many different forms and have a variety of different users. Some user groups and trail managers believe that hunting and fishing-related activities are not compatible for multi-use trails.

The OFAH works hard to maintain access to trails for anglers and hunters through participation on provincial committees such as the Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee

and adding our voice to discussions related to the development and management of Ontario's various trail systems. In 2014, we helped our members deal with offroad vehicle restrictions, hunting and trapping restrictions on or around trails and prohibitions for carrying firearms to and from hunting locations. In one example, the proposed Perth County Trail was to be added as a branch to the Trans Canada Trail. Other trails that would connect with this branch do not currently permit some activities such as hunting. The OFAH recommended a full investigation and consultation with interested stakeholders before adopting similar policies for this portion of the trail.

Protected Areas

Protected areas are parcels of land generally designated to safeguard natural features and biodiversity. Provincial parks, national parks, conservation authority lands and municipal forests are all examples of protected areas in Ontario. Many of Ontario's protected areas have policies, plans and classifications that limit certain types of recreation. Hunting, fishing, motorized vehicle use and other related activities are often prohibited or restricted. The OFAH continues to promote hunting as a safe recreational activity, seeks updates to severely outdated land use plans that will benefit anglers and hunters and speaks out on how to prevent overabundant wildlife issues in protected areas. The OFAH advocates for enhanced fishing, hunting and trapping opportunities in all protected areas where it is safe and sustainable to do so. In southern Ontario where there is limited Crown land available for fishing and hunting, conservation authority lands provide important public opportunities. We delivered a presentation on hunting at the annual Conservation Ontario Workshop and worked closely with local conservation authority staff to ensure hunting opportunities are maintained or enhanced on conservation authority lands. Lower Trent and Grand River Conservation Authorities were two of the organizations we worked with during 2014 to maintain or enhance hunting opportunities.

Ontario's provincial parks provide some fantastic fishing opportunities for anglers. Motorized vehicle use prohibitions, bait and tackle restrictions and accessibility are a few of the issues faced by anglers in provincial parks. We monitor park planning to ensure fishing is promoted and that policies do not unnecessarily restrict anglers.

Some provincial parks offer public hunting opportunities. These are particularly important in areas where the majority of hunting occurs on private lands. The OFAH and our clubs are directly responsible for maintaining some of these high quality

opportunities. In 2014, the OFAH partnered with local clubs and provincial park staff to administer longstanding controlled waterfowl hunts in Darlington, Long Point and Rondeau Provincial Parks. These parks provide some of the best waterfowl hunting opportunities in Ontario.

In provincial parks where hunting is not currently permitted, the OFAH continues to take advantage of every opportunity to advocate for its inclusion as a safe, sustainable and low-impact recreational activity. In addition to missing out on the many other benefits of hunting, many of the provincial parks that do not allow hunting are experiencing overabundant wildlife issues.

Fuelled by member concerns, the OFAH wrote to Ontario Parks to push for licensed hunting to be incorporated into more provincial park management plans to prevent issues associated with overabundant wildlife. We focused on the differences between culling and hunting and promoted the use of licensed hunters as a means of proactive wildlife management. The OFAH will continue dialogue with Ontario Parks on behalf of our members in hopes of creating increased hunting opportunities in provincial parks throughout Ontario.

Strawberry Island

Strawberry Island on Manitoulin Island was designated as a Nature Reserve Provincial Park in 2012, meaning that hunting will not be permitted. At that time, the OFAH opposed the designation because of the historical importance of Strawberry Island in providing hunting opportunities and the lack of evidence that hunting would negatively impact other park values. The OFAH continued to provide support to local clubs in 2014 and will remain involved in park management planning in the future.

Presqu'île

The OFAH submitted comments on the Presqu'île Provincial Park Management Plan. While we supported and encouraged more waterfowl hunting within the park, there were concerns about the lack of planning for the invasive mute swan populations and overabundant cormorant and deer populations. We recommended the use of licensed hunters to promote proactive wildlife management in the park.

Slate Islands

The OFAH reviewed and commented on the Slate Islands Provincial Park Management Plan. Maintaining existing fishing opportunities was supported, but we expressed concern over the expansion of Nature Reserve zones and lack of population objectives for caribou.

Rondeau

The historical Rondeau Provincial Park pier was decommissioned by MNRF due to safety concerns. Traditionally the pier was used by anglers and other recreationists within the park. The OFAH wrote a letter of support for the rebuilding and maintenance of the pier and recommended the MNRF consult with the public and stakeholder groups before deciding the fate of this focal structure.

National Parks

The Rouge National Urban Park is a new Parks Canada initiative proposed for the Greater Toronto Area. A draft management plan has been written and the OFAH was invited to review and comment. Overall, the OFAH supports the creation of a national urban park in the Rouge Hill area, but the OFAH has identified some areas of concern, highlighted program overlap and suggested incorporating conservation programs like the Invasive Species Awareness Program and Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program.

Resource Extraction and Development

Resource extraction and development activities in Ontario have the potential to influence the quantity and quality of fishing and hunting opportunities. Each year the OFAH monitors plans for forestry, mining, aggregate extraction, renewable energy projects and other large-scale developments and provides a voice for the angling and hunting community.

Forestry

Our forests are a valuable resource which provide critical habitat for wildlife, recreation opportunities, lumber and fibre, as well as providing many ecological services. Unlike some other forms of commercial resource use, forestry has the potential to enhance wildlife habitats and provide access to Crown lands for anglers and hunters.

The OFAH has a long history of directly participating with forest management in Ontario to ensure it adequately considers fish and wildlife conservation and fishing and hunting.

The OFAH closely monitors forest management plans, annual work schedules for forestry operations, forest audits and provincial-level direction to ensure forestry operations provide an optimal supply of wildlife habitat and continued public access.

In 2014, we continued to work with local members to try to resolve Crown forest access issues, as well as participate in a variety of consultations and discussions related to the effectiveness of Crown forest management

activities. In particular, our involvement focused on ensuring on-the-ground forest management activities are actually achieving the objectives and targets set out in the planning process.

Forest Audits

Independent Forest Audits are conducted periodically to assess forestry activities and ensure compliance with the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.

The OFAH reviewed and commented on the MNRF's newly-modernized Independent Forest Audit policy and supported the effort to streamline the audit process. We expressed concern with the new audit report becoming overly vague or too short, as well as MNRF following standards and timelines for managing Crown forests.

Silviculture

Silviculture refers to the tracking of forest regeneration activities, which determine long term Crown forest health. The OFAH provided an official response to the MNRF's Ontario Silviculture Discussion Paper supporting the development of a "design to purpose" monitoring program for the future, but calling for clarity around funding, as well as roles and responsibilities.

Forest Sustainability Certification

Resolute Forestry Products sought a letter of support from the OFAH as a requirement of their Forest Sustainability Certification. The OFAH agreed in principle, provided that the forests be managed under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and no new parks or protected areas are created as a result.

The OFAH anticipates future opportunities to consult and partner with Resolute to ensure Ontario's Crown forests provide a high quality and quantity of fishing and hunting opportunities.

Renewable Energy

As a result of government incentives in recent years, renewable energy has been one of the fastest growing sectors of resource development. In particular, solar and windpower projects have become more common on our landscapes resulting in concerns about the potential impacts to fish and wildlife.

The OFAH has identified concerns with solar and windpower projects and continues to push the government to ensure fish and wildlife conservation is considered in project planning and that impacts are sufficiently mitigated before, during and after development.

We continue to provide OFAH members and the general public with information and technical advice to help them voice concerns

with projects in their local communities.



Waterpower

Waterpower (hydroelectric) projects remain of interest to the OFAH because of their impact on fish and fisheries. New waterpower projects, obsolete dams and other barriers influence fish passage, water levels and the movement of invasive species such as Sea Lamprey.

An example of 2014 action saw the OFAH help the Kirkland District Game and Fish Protective Association provide comments on the environmental report for the proposed Blanch River hydroelectric project near Temiskaming. These comments highlighted negative impacts on the fishery and the importance of adaptive management. We also continued our involvement in discussions related to the trade-offs of removing the Black Sturgeon River dam near Nipigon. (See pg. 14).

In addition to specific projects, the OFAH takes advantage of every opportunity to influence provincial policies related to waterpower.

The Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act Bulletins outline the requirements and processes in locating, operating, managing and reporting for all dams in Ontario.

The OFAH provided an official submission to the Environmental Registry expressing concerns with fish habitat protection and passage, accountability, enforcement and transparent discussions among MNRF, DFO and stakeholders before any new dams are approved.

We Need Your Continued Support!

As you can see, the OFAH is involved in a large variety of land use issues occurring in all areas of Ontario. Due to the enormous amount of land use activities currently occurring on the landscape and the potential for specific localized impacts (e.g. local road decommissioning removing access to historical fishing and hunting areas), the OFAH relies on grassroots involvement from our board of directors, zones, clubs and members.

Please let us know of any land use management issues that are impacting your fishing and hunting traditions.



Responsible hunters support the many regulations that have been established to ensure Ontario wildlife populations are sustained and hunting remains a safe activity.

HUNTER EDUCATION

The Ontario Hunter Education Program, an OFAH and MNRF partnership, trains new hunters to understand the natural world and become a knowledgeable, responsible hunter. Participants learn about ecosystems and wildlife management, hunting laws and regulations, hunter responsibilities, identification, biology, hunting techniques for big game, small game and waterfowl, hunting and survival equipment and the hunter's role in society. The program also reinforces firearms safety.

The Ontario Hunter Education Program saw 24,695 participants in 2014 with 299 instructors teaching an average of seven courses annually.

Demand for courses remains very high with many phone calls and emails answered every day on course dates and instructor schedules. Women remain the fastest growing demographic of hunters, representing about 20% of all Hunter Education Program participants. Students wishing to take a course can visit ohep.net to find an instructor or course near them.

Hunter Education Instructors Conference

The 23rd Annual OFAH Hunter Education Instructors Conference held in London in June was a great success. Emad Hazboun, a London instructor, was conference coordinator and set a high bar for conferences to come. It was a record year for the conference with 77 registered instructors. Guest speakers talked about a range of issues from waterfowl to bullet selection to bow hunting. About \$3,600 was raised to further promote hunting heritage in Ontario. Years of service plaques were presented to several instructors. Two instructors were given 55 years of service awards for their outstanding service. The 2015 instructors conference will be held in Sudbury in late May.

Training

In October, provincial trainers trained 18 new instructors at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre. These



Women remain the fastest growing demographic of hunters, representing about 20% of all Hunter Education Program participants.

instructors were from areas of need around the province. These instructors had all applied and were carefully screened to make sure we had the best candidates. It was a very knowledgeable, eager group and we are looking forward to working with these new instructors once they have completed their final steps and have been certified by the MNRF. Plans have already begun for our next instructor training in 2015.

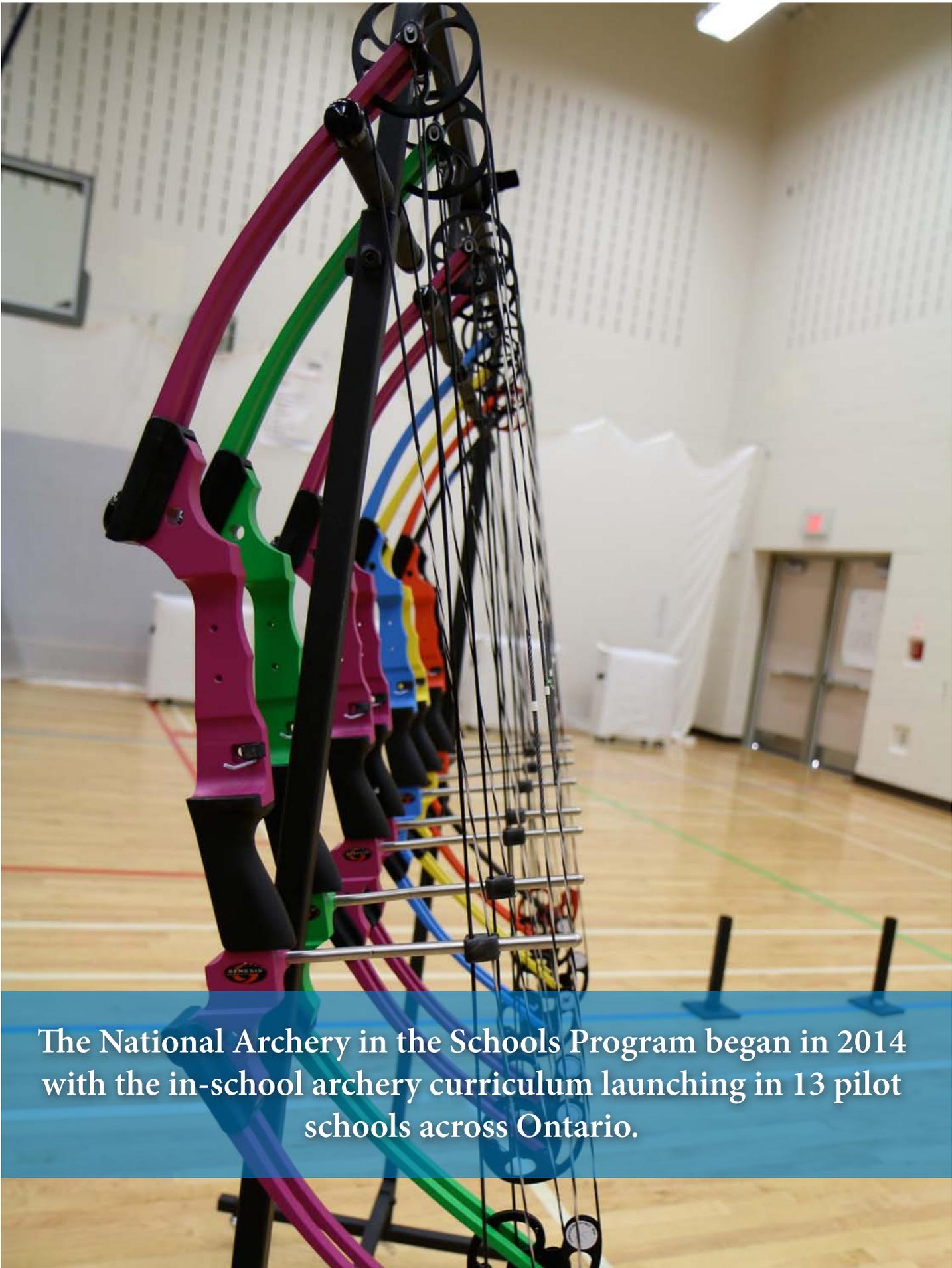
Wild Turkey Hunter Education Program

In 2014, the OFAH processed a total of 10,758 registrants in the Wild Turkey Hunter Education



Program with 1,786 taking the in-person wild turkey seminar and the remainder opting to purchase a DVD. DVD sales have continued to be popular and are mailed out to students every day. Magazine ads promoted the seminars from January to April. We tentatively have scheduled 18 wild turkey seminars in 2015 in popular areas across the province with a minimum capacity of 100 students.

Taking the wild turkey exam within the boundaries of the hunter education course is now common, and taking the exam in person or with a certified hunter education instructor provides a great resource to students who have questions regarding the curriculum. DVD sales are a mirror image of last year's sales. We thank the 240 hunter education instructors who not only signed up to examine students for this program, but have also provided guidance for these new turkey hunters and promoted it well in their communities. Visit www.ofah.org/seminars for more information about the Wild Turkey Hunter Education course.



The National Archery in the Schools Program began in 2014 with the in-school archery curriculum launching in 13 pilot schools across Ontario.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

As Ontario's demographic ages, it's important we engage the next generation on the merits of outdoor activities and conservation. Through a plethora of youth programs, the OFAH is committed to doing just that, connecting youth to fishing and hunting activities and espousing the virtues of conserving our fish and wildlife resources.

National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP)



In 2014, the OFAH began administering the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), which is expected to become the organization's largest youth program in our 86-year history, introducing youth to the shooting sports.

Partnering with the international, Kentucky-based NASP program in August, the OFAH trained its first cohort of regional Basic Archery Instructor Trainers and trained the first wave of Ontario elementary and secondary teachers who taught the curriculum-based archery program in their schools during the 2014/2015 school year.

NASP began in Kentucky in 2001 as a means of attracting a new generation to outdoors activities such as hunting and fishing. The program was an immediate success and has since spread worldwide, operating in 10 different countries with more than 15 million participants.

Given OFAH's role in administering NASP in Ontario and the size of the province's school population, there is reason to be optimistic Ontario will become one of the largest NASP participants in the world.

Instructor training was developed so teachers in every participating school could be certified to present NASP lessons that are safe for students, instructors, bystanders and the facility. Instructors learn how to determine a student's dominant eye and teach archer form, shot execution and follow-through. Teachers are provided extensive advice on how to provide positive coaching.

Archery is an accessible sport that allows youth of all ages and athletic ability to participate. It has proven to grow self-esteem and encourage school attendance. Nearly one-third of all NASP participants surveyed expressed an interest in trying other outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing.

The OFAH/NASP program is expected to grow its number of participating schools in 2015.

OFAH Get Outdoors Youth Leadership Conference

In March, 80 enthusiastic young conservationists came together at the OFAH Get Outdoors Youth Leadership Conference, held in conjunction with the 86th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference in Mississauga. In 2014, the youth leadership conference was themed "Waterfowl and Wetlands" to acknowledge a growing interest in the conservation of wetland habitat. Long Point Waterfowl partnered to deliver a workshop where our youth members learned about proper decoy placement and duck calling, followed by dog retrieval demonstrations by the Mill Creek Retriever Club. The Dufferin Northern Peel Anglers and Hunters Club opened its doors again for our youth members to enjoy a day of archery, fly tying, survival challenge, hawk demonstration and one-on-one instruction on the trap shooting and rifle ranges. We continue to have strong support from our sponsors: Stoeger Canada providing the high quality firearms for the participants to use; Graywood Sporting Group Inc. donating all of the ammunition; and Coleman Canada for donating the grand prize camping package for a lucky youth member to take home. Visit www.getoutdoors.org



to learn more or follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@OFAHGetOutdoors).

OFAH Get Outdoors Summer Leadership Camp

In response to the growing interest in the OFAH Get Outdoors Summer Leadership Camp, and with the help of our dedicated volunteers, we expanded the summer camp registration to offer a fourth session in 2014. In March, parents were eager to register their children for this outdoors experience of a lifetime. All 240 registrations were filled in just two minutes and we were left with a large waiting list.

From all across Ontario, 240 youth participants left their world of technology behind and came together for one purpose – discovering their place in the outdoors. Once again, great campers, hard-working staff and phenomenal volunteers made the 2014 OFAH Get Outdoors Summer Leadership Camp a program that should be the envy of every conservation-minded organization around the world. To the best of our knowledge, no other summer camp delivers quality programming for such a great value. The four-day experience for OFAH youth members combined outdoor exploration, conservation education, and leadership.

Campers enjoyed activities such as kayaking, canoeing, archery, fishing, swimming, fly tying, .22 range, ATV riding, wild game calling, wolf howl, night hiking, wildlife discussions, conservation initiatives, sunset campfires and, the most recent addition, stand up paddleboards. Most importantly, campers spent four days learning about the OFAH and why its members care about their participation in our organization, and they developed a true appreciation of our rich outdoor heritage.



Our dedicated volunteers are the heart and soul of this camp and are the key to its 13 years of success. We appreciate their continued support by giving their vacation time to deliver a one-of-a-kind program.

We continue to have strong support from our sponsors: Stoeger Canada provided the high quality firearms for the participants to use and Graywood Sporting Group Inc. donated all of the ammunition. Visit www.getoutdoors.org to learn more or follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@OFAHGetOutdoors).

Jumpstart to Get Outdoors

In September, OFAH staff and volunteers were busy in scenic Haliburton County delivering the inaugural Jumpstart to Get Outdoors weekend.

The OFAH and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities, two proud partners in outdoor education, joined forces to provide a one-of-a-kind experience for 60 heart-of-the-city youth.

A little bit of rain did not put a damper on fun or spirits during the weekend, as these kids eagerly took part in ATV riding, archery, fishing, wilderness survival, fly tying, canoeing, kayaking, high ropes courses, camping, night hiking, stargazing and great campfire discussions. Most importantly, the

youth developed an appreciation for our organization and the importance of hunting, fishing and conservation.

We are very proud Canadian Tire acknowledged the OFAH as a leading organization in youth outdoor education by partnering with us on this new initiative.

Offering the Get Outdoors program to this group of urban youth shows our members that every kid, regardless of where they live, can have the opportunity to develop a life-long connection and appreciation for the outdoors. The OFAH is looking forward to building on this year's success, as we move forward with planning another great Jumpstart to Get Outdoors Weekend for 2015.

OFAH/OPG TackleShare Program

The OFAH/OPG TackleShare Program continues to produce outstanding outreach for our organization through its loaner sites and OFAH/OPG Travelling TackleShare program that provides education and practical experience to new and novice anglers.

As title sponsor for the past five years, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) made another three-year commitment to the program to ensure Ontario's youth continue to reap the benefits

of fishing safely in the great outdoors for years to come.

In February, the OFAH/OPG TackleShare Program presented the annual OFAH Family Ice Fishing Day in Ennismore, Ont.

This is the largest of Ontario's winter Family Fishing Events and it attracted over 1,200 participants from across the province.

Through diligent marketing and promotion, this event attracted great media attention and recognition to the OFAH as being a leader in educating new and novice anglers.

This Peterborough-area event also featured an open house afternoon at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre.

We continue to have strong support from our title sponsor Ontario Power Generation, and program sponsors: Canadian Tire, Walmart, Lucky Strike, KTL Canada Inc., Plano, Rapala, Shimano and Ontario Parks. Visit www.tackleshare.com to learn more, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@OFAHTackleShare).

OFAH/OPG TackleShare Program Loaner Sites

The OFAH/OPG TackleShare Program has over 140 loaner sites across the province, encouraging thousands of new anglers to



become involved in recreational fishing. These loaner sites include Ontario Parks, public libraries, conservation authorities, Big Brothers and Big Sisters and other community organizations. The program continues to grow interest from participation at events and loaner sites across the province, and it welcomed 12 new loaner sites in 2014 while re-establishing the program at several previous sites.

With the financial strength from lead sponsor Ontario Power Generation (OPG), this year, the OFAH/OPG TackleShare Program distributed hundreds of rod and reel combos and fully-stocked tackle boxes to various loaner sites throughout the province. This year, the OFAH/OPG TackleShare Program continued to support the Learn to Fish program through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) at all six participating Ontario Parks. These parks were each supplied with 35 rod and reel combos, five fully-stocked tackle boxes, OFAH/OPG TackleShare bobbers and other educational material.

OFAH/OPG Travelling TackleShare Program

The OFAH/OPG Travelling TackleShare Program brought fishing equipment to 10 events this summer. At these events the OFAH/OPG Travelling TackleShare crew provided an educational workshop that includes introductory fishing instruction, fish identification, fishing tips and tricks, invasive species awareness, food chain interactions, aquatic habitat assessment, conservation, and water safety awareness, followed by the opportunity to go fishing. The program also loans fishing rods and reels to member clubs and other organizations for additional events each summer.

Not only does this program breakdown barriers for new and young anglers to go fishing at no cost, it also reaches out to urban families. All participants also learn about OFAH's important role in leading environmental work and youth outreach programming in Ontario.

Ontario Family Fishing Events (OFFE)

Every year Ontario declares two periods of licence-free fishing, three days in February and nine days in July. This year's dates were February 15-17 and July 5-13. During this time, Canadian residents do not require the otherwise mandatory fishing version of the Outdoors Card. This is a great opportunity for new and young anglers to discover the fun of fishing and prime time for families to share an experience in the outdoors together. OFFE is a long-running initiative of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), led by a steering committee that includes representatives from the MNRF, the OFAH, the Canadian National Sportfishing Foundation (CNSF), the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association (CSIA), and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The OFAH chairs the committee and administers the program.

The OFAH supplies promotional and



educational material to those who organize and 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 such as lures. We also add each event listing to the OFFE website and drive traffic to the site through advertising and social media.

This year, we successfully acquired 16 additional events, reaching a total of 87 events, all with excellent feedback.

Each year, we aim to increase awareness for the program and increase opportunities for families. We have received significant exposure via the OFFE Facebook and Twitter pages and great representation in print, radio and TV province-wide such as Angler & Hunter Radio, CHCH Morning Live (Hamilton), CKDR Dryden, London Free Press, My FM 98.9 Simcoe and The Peterborough Examiner, to name a few.

We continue to have strong support from our program supporters: Shimano, Lucky Strike, and Ontario OUT OF DOORS magazine who provide prizes for distribution at events and our annual colouring draw.

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

onfamfish).

OFAH/Ontario Record Fish Registry

In the spring, we revised the OFAH/Ontario Record Fish Registry program to enhance the recognition anglers receive when they reel in a remarkable catch.

The registry officials declared a new record, a 29.22-lbs Coho Salmon caught by Glen Hales on September 24, 2013 on the Ganaraska River and a new record 1.94-lbs Mooneye caught by Jack Therrien on February 12, 2013 on the Ottawa River. The January/February issue of *Angler and Hotline* announced these as potential records and officially acknowledged the Coho as a new record in the June issue.

There were two new potential records submitted to the registry in 2014 in the categories of Longnose Gar and White Perch. The registry is waiting on the final submission of all the registry requirements for the potential record Longnose Gar. Provided all requirements are met and there is no larger Longnose Gar caught and entered before February 15, 2015, the registry officials will confirm the fish's claim to record status, and declare a new record in March 2015. Registry officials have since clarified what was believed

to be a White Perch was actually a Wiper (aka Temperate Bass Hybrid) and as the Wiper entered into the registry is much smaller than the current record, we could not accept it as an official entry into the registry.

We continue to promote the program through records on display at the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre, which was expanded in August to include a new replica of the Ontario record Lake Sturgeon caught by Edward Paszkowski in 1982.

Visit www.ofah.org/recordfish for a current listing of record fish.

OFAH | Mario Cortellucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre

The Heritage Centre (HFHC), now in its fourth year of operation, welcomed a total of 1,974 students for educational field trips in 2014.

Grand total student attendance now stands at 8,583 since the centre opened in 2010.

In addition to hosting elementary and secondary classes, we have also welcomed students from alternative education programs. The feedback from these specialized groups has been positive, commending the

OFAH's ability to provide unique learning opportunities outside the classroom for youth, regardless of their background or day-to-day challenges.

The HFHC qualified for funding to support two 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 HFHC programming all summer long. Work on our Ontario Exhibit expansion began in June thanks to additional funds from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation.

Our Get Outdoors Summer Day Camp was a highlight as a total of 85 youth participated in our unique program, now in its 5th season.

This year our Trout campers (ages six to 13) had the chance to try stand up paddle boarding. With rave reviews from campers and parents, we look forward to incorporating this activity into future camp programs.

Our one-of-a-kind ATV safety program was also a camper favourite, now in its second year thanks to Canadian Tire. With the financial

support from OFAH Zone E, the camp will continue to run for another summer.

The Heritage Centre website took on a fresh new look in the fall and the layout better reflects the active, multi-use facility that it is.

The Orillia Fish and Game Conservation Club visited in March and the South Central Ontario Fish and Wildlife Association hosted a meeting here in September.

We look forward to working more closely with OFAH clubs to use the Heritage Centre as a place to meet and to leverage family and youth participation within their club.

The year 2014 proved to be another busy year on the Stoeger Airgun and Excalibur Archery Ranges, located at the Heritage Centre.

A total of 21 range rentals occurred throughout the year, often rented by families or community groups. These rentals provided 1,796 users with the chance to learn responsible, safe shooting techniques and practice their aim on the ranges.

The HFHC also provided a unique venue to 31 birthday parties and 20 private events in 2014. In addition to outside facility renters, in-house

OFAH programs such as the Invading Species Awareness Program and Hunter Education Program also used the Heritage Centre for training purposes.

In 2014, the HFHC saw 1,477 walk-in visitors with admission rates at \$5 per person. The Heritage Centre is open Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with additional weekend hours posted online, coinciding with other events that are occurring at the HFHC.

Shimano Fishing Pond

The pond had another busy season as summer staff and volunteers facilitated a variety of bookings.

From students on field trips to various community groups including day cares, retirement homes and special care agencies, a visit to the pond is a highlight for many visitors.

In 2014, a total of 1,146 anglers made use of the Shimano Fishing Pond – the home of the OFAH/OPG TackleShare program.

The pond hosted special events throughout the summer including the Cops and Kids Fishing Event, Fishing 101 for Women Seminar and the New Canadians Centre Fishing Day.





At a time when many member-based organizations are in a steady decline, the OFAH is bucking the trend with strong, consistent membership retention year after year.

MEMBERSHIP

If you enjoy access to Crown land, waterways protected from invasive species, lakes stocked with Walleye, trout and salmon, woodlands abundant with elk and wild turkey, and the opportunity to enjoy a Sunday morning partridge hunt with an apprentice hunter, you are benefiting from the determination of OFAH members.

Growth

Congratulations to every OFAH member! In 2014, the OFAH achieved another rock solid membership base with a high of 84,432 members.

Strength in OFAH membership is the lifeblood of our organization and the cornerstone of 86 years of world-leading conservation action. Indeed, that is a bold statement – and one that deserves to be repeated, particularly to anyone who thinks fishing and hunting opportunities come without a personal investment.

For the betterment of conservation and hunting and fishing traditions, the founders of our great organization had the wisdom to empower their fellow sportsmen.

OFAH members knew that big city politicians, even at the turn of the 19th century, could easily forget outdoor priorities, especially if their government ever underestimated the voting power and grassroots determination of hard working people prepared to stand up for it.

Complacency wasn't an option then, and it's certainly not an option for the future. Since 1928, joining the OFAH continues to be the single greatest investment a conservation-minded angler and hunter can make in Ontario.

In 2014, over 84,000 OFAH members stepped up for conservation with their OFAH membership renewals and donations. We are particularly proud of our new membership growth because we are confident we can retain that support for years to come.

As always, our success in membership retention and growth is the result of a solid team effort



by OFAH members who work diligently to remind fellow anglers and hunters about the importance of an OFAH membership. Even the best featured membership promotions cannot compare to the powerful influence from one hunter to another when they ask, "are you an OFAH member?"

Member Services

Monthly Giving

Through the OFAH monthly giving program, over 3,000 OFAH members keep their membership current and contribute to conservation in Ontario. In 2014, the total contributions from this program exceeded \$490,000.

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 2014, monthly giving and expired member calling campaigns generated over 400 new donors to the monthly giving program, with an increase in donations of \$4,500 per month.

Expired Membership

In 2014, we contacted over 6,300 expired members. As a result of these campaigns, we renewed over 1,300 single memberships and 230 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 2014. We now have 570 Life Members.

Club Growth

OFAH club membership numbers reached new record highs four separate times in 2014. The OFAH now has 725 affiliated Ontario clubs comprised of more than 20,250 club members.

The "no-cost" primary club comprehensive general liability coverage, which comes with OFAH enrolment, continues to be the most valued club member incentive. Head office presence at local club meetings is also an important aspect of our growing program.

If you are part of a hunting, fishing or conservation group looking for insurance coverage, an OFAH club membership is the right choice for you.

Affinity Partnerships

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is fortunate to have dedicated and strong partnerships with organizations that believe in fish and wildlife conservation as much as we do. Our valued affinity partners not only provide outstanding opportunities and savings on a variety of products and services each year, they make a financial contribution



to the OFAH, directly benefiting the great fish and wildlife conservation work we do.

From retail discounts to ensuring our members' life needs (life and health insurance, retirement planning) are fulfilled, our partners are there to help. The next time you're shopping for hunting boots



or considering a new RRSP investment, remember to help support those who support conservation.

The OFAH is continuously looking for new quality retail/service providers to partner with who can offer our members discounted prices on products or services.

Great North Wildlife Affiliates (GNWA) – Insurance Program (Individual and Club)

The \$3 million in excess members' personal public liability insurance and the "no-cost" primary club comprehensive general liability coverage continue to be major incentives for member recruitment and retention. In 2014, the OFAH was pleased to see two new improvements to our insurance program. Individual members now automatically receive an additional \$2 million excess umbrella liability policy, raising their coverage limit to \$5 million at no additional cost.

Also, live fire dog trials are now an insured activity.

As your federation grows, we continue to strive to make our programs grow, and the insurance program is no different. We are optimistic we will continue to see more improvements to the program in the future.

Zone presence



Since introducing the presence of an OFAH staff member at zone meetings across Ontario in 2012, the lines of communication from the zone level to head office have improved exponentially. This has been well received by zone executives and their members, reiterating the importance of on-the-ground participation in OFAH growth.

An OFAH staff member was present at 2014 zone meeting locations in Brantford, Sudbury, Georgina, Thunder Bay, Red Lake, Port Hope, Mount Elgin, Owen Sound, Kirkland Lake, Atikokan, Noelville, Barrie, Fort Frances, Matawahan, Perth, New Liskeard and Midland.

The 86th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish and Wildlife Conference welcomed over 450 outdoors enthusiasts to the Delta Meadowvale Hotel and Conference Centre in Mississauga. In addition to the annual general meeting, the three-day event in March featured speakers on a range of outdoor-related topics, award presentations, delicious food and great entertainment. Presentation topics included migratory birds; the use of unmanned vehicles for aerial surveys; a panel discussion on the invasive Asian Carp featuring experts from the U.S. and Canada; talks by MNR staff on emerging techniques in fish and wildlife enforcement; moose management and firearms regulations. Workshops included fishing tips and tricks, food plots, and proper selection and use of hunting and fishing knives. The OFAH Get Outdoors Youth Leadership Conference also welcomed an enthusiastic group of youth from eight to 18 years of age for two days of activities and field trips.

86th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish and Wildlife Conference





The 40th annual OFAH Conservation Lottery awarded more than \$322,000 in prizes, with proceeds going to fish and wildlife conservation programs.

FUNDRAISING

Vehicles, boats and motors, trailers, ATVs, a diamond ring and more went home to new owners thanks to their \$2 investment in the 40th Annual OFAH Conservation Lottery. As grand as the prizes in the main draw were, the biggest winners remained the fish and wildlife conservation programs supported by the lottery.

40th Annual OFAH Conservation Lottery



The OFAH Conservation Lottery is the OFAH's largest single fundraiser outside membership dues and remains a terrific way to support the OFAH and conservation programs across the province.

Our 2014 lottery ticket sales totalled 42,366 books, an increase of 5,000 books from the year before.

In 2014, lottery winners took home fantastic prizes while supporting conservation efforts in their communities and beyond.

The 40th lottery grand prize winners hailed from LaSalle, St. Thomas, Pickering, Thorndale, Ottawa and Miller Lake.

For a price of only \$2 per ticket there were some fantastic prizes to be won.

A complete list of winners was posted at www.ofah.org/lottery.

The line-up of prizes totalled more than \$322,000. We'd like to recognize Dodge (Chrysler Canada), our major vehicle sponsor;

The VOICE of Anglers and Hunters

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.

Jayco trailers also became a major sponsor in 2014 and provided a 15-foot travel trailer for the 6th grand prize.

Anyone selling more than five books of tickets was eligible to order a beautiful limited edition print by Port Perry artist Clinton Jammer called "Iridescence."

All told, 238 framed prints were sold and over 1,200 members qualified and received an unframed print. The OFAH thanks all those who purchased and sold tickets.

Nevada Lottery

The financial reports for the first three quarters of 2014 were all filed with the Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario.

We are operating under a three-year licence for the period of October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2017 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 sixteen outlets. We purchased 46 and sold 48 boxes of tickets in the first nine months, resulting in net proceeds of \$8,750.

We have been able to transfer the approved budget amount from 2014 to the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre in support of education programs at the facility.

We continue to have discussions with the Ontario Charitable Gaming Association about project options and funding streams available to provincial charities like ours to enhance sales.

The OFAH has been involved in break open ticket fundraising since 1993 and even though our current activity is well below the returns we were receiving 20 years ago, it remains a good streamlined program from a management and reporting perspective.

It is also a great way to provide additional funding to OFAH programs that need financial support to fulfill their valuable mandates to

our members and the public at large.

Conservation Dinners

In 2014, 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.

Wildlife Calendar and Christmas Cards

The 2014 OFAH Ontario Wildlife calendar was mailed in October and, as an added bonus this year, we also produced a special edition Ontario Whitetail Deer wall calendar for our members to display in their garage or hunt camp. Donations for the 2014 Ontario Wildlife Calendar continued to pour in until year end, with an average donation of \$18.50.

OFAH Christmas cards also generated revenues and once again reached the projected sales goal and sold out.





NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
PLAN



PLAN
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Fostering relationships with government and policymakers means the OFAH voice is loud and effective, allowing us to successfully represent the interests of our members.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & POLICY

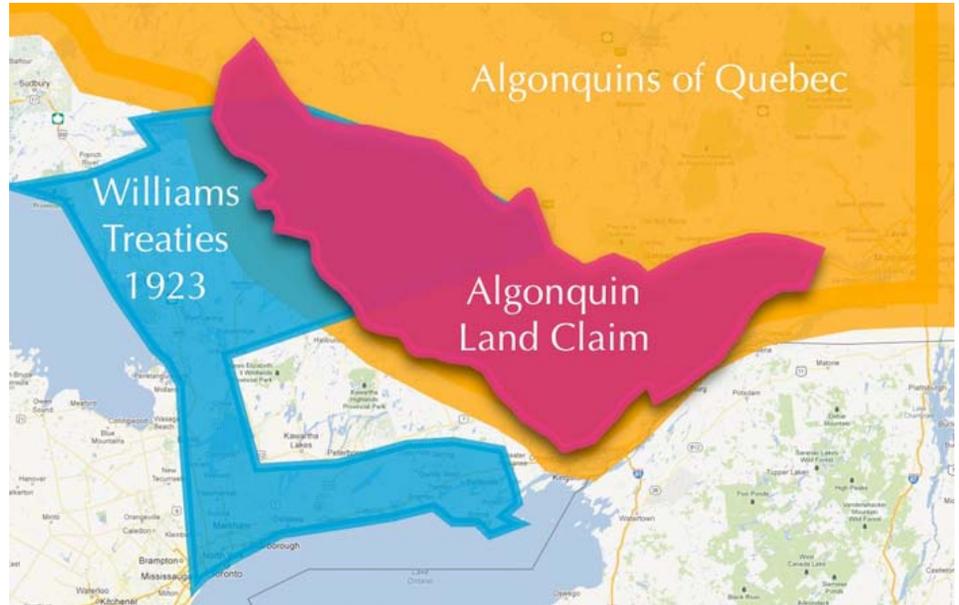
With an Ontario election bringing in new faces and new roles for MPPs, two major Supreme Court rulings on First Nation land rights, new federal firearms legislation and the opportunity to talk one-on-one with Prime Minister Stephen Harper on conservation, 2014 proved to be a busy year for the OFAH on government affairs and policy.

Supreme Court Decisions - Tsilhqot'in and Grassy Narrows (Keewatin)

Two Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) decisions in 2014 in cases brought forward by First Nations could have a profound impact on natural resources development, hunting and fishing and Aboriginal land claims in the future. In the case of the Tsilhqot'in Nation v British Columbia, the court ruled that Aboriginals still own their ancestral lands (unceded lands) unless they signed away ownership as part of a treaty with the government.

The case, also known as the William case, hinged on a Tsilhqot'in claim to a 1,750-square-kilometre area in south central B.C. In essence, the court recognized the existence of Aboriginal title on land and built on the 1997 Delgamuukw decision that Aboriginal title still existed in the absence of treaties, and the decision may weigh heavily on unresolved land claims such as the Algonquin Land Claim. First Nations have celebrated the B.C. decision, however, the court also imposed some restrictions and very specific reasons why governments can infringe on Aboriginal title. Governments still have the right to regulate the land base where Aboriginal title is claimed or proven if there is a substantial or compelling public purpose.

The court also ruled that despite the assertion by First Nations, provincial governments will retain regulatory authority over land obtained by Aboriginal people through the courts or claim negotiations. The federal government, which had intervened in the case to push for a narrower definition of Aboriginal title, is



currently studying the decision.

In the second case, Grassy Narrows First Nation v Ontario (Natural Resources), the SCC ruled the province has the authority to grant timber licences on the group's treaty lands; provinces are able to regulate over areas within their jurisdiction even when that impacts on Aboriginal and treaty rights; and the province is the sole authority when it comes to managing natural resources. Grassy Narrows First Nation had argued the province had no authority to grant timber licenses on the group's treaty lands.

The SCC dismissed the Keewatin appeal, ruling Ontario has the right to "take up" lands in the treaty area near Kenora under provisions of the Constitution and interpretation of the treaty. The decision complements the Tsilhqot'in decision and affirms that provinces are able to regulate areas within their jurisdiction, even when that regulation may impact on Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Algonquin Land Claim (ALC)

Public activity on the ALC slowed considerably in 2014. However, the Tsilhqot'in case ruling may be a game changer.

The decision clarifies that Aboriginals who were nomadic or semi-nomadic can establish title to large tracts of land by using and occupying that land through traditional

hunting, fishing, trapping, and other traditional harvesting activities. Prior to that, precedent had established that nomadic groups could only have small areas (specific sites of settlement) as Aboriginal title.

The Algonquins have stated publicly they will be reviewing the Tsilhqot'in decision and how it might strengthen their legal claim for Aboriginal title in the Ottawa Valley and their ongoing position in treaty negotiations.

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 traditions of non-Algonquin settlement, participation in outdoor recreational activities in the land claim area and recognition that the claim lies within a settled landscape which is home to over 1.4 million people.

Williams Treaty

In 2012, the seven First Nations that fall under the Williams Treaties of 1923 filed suit in federal court arguing the 91-year-old agreement did not include a surrender of pre-existing rights to hunt and fish in their traditional territories. The motion claims previous Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) rulings in 1994 and 1996 upholding the validity of the Williams Treaties erred in interpretation. The Williams Treaty extinguished any and all special hunting

and fishing rights for the seven First Nations covered by the Treaty.

Since 1923, everyone who fishes and hunts in south-central Ontario abides by the same hunting and fishing regulations. 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. The OFAH has been seeking to intervene in the court case to ensure the SCC's prior decisions in 1994 and 1996 are fully respected.

Unlike previous actions, both the federal and provincial governments have supported this recent claim in court. The province also took the position that pending the disposition of the case, except in certain circumstances, Ontario would not take enforcement action against members of the Williams Treaties First Nations when harvesting for food, social or ceremonial purposes, despite the conditions of the Treaty that have been in place for almost a century.

The OFAH legal counsel also filed a notice of motion in the Williams case to intervene in the proceedings in 2013 for the purpose of dismissing or staying the action. The motion was denied in February 2014 and the OFAH's appeal of that decision was dismissed. In October, the OFAH prepared a motion seeking leave to appeal to the SCC.

Common Sense Act

The federal government introduced Bill C-42, the Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act, in October, which will help reduce administrative burdens – red tape, paperwork – to Canada's law-abiding firearms owners while strengthening firearms prohibitions for those who are convicted of domestic violence offences. The OFAH has worked with Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Steven Blaney and his staff, both



independently and through the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee, to encourage the government to make these and other common sense changes in the future. The OFAH will testify as the bill goes before the Standing Committee on Public Safety in 2015.

One-on-One with Prime Minister Harper

In October, the federal government asked the OFAH to host a special one-on-one discussion between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and OFAH Executive Director Angelo Lombardo. The two discussed a variety of topics relating to hunting, angling and conservation in front of a crowd of 100 invited guests in Sault Ste. Marie.

The OFAH was privileged to act as moderator and took the opportunity to raise issues related to anglers and hunters such as the role of the National Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel (HAAP), recent changes to the Fisheries Act and the National Conservation Plan.

Special Purpose Account

The OFAH was a strong proponent for establishing the Fish & Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA) and we continue to have a vested interest in ensuring it operates at its full potential. For this reason, we have been an active participant in the MNRF's SPA Revenue Generation Project since 2012.

In 2014, the OFAH submitted a response to the MNRF's proposals to generate revenue for the SPA. We supported the MNRF's intent to generate revenue for the SPA to support fish and wildlife management in the province, but stressed that it cannot be done solely on the backs of anglers and hunters who already pay a lot. In particular, we voiced our opposition to the proposal to implement a senior's fishing licence (at 80% of the normal fee), and the proposal to add a \$2 processing fee to all licence and outdoor card purchases. Ontario's anglers and hunters are not satisfied with increasing fees in the face of diminishing government spending on fish and wildlife management. If anglers and hunters are asked to pay more money for the same level of fish and wildlife management, then it will continue to be viewed as taxation.

We recommended other ways to generate revenue for the SPA without simply taxing anglers and hunters. Specifically, we asked the MNRF to collect money that is owed to the SPA (e.g. unpaid fines), re-allocate revenue not currently going to the SPA (e.g. Land Use Permits), provide value-added fishing and hunting opportunities and actively promote fishing and hunting to recruit new anglers and hunters. We have been successful in keeping the MNRF from implementing a senior's fishing licence fee for now and have continued

discussions on how to generate revenue for the SPA without causing undue hardship for anglers and hunters.

Cruelty to Animals Bill

On April 9, NDP MP Isabel Morin (Notre Dame de Grace – Lachine) introduced a private member's bill intended to amend the cruelty to animal sections of the Criminal Code. Much of the language in the bill is reminiscent of previous animal cruelty legislation the OFAH and other groups across the country have fought against and defeated.

The OFAH has worked with the agricultural and fur industry to craft a response to all Conservative and Liberal MPs, asking them to defeat the bill at second reading and not allow it to proceed to committee.

Federal Lyme Disease Act

On Oct. 16, Bill C-442, sponsored by Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, was reinstated from a previous session of Parliament.

The bill moved fairly quickly through the legislative process, particularly for a private member's bill. It received third reading in the House of Commons on June 11 and was referred to the senate. Since that time, the bill has received second reading in the senate, and has been referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. There has been increasing concern over the rise in the number of Lyme disease cases. Studies have suggested that by 2020, up to 80% of the population in eastern and central Canada could be living in areas at risk of Lyme disease.

The legislation proposes to create a national Lyme disease strategy in anticipation of the future spread of the disease. Given that Lyme disease is caused by a bacteria spread to humans through the bite of certain (deer) ticks, putting hunters in a higher-risk category, the OFAH has voiced its willingness to support the bill and to testify at the committee.

At the provincial level, Haldimand-Norfolk MPP Toby Barrett introduced Bill 27 on Oct. 27. In short, the bill aims to establish a surveillance program to assist with the prevention and treatment of diseases such as Lyme disease.

Reciprocal Suspensions

Reciprocal suspensions are when a person's right to hunt, fish or harvest fish or wildlife is suspended in one jurisdiction and honoured in other jurisdictions. Suspensions are one of the most effective tools to ensure compliance and can be more effective than fines. In 1989, 42 U.S. states came together under the Wildlife Compact to honour suspensions in each others jurisdictions.

This would prevent offenders from hopping from one jurisdiction to another to continue

activities that are illegal and harmful to conservation. The Canadian Natural Resources Law Enforcement Chiefs have called for the creation of this system, which is also supported by the Canada Wildlife Directors Committee.

Some provinces already have the legislative/regulatory infrastructure in place, while others (Ontario included) will need to amend legislation and regulations to participate. The OFAH has spoken to the minister of Natural Resources and Forestry about the issue and is spearheading the effort in Canada to create a similar system with a national database likely maintained by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) that all provinces and territories can access.

ATV Bills

Two new bills aim to update Ontario's out-of-date ATV regulations. Bill 58, introduced by Conservative MPP Norm Miller, would update the Ontario Highway Traffic Act to include new classes of all-terrain vehicles, including two-up models and utility task vehicles.



Bill 46, introduced by NDP MPP John Vanthof, would amend the Act to allow the operation of multi-person all-terrain vehicles on highways. The OFAH strongly supports both bills and has been seeking changes to the Act for 10 years to recognize the growing number of new types of off-road vehicles on the market.

National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day

Northumberland-Quinte West MP Rick Norlock saw his Private Members' Bill C-501: An Act Respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day receive Royal Assent in November.

The OFAH has long supported Mr. Norlock's bill, which offers an opportunity for Canadians to enjoy the third Saturday in September in the great outdoors to honour a proud part of Canada's history.

Trespass Act

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones introduced Bill 36 in November. If passed, the bill provides for an increase in the provincial penalties

for trespass on private property, and would increase the current maximum fine for damages from \$1,000 to \$25,000.

It would also increase the minimum fine from \$50 to \$500. The OFAH supports the increased damage awards for trespassing.

Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel

The federal Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel (HAAP), chaired by the federal Minister of Environment and Minister of Fisheries and Oceans met three times in 2014.

Created by the Prime Minister in 2012 at the National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Congress, the work of the panel accelerated rapidly over the last year, and routinely deals with agendas containing over two dozen items, largely national in scope. As a result of the December meeting, a sub-committee of HAAP is preparing a report to the Prime Minister outlining some of the panel's accomplishments to date and proposing several national programs for consideration.

The two HAAP spokespeople (one representing the OFAH and the other representing the Canadian Federation of Outfitter Associations) have been invited to make a presentation to the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers in February 2015, outlining the work of the panel and the impact that fishing, hunting, trapping and outfitting have on the Canadian economy.

Federal Wild Game and Fish Reception

On Dec. 1, the OFAH and representatives from all fish and wildlife affiliates across Canada hosted the 2nd Annual Wild Game and Fish Reception in the House of Commons, Centre Block. Over 110 MPs, senators and staff attended what is rapidly becoming one of the go-to events on the Hill each year. The event provides an opportunity to speak with MPs and senators from all parties, and it is an ideal venue for advocating on behalf of fish and wildlife in a less formal setting.

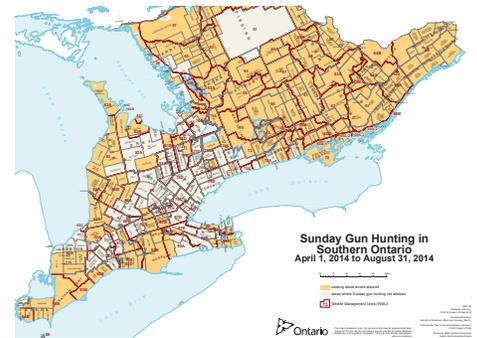
Discharge Bylaws

When a municipality creates, reviews or amends its discharge of firearms bylaw, it affects all law-abiding firearm owners in that area. Whether you are an occasional recreational shooter or an avid hunter, discharge bylaws by nature are made to restrict an activity, and in many cases, prohibit it altogether.

For years, the OFAH has been the leader in advocating for the rights of all law-abiding firearms users when it comes to this matter. Countless hours have been spent reviewing bylaws, providing recommendations, educating the public, municipal staff and

elected representatives and speaking before councils each year to help ensure the rights and traditions of recreational shooters and hunters are understood when these bylaws are reviewed. Over the course of 2014, the OFAH was involved in discharge of firearms bylaws in the following communities: King, Port Hope, Belleville, North Bay, Thorold, Uxbridge, Kirkland Lake, Lake of Bays, Stirling-Rawdon and Meaford. OFAH head office staff also made a presentation on discharge of firearms bylaws at the Chief Firearms Officer's (CFO) range day seminar in Orillia.

Sunday Gun Hunting



Sunday gun hunting in Southern Ontario has been, and continues to be, a significant OFAH success story. Since its inception in September 2005, the number of municipalities that permit Sunday gun hunting in Southern Ontario has grown to 160. Each year, OFAH staff attend numerous municipal committees and council meetings to champion Sunday gun hunting. This year was no exception as the OFAH was involved with successfully advocating Sunday gun hunting in the Archipelago, Asphodel-Norwood, Beckwith, Muskoka Lakes, Kilarney, Adelaide-Metcalf, Warwick, Middlesex Centre and Strathroy-Caradoc municipalities.

Manitoba Wildlife Restitution Act

In April, the Manitoba government introduced a bill entitled The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution). The bill amends the Manitoba Fisheries Act and the Wildlife Act. Persons convicted of offences that involve unlawful harvesting or possession of fish or wildlife will be liable to the government for their value.

The value of each species of fish and wildlife will be established by regulation, and offenders will not be able to obtain a fishing or hunting licence until they have paid the amount owing. This liability will be in addition to any fines normally levied under the two acts.

The OFAH has spoken to the Ontario government about this concept and anticipates further discussions in the new year.



Angler & Hunter Television garners more than five million viewers on four networks, bringing exciting fishing and hunting adventures to life each season.

COMMUNICATIONS

As outlined in the OFAH Strategic Plan, many of the organization's goals are directly related to communications. As such, 2014 was another busy year with OFAH leading dozens of successful media campaigns, overseeing the re-design of the ofah.org website, the re-design of Angler & Hunter Hotline and retooling our social media strategies, which increased our social media outreach by roughly 40% in less than a year.

In the News

In March 2014, the OFAH launched a new proactive media strategy that put our programs, advocacy, outreach and views into the media spotlight at much higher rates.

Our staff and spokespeople were consistently on the air, in print and before the cameras on issues ranging from conservation, fish and wildlife management, important federal and provincial legislation and our many outreach programs.

In 2014, the OFAH issued nearly 70 press releases. While provincial and national press releases, which are distributed through Marketwire and posted to our website and social media, remain a valuable tool for reaching media, government and industry leaders, proactive media relations proved a much more effective tool in 2014 for getting the OFAH voice heard.

Making an Impact

Through daily media monitoring, social media outreach and proactive media relations, the OFAH launched dozens of successful media campaigns on topics ranging from a new invasive species app, the spring bear hunt, new turkey seasons, invasive plants, Asian carps, moose tag cuts, deer tags, firearms legislation, Ontario Family Fishing Events, hunter safety, MNRF service fees, community hatcheries, hunting ethics, women and hunting and the OFAH National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP).

The VOICE of Anglers and Hunters



Social Media

The OFAH revamped its approach to social media in 2014 in an attempt to reach a broader and younger demographic who tend to turn to smart phones and social media as their primary source of news and information.

With a focus on creating and distributing outdoors content and news and engaging followers from their turkey blinds and bass boats, the OFAH is building its social media brand as a go-to place for all things outdoors.

The result was a roughly 40% increase in social media following in 2014. The OFAH is confident the new social media strategy will continue to build its communications reach.

Angler & Hunter Hotline



Angler & Hunter Hotline remains one of the best tools for directly communicating with our members.

In 2014, the members-only magazine was given a complete re-design from cover to cover.

We're using info graphics and images and in-depth features to better bring to life the issues that matter most to our members.

The 16-page magazine is produced 10 times per year and appears in Ontario OUT of DOORS magazine as part of OFAH membership.

OFAH.org

OFAH's online presence remains an essential element to the organization's communication strategies.

We continue to build the website into a vast, one-stop hunting, angling and conservation resource.

We led an ambitious website re-design in 2014 (with a 2015 launch date) to make the site more engaging and easier to navigate.

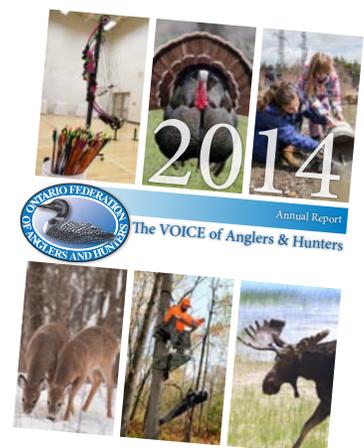
PSAs, Brochures and Other Communications

The OFAH created two new radio public service announcements in 2014 to coincide with the fall gun hunt and also produced updated versions of our Responsible Hunting brochure that is handed out to participants of the Ontario Hunter Education Program.

Annual Report

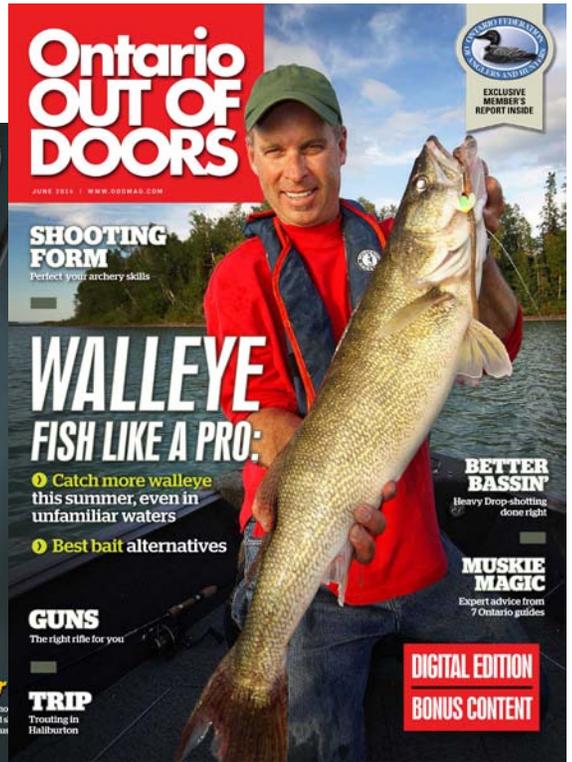
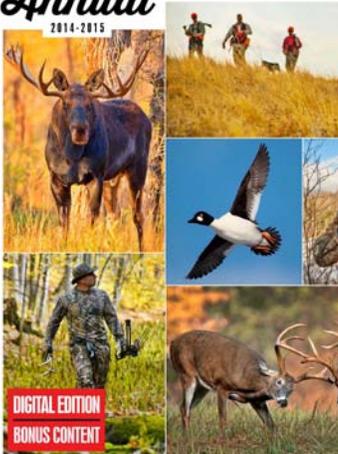
After sticking with the status quo for years, the OFAH re-designed the OFAH annual report in 2014, aiming for a more colourful, engaging, easy-to-read product that better highlighted the fruits of our labours.

Using engaging graphics and a more common sense approach to organization, our aim was to make a product that does service to the many programs we operate and issues we tackle on behalf of our members.



HUNTING

Annual
2014-2015



Ontario OUT of DOORS

Ontario OUT of DOORS (OOD) is the hunter and angler's go-to source for fishing and hunting information in print, online and social media.

The OOD brand grew again in 2014. The magazine was ranked Canada's "Best Read" outdoors publication according to the Print Measurement Bureau's national survey. OOD's Facebook fans surpassed 5,300, with a monthly reach of double that and over 3,500

people followed @OODMag on Twitter.

OOD publishes 10 issues a year, and is available three ways: in an OFAH membership package, by subscription, and on newsstand.

Gone Digital

A second grant from the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) helped OOD launch a digital edition of the magazine in August. This online version features extra photos, embedded videos and sound clips.

Subscribers can choose print only, enhanced digital only or the "fully connected" option, which includes both editions. Digital and fully connected subscribers have access to every issue in the 2014 archive, as well as the digital special interest publication, *Deer: The Master Guide to Hunting Whitetails*.

OOD Online

More than 900,000 unique visitors and approximately 11 million page views are a great indication that www.oodmag.com was a favourite destination in 2014. The online forum, where anglers and hunters can connect with like-minded outdoors enthusiasts, boasts 12,700 members and is growing.

For a second year, OOD was a finalist in the Canadian Online Publishing Awards (COPAs) "Best Use of Social Media" category. On average, OOD receives 5,500 referrals a month through Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, and Pinterest.

The OOD video library grew to over 258 clips, with more than 900 subscribers enjoying access to phenomenal fishing and hunting how-to videos. To date, the OOD YouTube channel has attracted nearly 600,000 views.

Nationally, OOD rose a spot to 29 out of 404 on the list of top Canadian magazines by paid copies distributed. Thanks to its loyal readers, in a time when many magazines are in decline, OOD is moving in the opposite direction.



Angler & Hunter Television

This past season was one of the most successful in our television production's 22-year history. While the landscape of how people watch TV has changed, television remains the most effective way to get messaging directly to the masses.

Angler & Hunter Television has over 5 million Canadians tuning in each year over four networks that currently air our program. Never before have we been able to access such a large scale of outdoors enthusiasts and share our message of ethical hunting, fishing and conservation practices.

Corporate supporters are reinforcing this statement and climbing on board to access our dedicated audience. Hunting and fishing have never been more popular and our list of corporate supporters has never been so impressive. Our sponsors include Canadian Tire, Mercury Outboards, Lund Boats, Browning firearms, Winchester Ammunition, Minn Kota, Hummingbird, Yamaha ATVs, Rapala, Yukon Gear, Wildgame Innovations, Camillus Knives, Excalibur Crossbow, Ameristep and Flextone calls.

Supporting sponsors also make a big contribution and include Ontario *OUT OF DOORS*, DT Powersports, Lucky Strike and JJ Stewart Motors.

Through 2014, we captured exciting fishing and hunting adventures on film, including the return of Ontario's spring bear season and three episodes highlighting youth hunting.

The Outdoor Life Network (OLN), WILD TV, and our regional broadcast partners CHEX TV and Global Thunder Bay have proven to be excellent homes for our program. *AHTV* is available via satellite on Bell ExpressVu, Rogers Digital Cable, and Shaw Direct.

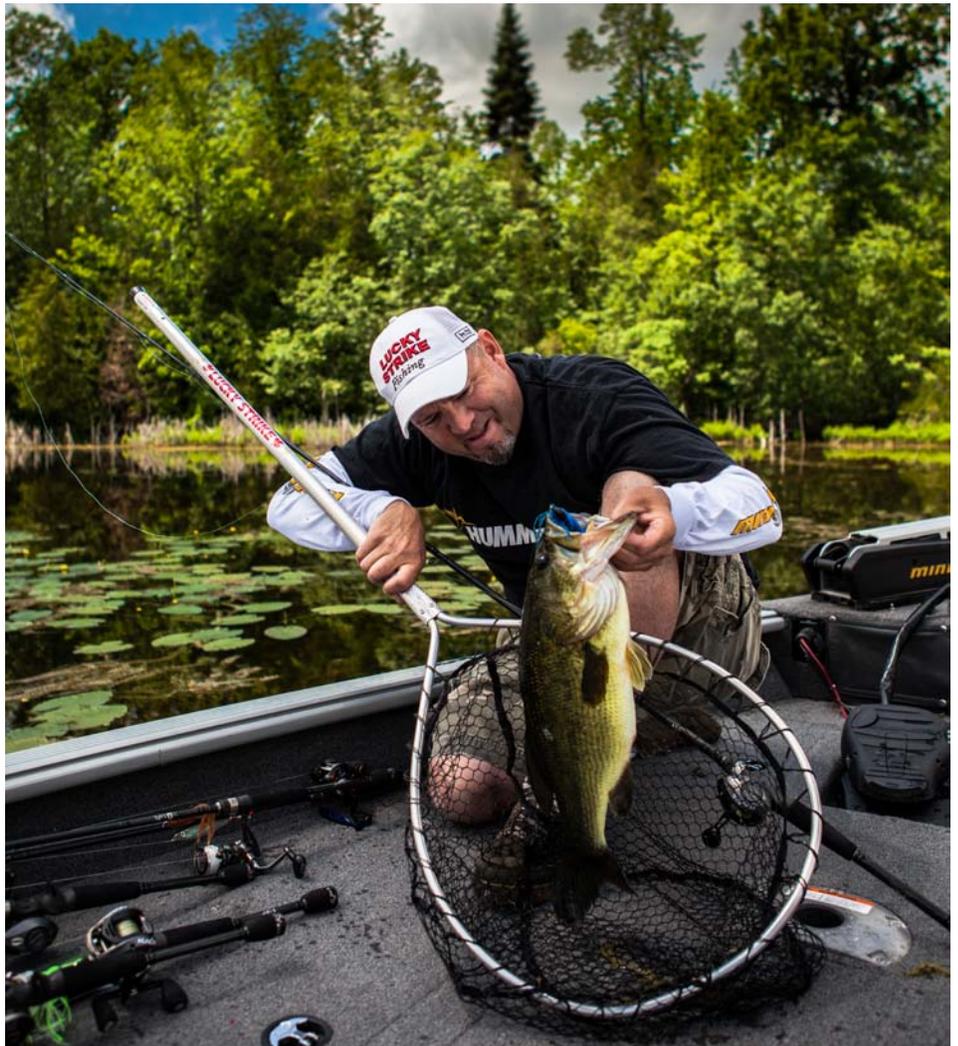
The outdoors is one of the most competitive segments of television in North America, and we intend to keep *AHTV* at the top by utilizing the latest HD digital capture methods making it one of Canada's best-produced outdoor programs and the benchmark that all others will strive to meet. Visit www.ahtv.com for a current list of episodes and local air times or to watch episodes online via YouTube.

Angler & Hunter Radio

New host and lifetime outdoorsman Randy Jennings stepped into the radio booth to take the reins of *Angler and Hunter Radio* in 2014.



The VOICE of Anglers and Hunters



Along with regular features on fishing and hunting, the radio program covered timely topics that affect Ontario anglers and hunters. Jennings spent 2014 interviewing high profile guests from the outdoor industry and government. These featured interviews were promoted in our Ontario *OUT of DOORS* ads and across the *Angler and Hunter Radio*

network and were available as podcasts online at ahradio.ca and WRVO radio network.

Angler and Hunter Radio was proudly sponsored this year by Canadian Tire, Yamaha, Alumacraft, Kingfisher, Camillus, Cabelas, Fitzsimmons Financial and Ontario *OUT of DOORS*. We thank our listeners for their ongoing support.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



With a single page it is impossible to touch on all of the challenges and successes 2014 served up for OFAH staff and board members, so please be sure to read the annual report in its entirety and pick up a copy to share with family and friends.

As in any year, 2014 brought with it reasons to celebrate and reasons to worry, opening up new hunting and angling opportunities in some areas, while putting up barriers in others.

Beginning with the good, this year saw the launch of the spring bear hunt pilot project, which opened up the hunt to select areas in Ontario for the first time since 1999. While this was great news and we certainly welcome the return of this time-honoured tradition, your Federation will continue to work toward the ultimate goal of seeing a full-fledged bear hunt across all Ontario bear country.

In August, the OFAH trained its first cohort of National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) instructors, introducing the popular program to 13 pilot schools across Ontario and laying the groundwork for this curriculum-based program that has the potential to expose international-style target archery to thousands of youth in hundreds of schools across Ontario.

Strong partnerships have always been a cornerstone of OFAH successes and, in this regard, 2014 was no different. Lake Simcoe welcomed back a Lake Herring (Cisco) fishery for the first time in 13 years, a result of collaboration between the OFAH and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). The Community Hatchery Program, administered by OFAH on behalf of the MNRF, celebrated a banner year, providing volunteer fish hatcheries with a record amount of funding this year.

The Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program reached major milestones in 2014, while the Invading Species Awareness Program led the fight against invasive species, including a \$450,000 Asian carps awareness campaign in partnership with DFO. Other stalwart partnerships such as the Ontario Hunter Education Program and Ontario Family Fishing Events continue to produce Ontario's next generation of hunters and anglers. Our award-winning Get Outdoors youth leadership camp was proud to partner with Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities to provide first-time hunting, fishing and camping opportunities to a new demographic of youth.

But 2014 was also marked by drastic reductions in moose tags in Northern Ontario WMUs and deer tags in Southern Ontario WMUs. We continue to voice our members' frustration at the lack of transparency behind these decisions and have advocated for a more proactive approach to wildlife management that doesn't fall solely on the backs of Ontario hunters.

When the government proposed a seniors' fishing licence, our members responded in droves, speaking out strongly against it. We took that message to the province and the idea has been shelved, at least for now. Unfortunately, it will be more expensive than ever to hunt and fish in the province this year after the government introduced a \$2 service fee on hunting and fishing licences and the outdoors card. Our members see this as a tax on anglers and hunters, who already pay for 70% of the province's fish and wildlife programming.

The OFAH continues to encourage the government to look at alternative options to generating fish and wildlife funding, such as removing barriers to hunting and fishing opportunities, collecting unpaid fines and increasing the amount of money the province's Consolidated Revenue Fund contributes to the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account.

I must acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our head office staff. On behalf of the board of directors, our members and clubs, thank you for the long hours, dedication and hard work that make the OFAH the leading conservation organization that it is today.

I also want to thank the board of directors for their support and for selflessly giving their time in their zones, at the board table and on various advisory committees.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn Rivard". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Glenn Rivard
OFAH President

OFAH ZONE REPORTS

Zone A

Chair – Jeremy Funk

OFAH Zone A's year started January 25 in Red Lake with our annual general meeting and elections. We presented our two zone awards at this meeting.

The Fred Aaron Award (given to the club deemed to have contributed the most to conservation that year) was presented to the Sioux Lookout Anglers & Hunters. The Larry Nault Award (given to the individual in our zone who best promoted conservation) was presented to long-time OFAH Zone A executive committee member Bruce Hamilton of Fort Frances. This meeting also marked Bruce's retirement from the zone executive. The membership of the zone, the executive, and I, would like to thank Bruce for all his years of service to both the OFAH and the zone.

The members present at this meeting were pleased to have an opportunity to, once again, meet and talk with OFAH President Bill Blackwell and OFAH zone/member and club services liaison Brian McRae.

In early May, Zone A met again in Atikokan, a well-attended meeting providing the opportunity to tour the Atikokan Sportsmen's Conservation Club Walleye hatchery. We were also able to attend their fundraising dinner and live auction. With our zone covering such a vast area and our clubs being largely removed from each other, it was a good opportunity for the representatives present to see how other clubs do things.

Zone A hit the ground running in the summer as clubs across the zone provided community outreach projects, hatchery programs, educational outings, clean-ups with the MNRF, programs and events aimed specifically towards youth and families, programs geared towards introducing women into the outdoors, fishing derbies and tournaments, archery and trap shoots, barbecues, trade and sport shows and mentorship events covering a variety of activities and interests.

Earlier in the year, OFAH head office had announced that after much careful planning, we were in a position to start offering the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) at the beginning of the school year in the fall. In early August, I was able to travel to Bolton to take part in the three-day NASP



Basic Archery Instructor Trainer program. The first two days covered instructor training and on the third day, teachers from the first NASP pilot schools arrived for their training. It was very encouraging to see two schools from our zone represented – Beaver Brae High School from Kenora and Open Roads Public School from Dryden. As I write this report, there are four more schools within our zone working on becoming NASP participants.

As summer carried on, our thoughts turned towards hunting. Many of us were shocked when the MNRF announced the drastic cuts to the moose adult validation tags (AVTs). Of all of the wildlife management units (WMUs) that had AVT cuts, one of the top three was within our zone, with several other WMUs in our zone also having experienced significant cuts.

To say we were disappointed with the cuts would be an understatement; however, the MNRF did vow to work with the OFAH to review the moose program. The MNRF held three meetings with stakeholders, and I can confidently say there was a strong OFAH presence at all of them. I attended the last of the three moose program focus group review sessions held in Thunder Bay, where not only was the OFAH well-represented as a whole, but our zone had two members of the executive and at least two other members present. Our

concerns and suggestions were given but, like everyone else, we have to wait and see what the MNRF does in response.

We were disappointed to learn the MNRF has no plan right now to reinstate the spring bear hunt across the province and/or the whole of our zone for 2015.

We understand they have set it up as a two-year pilot project and 2014 was only the first year; however, numerous WMUs in our zone seem to have an abundance of bears and related issues and in a few communities, documented attacks. Several of our clubs believe the spring hunt should be reinstated and will continue to ask for it.

Members of the executive and the zone stay active, current, informed, and at the table on all of the issues facing our area: access to roads and trails, land claims, mining operations, fish and wildlife populations and habitat issues. Executive and club members stay active fighting for the rights of hunters and anglers across Northwestern Ontario.

Once again, this was a busy and active year for our clubs and will go down in the books as having been a good year across the zone. The programs and events our clubs offer and the work our members do, both publicly and behind the scenes, are important to our

pursuits as anglers and hunters. While we enjoyed a variety of successes in 2014, as a whole, our zone membership declined in the past year. It is only through our membership we and the OFAH are able to keep up with the events and programing we have now, or to take on new ones. If you are a member, suggest membership to a non-member. If you are reading this and are not a member, think about supporting a group that is working hard for your rights to hunt and fish.

I would like to thank all the zone members, clubs and the executive committee for all of their help and support for our zone in 2014 – thank you.

Zone B

Chair – Debbie Rivard

On July 11, Glenn and I attended a presentation by Manitoba MP Robert Sopuck, representing the Manitoba riding of Dauphin-Swan River-Marquette and chair of the National Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus. The goal of the meeting was to give local stakeholder groups an opportunity to voice their opinions regarding federal issues and what they would like to see in the future. There were about 40 people in attendance.

September saw the launch of the OFAH National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) in Ontario schools.

Westgate High School in Thunder Bay and George O'Neil Elementary School in Nipigon are participating in the pilot year for Zone B. We would like to acknowledge Lakehead Archers and Zone B for sponsoring Westgate High School and the Northwestern Ontario Sportsman's Alliance (NOSA) for sponsoring George O'Neil Elementary School. Without this support, these schools would not have been able to participate. Glenn and I, along with Kelley Wrigley, principal of George O'Neil Elementary School, attended the three-day training to become NASP Basic Archery Instructor Trainers (BAIT), and then on October 7, we trained three teachers at George O'Neil Elementary School to deliver NASP in the school. The teachers taking the training covered grades 4 to 8, so all eligible students will be participating during their gym classes. Glenn and I also attended Westgate High School on November 18 to observe a gym class participating in NASP.

On Sept. 21, Thunder Bay held an event called Exploring our Routes, during which Zone B hosted an intercity youth fishing event. As with the former Kam River Reel In event, the City of Thunder Bay provided worms, lifejackets and this year, two lifeguards at the site. The rods and reels were borrowed through the OFAH TackleShare Program from the local libraries. Approximately 35 kids participated. This event provided an opportunity for some youth to try

fishing who otherwise would not have had the chance.

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) task force has placed a firewood collection box at the Pigeon River border crossing to collect firewood coming into Canada across the border.

The local Canadian Food Inspection Agency has provided education to the Canadian Border Services Agency employees regarding what EAB is, why it is a threat, and why it is important to halt movement of firewood wherever possible. The firewood collection box has gathered a fair amount of wood over the past two camping seasons. A piece of ash, which had hosted an EAB gallery, was recently gathered from the Pigeon River firewood bin.

The CFIA feels this gallery was likely vacated before the tree was cut and processed into firewood and, therefore, did not likely represent an infestation threat. But it is a very clear and troubling indicator that EAB is nipping at our heels. A member of the EAB Task Force personally had an unconfirmed sighting of an EAB not far from the Canada/U.S. border. While an unconfirmed sighting is at best unreliable, it is noteworthy that it was someone well educated on EAB and its appearance that made the sighting. It is not a matter of if EAB will get here, but when.

Resolute Forest Products hosted community discussions on the future of Ontario's boreal forest. Public discussion on the boreal forest usually lacks the voices and experiences of the First Nations, northern communities and individuals whose livelihoods and well-being depend on strong, healthy, working forests. Resolute believes it is time for these voices to be heard. Resolute will be providing an overview on the state of the boreal forest, share perspectives and introduce an online discussion forum on boreal issues that they will be launching soon.

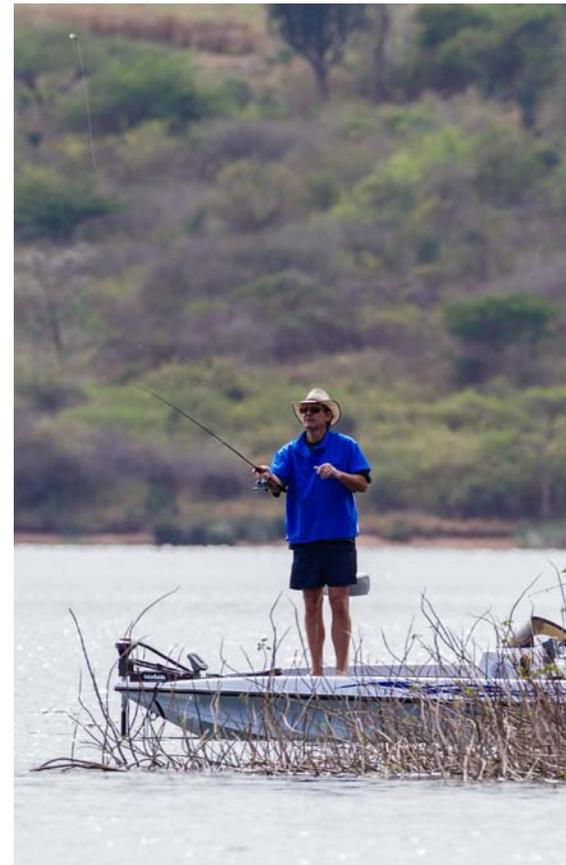
Other events attended include the Central Canada Outdoor Show, Northwestern Ontario Fur Trappers Convention, a workshop on building marten and weasel boxes, a booth at Eco-Superior Lake Superior Day and a 3D Shoot at Lakehead Archery Club, for which Zone B was a co-sponsor.

Zone C

Chair – Robert Allen

From issues involving ATVs on municipal streets to moose focus workshops, Zone C has been very busy working on your behalf to ensure issues regarding fish and wildlife conservation are foremost in our efforts.

Zone C has been involved on many fronts. Not only on a local level have we contributed to conservation, we have representation on FMZs 8 and 10, and we continue to provide our input to the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry as issues are posted that require our input.



There have been some changes in the zone executive and we are now seeing some younger people get involved. Special thanks go to Bob Bartlett from Kapuskasing for his many years served as a member of the zone executive and an active ambassador for the OFAH in Kapuskasing.

As a result of the decrease in moose adult validation tags in the Northeast, hunters continue to voice their concerns. I attended the fall meeting of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee in Kirkland Lake. At the meeting, the committee was advised that the MNRF should re-fly WMU 28. They said they would carry the message forward; however, this was definitely not going to happen. I also attended the workshop for the "moose project" in late November.

Resolute Forest Products closed the bridge over the Abitibi River north of Iroquois Falls. The bridge is primary access for numerous cottages and Land Use Permits north of town. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation secured the services of a consultant to undertake a more thorough examination of the structure.

The report was released mid-November and, as a result of the visual inspection, it is estimated that approximately \$900,000 is required to reopen the bridge to traffic with a five-ton limit. I spoke with Iroquois Falls' incoming mayor on the issue and he is confident the bridge will be reopened next year. The bridge is still owned by Resolute Forest Products,



and until such time that either the MTO or the MNRF take over the ownership, nothing will happen with the bridge.

The Town of Iroquois Falls has implemented a bylaw for ATVs on their streets. They did not include local roads; therefore, as a result, you can run on the town streets, but can't get out of town unless you go in the ditches along the highways. The town is promoting this and maintains it is their highway and their right of way and they would prefer the ATVs in the ditch over using the shoulder of the road. As a result, the ditches are fast becoming an environmental mess, vegetation is being destroyed and the ditches are heavily rutted. On another note regarding ATVs, John Vanthof, MPP for Temiskaming-Cochrane, has introduced a private member's bill to make the regulation the same for UTVs as it is for ATVs.

Zone D

Chair – Roy Polsky

During 2014, the zone dealt with many issues. Some never go away such as access restrictions, road closures and abandonment, FMZ zones fishing regulations and many wildlife issues.

The zone held three meetings in 2014. In January, the zone's annual general meeting and elections were held in Sudbury. Our guests for the meeting were OFAH President Bill Blackwell, OFAH zone/member & club services liaison Brian McRae, MNRF Sudbury

District Conservation Officer Steve Masse and Brokerlink representative from the Sudbury office, Jessica Young.

In May, the meeting was hosted by the Noelville Rod and Gun Club. The zone congratulated Bill Strain from the Little Current & District Fish and Game Club for being the recipient of the OFAH Larry Wallace Memorial Volunteer Award. Our September meeting was hosted by the Parry Sound Anglers and Hunters.

Due to the cold and heavy snow this past winter in the Manitoulin, Parry Sound, Sudbury, and Espanola areas, the deer were under tremendous pressure. The zone, along with the OFAH DeerSave Program, provided funding to help alleviate the problem by breaking trails, cutting browse and providing feed. The zone provided \$1,000 (Manitoulin area), \$500 (Espanola area) and \$500 (Parry Sound Area). The OFAH DeerSave Program provided \$4,000, \$5,000 and \$1,000, respectively. The deer population seems to have survived the winter fairly well, thanks in part to the help from local club members and organizations.

The Manitoulin Deer Management Advisory Committee met at the end of April in Kagawong and, at that time, the advisory group recommended to the MNRF to reduce antlerless tags and the tag quota was set. Some members wanted to cut the tags even further. During the fall hunt, quite a few does and fawns were harvested, but there was a decline in bucks, especially yearlings.

Some WMUs in the zone (42, 47, 49, and 50), had their first wild turkey hunt this spring. The West Arm/French River Wild Turkey Group, along with OFAH head office, had been canvassing the MNRF for quite a while and it came as a surprise when it was posted to the EBR.

The MNRF also posted an EBR for a spring bear season in WMUs 13, 14, 29, 30, 39, 41 and 42. This is a two-year pilot project and the season was from May 1 to June 15.

The Sudbury elk herd is holding its own with small increases in recruitment. We have no information on a solution to the nuisance elk problem in the North Shore and Algoma area. Some of the local farmers had contacted First Nations in the area to harvest some of the nuisance elk. In the absence of a population objective, all harvest is technically unsustainable, regardless of the user group.

The Lake Nipissing fishery is still an issue of great concern to area anglers. The Nipissing First Nation has said they will not be setting any nets until the opening of the recreational Walleye fishing season. There is no indication of what impact, if any, this will have on the status of the fishery.

Even though the Sudbury Forest Management Plan was approved for 2010 to 2020, there is still opposition to the removal of the gate

at Frog Creek on the Spanish Arm Road that allow motorized access to the area.

During the review for the five-year plan, 2015 to 2020, the MNRF Sudbury District manager had to deal with several issue resolutions from area cottagers and tourist outfitters.

On June 18, the zone's long-standing member and OFAH director of 44 years, Doug Ogston passed away. Doug's expertise, his devotion towards conservation issues and personality, will be sadly missed by all.

During the course of the year, the zone approved funding to local clubs and organizations such as United Walleye Club, Youth Trappers Course, Long Point Waterfowl, the 2014 Hunter Safety Instructor Conference and Manitoulin Streams.

Along with the \$2,000 the zone contributed to the OFAH DeerSave Program as mentioned above, the zone also provided prizes or cash donations to clubs who were holding a fundraiser.

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

Zone E

Chair – Gord Trylinski

Zone E had quite a busy year in 2014. The first meeting was held on March 30 at the Grand River Conservation Authority in Port Hope. Guest speakers Adam Challice, MNRF, and Jim Kelly, Muskies Canada, gave an excellent presentation on the nine years of work reestablishing the Muskie population in Lake Simcoe.

The MNRF had previously done this in 1936 to the 1960s; moving to the monitoring stage with less egg collection/fry stocking to netting and evaluation of population.

OFAH Zone E provided donations to Sporting Dogs, Municipality of Highlands East Volunteer Angler Diary Program, Lake Simcoe Muskie Project, Peterborough Children's Water Festival, South Central Ontario Fish & Wildlife Association's Big Buck Day and Kids' Fishing Day, Long Point 2nd Annual Youth Hunting & Conservation Course, Renfrew County Youth Mentorship Program, Griffith & Matawatchan Fish & Game Club, OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre - Get Outdoors Camps, OFAH DeerSave Fund and OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference.

I attended a Bancroft District MNRF group session explaining the transformation of the ministry.

In connection with the Greens Mountain Recreation Master Plan, Alan Fennell, representing Zone E, attended a six-day session. The focus groups tackled issues such as motorized and non-motorized user groups,

business and tourism user groups, the public, special interest user groups and adjacent landowners. As a result, a draft proposal has been developed, which includes hunting, fishing and conservation opportunities.

OFAH Zone E sponsored Firearms Safety & Hunter Education courses at the Griffith & Matawatchan Fish & Game Club (successfully producing seven young hunters), Renfrew County Youth Mentorship Program (successfully producing 20 young hunters) and Long Point Waterfowl (successfully producing 30 young hunters).

The Lake Simcoe Muskie Restoration Program started three weeks later due to ice, and collected three families which filled the Fleming College and MNRF Blue Jay Creek hatcheries. Fleming College stocked out 2,254 eight- to ten-inch fingerlings, making the total to date 11,042 fish. Blue Jay Creek had trouble getting the fry to convert to pellet feed, so as a result, had 82 fall fingerlings at the hatchery and will be keeping them for next year's release. To date, there were 140,000 fish stocked.

Darlington Waterfowl Hunt had upgrades

done to blinds that contributed to another successful hunt with more youth participation.

South Central Ontario Fish & Wildlife Association held their Big Buck Contest and Kids' Fishing Day.

Peterborough Children's Water Festival was very successful and saw many participants.

Bancroft Fish & Wildlife held an open house featuring their successful 3-D Archery Program that is open to both adult and youth participants.

Griffith & Matawatchan Fish & Game Club held their Ice Fishing Derby, which had more than 200 participants. Many prizes were donated by local and surrounding businesses. A barbeque followed that was enjoyed by all. In August, they held a free community appreciation pig roast that saw more than 150 attend.

Many enjoyed the "Red-neck Golf Tournament" held on a farmer's cow pasture! They also held a Big Buck Contest during their deer season.

Canadian Forces Lineman Association held their 16th annual Bill Hansen Memorial Family Fishing Day at Cory Lake, Petawawa, with more than 100 participants despite the rainy

weather. Prizes were donated by the OFAH.

The Renfrew County Mentorship Program group had 16 youth participants in the hunt on Waterfowl Heritage Day, at which 60 geese were harvested.

Arnprior Fish & Game Club continues to monitor the American Eel population in the Ottawa River and observed a high mortality rate below dams.

Eganville & District Fish & Game Club held the Annual Gun Show, one of their biggest fundraising events. This year's show was highly successful.

Zone F

Chair – Ed Giffin

In 2014, Zone F held three meetings at the Royal Canadian Legion in Perth.

On May 4, Zone F welcomed three guest speakers from the Kemptville District MNRF – manager Joy Sterritt, biologist Scott Smithers and partnership specialist Jeff Ward. Joy provided the meeting with information about the MNRF's transformation and impact on the Kemptville District, and that the district wants to connect more efficiently with client groups. Scott provided a brief overview of the fish and wildlife programs in the Kemptville District, explaining the winter of 2014 was particularly severe on wildlife resulting in a reduction of antlerless deer tags. He also talked about the FMZ Fisheries Management Plan, the fall Walleye index netting survey on Upper Rideau Lake, district concerns for put-grow-take lakes, broad-scale monitoring on Charleston and White Lakes in 2014 and an index netting survey on the South Nation River. Jeff indicated his job was to actively facilitate partnerships with the MNRF.

On August 28, Zone F welcomed special guests OFAH President Glenn Rivard and OFAH zone/member and club services liaison Brian McRae. Glenn provided updates to OFAH positions on the proposed seniors' fishing licence; Special Purpose Account (SPA) funding issues; updates on NASP; and the frustration encountered with the MNRF's telephone system. Brian provided an update on the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) properties and hunting opportunities for OFAH club members.

On November 30, Zone F held its annual meeting and elected its executive for 2015.

Zone F continues to support conservation projects and activities by OFAH affiliated clubs. In 2014, OFAH Zone F contributed funds to the following: Osgoode Township Fish, Game & Conservation Club for ice fishing equipment and ice fishing shelters; the 2014 Ontario Hunter Education conference; Kingston Fish & Game for their bass fishing derby; Youth Hunter Education Scholarship (YHES) Fund; NASP for Granite Ridge Secondary School in



Sharbot Lake; Grenville Fish & Game Club for their Special Events Trailer; Ottawa Region Walleye League's annual kids' ice fishing day; Kingston & District Fish & Game Club's annual kids' ice fishing and perch derbies; Perth Kids' fishing derby; Lanark County Stewardship Council Dalhousie Lake spawning and fish habitat project; the MNRF Elk Restoration Survey in the Bancroft District; Westport Area Outdoor Association's annual ice fishing derby; Napanee District Rod & Gun Club fundraising dinner print; Osgoode Township Fish, Game & Conservation Club's kids' ice fishing day; Eastern Ontario Deer Advisory Committee meetings; booth space at the Ottawa Valley Sportsman Show; Pierre Boucher's attendance at the Muskie Symposium; Lindsay Fumerton, archery student competitor; West Carleton Fish & Game Club fishing derby; Osgoode Township Fish, Game & Conservation Club firearms training equipment; and the 86th OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference silent auction contribution.

In total, the OFAH Zone F contributed \$9,367 in support of conservation projects in 2014.

The OFAH and NCC have signed an agreement to allow OFAH affiliated clubs and their members in Zone F hunting access to NCC properties for the fall of 2014 and 2015 spring seasons.

To date, the Grenville Fish & Game Club, the Osgoode Township Fish, Game & Conservation Club, the Giles Gang, and the Land O'Lakes Sporting Club have taken advantage of this opportunity. It is hoped that other clubs will have an opportunity to participate as more land is acquired by the NCC, and that this agreement will be extended to include other OFAH zones and their affiliated clubs.

Our zone continues to provide plot mules to OFAH members and clubs that are conveniently located in Brockville, Cloyne, Cornwall, Lanark, Osgoode and Sydenham. Secretary/treasurer Len Dickinson continues to maintain the Zone F website. The website is part of our commitment to provide information to Zone F members and clubs.

Zone G

Chair – Rob Hare

The November Zone G Annual General Meeting was hosted by the Ajax Rod and Gun Club at their club house in Ajax. The guest speaker was Keith Munro, who was the recipient of the OFAH/OFAH Zone G Wildlife Research Grant Award in 2013. 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.

The January Zone G quarterly meeting was hosted by the Georgina Sportsmen's Alliance. The meeting was held at District #3 of the



York Regional Police in Sutton, and the guest speakers were Gabby Liddel and Wil Wegman who spoke about the Muskie reintroduction program project in Lake Simcoe, as well as the wild rice planting project.

The Zone G April quarterly meeting was hosted by the Islington Sportsmen's Club at their facility in Caledon Hills. The guest speaker was Mario Bertrand from Gobble Stalker Calls, whose talk was geared to be a tune up for the upcoming spring turkey hunt.

The August Zone G quarterly meeting was hosted by the Metro Toronto Conservation Authority at their head office in Toronto. The guest speaker spoke about the rehabilitation work and fish monitoring the authority has undertaken on the Toronto waterfront.

Turkeys could be heard gobbling a week or two before the spring turkey season opened. After the harsh winter we experienced, it became apparent the birds that hatched last spring did not survive well throughout the winter.

It appears our white-tailed deer came through the winter in relatively good shape. I feel that one of the factors that greatly contributed

to our deer faring better than in some other areas of the province was the large amount of standing corn left over winter in the fields.

The much anticipated opening of trout season was celebrated again this year in Uxbridge at the Huck Finn Kids' Day Fishing event held at the Elgin Pond. The zone contributes half the money needed to purchase Rainbow Trout for the event, which are stocked into the pond. A number of members from the Pickering Rod and Gun Club were on hand loaning out fishing rods for the kids to use. The club also distributes bait (worms) for the kids to use, and contributes money toward the purchase of the trout. This year's event drew about 700 kids and their families out to fish in the pond.

The Cisco population within Lake Simcoe has shown positive trends in recent years. The ministry announced in late December that it is reintroducing a Cisco fishery on the lake for the first time in 13 years.

The zone and the Aurora District MNRF secured an electro-fishing boat from the Metro Toronto Region Conservation Authority. The intent of this electro-fishing is to gain

perspective on the relative status on each of the four tributaries spawning runs and to mark Walleye (through unique dorsal spine clips for each tributary) to assess tributary fidelity through recaptures in following years of electro-fishing.

During the evenings of April 22, 23, 24 and May 1, we electro-fished Talbot River, Beaver River, Pefferlaw Brook and the Black River. We caught a number of Walleye (with the exception of Black River), as well as five Muskie (from the Talbot River). Walleye were also detected through flashlight surveys in areas that could not be accessed with the boat.

The OFAH Zone G youth adventure camp which was held in July at the Islington Sportsmen's Club was a huge success. Twenty-four young men had the opportunity to attend this one-week adventure camp and 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 young ladies, 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.

Zone H

Chair – Wayne Forgrave

Fish Barrel Beach (aka Shale Beach) in Craigleith continues to be closed to parking. The parking lot was closed by the Ministry of Transportation citing safety concerns over cars entering the highway. When asked about the many residents' driveways entering the highway the reply was, they know the highway is there and take precautions accordingly. This beach has been a great place for anglers with mobility issues to fish, as it was wheelchair and car accessible.

Private Member's Bill 502 presented by MP Bruce Stanton has been passed in the House of Commons. The bill calls for the channel that connects Georgian Bay and the westerly limit of the Trent-Severn Waterway at Port Severn to be deepened, widened and straightened. This project will make navigation of the channel easier, safer, and will be beneficial to residents, visitors and businesses along the channel.

Coyotes continue to be a problem across the zone. Some residents have been asking municipalities to put a bounty on them. The OFAH in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs hosted two coyote workshops.

Springwater Provincial Park was closed in 2013. While camping in the park has always been prohibited, the Aboriginals have occupied it since April 2013. They have constructed an Aboriginal teaching lodge that is 60 feet long.

The lodge (one of three constructed in the last decade in the Simcoe County area) was the gathering place for 74 Aboriginal people taking part in a healing circle. The MNRF opened the gates so that the elderly and disabled could attend. Nearby the lodge is a Midewin sweat lodge and camping tents. Only First Nations, Métis, or people with Aboriginal ancestry are permitted to camp on the land. They claim the land is traditional land and a "spiritual place."

There are groups of concerned citizens trying to get the MNRF to reopen it to the public with volunteer help and financing.

Zone H donated \$500 to the Meaford Military Base to supply fishing equipment to soldiers away from home on training exercises, so that they can fish during their time off. The equipment will be kept in a locked cabinet and can be signed out and returned when they are finished.

Simcoe County Forests continue to create additional hunting opportunities for OFAH members, with the addition of two properties in the Midland/Penetanguishene area. They have added over 3,000 acres to the county forests in the past 10 years.

The University of Guelph, with the assistance of Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON), are doing netting on Colpoys Bay in Georgian Bay of Lake Trout, Lake Whitefish, and Rainbow Trout for analysis of stress. The study will include measurement of some internal organs and stress chemicals, which will likely be hormones, steroids, and other like chemicals.

Zone J

Chair – Brian Moore

As you 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. For example, this past fall Strathroy-Caradoc, Warwick and other municipalities have adopted Sunday gun hunting thanks to our collective efforts to convince them of the value of Sunday gun hunting.

Getting young apprentice hunters into the outdoors continues to be a priority. With great excitement, we recognize the excellent work of local clubs, along with support from various other stakeholders. Zone J has been the area of focus for the youth apprentice hunts.

The youth pheasant hunts are now a 10-year success story, having originated with Fingal and are now successfully taking place in several locations. I personally had the privilege to promote the OFAH and take part in the Twin Creeks Youth Hunting Day in March. Many of the Zone J executive members volunteer their time to assist with a local youth hunt. You can

find an excellent tool kit on-line for initiating, planning and implementing your own youth hunting event at www.youthhunting.ca.

Members of Zone J participated in the development of the information package to be shared with all.

Once again, Zone J hosted our annual youth campout. This past Father's Day weekend, we celebrated our 26th annual camp, hosted by the Brant Rod and Gun Club (BRGC). With 75 eager youth, the weekend was very busy, as we assisted with introducing youth to many new outdoor activities, including archery, pellet guns, lure making, waterfowl habitat, snake habitat and a tour of the BRGC's fish hatchery.

Greg Balch supports this program with his excellent travelling hands-on educational display explaining the cycle of life and purpose and value of various species, including our part in that matrix as stewards and consumptive users. Several members of a tournament bass fishing club in the London area help the youth build custom bass lures that they take home to use.

Thanks to the many donors that continue to ensure we can provide this camp at no cost to the participants.

All members of the Zone J executive have been very active with fisheries management, land access, hunting issues, club meeting presentations, and municipal council presentations, to name a few. We are actively engaged in FMZ 19, the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group, Halton Community Streams Committee, Grand River fisheries management plan and implementation, Lower Grand River Technical Committee, Hamilton Harbor Restoration Group, Misner and Springbank dam issues, as well as others. We continue to see the Community Hatchery Program (CHP) build momentum and be used by many clubs/hatcheries throughout Zone J. A very hot topic throughout Zone J over the past several months has been the reduction of tags for both moose and white-tailed deer.

We continue to build good working relationships with our local clubs, supporters, partners and individual members. We are always looking for ways to connect with our members. Zone J has been actively using both Facebook and Twitter (@ofahZoneJ), and at the many events we attend, you will be able to follow our live tweeting. We encourage you to be active with your Federation.

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

As the warmer weather seems to be not too far away, take time to mentor someone new in the outdoors!

OFAH ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Agriculture Liaison

Chair – Jim Magee



In 2014, the Agriculture Liaison Advisory Committee was most involved in the development of two coyote hunting workshops.

We have recognized the issue of coyote livestock predation, and it would be of great value to livestock producers and municipalities if knowledgeable coyote hunters could be called in to help deal with predation issues on a particular farm or local area.

The workshops will be held in January 2015 in Elmwood and Lindsay, two areas with high predation numbers.

Speakers will cover issues of livestock losses, compensation costs, biology and coyote hunting and trapping methods.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs provided a grant to the OFAH to host the workshops and the livestock industry also contributed to these events.

I would like to sincerely thank all of the committee members and OFAH head office staff for their active participation in developing and promoting these workshops.

Big Game

Chair - Neil Wiens

The Big Game Advisory Committee had another busy year deliberating on issues important to our members.

I would like to express my appreciation for the dedication of the head office staff and committee members for taking the time and providing the invaluable input that helps to ensure we do our very best to adhere to the

tenets of conservation, while providing for optimum opportunities and access to our big game species.

Bear

We were pleased with the return of a spring bear hunt this year. Considerable time and effort went into providing support for this long-awaited government action to address the growing population of bears across the province and the negative impacts resulting from increased bear numbers since 1999.

In the years preceding 2014, about 1,000 bear licences were purchased early in the year at the same time hunters were purchasing deer and moose licences. We were pleased to learn licence sales prior to June 16 totaled 4,288.

The increase in licences purchased can be attributed to the spring season pilot project that was established in eight northern WMUs (13, 14, 29, 30, 36, 39, 41, and 42).

Residents have answered the call and have represented the majority of bear hunters in the province for several years, with total licence sales of approximately 17,000 seals.

The MNRF has not committed to anything more than a two-year pilot that will sunset at the end of the 2015 season.

The committee continues to push for a return of the spring season across the province for all of the benefits it would provide. We have also asked the MNRF to take necessary steps to update its population assessment database on a regular rotating basis as part of a complete black bear management program.

Caribou

While the committee recognizes the Boreal (Woodland) caribou has been designated as threatened across its range, Ontario is also home to a healthy population of Tundra caribou inhabiting the shoreline area of Hudson's Bay. This is a nomadic population our province shares with Manitoba.

For some time, Manitoba has allowed for a limited hunt of these caribou, and our committee has devoted some time discussing whether or not a similar opportunity could exist for Ontario hunters.

We hope to initiate discussions with MNRF staff in early 2015 regarding these additional new opportunities.

Deer

On a province-wide basis, deer are still plentiful. A few areas experienced some severe winter conditions in the spring of 2014 resulting in some applications for funding from our OFAH DeerSave Fund. Helping out to defray costs of DeerSave activities reduced our fund to a level that would be insufficient to meet the demand, if we are faced with another similar winter. A call for donations was recommended and funds have been coming in to rebuild this funding source for use in times of need. The committee undertook a review of our DeerSave Fund application form and related eligibility requirements in anticipation of having a simple document that could be accessed through the OFAH website.

The committee was concerned with the number and severity of cuts to antlerless deer tags and number of additional seals that were being made available to hunters for the 2014 season. The MNRF Parry Sound District, in particular, saw deep cuts of over 7,000 tags without any consultation with the OFAH. We believe this is unacceptable and have reaffirmed with the MNRF that we must be at the table when discussions on wildlife issues take place and decisions are rendered.

Elk

The committee reviewed the EBR postings



and provided input to the MNRF regarding the population objectives being considered for both the Nipissing/French River and Lake Huron/North Shore elk. A complete elk management plan is still needed for these groups. We continue to express our concerns



about the use of authorizations to kill nuisance elk in all areas of the province. Time was spent with MNRF staff reviewing the tag allocation for the 2014 season in the Bancroft area that saw a decrease in the number of tags and a redistribution of bull and cow components of the harvest plan. The MNRF has some concerns about the population dynamics, specifically the lack of mature bulls that are being seen on the landscape.

Moose

Much of our time this past year was spent on discussions around moose. We continue to have input into the tag allocation process through our involvement with the province's Big Game Management Advisory Committee.

There was shock and dismay about the deep cuts to tags in a number of units in the Northeast and Northwest regions of the province. The committee recommended a suite of actions that our Federation should insist be undertaken, including a call for the MNRF to re-fly those WMUs (8, 13, and 28) that showed such precipitous drops in population numbers since the previous Moose Aerial Inventories (MAI). We have also recommended the MNRF undertake a more balanced management regime that is not simply focused on licensed hunter management, but includes all of the numerous factors that negatively impact moose populations. In all, 16 recommendations were forwarded to the MNRF for their consideration. These same points were reiterated to the minister of Natural Resources and Forestry in response to his request from selected stakeholder groups for input into moose management.

In November, a number of our committee and board members were invited to participate in

Moose Management Focus Group Sessions, facilitated by the MNRF. Meetings took place in each of the three regions (Northwest, Northeast, and Southern) of the province. Much background information covering the numerous factors affecting moose populations was presented, followed by discussions on ways to mitigate negative impacts and maintain or grow moose populations throughout their current range.

Habitat analysis describing landscape carrying capacity for moose was a key component of the discussions, as was harvest control, and participants were asked to comment specifically on these two aspects of the sessions. Ministry staff also attended our December advisory committee meeting and gave a brief overview of the presentations from the Focus Group Sessions and discussed with us some of the directions they were considering to manage moose populations.

The committee performed an in-depth review of those recommendations in order to develop a response. The MNRF has indicated comments from focus group participants will help to develop the options to be put forward for public consultation in the next step of the "Moose Project."

Firearms/Recreational Shooting/Hunter Education

Chair – Bill Blackwell

As evident by the name, this committee multi-tasks on a number of different, but related items. I would like to thank all committee members for the work they put in, as well as head office staff for their hard work and guidance, not only to us as a committee, but also to the federal and provincial governments

on decisions that impact all hunters and firearms owners.

Donation of Seized Firearms

Prior to 2008, when a little known clause of Bill C-68 kicked in, in jurisdictions such as Saskatchewan, firearms seized due to hunting violations were able to be donated to organizations such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation (SWF) that auctioned them off to raise funds for fish and wildlife conservation. Once the clause in C-68 took effect, this practice was halted. The OFAH and SWF have advocated the government to amend the regulation to once again allow for the donation of seized firearms to conservation organizations. Despite the fact the firearms in question are non-restricted long guns used for hunting or recreational shooting, there has been some concern expressed by some police agencies about having seized firearms back in circulation. It must be stressed that these firearms were seized as a result of poaching or other hunting infractions and are made available upon conviction of the owner to organizations for fundraising. The OFAH will continue to keep this issue in front of the minister.

Bowhunting Policy

In December, after much work, this advisory committee presented its bowhunting policy to the board and it was adopted. The MNRF should do away with questions on the hunter education exam dealing with firearms (guns) for students who only wish to hunt with a bow, or the exam should be amended for these students to include more bowhunting questions, the policy states.

SKS Rifles

The CFO recently informed firearms businesses that a person who legally owns one of the SKS semi-automatic rifles had it go fully auto when he fired it. There are 250,000 of these legally owned rifles in the country and the CFO would like all owners of these firearms to have them tested, even though this was an isolated case. The fact that only a single occurrence has been recorded does not, in our opinion, warrant a recall for RCMP re-testing.

Ammunition Warning – HEVI-SHOT

In early December, HEVI-SHOT, makers of ammunition used by thousands of hunters, issued a warning regarding their 12 gauge, three-inch HEVI-Metal and HEVI-Steel shot shells. At temperatures below 0 C, the shot shell wads may crack on ignition, resulting in a “squib” load. This results when a wad becomes stuck in the barrel, because the force of the load may not be enough to push the wad out of the muzzle. While the initial squib load will not damage the firearm, failure to recognize this has occurred and clear the barrel before firing again can cause damage to the barrel or the user. HEVI-SHOT is replacing these shells and anyone concerned they may have the potentially flawed shells should contact them directly.

Faulty Remington Triggers

Remington has agreed to replace triggers in millions of guns as a result of a class action lawsuit in the U.S. Remington will replace S-Mark Pro triggers on Model 700 and Model Seven rifles manufactured from May 1, 2006 through April 9, 2014. It has also agreed to replace the triggers on a number of other models, but accepts no liability for the equipment defect. The bonding agent used in the assembly process could cause the rifles to discharge unintentionally.

UN Marking System

Every December, the federal government has to decide whether to sign on to the UN Firearms Marking Protocol for tracking purposes or defer a decision for another year. Thus far, the Harper government has declined to sign the protocol, which is not supported by firearms organizations across the country. The OFAH wrote to the minister of Public Safety in early December urging him to repeal the previous commitment to a marking system, recognizing a serial number alone is enough information to track firearms. It is expected the government will make a final decision in this matter in the new year.

BB Gun Bill

A recent Supreme Court of Canada decision ruled a BB gun should be considered a firearm despite the fact it does not meet the standard 500 feet/second rule to be classified



as a firearm. This stems from a person being charged for pointing an air gun at another person. MP Robert Sopuck, chair of the Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus, has introduced Bill 637 that would clearly not recognize any gun that shoots a projectile at a velocity of less than 153.8 m/sec (500 feet) as a firearm with regards to conditions for use, storage, etc.

Suppressors

In late 2014, Florida became the latest U.S. state to allow the use of suppressors while hunting. Suppressors are currently illegal in Canada. The OFAH has been approached with a request to support the use of these items; however, there are a number of factors that need to be considered before adopting any such policy, including cost, availability, potential devaluation of firearms, ethics and public reaction. Consequently, there are no plans to create a policy around the use of suppressors at this time.

Alberta Wildlife Regulations

In mid-November, Alberta announced proposed changes to their wildlife regulations that would allow hunters to bring dogs as companions while hunting, use spears or knives, use air guns to hunt big game, introduce non-native birds for falconry and remove restrictions on the use of off road vehicles while hunting. The proposals are considered controversial and are stirring debate among hunters and conservation groups.

Saskatchewan Hunting Enforcement Changes

In November 2014, the Saskatchewan government announced new legislation that would increase the severity of hunting penalties

in an effort to better protect wildlife. The intent is to send a message to poachers that the government is serious about cracking down on the illegal taking of wildlife. The legislation extends the time wildlife enforcement officers have to report wildlife violations from two to three years. It also means those convicted of fish and wildlife offences must pay previous fines before they are eligible for new licences, and anyone suspended in other jurisdictions will be prohibited from buying licences in Saskatchewan. The act also includes a lifetime ban for hunting if someone has been convicted of a serious wildlife offense on three separate occasions.

Long Gun Registry

On Dec. 3, federal NDP Leader Tom Mulcair announced that if his party formed the next government, the NDP would revive the long gun registry, minus the flaws that made the original registry so controversial. The NDP is committed to ensuring police have the ability to track firearms.

The announcement was not welcomed by all members of the NDP caucus; some do not agree with the idea. In response to the NDP announcement, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau stated the Liberals would not revive the long gun registry because it was too divisive, despite the fact the party supported the retention of the registry in Quebec and the fact Trudeau had previously stated he would have supported the registry if it had been voted on again before being scrapped by the Conservatives.

He suggested other ways to reduce gun violence, including strict classification of restricted and prohibited firearms and enhanced gun purchasing criteria. He also suggested that if they form the next government, the Liberals would find evidence-based policies around firearms that will unite, rather than divide Canadians. The OFAH will seek a meeting with the Liberal leader in 2015 to verify where his party stands on this and other issues impacting anglers and hunters.

Fisheries

Chair – Debbie Rivard

I would like to thank all members of the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee (FAC) for their continued commitment, dedication and knowledge. Committee members give up their personal time to attend FAC meetings three times during the year and also represent the OFAH on various other committees and Fisheries Management Zone Councils around the province.

Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) Council reports continue to take up a significant amount of committee time. Some of the councils are not meeting as often as they have

in the past and FMZs 7, 8, 15 and 16 have still not been formed.

Discussions were held regarding micro plastics in the Great Lakes. Micro plastics are tiny, buoyant pieces of plastic found in common consumer products such as toothpastes, deodorants, body washes, hand cleansers and facial exfoliates. If a product contains polyethylene or polypropylene, it will contain micro plastics. Due to the small diameter, they cannot be captured by waste-water treatment plants and, as a result, find their way into the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission passed a resolution to ban personal care products that contained micro plastics, which was supported by the FAC.

MNRF Fisheries Policy Section staff provided the committee with a presentation on the provincial bait review. OFAH staff provided updates on the continuation of OFAH involvement with the Bait Review Advisory Group process; an MNRF-led stakeholder advisory group on the provincial bait review. Two Environmental Bill of Rights Registry postings on the provincial bait review were also discussed at length to determine the OFAH direction on angler use and movement of live bait, as well as the use and storage of live bait in parks and protected areas. In anticipation of public consultation, the FAC initiated a process to update the OFAH policy

on the use of live bait. The updated policy, which was recommended by the FAC, was adopted by the OFAH Board of Directors at its December meeting.

MNRF Fisheries Policy Section staff also provided the committee with a status report on the development of the Provincial Fish Strategy.

Shane Wood, OFAH Community Hatchery Program (CHP) coordinator, provided an overview of the first year (2013) of the OFAH/MNRF program. Community hatcheries are volunteer driven and raised just shy of 13,660,000 fish. Improvements to the program for this year saw a new and simplified funding formula, as well as a longer window to apply for funding.

Chris Robinson, OFAH Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program coordinator, gave the committee an overview of the restoration program up to 2014. To date, 5.7 million fish have been stocked, with 900 volunteers and 3,800 hours of stocking. The program has also just completed a scientific review to determine the direction for the next five years of the restoration program.

OFAH staff provided updates regarding the new Fisheries Act including details regarding a national workshop run by conservation non-governmental organizations on the understanding and implementation of the

Act. A presentation was also made to the FAC regarding habitat offsetting and banking under the Act, with further information and discussions to follow at subsequent meetings.

Committee discussions on the expansion of barbless hook policies across Canada led to the development of an OFAH policy on the use of barbless hooks in Ontario, which was adopted by the OFAH Board of Directors at its December meeting.

OFAH staff updates and subsequent committee discussions have been held regarding the current issues with the Lake Nipissing Walleye fishery. This topic continues to be at the forefront of the committee's attention and will undoubtedly be the subject of further discussion and comment at future FAC meetings.

Land Use/Access/Trails

Chair – Gilles Dumais

The OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee has representation from most and receives input from all zones as issues arise. Our committee also addresses issues sent by members to head office staff.

Forest management plans generate many concerns that are dealt with by the committee with the guidance of the OFAH land use specialist.



Occasionally at our meetings, a special expert will make a presentation to inform us on certain subjects of interest. For example, at our December meeting, we had an informative presentation by David Critchlow, MNRF's provincial enforcement specialist, on possession of firearms and right of way issues.

The committee looked at Bill 36, an act to amend the Trespass to Property Act; several road entrance removals; the Shale Beach vehicle entrance closure; the new Strawberry Island provincial park; the Hillman Marsh; the Harwich Tract; the Rouge Valley National Park; the Murray Marsh Management Strategy and an ongoing issue at the Abitibi River Trestle Bridge. As well, a new type of road restriction sign was erected in the Trout Lake Forest.

A new pamphlet, "Where can I hunt in Ontario," was developed by head office staff to aid hunters and anglers to deal with questions on where to hunt in Ontario, which addresses both private and Crown lands. This also includes the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas (CLUPA). This information is available on the OFAH web site or by contacting the OFAH land use specialist.

I would like to conclude this report by thanking head office staff for their help, guidance and assistance. I would especially like to thank the committee members for their time and dedication.

Native Affairs

Chair – Dan Elliott

Not surprisingly, the Native Affairs Advisory Committee spent a great deal of time in 2014 discussing the Algonquin Land Claim, the Williams Treaty and the Supreme Court of Canada decision in the Tsilqhot'in case. These issues are broken down in the Government Affairs and Policy section of this annual report beginning on page 44.

James Bay Cree Court Action

James Bay Treaty Signatories want their treaty overturned based on the claim they were misled and did not understand the intent of the treaty upon signing. They are seeking to reclaim 324,900 square miles of Northern Ontario. Evidence that has surfaced recently suggests the claim may have some merit.

Manitoulin Court Action

The Manitoulin First Nation has asserted title claim to the lake bed and islands surrounding Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron based on broken promises of the 1862 treaty. The group claims it never gave up title to the lake bed and islands surrounding Manitoulin. The First Nation is not seeking to displace any third parties or anyone who owns land that was sold to them by the Crown.

Federal Comprehensive Land

Claims Policy Revision

To the best of our knowledge, the OFAH was the only fish and wildlife organization in Canada asked by the federal government to comment on revisions to their Comprehensive Land Claims Policy. The OFAH provided extensive written comments on all sections of the policy in November 2014.

Ontario Treaty Obligations

The Ontario Aboriginal Affairs minister has publicly stated the Liberal government is committed to meeting the Crown's obligations to treaty promises. The government has also pledged that all schools in Ontario will ensure their curriculum contains lessons on the history of Aboriginal peoples in Ontario and the commitments to First Nations in treaties signed by our government when this country was settled. In addition, Ontario is committed to the establishment of a "Treaty Awareness Day."

Northwest Territories (NWT)

Aboriginal Rights Challenge

Aboriginal peoples will no longer require licences or permits to hunt in their traditional areas. In the Yukon, the Dene First Nations are proposing that in the future, they should have control over issuance of all hunting and fishing licences.

Ontario Métis Policy

At an OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee meeting, guest speaker Karan Aquino, director of the MNRF Aboriginal Policy Branch, provided a detailed presentation on Métis issues:

Synopsis:

- Métis have Diverse Ancestral origin (Ojibway, Cree, Scottish, Irish and French);
- Generally not included in Ontario's historical treaties;
- 86,000 Métis versus 200,000 First Nations;
- Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) maintains a registry of members;
- Powley Decision identified that Métis can assert S.35 right to hunt for food, social and ceremonial purposes.

- These assertions must meet three criteria:

- i) Individual must self-identify as a Métis;
- ii) There must be proof of ancestral connection to a historic Métis community;
- iii) There must be proof of acceptance of the individual by a modern Métis community.

In 2004, Ontario established Four Points of Agreement with the Métis Nation of Ontario:

- i) Métis Nation of Ontario will establish a

maximum of 1,250 Harvester Certificates;

ii) The MNRF will apply Interim Enforcement Policy to cardholders within traditional harvest areas;

iii) Agreement is interim until final agreement is in place;

iv) As agreed to by both parties, an independent evaluation of the agreement will be performed.

Harvest Reports

Concern has been expressed about how the overlap of potential sheltering agreements between First Nations or changes in title and treaty rights might impact on conservation of the resource. This raises several important questions as it pertains to Section 35 rights and the primacy of conservation as noted in the Sparrow decision:

- 1) When does conservation become an issue to MNRF (what is a population's threshold point)?
- 2) When and how will government respond?
- 3) Is government prepared to take action and enforce the laws?

Saugeen Land Claim

Early in 2014, the Saugeen First Nation laid claim to lands in the town area of Sable Beach to extend the boundary of their area. The claim takes in one and a half kilometres of beach, a traditional landing site for the Saugeen First Nations fishermen. They have since retracted their claim over the town site. The claim has not developed any further since.

First Nations Deer Culls

First Nations deer herd reductions were conducted in the fall of 2014 in Pinery and Rondeau Provincial Parks. The harvest went as planned. There was also a reduction at Short Hills Provincial Park, a rights-based deer herd reduction conducted by the Six Nations Haudenosaunee, an Aboriginal group that exercises Aboriginal rights to hunt with bows. This hunt is not like the firearm hunts in Pinery and Rondeau provincial parks. The MNRF Southwestern native liaison specialist will be invited to speak on Short Hills, Caledonia, Ipperwash, and other issues at a future meeting of the OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee.

Past Presidents

Chair – Bill Blackwell

The Past Presidents Advisory Committee is comprised of past presidents of the OFAH. Our job is to offer advice on issues that are assigned to us by the president and board of directors. In the past, this committee has completed a thorough look at and revitalization of OFAH constitution and bylaws, which

were subsequently passed by the general membership at our annual general meeting in 2013. We were saddened earlier this year by the passing of Doug Ogston, who was not only a past OFAH president, but was the longest-serving member of the OFAH Board of Directors with 44 years of service. His wise counsel will be missed.

Directors-at-Large

Chair – Bill Blackwell

Provincial directors-at-large (five in total) are elected by the general membership to serve on the OFAH Board of Directors for a term of two years (from annual general meeting to annual general meeting). People who are nominated for this position generally have some unique qualification that would be beneficial to the board and, subsequently, to the OFAH. A person can be nominated either by the nominating committee to stand for election, or by receiving 25 signatures from OFAH members in good standing. In 2014, five provincial directors at large were acclaimed, two returning members Tony Jackson and Jack Osadzuk, and three new members, Dr. Bruce Tufts, Dr. Joe Wilson and Dan Elliott, all of whom are actively engaged in serving on or chairing some of the advisory committees. At our annual general meeting in March 2015, all provincial directors at large will have completed the first year of their two-year term. Therefore, in the spring of 2015, we will be putting a call out for nominations in *Hunter & Angler Hotline*. We will ask the current directors at large if they would wish to seek another term. If you know of someone who would be an asset to the board in this position, I encourage you to bring their names forward to the committee or nominate them for one of the positions.

Small Game

Chair – Tony Jackson

Wild Turkey

In 2014, the addition of several WMUs adding a spring hunt included 42, 47, 49, and 50, as well as an addition of a fall hunt in 59. It is the belief of the committee that there is a need for the Wild Turkey Working Group to reconvene and review the provincial strategy for licensing and spring and fall hunting opportunities, including a Wild Turkey Heritage Hunt established for apprentice hunters.

This spring there was a report of a wild turkey with possible Avian Pox in Southwestern Ontario. Although no one is currently tracking lymphoproliferative disease virus (LPD) or Avian Pox in wild turkeys, the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) at the University of Guelph Pathobiology Lab has expressed an interest in receiving information and/or

samples of unhealthy wild turkeys. Hunters are asked to report any unusual growths and behaviors noticed in wild turkeys to the CWHC.

Coyotes

We continue to encourage the use of the most recent information and science that would suggest there is a clear distinction between coyote and the gray wolves, and little evidence of Eastern wolves north of the French River. Given the continued issues with livestock predation due primarily to coyote in these areas, managing these species under the same restrictive harvest management scheme makes little sense. The committee supports the removal of the seal requirement for coyotes (only a small game licence would be required) with a year-round season in WMUs 1A, 1C, 1D and 2-42. We also recommended removing current restrictions on party hunting for wolves in WMUs 1A, 1C, 1D and 2-42, and where coyote seal requirements remain in core wolf range (i.e. 46-50 and 53-58).

Seasons and Regulations

Despite OFAH and its members asking for a comprehensive MNRF review of the small game program, limited resource time has been allocated due to prioritized spring bear pilots and the moose program review.

With all opportunities available to small game hunters, there is little reason not to be out enjoying the great outdoors.

A heartfelt thanks to members of the committee and head office staff for their help throughout the year.

Wetlands/Migratory Birds

Chair – Scott Petrie

Migratory Bird Regulatory Changes

The Canadian Wildlife Service/Environment Canada (CWS) recently adopted a biennial cycle for hunting regulations, meaning that amendments will only be considered every second year. Therefore, there will be no changes to Ontario's migratory bird regulations in 2015.

Waterfowler Heritage Days

The OFAH asked the CWS to modify regulatory wording to make clear the Waterfowler Heritage Day in Ontario is only for minors (i.e. under 18 years of age). This will maintain the original intent, which is to provide a unique opportunity for minors to hunt on this day. The CWS will also be proposing to have Mourning Doves included as a legal species to hunt on the Waterfowler Heritage Day.

Mourning Dove

Ontario's inaugural mourning dove season was in fall 2013 and the CWS estimated that 3,000 hunters harvested 18,000 mourning doves. Given the estimated size of the Ontario Mourning Dove population, this harvest is sustainable.

Currently, doves are only harvested in the Southern and Central Zones of Ontario. The CWS received requests to open the season in the Northern Zone, as the range of doves in Ontario has expanded northward. It was noted that a dove season could provide enhanced opportunities in those areas. The OFAH requested CWS consider opening the dove hunting season on Sept. 1 across the Central and Southern Hunting Districts (and





Northern District in the future) to facilitate more youth participation. A Sept. 1 opener would follow the U.S. Eastern Management Unit dove hunting season framework. Also, harmonizing the opening date among all Ontario hunting districts would simplify the dove regulations across the province. As a result, the CWS is planning to draft a proposal to expand the Mourning Dove hunting season into the Northern Hunting District in Ontario. In addition, the CWS will draft a proposal to fix the opening date of the Mourning Dove hunting season in Ontario to Sept. 1.

Sandhill Crane

Sandhill Crane populations have been increasing in Ontario for several decades and are now at a level that they are causing agricultural damage in some WMUs. To date, the majority of requests for a crane season have been from the agricultural community relating to local areas where cranes are causing damage to cereal crops. However, the majority of damage is occurring before Sept. 1, which is outside any potential hunting season.

Next steps identified by CWS: (1) work with the agricultural sector to identify options to help alleviate crop damage from cranes; (2) design a reliable methodology for collecting crane recruitment and productivity data; and (3) explore the development of a population model for Sandhill Cranes in Ontario. The CWS explained that a population model, similar to the model prepared for doves, needed to be developed prior to opening a localized crane season in Ontario.

Permit Sales

There has been a substantial decline in

waterfowl permit sales since the 1970s. Sales reached an all time high in Ontario in 1978 with nearly 160,000 permits sold and an all time low in 2005 with just over 53,000 permits sold. Fortunately, by 2013, permit sales had increased to 62,000. This increased interest in waterfowl hunting can be attributed to increased opportunity and healthy continental waterfowl populations.

Between 2013 and 2014, Ontario waterfowl licence sales increased by nearly 5,000, which was the largest increase in licence sales since 1976. The only major regulatory change between 2013 and 2014 was the opening of the Mourning Dove season.

Online Permit Purchase

Beginning in 2014, the CWS made Ontario waterfowl licences available for purchase online. The OFAH has applauded this excellent initiative. The OFAH has asked that a mechanism be put in place to immediately validate online licence purchases rather than having to wait for the licence to be mailed.

The OFAH will continue to promote the conservation and management of waterfowl and wetlands within the province. We will also continue to promote the expansion of hunting opportunities when and where it is considered to be ecologically sustainable.

Sporting Dogs

Chair – Dr. Joe Wilson

Since March 2014, the Sporting Dogs Advisory Committee has been involved in several ongoing projects.

The final draft of the revised OFAH Sporting

Dogs policies will be distributed to the OFAH Board of Directors for comments, approval and adoption.

We continue to deal with the ongoing issue to legalize the use of GPS collars for tracking dogs in Canada. We have exchanged letters with the Industry Canada Minister James Moore and Spectrum Management Operations Senior Director Peter Hill. We have also been advised that the Radio Advisory Board of Canada (RABA) has been asked by Industry Canada to study the use of Multiple Use Radio Systems (MURS) and to participate in a MURS working group. We have also had correspondence with Garmin International, in order to mount a consolidated effort with industry and other interested user groups to accomplish our objective of having the use of GPS tracking collars legalized.

A more recent and disturbing issue is the closing of at least one Grand River Conservation Authority property (Keldon Tract) for training and hunting with dogs. We understand this closure is in response to the complaints of one landowner. A meeting was held with the GRCA and it has been decided to leave the matter at the present time. The reason behind this decision is the potential for the loss of all hunting on that particular tract. In order to satisfy the passion of sporting dog enthusiasts, we will continue to keep in contact with the GRCA as to the possibility of reopening the Keldon Tract for training and hunting with dogs.

In 2015, we will attempt to establish dialogue with the MNRF Policy Section to discuss the implications and support for the continued use of training and trialing areas.



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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, 2014, 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, 2014. We expressed a qualified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated February 25, 2015 (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, 2014.

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, 2014 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, 2014.

The misstatement of the audited financial statements is described in our qualified audit opinion in our report dated February 25, 2015. 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, 2014, and its results of operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

McCull Turner LLP

Licensed Public Accountants

Peterborough, Ontario
February 25, 2015

THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS INCORPORATED

Financial Summary 2014

Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31, 2014	2014	2013
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash	\$ 2,467,358	\$ 2,032,791
Investments	1,725,932	1,677,683
Accounts receivable	1,008,988	1,144,458
Inventories	258,673	306,898
Prepaid expenses	552,272	520,324
	6,013,223	5,682,154
Land, buildings and equipment	2,566,705	2,690,723
	\$ 8,579,928	\$ 8,372,877
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 442,303	\$ 408,520
Deferred revenue	1,564,777	1,540,398
	2,007,080	1,948,918
Net assets		
Invested in land, buildings and equipment	2,566,705	2,690,723
Internally restricted	564,107	539,856
Unrestricted	3,442,036	3,193,380
	6,572,848	6,423,959
	\$ 8,579,928	\$ 8,372,877

Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31, 2014	2014	2013
Revenue		
Membership fees	\$ 3,498,246	\$ 3,479,035
Program fees	2,279,652	1,926,891
OOD magazine revenues	3,941,802	3,956,034
Sales	183,289	227,448
Fundraising	1,282,390	1,292,539
Donations	884,835	745,060
Interest and investment income	39,283	47,412
Solar panel revenues	26,382	29,446
Foreign exchange (loss)/gain	(2,094)	23,980
Gain on sale of assets	5,000	136,500
	\$ 12,138,785	\$ 11,864,345
Expenditures		
Salaries and employee costs	\$ 1,913,526	\$ 1,845,560
Membership	2,066,346	1,957,557
Programs, public information and education	2,428,366	2,114,966
OOD magazine expenses	3,492,903	3,512,038
Office, general and professional	667,349	675,289
Cost of sales	179,772	243,146
Legal/policy	84,190	112,514
Informational programs	17,757	5,500
Fundraising	920,732	1,205,131
Amortization	218,955	319,010
	\$ 11,989,896	\$ 11,990,711
Excess of revenue over expenditures/ (expenditures over revenue)	\$ 148,889	\$ (126,366)

www.ofah.org



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