



# ANNUAL REPORT

The Voice of Anglers and Hunters



2015

# OFAH ZONE REPORTS



## ZONE A CHAIR - JEREMY FUNK

Our 2015 zone meetings in Sioux Lookout, Red Lake and Ear Falls saw a strong attendance and good representation, which is quite an accomplishment given the distance across our zone. In addition to the zone meetings, we hosted one of the OFAH's Northern Ontario open houses in Dryden. Head office staff spoke at length with our members and the general public touching on many fish and wildlife-related issues.

From a more general club perspective, our member clubs have and will continue to offer programs and activities second to none and I know our members will continue to work behind the scenes on advisory groups, committees and panels, while looking out for our collective interests.

In addition to our many successes as individuals, clubs and as a zone, we are all very proud and supportive of the OFAH's undertaking of the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP).

Our members are ambassadors for this great program, and we are all very proud of the strong foothold NASP has secured in the northwest -- Kenora, Dryden, Rainy River, Sioux Lookout, Red Lake, and Fort Frances all have a course running or have laid the groundwork to do so in 2016. Moose numbers are down and hunters were challenged with new regulations

and specific guidelines regarding harvest in 2015, though hunters I spoke with said moose harvest numbers were only slightly down, and not nearly as bad as anyone would have thought. Furthermore, most of the hunters that I talked to had voluntarily committed to and followed through with not shooting cows that were with calves prior to the two-week calf season. This leads me to believe that a positive attitude towards conservation of our moose population is present in Ontario hunters, and if the OFAH at any level had even a slight impact on that attitude, it is something we should all be proud of.

## ZONE B CHAIR - DEBBIE RIVARD

In January, Glenn Rivard, Debbie Rivard, and Jeremy Funk trained teachers in Kenora and Rainy River to deliver NASP in their schools. The Rivards also trained nine teachers in Atikokan. We continue to receive inquiries regarding the program as it gains in popularity. The Central Canada Outdoor Show and the Northwest Trappers Association Show were held on the same weekend at the end of February. Thanks to the volunteers, we were able to have a booth at both shows. We also had a booth at the Geraldton show in April, which provided good exposure for the OFAH. An Environmental Registry posting for the Stocking Plan for the Ontario Waters of Lake Superior was

posted during the summer. The focus of the stocking plan will be on stocking Chinook Salmon, and short- and long-term goals and objectives for the future of Chinook stocking. The plan is very specific to stocking salmon in the Kaministiquia River with the goal of establishing a self-sustaining population of Chinook Salmon, while not negatively impacting other species. The number of eggs collected and collection sites are clearly identified in the plan; however, this does not provide the entire picture of the overall Chinook fishery.

The Thunder Bay Salmon Association, with the assistance of the MNRF electroshocking boat, collected approximately 34,500 salmon eggs for their hatchery. While collecting eggs on the Nipigon River, members cleaned up garbage at Alexander landing. The TBSA received reports of clipped salmon caught in the Kaministiquia River at Old Fort William and Kakabeka Falls.

In Shuniah, there has long been a large part of that municipality closed to hunting. The former mayor of the municipality was strongly opposed to any hunting in this area. Last fall, a new mayor was elected in Shuniah. Gilles Dumais, 1st vice chair, Zone B, set up the initial meeting with Mayor Wendy Landry, which included himself and the Rivards, to discuss the opening of the closed area. Subsequently, Glenn Rivard talked with the OPP and municipal administration in regards to this and attended a council meeting where we made a presentation to council. After

council took into consideration residents' comments, the bylaw was revised and will see bowhunting allowed in this area during any open season in accordance with the provincial regulations.

The OFAH held four open houses in Zones A, B, C, and D, which provided an opportunity for anyone to come and ask questions about the OFAH -- staff did an excellent job of answering all questions on a wide variety of topics.

The Black Sturgeon River Dam environmental assessment process continues. In the spring, the MNRF hired a service provider to do the field work and prepare an Environmental Study report, including a detailed analysis and assessment of the proposed project to decommission Camp 43 dam and reconstruct a new barrier at the Camp 1 location.

Four other alternatives include: repair Camp 43 dam and build a trap and sort facility; repair the dam and control fish passage via stop logs; repair the dam with no fish passage; or do nothing.

## **ZONE C**

**CHAIR - PETER SWORD**

The zone held two meetings and one executive meeting during 2015, all in Kenogami. In conjunction with the April zone meeting, Glenn Rivard and OFAH staff held another instalment of the Northern Ontario open houses, which was well attended. Concerns were heard on fishing issues in FMZ 8, 11, and 12, while issues regarding moose, bear, and wolves were also discussed.

Our zone was well represented externally in 2015, sitting on the Northeast Regional Advisory Committee, the Kirkland Lake Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee, the Temagami Local Citizens Committee, and FMZ 12 Council. We also participated in a winter creel on St. Anthony Lake in the Kirkland Lake District, a Roadside Moose Tick Survey in WMU 28, and On-Ice Safety Training in Kirkland Lake. Looking ahead, planning continues on a number of waterpower projects locally, while a wind project is also being proposed for the Cobalt area.

Meanwhile, negotiations and planning continue on a tenure model for the Temagami Forest Management Unit -- participants include the Temagami First Nation, area municipalities, and the forest industry.



Train derailments continue to occur and cause issues in the zone. The most recent was in the Gogama area, causing much concern for local residents, as plenty of clean up and restoration was needed.

Zone directors were active with comments on the Environmental Registry, submitting stances on Phase II of the Moose Project, the extension of the spring bear pilot project, and the bait review. Other issues at hand heading into 2016 include restrictive fishing regulations of FMZ 11, and significant moose tag reductions in WMUs 28 and 40.

## **ZONE D**

**CHAIR - ROY POLSKY**

Our zone dealt with many issues such as road closures and abandonment, access restrictions, FMZ fishing regulations, and many wildlife issues. Many of these issues were discussed at length during our three zone meetings in Val Caron, Sheguindah and Parry Sound. At those meetings we also welcomed a host of guest speakers that touched on many topics important to our members and the outdoors community as a whole.

Throughout the year, our zone made a habit out of giving back to conservation with a series of donations totalling \$13,000 to OFAH member clubs and organizations to help with various educational, and fish and wildlife projects. Those donations included \$2,500 to Manitoulin Streams restoration, \$2,600 to the Youth Trappers Course for purchase of trapping kits and OFAH memberships, and \$4,000 to the United Walleye Clubs (\$2,500 to help defer the cost of a shocker boat and \$1,500 for school micro-hatchery and education programs).

The zone also donated \$1,250 to the OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference, and another \$875 to the Manitoulin Streams Youth Hunter Initiative and \$500 to the annual Ontario Hunter Education Instructors' Conference. Gore Bay and District Fish and Game Club was the recipient of \$600 for micro hatcheries, we donated \$850 to the Trailsmen's Rod and Gun Club to help cover cost of signage and \$100 to the Long Point Youth Camp.

The fishery on Lake Nipissing remains a concern to area anglers. The Fisheries Management Plan for Lake Nipissing was released in April and some of the changes included the introduction of a minimum size limit of 46 centimetres (18 inches), and the opening of bass season being moved up one week. First Nations representatives also committed to not set nets until the opening of the recreational Walleye season.

The MNRF released a report on the status of Lake Mindemoya's Walleye population on the Fall Walleye Index Netting (FWIN) that was conducted in the fall of 2013. It showed an abundance of Yellow Perch, Rock Bass, and Walleye. There was also an increase in Rainbow Smelt, which had been introduced into the lake between 2005 and 2009.

The Anishinabek/Ontario Fisheries Resource Centre conducted a FWIN on LaCloche Lake. From a wildlife perspective, the MNRF set up a committee to deal with the nuisance elk problem in the Algoma/North Shore area, while the Manitoulin Deer Advisory Committee met in April and analyzed all of the data that was provided. The committee recommended to increase the number of antlerless deer tags in WMUs 43A and 43B. Additionally,

the MNRF conducted a Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program in WMUs 42, 46, 47, 49, and 50 during the fall gun season.

The newly formed Sudbury and District Fish and Wildlife Advisory Group held its first meeting and started a discussion on a wide range of issues.

Wild turkeys were a topic of discussion in 2015, as well.

The MNRF has acknowledged that the turkeys in the Kagawong area are wild, but they have no plans to do anything about it. The wild turkeys in the West Arm/French River area are holding their own following two severe winters.

In March the Trailsmen's Rod and Gun Club was the recipient of the Mary Pickford Award, while the Manitoulin Streams Improvement Association received the Minister's Award for Environmental Excellence.

Zone D was also home to an OFAH Northern Ontario open house where members and the

general public were invited to ask questions of OFAH staff, while another open house was held in the zone to address the Wicwemkoong Island Boundary Claim Negotiations.

This meeting provided information regarding the land claim and proposed land alternative. There is a lot of opposition to the land transfer alternatives, as it will affect all those who fish, camp, berry pick, canoe, etc., and navigate the waters of the Georgian Bay in the Kilarney Park, Philip Edward Island, and all of the small islands in the area.



**ZONE E**  
CHAIR - GORD TRYLINSKI

Zone E made a commitment in 2015 to support a number of different events and causes with donations that totalled nearly \$20,000.

Our donations helped out the Renfrew County Youth Mentorship Program, Griffith & Matawatchan Fish & Game Club, Bancroft District Fish & Game Protective Association, Haliburton Highland Outdoors, Peterborough Children's Water Festival, South Central Ontario

Fish & Wildlife Association, the Darlington Waterfowl Hunt and Long Point Waterfowl.

We also donated to the OFAH/Mario Cortellucci Hunting & Fishing Heritage Centre, which continues to host and educate visitors of all ages on conservation, the Champlain Dog Club and the OFAH Annual General Meeting and Fish & Wildlife Conference.

Activities held by various clubs and organizations within the zone included the Renfrew County Youth Mentorship Program, which had 20 participants in the firearms safety and hunter education, course, while the Griffith & Matawatchan Fish & Game Club had seven youth pass the firearms safety and hunter education and also hosted a lake clean-up day.

The Bancroft District Fish & Game Protective Association had an open house in the spring and a fall grand reopening to showcase upgrades to their ranges and facilities, including wheelchair accessibility. The Haliburton Highland Outdoors Association hosted a meeting and gave an informed presentation and tour of their fish hatchery.

In Peterborough, the Children's Water Festival was a success, providing fun and educational activities

for all and the South Central Ontario Fish & Wildlife Association held their annual fishing day, which was a success.

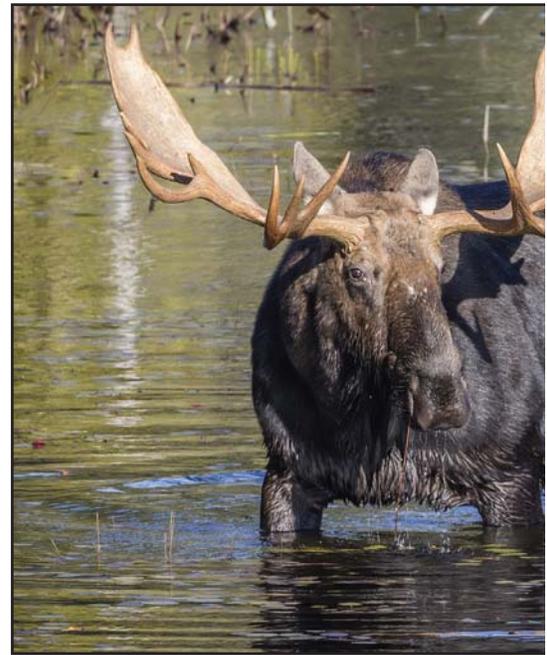
The Darlington waterfowl hunt was extended due to the favourable weather conditions and an abundance of birds, and Long Point Waterfowl had 30 youth pass firearms safety and hunter education courses before going on an upland game hunt.

The Eganville & District Sportsman's Club held their annual gun show at the Eganville arena, which was a great fundraising success.

**ZONE F**  
CHAIR - ED GIFFIN

In 2015, OFAH Zone F held three meetings at the Royal Canadian Legion in Perth.

At that first meeting we welcomed MNRF District Manager Dan Thompson and Fish & Wildlife Biologist Scott Smithers to update us on the deer herd status, deer



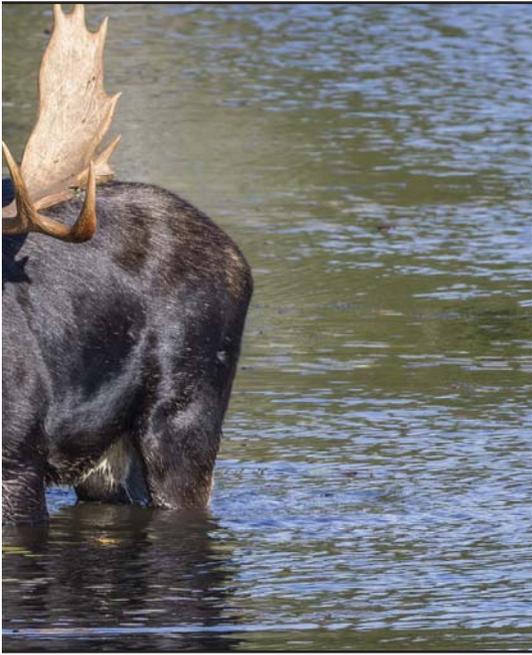
jaw data, Deer Removal Authorizations (DRAs) and the Snow Depth Index in the Kemptville District. Smithers indicated that no deer modelling was done in the Kemptville District and that the MNRF would not be conducting the annual hunt camp surveys in the Kemptville District. He reported that the moose population ranges from stable to slightly rising, and that regional MNRF staff are taking over fisheries management in FMZ 18. The region will coordinate broad-scale monitoring as well.

At our meeting in August, we approved a motion that OFAH Zone F would send out hunt camp surveys to all of our affiliated hunt camp clubs with a covering letter indicating the importance of this information, and why OFAH Zone F has taken on this survey initiative.

At our AGM and elections, we had a pair of guest speakers and staff from OFAH head office on hand. We were provided updates on the spring bear hunt restoration, the NCC/OFAH hunting agreement, and reviewed liability insurance coverage for members and affiliated clubs.

The meeting also recognized and paid tribute to Len Dickinson for his many years of outstanding contribution to conservation in Zone F, as he retires from his position as secretary/treasurer and OFAH director.

Also of note, our zone continued to support conservation projects and activities in 2015, providing funds to the Grenville Fish & Game Club for their special events trailer; Osgoode Township



Fish, Game & Conservation Club for their kid's fishing derby and firearms education program; Kingston Fish & Game for their Kid's Perch Derby; the Youth Hunter Education Scholarship (YHES) Fund; Long Point Youth Camp; Lanark Stewardship Council for work on Nature in Deed; South Lancaster for their kid's fishing derby; the Ontario Hunter Education Conference; Wild Harvest Initiative; West Carleton Sportsmen Association kid's ice fishing derby; and the Ottawa Region Walleye League for its annual kid's ice fishing derby.

**ZONE G**  
CHAIR - ROB HARE

At our zone meeting held at the Georgina Sportsmen's Alliance, we hosted guest speaker Meredith Purcell, a PhD Candidate at Trent University. Her thesis is on moose genomics, and aims to identify the factors influencing genetic diversity, which could impact the ability of moose to adapt to a changing climate. As part of her research, she is collecting moose samples to obtain DNA data to help understand why some moose populations are doing better in comparison to others. After 13 years the herring fishery on Lake Simcoe reopened, which is great news. For the second consecutive year, MNRF Aurora District and local OFAH clubs conducted a survey of spawning Walleye in Lake Simcoe. Spawning surveys have begun and are to be conducted on the Talbot River, Beaver River, Pefferlaw

River, Black River and the Holland River. In addition to surveying Walleye, they are also looking for spawning Muskie. Zone G's March meeting was hosted by the Islington Sportsmen's Club and the guest speaker was from Advanced Taxidermy, while Uxbridge Shooting Sports hosted the August meeting. In 2014, MNRF found wild rice growing as a result of our Lake Simcoe wild rice restoration efforts and we learned in 2015 that this population has grown. Since seeding in the fall of 2014, the amount of wild rice plants has more than tripled. Invasive species were an issue in the area in 2015. Two Asian Grass Carp were found in a pond near Toronto's waterfront. A spokesperson from the Toronto Region Conservation Authority said that its staff discovered the first fish while relocating fish from Tommy Thompson Park. The second carp was found a day later in the same pond. Wild Parsnip is also in the area. The plant is a member of the same family as carrots, giant hogweed and parsley, and was brought over from Europe and Asia likely by early European settlers who grew it as an edible root. Another invasive plant, Water Soldier, was discovered in the Black River, upstream of the dam in Sutton, by Aurora District MNRF staff during routine wetland evaluations. Follow-up assessments found 30 square metres of Water Soldier and two satellite colonies about six square metres each. It is unclear how this population reached this location. In Lake Simcoe Muskellunge Restoration Project news, we stocked 66 Muskie from Blue Jay Creek Hatchery into the Talbot River and 400 Muskie from the Sir Sandford Fleming Hatchery at Thorah Centennial Park, on the eastern side of Lake Simcoe, north of Beaverton. The purpose of this program is to reintroduce a self-sustaining population of the once-native Muskellunge into Lake Simcoe. This is the 11th year and our biggest year yet. In total, approximately 4,000 Muskie were stocked across multiple events. The OFAH Zone G Youth Camp had another very successful year with 16 female youth attending the camp where



they learned a tremendous amount and had great fun doing so. Stephen Huntley, Mike Ennis, Jim Kelly and Christine Finter were integral in the success of the event. The Pickering Rod and Gun Club was generous in its donation of a canoe for camp. Camp simply would not take place without the support of the Islington Sportmen's Club, which donates the use of their facility free of charge. At our November zone meeting and elections hosted by the Ajax Rod and Gun Club, OFAH head office staff member Chris Robinson provided an update on the status of the Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program and the classroom hatchery program.

**ZONE H**  
CHAIR - WAYNE FORGRAVE

Springwater Provincial Park was closed in September 2012 and reopened in 2015 under a five-year agreement between the province and the Beausoleil First Nations. It is operated by the First Nations, but will be open to the public for camping, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and other recreational activities. In 2015, Simcoe County acquired properties to the north and east of the Charlebois Tract that have resulted in a large contiguous forest block of approximately 650 acres, comprising the Charlebois, Thompson, and Martin Valley Tracts. The Thompson Tract, within the Municipality of Penetanguishene, has been the only non-hunting forest in the area. These additions to the forest have resulted in a forest block that now crosses the three municipal borders of Tiny, Penetanguishene, and Midland. As there is no hunting permitted in Midland due to a no discharge bylaw, and the Penetanguishene portion was already designated non-hunting, forestry staff recommended that the entire block be designated non-hunting. The difficulty in continuing to permit hunting on a portion of this forest block and not on others is enforcement, as well as confusion on the part



of area residents and hunters alike. To try to continue hunting in a situation like this will only create tension between the hunting and non-hunting community in the area. It must be stressed that this does not represent a change to the recreation policy, and hunting continues to be a recognized activity in over 95 percent of the Simcoe County Forests. In the summer of 2015, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit was advised by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change that laboratory tests of blue-green algae bloom in Little Lake, on Barrie's northern border, indicated the presence of the toxin microcystin. Blue-green algae are common in the warm summer months, occurring naturally in area lakes and rivers. People have been advised that if blooms are visible, they should not use the water for drinking, food preparation, bathing, or showering; children, pets, and/or livestock should not be allowed to swim in or drink the water; avoid eating fish caught from areas where an algae bloom is present; and Boiling the water won't destroy the toxin. The Ministry of Transportation closed the entrance to the Shale Beach area from Highway 26 on June 17, 2013. Inappropriate use of the beach by certain members of the public had raised a number of concerns regarding health and safety, and environmental damage to the beach itself.



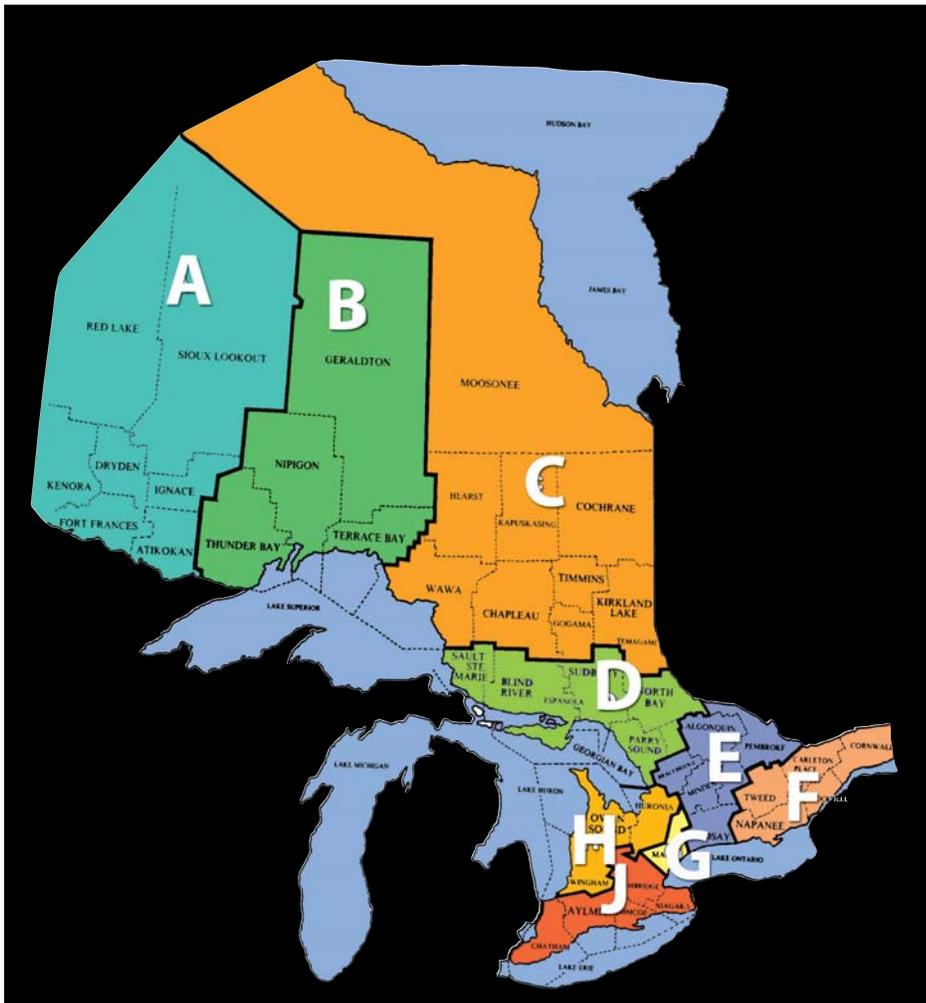
Visitors can still access Shale Beach either through Craigeleith Provincial Park or on foot. When the entrance closed, MTO committed to developing a long-term strategy for the area, and there have been negotiations to transfer ownership of the lands to Craigeleith Provincial Park. The MTO is also partnering with the MNRF to make improvements to Shale Beach, including a vault toilet, an accessible boardwalk, and parking improvements. The entrance to Shale Beach is not expected to reopen before the transfer and improvements are complete.

**ZONE J**  
**CHAIR - BRIAN MOORE**

Zone J has the largest number of members of any zone, and the executive remains very busy and keeps engaged with current issues.. Lakes Erie and St. Clair remain key fisheries producers that are susceptible to change. We are pleased with the management approaches taken by FMZ 19, the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group, and the Great Lakes Protection Act, as far as it goes and OFAH participation therein. We remain concerned with the lack of stakeholder representation on FMZ 16. OFAH Zone J continues to be disadvantaged in this regard and requested regulatory

changes continue to be dismissed (e.g. Walleye season in the Thames River). Habitat and fisheries recruitment is not being adequately considered for several questionable cost barriers in our main watersheds (Springbank Dam, Misner Dam, obsolete Grand River dams). We held our 27th annual Youth Campout on Father's Day weekend, which was hosted by the Brant Rod and Gun Club. Seventy-five youth participated in many outdoor activities such as archery, pellet guns, lure making, solar energy cooking, fishing and composting. Greg Balch supports this program with his educational display that explains 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 helped the youth build custom bass lures that they took home to use. Thank you to the many donors who ensure we can provide this camp at no cost. Zone J executive members have been active with fisheries management, land access, hunting issues, club meeting presentations and municipal council presentations. We continue to work with municipalities to improve access and opportunities. Over the past year, a very hot topic throughout the zone has been the reduction of tags for both moose and white-tailed deer. Additionally, we continue to build good working relationships with our local clubs, supporters, partners and individual members, and we will continue to work hard and together find ways to protect, promote, and create new outdoors opportunities.

# OFAH ZONES



**NOW THAT YOU'VE READ ABOUT WHAT OUR ZONES DO, HOW ABOUT LEARNING MORE?**

**GO ONLINE:  
WWW.OFAH.ORG/  
ZONES**

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE...

OFAH zone meetings keep the OFAH going strong because they are a source of grassroots ideas and membership initiatives.

New faces and fresh ideas are always welcomed on zone executives, local committees and citizens' groups, as well as at the table of the OFAH Board of Directors. Mentorship is strongly encouraged and urgently needed at the local and provincial levels. While each zone may offer a slightly different format, most meetings are conducted quarterly, either on a Saturday or Sunday morning. To help break up the travel, these meetings move across the zone and are generally hosted by various OFAH member clubs. Moving these meetings across the zone gives more OFAH members a chance to affordably participate whenever a zone meeting is hosted near their community.