

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS



Ontario Conservation Centre

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August 27, 2014

Mr. Wayne Fiset, District Manager
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
64 Church Street
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario
P6A 3H3

Dear Wayne:

Subject: Update on the Aboriginal Harvest of Elk in Lake Huron North Shore Restoration Area

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) is Ontario's largest non-profit, conservation-based organization, representing 100,000 members, subscribers, and supporters, and 720 member clubs.

In November 2013, the OFAH was informed that an unknown number of elk had been harvested by local Aboriginal hunters in the Lake Huron North Shore (LHNS) elk restoration area. Subsequent communications with the MNRF revealed that two or three communities had participated in an elk hunt and an unknown number of elk had been harvested (only one was confirmed). We were assured that the Sault Ste. Marie District would initiate discussions with all local First Nation and Métis communities to request "voluntary cooperation to refrain from harvesting elk until such time it has been determined that the population is sustainable." We were also assured that work was proceeding on a draft population objective for this herd. Despite frequent communications with the Sault Ste. Marie District, we have yet to receive satisfying responses to many of our questions.

1. Has the MNRF initiated discussions with all local First Nation and Métis communities to request their cooperation? If so, what response was received?
2. Do local Aboriginal communities intend on harvesting elk in 2014?
3. How many elk have been harvested to date from the LHNS herd by local Aboriginal hunters?
4. Please explain how any harvest can be deemed acceptable in the absence of a population objective.
5. What is the timeline for completion of the population objective setting process for this herd?

As a long-time partner in the provincial elk restoration program, the OFAH is strongly opposed to the harvest of elk by any hunters prior to establishing (and achieving) a population objective; indeed, harvest sustainability is impossible to determine in the absence of a population objective.

We look forward to your response.

Yours in Conservation,

Mark Ryckman
Senior Wildlife Biologist

MR/gh

cc: Deb Stetson, MNRF Manager, Wildlife Policy Section
OFAH Board of Directors
OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee
Angelo Lombardo, OFAH Executive Director
Greg Farrant, OFAH Manager, Government Affairs & Policy
Matt DeMille, OFAH Manager, Fish & Wildlife Services
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