

OFAH – Liberal Response

As a long-standing and proud member who has worked extensively with the OFAH, I am pleased to respond to your questions.

The Ontario Liberal Party recognizes that, for 90 years, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters has been the leading voice for the province's recreational anglers and hunters and a leader in fish and wildlife conservation. Through partnerships with the Ontario government, and through their own initiatives, the OFAH has promoted the ecological, economic and sociocultural benefits of recreational fishing and hunting while ensuring the sustainability of the province's fish and wildlife for future generations. If elected, the Ontario Liberal Party will continue to support OFAH's mandate as champions of our great outdoors.

- 1) The Ontario Liberal Party recognizes that hunters and anglers expect a fair return for the money they pay each year for fish and wildlife licences. This is why our government ensures that 100% of all hunting and fishing revenue, collected through the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account, is spent on fish and wildlife services, including fish culture and stocking, wildlife population studies, research and enforcement. This SPA revenue pays for about two thirds of our fish and wildlife expenditures, while central government revenue pays for one third.
- 2) Our government recognizes the economic and cultural importance of a sustainable moose hunt to hunters and Indigenous communities in Central and Northern Ontario. This is why, in 2015 and again in 2016, our government introduced regulatory measures to help protect and grow the province's moose population, including introducing a shortened calf hunting season in Northern Ontario, and increased the amount of Moose Aerial Surveys conducted across the province (in the past two years, our government has conducted surveys in over half of the 68 Wildlife Management Units with moose hunting seasons). However, we understand that even more can be done; if elected, the Ontario Liberal Party will continue to plan for sustainable moose hunting, and will address gaps in our knowledge of the impacts of disease and climate change on our moose population.
- 3) The Ontario Liberal Party understands that access to Crown land is essential to the hunting and angling experience in Northern Ontario. If elected, the Ontario Liberal Party will continue to implement land use

planning processes to ensure a balance between public to Crown land with the commercial interests of tourism outfitters and the forestry industry and sustainability of wildlife populations.

- 4) In 2016, our government extended our spring black bear pilot to 2020 and extended spring black bear hunting opportunities to residents and non-residents alike in 88 Wildlife Management Units across Central and Northern Ontario. If elected, the Ontario Liberal Party will continue to monitor the results of the pilot while continuing to listen to the perspectives of rural and Northern Ontario as we approach a decision to further extend the pilot beyond 2020.
- 5) In 2016, our government proposed changes to our provincial bait policy to reduce risks from the spread of aquatic invasive species while continuing to support a viable bait industry in Ontario. If elected, the Ontario Party commits to finalizing a bait policy that limits ecological risk while still allowing for the use of live bait in the province.
- 6) The Ontario Liberal Party understands the difficulties faced by hunters, trappers and farmers in dealing with the closure of wolf and coyotes hunting and trapping seasons introduced in some parts of Central Ontario in 2016 to protect the Algonquin Wolf, a species classified as 'Threatened' under the *Endangered Species*. If elected, the Ontario Liberal Party will carefully consider all scientific and stakeholder opinions in the development of a strategy that ensures the recovery of the Algonquin Wolf while minimizing unintended socioeconomic impacts.
- 7) The Ontario Liberal Party is proud of our government's community-based partnerships with the OFAH, including the Community Hatchery Program, which provides funding to roughly 50 community hatcheries across the province. If elected, the Ontario Liberal Party will continue to support these essential community programs.
- 8) The Ontario Liberal Party is proud of the integral role hunting, fishing and trapping have played in our province's history and recognize the vital socioeconomic importance of these activities today. If elected, the Ontario Liberal Party will continue to encourage non-anglers and new Canadians to fish through the Learn to Fish Program and will continue to streamline



hunter education and youth apprenticeship programs and regulations through the government's modernized fish and wildlife licensing system.

- 9) The Ontario Liberal Party recognizes that, in order to ensure hunting opportunities for future generations, government must develop a strategy that will protect wildlife habitat and address threats like climate change and invasive species to our native biodiversity. If elected, the Ontario Liberal Party will finalize a provincial wildlife strategy that addresses these important issues.