

# ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS



*Ontario Conservation Centre*

P.O. Box 2800, 4601 Guthrie Drive, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 8L5  
Phone: (705) 748.6324 • Fax: (705) 748.9577 • Visit: [www.ofah.org](http://www.ofah.org) • Email: [ofah@ofah.org](mailto:ofah@ofah.org)

OFAH File: 406

September 21, 2017

Public Health Agency of Canada  
130 Colonnade Road  
A.L. 6501H  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K

To Whom It May Concern:

Established in 1928, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is the province's largest non-profit, charitable fish and wildlife conservation organization. On behalf of the OFAH, its 100,000 members, supporters, and subscribers, and 740 member clubs, I am writing to express our organization's support for the attached research project entitled "*Characterizing the spatial patterns of white-tailed deer zoonoses in response to a changing climate*", submitted by Dr. Aaron Shafer and colleagues.

Ontario's white-tailed deer resource provides tremendous ecological, cultural, recreational, and socio-economic benefits to the province. Over 190,000 resident hunters purchase deer licences annually, contributing over \$9 million in licence fees alone to fish and wildlife management. These hunters collectively spend millions of days afield and harvest thousands of pounds of sustainable, organic protein to supplement their diets. White-tailed deer are also an important traditional food source for Indigenous peoples. We believe that chronic wasting disease (CWD) is the single greatest threat facing our white-tailed deer populations today.

The OFAH has a long history of advocacy on the issues of CWD and Lyme disease. We actively lobby the governments of Ontario and Canada for improved CWD management, and contribute annually to the province's CWD Surveillance and Monitoring efforts. As Lyme disease poses a growing threat to OFAH members and the outdoors community in general, the OFAH is an active member of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care's Lyme Disease Stakeholder Reference Group. We have advocated for increased public education, increased funding, better diagnostic tools, and better medical treatments for Lyme sufferers. We also partner with CanLyme, Lyme Ontario, and the G. Magnotta Foundation for Vector-Borne Diseases on various public education and communication efforts.

The field of conservation, including wildlife management, must become more predictive if we are to be adequately prepared to address future conservation challenges. The OFAH has previously called on the provincial and federal governments to prioritize research into the potential impacts of climate change on deer (e.g. range expansion), humans (via zoonotic diseases), and other cervid species (e.g. CWD, bluetongue, epizootic hemorrhagic disease, and brainworm). The results of this project will contribute significantly to both cervid management and the surveillance and monitoring of zoonotic diseases. Additionally, the proposed research project has several direct links to the *White-tailed Deer Management Policy for Ontario*, specifically Strategies 1.2, 1.5, 3.1, and 3.2 (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/white-tailed-deer-management-policy-ontario>).

# ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS



*Ontario Conservation Centre*

P.O. Box 2800, 4601 Guthrie Drive, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 8L5  
Phone: (705) 748.6324 • Fax: (705) 748.9577 • Visit: [www.ofah.org](http://www.ofah.org) • Email: [ofah@ofah.org](mailto:ofah@ofah.org)

Public Health Ontario's *Technical Report: Update on Lyme disease prevention and control* states that a warming climate is the main driver behind the recent expansion of Lyme disease cases in Ontario, "specifically the increase in the mean annual degree days above 0°C". Combined with other factors such as range expansion of white-tailed deer and white-footed mouse populations, an increase in the number and spatial distribution of human Lyme disease cases is inevitable. It is incumbent upon us to engage in efforts to predict future hotspots of Lyme disease and CWD to inform surveillance and response programs, distribute finite resources and personnel in the most cost-effective manner, and contribute to the body of research knowledge on Lyme and CWD.

## OFAH Participation in Proposed Project

The OFAH operates multiple communications vehicles that make us a logical and powerful partner in this research project. We publish *Ontario Out of Doors* magazine (sold on newsstands and distributed to OFAH members), produce *Angler & Hunter TV* and *Angler & Hunter Radio*, and have an extensive database of member email addresses. We are also active on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These outlets give us direct access to a diverse range of outdoor enthusiasts to conduct outreach, solicit hunter participation in the project, and disseminate research updates. We also have an extensive network of OFAH Zones and member clubs that we can leverage for participation, communications, and additional funding.

We look forward to being a vital partner in this important research endeavour.

Yours in Conservation,

Mark Ryckman  
Senior Wildlife Biologist

CC: OFAH Board of Directors  
Angelo Lombardo, Executive Director, OFAH  
Greg Farrant, Manager, Government Affairs and Policy, OFAH  
Matt DeMille, Manager, Fish and Wildlife Services, OFAH  
OFAH Fish and Wildlife Staff