

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS

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Ontario Conservation Centre

OFAH FILE: 353B
July 15, 2020

Mr. Corey Crewson,
By-law Enforcement Officer
Town of Huntsville
37 Main Street East
Huntsville, Ontario
P1H 1A1

Dear Mr. Crewson:

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), our 100,000 members, supporters and subscribers, and our 725 affiliated clubs, thank you for affording us the opportunity to provide comments on proposed By-law number 2020-XX; being a bylaw to regulate the discharge of firearms within the Town of Huntsville.

Over the last decade, the OFAH has been involved in approximately 100 discharge by-laws at municipal councils across the province. In many cases, local councils or staff have contacted the OFAH seeking our assistance in crafting these by-laws, given our expertise in this matter. We have also appeared at dozens of committee and council meetings across Ontario to make presentations on discharge by-laws and have worked in partnerships with those same municipalities to create a by-law that does not impede legal hunting, trapping and/or recreational shooting opportunities, while respecting public safety.

Upon reviewing the proposed by-law, we would like to offer the following comments and/or recommendations for your consideration:

1. Definition section 1.3 “firearm(s)” – we are very concerned with the definition that you are using for a firearm. A firearm, for the purposes of legal hunting, trapping and/or recreational shooting, is not a weapon. A weapon is used to commit crimes or hurt someone. While we realize that you are likely looking at definitions from a number of locations, it is important to remember that many definitions speak to criminal acts. Legal hunting, trapping and/or recreational shooting activities are not criminal acts and should not be grouped in the same category as such. A firearm, used for hunting, trapping and/or recreational shooting, is not a weapon.
2. Prohibitions section 2.1 c) – we are seeking justification as to why the town is attempting to prohibit the discharge of firearms within 100 meters (328 feet) of all the waterbodies shown in Schedule A:8.
3. Exemptions section 3.1:
 - d) official name is the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, rather than Ontario Association of Anglers and Hunters.
 - h) as per the provincial hunting regulations, and in accordance with the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997, hunting is permitted one half-hour before sunrise until one half-hour after sunset.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS

July 15, 2020

Page Two

h & j) we are seeking justification on the property size requirement of three hectares (7.4 acres) in order to discharge a firearm and/or bow, when provincial regulations do not call for such a requirement. Three hectares (7.4 acres) is far too restrictive (especially when using a bow), and we would recommend eliminating the minimum acreage requirement, or at minimum, reduce the size.

Thank you again for allowing us the opportunity to offer our comments, suggestions and recommendations on the proposed discharge of firearms by-law. I can be available to discuss this matter with you further at your convenience. Our intent is to work with staff and council on a by-law that takes into consideration the needs and wishes of council, while recognizing and maintaining the heritage activities (e.g. hunting) that have taken place within your township for generations.

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. McRae", written in a cursive style.

Brian McRae
Senior Advisor, Community & Partner Relations

BM/jb

cc: OFAH Board of Directors
Angelo Lombardo, OFAH Executive Director