

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS

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Ontario Conservation Centre

OFAH FILE: 417/794

November 24, 2020

Public Input Coordinator
Species Conservation Policy Branch - Wildlife Section
300 Water Street
5th Floor, North tower
Peterborough, Ontario
K9J 3C7

Dear Sir of Madam:

Subject: ERO # 019-1608 Proposed renewed approach to allocating registered traplines

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) is Ontario's largest, non-profit, fish and wildlife conservation-based organization, representing 100,000 members, subscribers, and supporters, and 725 member clubs. We have reviewed the proposed renewed approach to allocating registered traplines and are supportive of the changes. While we defer to the Ontario Fur Managers Federation for detailed perspectives on trapping-related policies, we feel inclined to offer comment on this proposal because of the potential it has to maintain strong traditions and heritage for trapping in Ontario. This is incredibly important to the OFAH.

Determining When a Trapline is Vacant

The proposed changes to the Trapline Allocation Policy will provide an opportunity to keep traplines in a family for generations. The new policy would allow for a head trapper to transfer the trapline to a family member, who must meet very strict requirements, without first designating the trapline as vacant. Currently, a head trapper must designate their trapline as vacant if they wish to stop trapping, which could result in the trapline being allocated to someone other than a family member. Many trappers keep their traplines for decades, spending money, time, and effort building and maintaining the line. There is often significant sentimental attachment and family tradition associated with these traplines. Providing a guarantee that the line could be transferred to family members would further encourage these connections to the trapline. This change has the potential to bring more younger people into trapping as it would allow them a better chance at getting a trapline – and one in an area that they are likely already invested in. The proposed changes will be beneficial for keeping trapping in Ontario a traditional heritage activity.

In addition to this change, the OFAH recommends that the ability to transfer the head trapper designation to an eligible family member be allowed to occur posthumously by having it on record with the MNRF. This would allow for someone who still wishes to be head trapper, for the time being, to secure their trapline in their family in the event of an untimely death. If the requirements are not met by the individual who is indicated as successor, then the trapline should go through the allocation process as written in the proposed policy. This could be done as simply as the current system in place for allowing head trappers to recommend a helper trapper to take over the line when it becomes vacant, which already permits these recommendations to be valid if the head trapper is deceased.

Process for Identifying Trappers for Authorization to Trap on Crown Land Areas

The OFAH supports the MNRF decision to create a clear policy for the authorization to trap on Crown land, other than a registered trapline. The creation of this policy creates transparency in how trappers are chosen for Crown land trapping. Using the criteria that is in place for allocating registered traplines is a fair and well understood process.

The OFAH is encouraged to see the improvements that the MNRF has made to trapline allocations and hopes that they will result in increased recruitment and retention of Ontario's trappers. Thank you for considering our comments.

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Tonelli', written in a cursive style.

Lauren Tonelli
Resource Management Specialist

LT/jb

cc: Robin Horwath, OFMF General Manager
OFAH Board of Directors
Angelo Lombardo, OFAH Executive Director
Matt DeMille, OFAH Manager, Fish & Wildlife Services
Mark Ryckman, OFAH Manager, Policy
OFAH Fish and Wildlife Staff