

**OFAH ZONE “H” report for BPSA
Stu Paterson –December 2017**

**“opinions expressed in this report are
not necessarily those of BPSA, its
members or directors”**



This report includes coverage of the zone H fall 2017 OFAH meeting in Orillia.

1. With epizootic hemorrhagic disease or EHD confirmed in Ontario, OFAH and MNRF are asking hunters to help monitor the situation. There is no vaccine for EHD. Cases were confirmed near London and two other Ontario deer deaths are suspected to be related to this disease. These are the first confirmed cases of EHD in deer in our province.

Here is how you can help. If you find a dead deer (the disease causes fever and labored breathing. Infected deer often seek out water to cool down and end up dead near water) contact the MNRF at 1-866-673-4781, or 1-800-667-1940 or the Canadian Wildlife Health Co-operative at 1-866-673-4781



Also, graduate student Samantha Allen is researching the spread of EHD with funding from OFAH and the OMAFRA-University of Guelph Research Program. She wants deer blood samples from hunters. If you can help she is at sallen02@uoguelph.ca

This disease has been present in New York since 2007 and Michigan since 1955. So it was inevitable that it would spread to Ontario.



Ontario Out of Doors magazine has more on this threat to deer on page 10 of the December 2017 edition.

2. Anglers helped MNRF save the day at Thornbury after a power cut opened dam gates near the mouth of the Beaver River. It happened September 29th. The increased flow drained the mill pond above the dam, which dried out the fish ladder where fish were stranded and died.

About 70 salmon and 30 rainbow trout were killed. People there to fish the river and an MNRF response team the next morning, helped close the dam manually, raising the pond level and returning water to the fishway. Angler John Kendall from Oakville noticed the dead fish and was among those who raised the alarm and helped clean up the dead fish. The ministry is working to make sure another power cut won't cause a similar problem. The Thornbury fishway underwent major repairs in 2003.



3. OFAH President Kerry Coleman is backing the plan to force ALL licensed hunters to report their hunting activity for moose, deer, elk, black bear, and wild turkey. The proposal was part of a plan circulated by the MNRF this past summer. Coleman agrees with the plan. Under the scheme failure to report could result in not being able to buy a license the following year. Coleman points out, accurate and complete harvest information is crucial for effective management of game wildlife. As far as first nations also being forced to report their hunting activities, Coleman points out "this has nothing to do with rights". In his words "it has everything to do with responsibility and actively participating in resource management".
4. A report from the OFAH Ontario Native Affairs Advisory Committee tabled on September 8, 2017.



Manitoulin Island:

... "The Little Current Fish and Game Club has operated a Walleye stocking program for many years. Recently a First Nations individual was seen harvesting Walleye by stringing nets across the river mouth of Bass Creek, and then selling them on Kijiji. The River Watch program operated by the club did not see a spring run of Walleye this year, and have suspended their hatchery program until the issue is resolved".....

Zone H Native Affairs director Kevin Vardy attended this committee meeting.

The Manitoulin Paper has more on the challenges faced by our friends who stock fish to our North <http://www.manitoulin.ca/2017/09/06/little-current-fish-game-club-challenged-spring-walleye-netting/>

5. In a report earlier this year OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee Chair, Director Dan Elliott, referred to what he called “the Cape Croker/Colpoy’s Bay Fishery Dispute”.



Elliott said “no MNRF or First Nation action was taken on complaints about illegal netting activity by native commercial fishermen”.

He also reported “a First Nation commercial fisherman claims he is exercising a traditional aboriginal right and was not a signatory to any commercial fishing agreement”.

6. In a move considered to be progressive, the Ontario Fisheries Management Zone 11 has added two first nations folks, also referred to as “indigenous”, as members.
7. The new Fisheries Management Zone, zone 16 is still not operating. It covers the huge region of inland lakes, rivers, streams and ponds from Tobermory, South to Lake Erie. The OFAH Fisheries committee reports there are MNRF plans to study the Dunnville fishway. And in this zone the muskie size limit has increased from 38 inches to 44 inches. Existing water/river management plans remain the guide for MNRF decisions affecting this vast region until the new FMZ Zone 16 council is established. See my report on the Zone 16 MNRF “listening sessions” in the latest BPSA newsletter.
8. The OFAH Fisheries committee reports that the FMZ 13/14 councils which meet jointly, (as of this writing) had not been asked to provide input on the all-important Lake Huron Lakewide Management Plan.
9. Dave Hintz with the MNRF Fisheries Policy Section is quoted as telling the OFAH fisheries committee that “there is growing interest in developing terrestrial aquaculture farms” and “new ministry guidelines will provide step-by-step processes of how to start/grow a new aquaculture facility”. New startups can’t exceed 2-thousand 500-tons...which is the largest operator in Ontario.
10. At the annual zone meeting secretary/treasurer Wally Motz noted the Rankin Resource Group has not thanked the zone for the last two cheques OFAH sent the group. In his words “what are they doing”? At the time of the meeting the cheques had not been cashed.

11. At the zone annual zone chair Wayne Forgrave noted that the phragmites invasion of our province may be one of the big news stories in 2018.



The seriousness of the spread of this invasive weed was outlined by Brook Schryer the head of the OFAH Invasive Species team.

He congratulated BPSA for our BootScubber Program and said our club is among the leaders in Ontario as we try to control this weed which chokes out natural plants and seriously affects the environment where it is allowed to spread. I circulated Grey-Bruce news stories about our program at the meeting. Within days the phragmites choking the mouth of the Pottawatomi River were removed. Several members of the SSA attended the zone meeting.

There are 700 invasive plants in Ontario...444

plants and 185 aquatic species. He concluded saying “our best weapon is awareness”.

The OFAH INVASIVE SPECIES LINK - <https://www.ofah.org/programs/invading-species-awareness-program/>



You can report an invasive species by calling the Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711 or visiting www.eddmaps.org/ontario.

12. At the annual zone meeting there was a reminder that clubs such as ours can easily do our own water quality testing.

Dorthea Hangaard of the Couchiching Conservancy outlined a long list of reasons why clubs like ours need to monitor water quality. She said we can keep stocking fish and then find out the water where we are stocking has deteriorated and may no longer be suitable for stocking. She explained that community clubs can buy a 500-dollar kit that measures turbidity, phosphorous, dissolved oxygen, nitrogen levels and chlorides which can come from road salt. She explained that many clubs engage student volunteers to do the work twice a month. That work can ensure the water being stocked remains suitable for stocking. She said streams may look clean but they are not. The real estate boom in many areas has wiped out populations of brook trout. Hoskins in Burlington has the kits.



<http://www.hoskin.ca/>

Ontario Streams will train your volunteers how to use the kits.

13. Some highlights of this past year came from top officials of the MNRF.

Ontario's Natural Resources Minister had enthusiastic praise for volunteers who set aside their spare time to work on the Province's Community Hatchery Program (CHP).

Minister Kathryn McGarry addressed the annual meeting of the (OFAH) in Mississauga. She said she was so enthusiastic about the success of the program; she approved its renewal last fall for an additional three years.



Minister McGarry noted the continuing CHP partnership with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is "something to be proud of". The program involves 41 Ontario community hatcheries, including several volunteer run hatcheries in the Grey Bruce region. The OFAH operates the Community Hatchery Program under the supervision of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

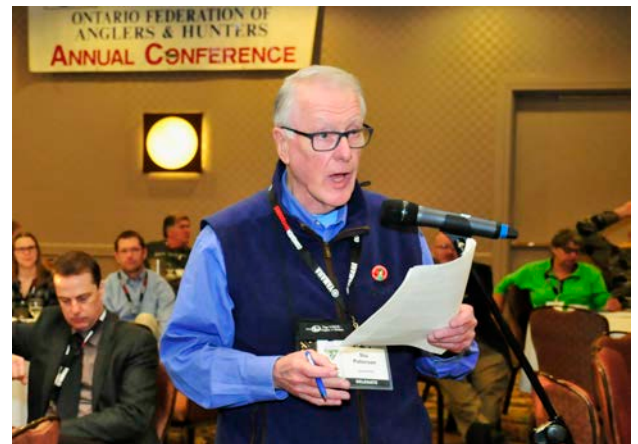
Minister McGarry congratulated "the more than 900 volunteer workers" who put in nearly 60-thousand hours of their time a year at our community fish hatcheries across the province. She congratulated OFAH for promoting responsible hunting and fishing.

Ken Lecroix the MNRF Upper Great Lakes District manager sang a similar tune at the annual meeting of the Community Hatchery Program in Sarnia. Lecroix said the ministry will continue for many years to support fish stocking by groups like BPSA.

In our region the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association, the Sydenham Sportsmen, the Lake Huron Fishing Club, the Ontario Steel Headers and the Georgian Triangle Anglers are just some of the volunteer clubs involved with the CHP. Since the sixties our club has stocked more than 4-million rainbow and brown trout and salmon to support a thriving sports fishery.

Another highlight of the year was when I gave Minister McGarry a list of concerns about the fisheries, sports and commercial, that BPSA members have discussed at our meetings over the last three years. I also read this statement to her and her staff during the question and answer session at the conference:

"We are pleased with the partnership and the good relationship our club has with MNRF. There are forces in society that want us to stop stocking as our fish, rainbow and brown trout and salmon are considered to be "invasives". We have been told by MNRF that there are no plans to stop our fish stocking which we have been doing since the sixties. We appreciate the continuing support shown by MNRF to our club and neighboring clubs".....



Minister McGarry thanked me for the praise and said she hoped we all continue to work together to do good things.

14. The annual zone H meeting saw all executive members acclaimed to their posts which are as follows:

Zone H Chair – Wayne Forgrave email hillview27@gmail.com

Zone H Vice Chair – Mike Evers email d_evers@rogers.com

2nd Vice Glen Meads gmeads@hotmail.ca

Sec/Treas Wally Motz email buffy1@tnt21.com

2nd alt Kevin Vardy email trophyhunter2384@gmail.com

Vardy continues monitoring the OFAH Native Affairs Advisory Committee, Mike is our Fisheries rep on the OFAH Board.

Glen watches over land use such as new quarry proposals.

15. There are 12,260 OFAH members in Zone H. That's up 4 per cent over last year. Total OFAH membership is nearly 80-thousand.
16. The next Zone H OFAH meeting will be in Durham at the Legion on January 14, 2018 hosted by the South Bruce Anglers & Hunters. I will attend on your behalf.

Please eat and drink responsibly over the Holidays...Here's to a happy and healthy year of fishing, hunting and outdoors fun in 2018!!!!

Stu Paterson reporting on OFAH for BPSA

