

**OFAH ZONE “H” report for BPSA
Stu Paterson –May 2018**

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



1. RENEWED SAUGEEN OJIBWAY (SON) COMMERCIAL FISHING AGREEMENT:

“the government is out of control giving them unlimited nets”

“we remain concerned there is no requirement to report catch”

“there is no enforcement”

“this is a government betrayal of people who stock fish”

These were just some of the comments on the renewed commercial fishing agreement affecting this fishery from Kincardine to Tobermory and East to Collingwood. The reaction came at the spring Zone H OFAH meeting in Midland.

This agreement outlines how nets in Owen Sound and Colpoy’s Bay need to be marked every 300 metres for safety purposes and there will no longer be net length limitations. Most delegates attending the zone H meeting condemned what they called a “truly outrageous” way of overseeing the commercial fishery. In the latest Ontario Out Of Doors Magazine (page 15) the OFAH laid out its official position on the renewed agreement.



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In Ontario Out of Doors Magazine, an expert on fish and wildlife and First Nations relations with non-natives, commented on the renewed agreement.

In the words of Matt Demille OFAH Manager of fish and wildlife referring to this SON agreement “we will be asking for accountability when it comes to government spending, monitoring, compliance and data sharing. The previous agreement provided first nations with 850-thousand dollars to study the fisheries in our region. So far commercial fishers have withheld results of these studies”. This new five year agreement provides 1-million 250-thousand dollars for new studies. DeMille says “our federation will continue to fight for the results of these important studies”. He also states “transparent government action related to community concerns will be important in reducing.....conflicts in order to ensure a safe and sustainable Great Lakes fishery for all users”.



Kevin Vardy Zone H OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee rep says he is outraged by the terms of this new agreement. Vardy told the zone spring meeting, our Ontario government is “out of control” if government officials think this is the proper way to maintain healthy sports and commercial fisheries for the future. He cited near zero enforcement and the lack of reporting on fish caught as major concerns. He said “if governments continue like this there will be nothing left in our lakes”.



Later Kevin issued a further statement on the SON agreement extension-

Fishing Agreement:

....” Right from the start I do acknowledge native rights and do not dispute this. My issue with this agreement lies entirely with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). In the previous agreement nets were limited to 300m. This part of the agreement was not always adhered to and was not enforced even though there were constant reports and complaints made about infractions regarding nets. To solve the noncompliance issue the net length restrictions were simply removed from the new agreement. It was replaced by a requirement to simply mark the nets every 300m. After the collapse of the Lake Nipissing fisheries which I also blame on the MNRF for making one bad agreement after another, you would think they would have learned. The only thing that supersedes harvest rights is conservation which is the job of the MNRF. A job they are failing badly at. My other concern is 1.2 million to study the fishery when we have not seen the results of the last study that we the tax payer funded ”...

Kevin Vardy

OFAH zone H Alternate Director

For the official Ontario Government position on the agreement, please refer to the OFAH report we filed last month.

2. In the works is a request from BPSA to the MNRF asking the ministry to host an “all stakeholders meeting” to discuss the state of our sports and commercial fisheries. There are many challenges facing both fisheries. One aim of this meeting will be to try to convince our First Nations neighbours to share information from fisheries studies they have kept secret for the last five years. Apparently only members of the First Nations “Governance Council” know results from these studies. Ken Lecroix the MNRF Upper Great Lakes manager has been asked to help by leading this meeting.



3. At the spring zone meeting there was a report on spearing spawning rainbow trout at Gleason Brook East of Warton.

POACHING: Georgian Bluffs, Ontario

On Tuesday April 3, 2018 at 5:30pm three people, one child, a man and a woman were observed spearing spawning rainbow trout at a stream called Gleason Brook. This activity was conducted in a sanctuary which prohibits any kind of fishing, spearing etc. They continued for about a half hour. When questioned about their behaviour they told a witness “we have the right to do this”.



Many volunteer clubs put in hundreds of man (human-person) hours a year raising these fish for the put-and-take sports fishery.

Across the water at Colpoy’s Bay in the sanctuary, in past weeks, there was at least one reliable witness report of two men bagging spawning rainbow trout and leaving with the fish. Please call the MNRF Tips Line if you see such activity.





Deletates reminded BPSA to continue using “no trespassing” signs and trail cams on private property in sanctuary areas to discourage poachers.

4. I reported to our spring zone H meeting that BPSA is continually working to improve the survival rate of the fish we stock. I explained our plan, if approved, to use net pens, in a sheltered area, as transition zones for brown trout raised at our BPSA Hatchery. I explained during the multi-week transition period between the hatchery and release, the fish acclimatize and feed and grow at improved rates as well as result in much higher survival rates.

Gavin Reed of Georgian Bluffs recently showed off his 10-pound brown caught near Wiarton. The fish was fin clipped suggesting it was a stocked fish.

We have noticed an improved brown trout survival rate in our bay over the last year. Which is good news as historically, our browns have not had nearly as positive return rates as the millions of rainbow trout we have stocked since the sixties.



5. At the 90th annual OFAH fish and wildlife Conference the retired chairman of Canadian National Sportsmen’s Shows was presented with an honorary OFAH lifetime membership. Walter Oster received the nod for his dedication and commitment to outdoors recreation and our heritage pursuits of fishing, hunting and trapping. Under Walter’s leadership during a ten year period, BPSA received more than 13-thousand dollars-worth of fishing rod and reel kits from the Toronto Sportsmen’s Show, which we used as prizes at our kids fishing events.



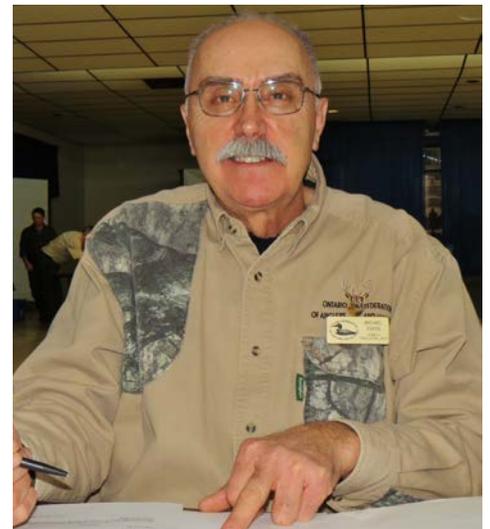
6. Our Zone H has won the Bob Hope Memorial Trophy for the largest membership increase of any of the OFAH zones. Our Zone boasts more than 12-thousand members, up by 256 over last year.



The trophy was presented to zone executive members at the 90th annual OFAH Fish and Wildlife Conference in Mississauga.

7. At the OFAH Annual Conference there was discussion about crown land, logging roads, and the government policy of restricting hunter and access to that land. Provincial law allows hunting and fishing outfitters (who pay for that right) to have exclusive access to former logging and other crown land roads. These roads for years have been used by outdoors folks to get to their hunting and fishing spots.

Zone H Director Mike Evers told the conference, anglers and hunters pump millions of dollars into the northern Ontario economy. This is an ongoing issue and Mike promised that OFAH will keep fighting for improved hunter/angler access to forestry roads, both abandoned ones and roads still in use.



8. OFAH President Kerry Coleman reports the province is closing the MNR operated seed plant near Angus. The move he says comes without any kind of contingency plan to provide seeds for the reforestation and rehabilitation of millions of acres. Most private tree nurseries in southern Ontario sourced their tree and shrub seeds from that plant.

Former Premier McGuinty introduced the “50-million tree program” that provided government subsidies enabling the planting of that many trees by 2020. We already know that trees provide crucial habitat for wildlife including species at risk.



Trees are also an indicator of the type of healthy landscape the MNR often talks about. Coleman gives the province “two thumbs down” on this move.

9. OFAH Zone H has provided BPSA with a \$400.00 donation to help cover some expenses for our 2018 BPSA Kids Fishing Day. Please make sure we thank the zone secretary – treasurer and explain how the money was used. In wake of all the OFAH help to our club in recent years, it is time to once again become an “affiliated club” of OFAH. On one hand, here we are asking for help on grants etc. On the other hand we continue to refuse to become an officially affiliated OFAH club. I have said it many times....”not affiliating with OFAH is the same as Canada refusing to join the United Nations”.

10. Things I learned at recent OFAH meetings-

- (a) Under new MNR licensing rules you need a computer, printer or other electronic device so a CO can scan/verify your license/ tag in the field
- (b) You must carry your PAL when you are transporting or hunting, using any type of gun or bow
- (c) Each tag will be different, carrying detailed info on what it is valid for
- (d) Only 52% of resident moose hunters are reporting their harvest which hurts MNR efforts to continue monitoring moose herds

11. On your behalf I will attend the next zone H OFAH meeting. It is the zone annual, slated for Collingwood. The meeting is set for September 30, 2018 at 10am. There is a hospitality suite for all attendees the night before and the annual Zone dinner the night of Sunday the 30th. These events will be hosted by the Georgian Triangle Anglers.

Stu Paterson reporting on OFAH for BPSA

BPSA - now celebrating 56 years of conservation.

Photo Credits: Boris Reyes OFAH, Paterson Media

