

**OFAH ZONE “H” report for BPSA
Stu Paterson -July 2018**

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



1. Ontario’s new Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) is Jeff Yurek the MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London. He is familiar with many of our concerns after a meeting we had with him at the OFAH annual 2 years ago. A pharmacist and business owner, Jeff is a life-long resident of St. Thomas. First elected to the legislature in 2011 Jeff has served in a series of roles in the PC Caucus including Health Critic, Critic of Natural Resources and Forestry, Deputy Critic of Finance, Critic of Transportation & Auto Insurance Reform, and as a Member of the Standing Committee on General Government. Jeff has fought for accountability and answers on matters around hunting and fishing regulations, on the use of the millions of dollars in the Ontario MNRF Special Purposes Account, around OHIP coverage, and mandatory WSIB coverage for independent contractors.



Two years ago your OFAH correspondent and Jack Doherty of the Sydenham Sportsmen enjoyed a 2 hour lunch/chat with Jeff at the OFAH annual. I believe Jeff totally understands the challenges we face in dealing with First Nations Commercial Fishers and the MNRF. We should invite Jeff to attend our annual Pork & Beef Barbecue (our club’s largest fundraiser of the year) to show him around and to discuss the issues we have been facing with our more than 60-year old fish stocking program. He could use the occasion to make an announcement or two about MNRF policies and how they affect our region. Maybe renew the Community Hatchery program.

2. OFAH did its job during the run up to the recent Ontario election. Our federation issued a list of issues of concern to OFAH members and the party leaders asking each party to comment on those issues.
The Ontario Conservative leader Doug Ford had an encouraging response (CBC News photo)



May 2018
Angelo Lombardo, Executive Director
Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters

Dear Mr. Lombardo.

Thank you for taking the time to write and share the concerns of the Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters.

Ontario hunters and anglers play a very important role in supporting wildlife conservation efforts. They understand better than anyone the importance of careful stewardship of our natural habitats and wildlife. But, the Liberals have turned hunting and fishing licenses into a cash grab to pay for their own irresponsible spending. At the same time, a lack of proper conservation funding has led to declining moose populations, understocking of fish, and various other issues involving hunting and fishing.

This is unacceptable. These funds are meant to go into a special purpose account and be earmarked for conservation efforts and improving hunting and fishing in Ontario. A PC Government would use these funds accordingly, which would include hiring more conservation officers.

Similarly, the Wynne Liberals have consistently and significantly reduced the number of moose tags issued, as well as shortening the length of the moose-hunting season. The government should consider the economic and cultural benefits of the moose hunt in its policies and employ cost-effective, evidence-based approaches to managing the moose population and habitat protection.

Crown lands account for 87% of the land base in Ontario but the Ministry of Natural Resources has too often restricted access to these lands and the more than 2,000 lakes they hold. This precludes hunting and angling opportunities and even simple things like hiking and general tourism. Quite simply, it stops local citizens from accessing their own Crown lands without the threat of heavy fines for trespassing.

An Ontario PC Government would look to unlock Crown lands for hunting, angling, and tourism; and explore ways to increase public access to resource access roads, including forest roads.

For too long, successive Ontario governments have crafted hunting regulations based on emotion rather than on appropriate wildlife management practices. For example, they have refused to make cormorants a hunt-eligible species despite large populations and the negative environmental consequences of that bird population. While the spring black bear hunt has been reinstated, it was done only on a temporary pilot basis. This should be re-examined, with the mindset that municipalities in the North get the final say on allowing the hunt in their jurisdiction and that the population is effectively monitored.

Your dedication to conservation and upholding the traditions of fishing and hunting in Ontario is truly appreciated. When I am elected Premier on June 7th, I promise I will focus on investing in the priorities that matter most to the people of Ontario.

Thank you again for writing to me on these important matters and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,
Doug Ford
Leader, Ontario PC Party

Many of the issues mentioned by Ford have been brought up by BPSA and OFAH members for many years. (locked crown land gate near Cornwall Post Media photo)



The Crown Land issue where outfitters pay for the right to blockade logging roads and only allow their customers use of these roads, is certainly one to watch. At the last two OFAH annual meetings there have been rude outbursts by delegates in front of Ministry officials, over the closure of roads and public access to crown land.

The issue of protecting the Special Purpose Account has been very controversial under the former Liberal Ontario Government. And you may recall MPP Bill Walker addressing our BPSA members before the election, promised increased funding for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry under a Conservative government.

2. BILL C-71: AN ACT TO AMEND CERTAIN ACTS AND REGULATIONS IN RELATION TO FIREARMS



UPDATE:

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security has finished studying Bill C-71. The OFAH went to Parliament Hill on May 30, 2018 to provide testimony to the committee (see below). The Committee's report on Bill C-71 was presented in the House of Commons on June 12, 2018 and briefly debated (time allocation for debate was restricted). The report recommended only a few amendments, none which addressed the important issues raised by the OFAH during our testimony on the bill. The lack of recognition for legitimate concerns from the firearms community is disappointing, but we are not finished trying to get some significant changes to the proposed legislation.

With the House of Commons rising for the summer on June 20, Bill C-71 did not make it to 3rd reading prior to summer recess, meaning that process won't occur until after the fall session begins. The Bill not only requires 3rd reading, but still needs to make its way through the Senate – a process very similar to what it just went through in the House of Commons. It will be debated, go to committee and be considered for amendments. The process may be similar, but it doesn't have the same degree of partisanship (Senators aren't thinking about re-election, and some are independent). Also, other recent bills

(e.g. Bill C-45, the “Cannabis Act”) have been scrutinized, hotly debated and subject to numerous proposed amendments in the Senate – some of which were actually accepted by the government in the House of Commons.

OFAH supports firearms legislation measures that increase the public safety of Canadians, as long as it doesn't implement further unnecessary restrictions or barriers on law-abiding firearms users.

The government's stated intention of Bill C-71 is to prioritize public safety and respond to increasing trends in gun crime and violence, yet it would seem that the majority of the proposals are focused on lawful firearms users. The government is painting a picture of alarming trends in firearms-related crime and violence to justify the proposed measures and to show action on election platform promises of 2015. Unfortunately, targeting lawful firearms users will not help them achieve their intended goals.

The [stats being used to support the need for Bill C-71](#) reference 2013 (lowest criminal homicides in 50 years) as a baseline to suggest we have a growing problem with firearms in Canada. However, the facts show a long-term decline in firearm-related crime. OFAH will continue our advocacy on Parliament Hill to try to get some traction on meaningful changes to Bill C-71. OFAH was aware of the seminar BPSA and our Handgun Club had to review this bill. Several at head office congratulated us on our effort.

3. OFAH head office is closely watching for developments on this story. It involves the often controversial Lake Nipissing commercial fishery which is in the news again with the discovery of “ghost nets” containing rotting fish.

<http://www.thesudburystar.com/2018/06/21/two-ghost-nets-found-in-lake-nipissing>

4. Among the priorities for OFAH is continuing good relations between first nations and groups like ours. This is how the federation worded a note on the subject to all political parties before the provincial election:

...“Increase efforts to work with Indigenous communities to achieve conservation priorities. Cooperative approaches between Indigenous communities, government and non-government organizations will be essential in ensuring the sustainable management of Ontario's fish and wildlife for future generations”...

This is yet another reason why all clubs that stock fish in our region should have a joint meeting involving the MNRF and First Nations leaders to discuss mutual concerns. BPSA directors continue to seek such a meeting. Now that the election is over we see no reason to delay holding such a session as proposed by myself this past spring.

5.

...“researchers verified extremely high concentrations of cancer-causing pollution in the Owen Sound harbour's sediment”...

The news story about Trent University researchers confirming major toxic pollution in the sediment of the Owen Sound harbour, needs to be followed closely. The story did not clarify if the researchers were being paid by SON under the terms of present or past Commercial Fishing Agreements. These agreements provide SON with big tax dollars designated for “fishery studies” which we have not been able to review due to secrecy on the part of the SON folks with the “governance council” that oversees these agreements. Many BPSA members have eaten fish from that harbor or fish that have spawned and moved through this harbor which is the focus of the story. This is how Post Media covered the issue:



<http://www.owensoundsuntimes.com/2018/06/21/son-raises-concerns-about-pollution-in-owen-sound-harbours-sediment>

6. From OFAH head office: Moose populations continue to decline in many wildlife management units. The hope is to continue gathering information on threats to moose and to find ways to work cooperatively with other groups, including indigenous communities. Our federation emphasizes “we need to develop solutions to declining moose populations that are acceptable to everyone”.



7. At the next OFAH zone meeting I will pass on information about the MNRF “Wildlife Monitoring Station” that was set up at Howdenvale and Huron Roads North of Wiarton. From May 15th to June 19 the Ministry was monitoring bear population activities.

Technicians set up a series of baited survey stations mainly focused on assessing black bear populations. Nearby a sign warned observers to be “aware of their surroundings” and that “black bears DO inhabit the area”. Craig Todd of the MNRF (519-371-8465) should have the results of the study by September. The story was reported by Janice Greenwood of Postmedia.



Ten years ago the area from Big Bay to Oxenden was reported to have a population of ten black bears.

8. Ministry folks are considering posting notices at Berford Lake near Warton about “cercarial dermatitis”. This is a condition among swimmers known as “swimmers itch”. It has been known for 30 years that this lake contains certain parasites that cause skin rashes and itchiness. The Mayo Clinic reports these critters burrow in your skin and can cause persistently itchy welts and major discomfort lasting for days. Beware of swimming in Berford Lake.

9. LYME DISEASE: There are new elements to OFAH insurance. As an OFAH member you can now receive benefits related to Lyme disease diagnosis and medical travel expenses.

Here is what you need to know about LYME DISEASE:

<https://www.ofah.org/issues/lyme-disease/>

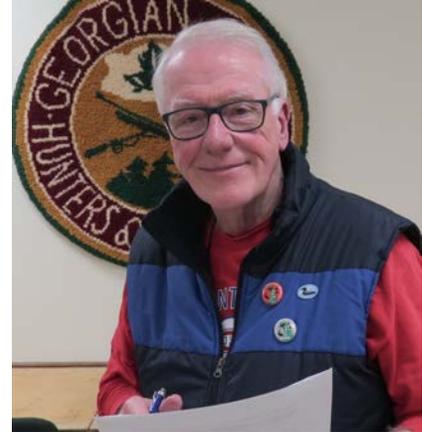
10. Once again governments are hinting about a ban on lead in hunting and fishing products. (see page 14 in the June 2018 edition of Ontario Out of Doors) You can have your say by responding to the question “are you prepared to move toward lead-free options for hunting and fishing”?

Vote now at – www.oodmag.com

11. July 15, 2018 at 10am marks the date and time of the next Zone H OFAH meeting. It’s at the Barrie District Anglers and Hunters clubhouse. I will represent you as usual. The zone H annual meeting is set for 10 am Saturday September 29, 2018 hosted by

the Georgian Triangle Anglers at the leisure Club 100 Minnesota Street Collingwood. If you want to attend the festivities (hospitality suite) Friday the 28th and the annual general meeting and dinner on the Saturday night, a block of rooms has been booked for OFAH delegates at the Mariner Motor Hotel with the rate \$110.00 a night. Meals and registration for the Saturday evening dinner will set you back \$80.00 a couple. Your correspondent chooses to attend only the annual meeting on the Saturday in hopes of saving money for BPSA. In thirteen years as **BPSA**-OFAH rep, I have never attended the dinner associated with this annual meeting.

That's all for nowStu Paterson reporting on OFAH for BPSA. Have a happy healthy summer and remember if you are out there... keep your sense of humour. As we have said so many times -



"The fishing was good; it was the catching that was bad". ~A.K. Best