

**OFAH ZONE “H” report for BPSA
Stu Paterson – April 2019**

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



1. I managed to arrange a chat with the Ontario Natural Resources Minister just before his speech at the OFAH annual meeting in Mississauga. It is clear he understands most of our issues, so that's a good thing. Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry John Yakabuski is from Barry's Bay in a rural area of eastern Ontario. He does appear to understand many of our concerns surrounding fishing, hunting and conservation and how they are integrated. We will see if he can move ahead solving some of our problems in wake of issues left us by the former Liberal party folks.

We discussed the importance of the Ontario Community Hatchery Program to clubs such as ours. I made it clear that for several years we at BPSA have had a positive working relationship with his ministry folk in our region.

Yakabuski has good people skills. Before his speech he took time to wander around the conference floor to talk with delegates to the OFAH annual. He appeared jovial and seemed keenly interested in what OFAH members were telling him.



2. In his speech to the OFAH annual conference, Minister Yakabuski said with climate change and fish and wildlife population fluctuations, OFAH is needed more than ever. He noted our members are out there in the wild, helping his ministry keep watch on what's happening. He urged us to continue to have a strong voice on fishing and hunting issues, so anglers and hunter's opinions will be heard by provincial decision makers. The Minister talked about all the energetic volunteers who take part in fish stocking and many other outdoors activities that benefit our province. In his words “I am impressed...thank you to all the volunteers” who make Ontario a better place.



- In his annual report the executive director of OFAH reminded us our federation is the VOICE OF ANGLERS, HUNTERS and TRAPPERS on “all issues related to fishing, hunting and fish and wildlife conservation management”.

Angelo Lombardo noted a long list of federation accomplishments in 2018, including our active role in fighting a proposed federal handgun ban. He suggested that through our activism, the federation Webpage, Facebook page and Ontario Out of Doors magazine, OFAH is “the information hub for Canada’s outdoors community.”

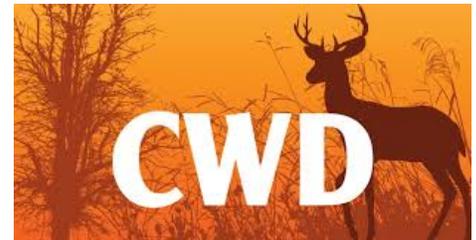
“We communicate regularly with 20-thousand people via email and last year nearly 75-thousand followed OFAH on social media.”

Lombardo noted the OFAH operates the Community Hatchery Program (of which BPSA is a member) that enhances the quality and quantity of sustainable fishing opportunities. In his words “promoting the wise use of our fish and wildlife resources continues to be a pillar for why the fishing, hunting and trapping communities trust and rely on OFAH to be their voice.”



- OFAH has launched a major information campaign to spread the word about CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD).

The launch came at the annual federation conference, which dealt in depth with the threat of the disease spreading into our province.

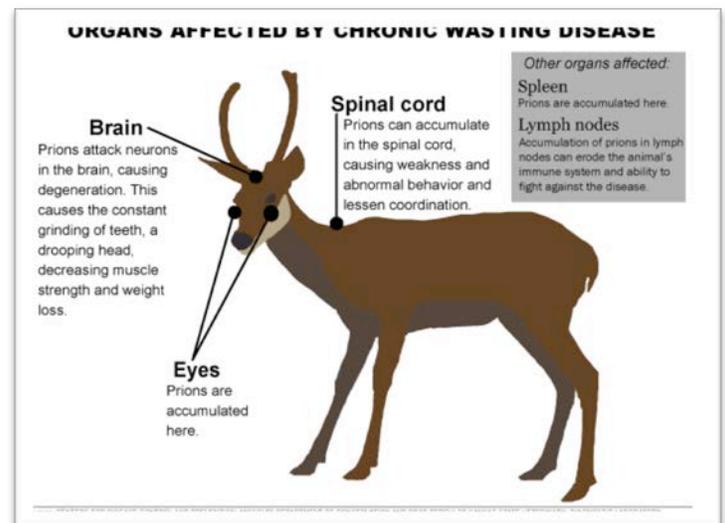


At the meeting we learned Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has the potential to kill entire populations of deer species, and the disease is knocking at Ontario’s door. The untreatable disease affects the nervous system of members of the cervid species family including red, mule and whitetail deer, elk, moose and caribou.

Animals infected with CWD will die within two years. It is not known if it can spread to humans.

The threat of CWD reaching Ontario increased big time in the fall of 2018, with the disease found on a red deer farm in Quebec, almost directly across the border from the Ottawa River.

CWD is “a fatal, untreatable disease of the central nervous system affecting members of the deer family (e.g., white-tailed, red & mule deer, American elk, moose and woodland caribou),” according to an [overview](#) of the disease on the Ontario government website. The disease can be transferred among animals through close contact or exposure to a contaminated



environment. Evidence suggests CWD can remain infectious in an environment, for example, in soil, for years. It is spread in the urine and feces of animals. It is also easily spread when in contact with feed or even a trailer that has contacted infected animals.

CWD has not yet been confirmed in Ontario, though 11 cases of the disease have been confirmed on that game farm in Quebec, 15 kilometres (9.3 miles) across the border,

OFAH Manager of Fish and Wildlife Services, Matt DeMille told the conference.

“We can no longer wait on governments to decide CWD prevention is a priority. Hosting this conference is our way of kick-starting the momentum needed to force positive change.” He promised our federation will lead the way informing ALL Ontarians, not just hunters, of the dangers of this dreaded disease. A summary of all conference CWD presentations is in the works.



OFAH brought in 14 CWD experts from across Canada and the United States to raise awareness and to build a strong coalition that can push for strong action against CWD. 50 agencies, organizations and interest groups attended including First Nations, health and medicine, science and research and industry reps.

Dr. Evelyn Merrill biologist from the University of Alberta predicted “we will see decreased deer populations as CWD spreads.” She noted “crows, coyotes and skunks can spread CWD from eating infected animals.” Dr. Merrill said CWD is “a super-wicked problem because there is no vaccine against it and it would be impossible to give shots to millions of animals hoping to prevent its spread.”



CWD: What are we up against?
Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) of cervids: moose, elk, deer, caribou



Characteristics

- Highly contagious
- No full resistance
- 100% fatal
- Time to death:
 - Deer ~ 1.5-2.5 yrs
 - Elk ~ 4yr

A top federal scientist told the conference mass culling is the only answer when CWD appears. Dr. Michael Coulthart is with the infectious disease branch of the Public Health Agency of Canada. He also stated the risk to humans “is poorly understood.”

Dr. Coulthart said his agency has determined with 972 cases of CWD identified in Canada but none in Ontario so far, “the risk to humans appears low but cannot be dismissed.”



A perspective on human risk

- No direct evidence of human CWD (so far), **But:**
 - > Human exposure to CWD is likely widespread
 - > Recent scientific evidence questions some assumptions
 - No scientific basis for human “immunity” to CWD
 - > Additional factors to consider
 - Some people may be more susceptible
 - CWD prions may adapt to humans
 - There may be silently infected human CWD “carriers”
 - *Etc.*
- ***Risk of human CWD infection cannot be dismissed***
- ***Human CWD could have very serious consequences***
- ***“Precautionary principle” is relevant***

So far provincial testing of over 12-thousand animals for CWD shows no cases in this province. Grey-Bruce is considered to be in a “MEDIUM-RISK” CWD zone. Southwest Ontario is at a higher risk due to the presence of game farms. One rep from New York State promised his team would come immediately to Ontario to help with a cull, if chronic wasting disease is confirmed here.

Jim Farquhar is Wildlife Bureau Chief with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. New York has banned deer feeding to reduce concentrations of deer as concentrations of the animals result in CWD. His state has tested 52-hundred deer since 2002. When tests are positive a 15-20 mile circle is established where hired sharpshooters do their work at night killing all deer in that circle. Then the deer brains or lymph nodes are tested. So far preventative CWD deer culls involving 80-100 people using night vision scopes, have cost New Yorkers over 1-million dollars. Only a few New York deer have tested positive for CWD.



5. Every year 190-thousand deer hunting licenses are sold in Ontario. Deer hunting pumps millions of dollars into the Ontario economy. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) has collected public opinions on our hunting licensing system. As a result of this survey OFAH is recommending the province implement mandatory double-fencing for cervid (deer, elk, etc) farms and eventually phase out these farms to eliminate the risk they pose to wild deer and elk populations.

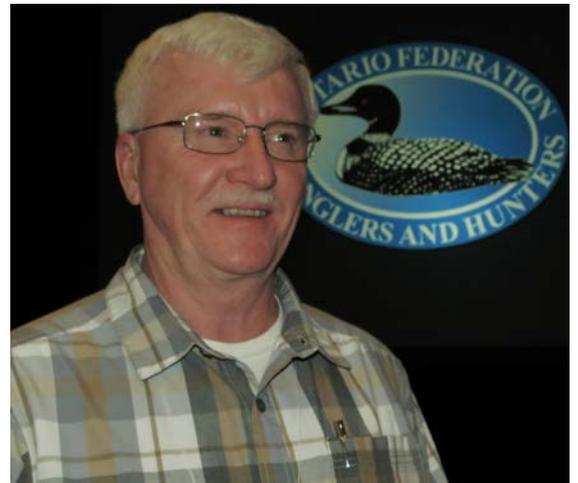
Former OFAH President Bill Blackwell of Port Elgin told the conference it is time to send a strongly worded message to the MNR about existing elk and deer farms in Ontario. He wants them closed ASAP and the owners properly compensated, to prevent the spread of diseases such as CWD.



6. The chair of the OFAH Indigenous Relations Liaison Committee reported our federation has taken a fresh approach to working with Indigenous Communities.

OFAH Director Dan Elliott told the conference his committee now “works on projects focused on building relationships and establishing partnerships to further mutual conservation initiatives with First Nations Communities.” One of the priorities he said is to “establish contacts that will promote, build on and maintain existing Indigenous relations” that OFAH has with First Nations individuals and organizations.

The OFAH Indigenous Relations Liaison Committee encouraged several OFAH staff members to take Indigenous Cultural Competency training to improve relationship building with indigenous groups and individuals.



7. OFAH Zone H has a bursary program that is open to all family members attending college or university studying FLORA or FAUNA or related subjects. The applicant must have been a member of OFAH Zone H for the previous 12 months. Applications can be made through Zone Secretary Dennis Wiseman.

8. OFAH has issued an appeal for young people to apply for summer jobs in the field of invasive species



JOB
opportunity

We are currently searching for one

Atlantic Salmon Educator

Visit our website for complete details: www.ofah.org/jobs



<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=public+service+video++ofah+port+hope+responsibl+e+fishing&&view=detail&mid=CF36FE4D9BB910A12A55CF36FE4D9BB910A12A55>

JOB OPPORTUNITIES:

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is searching for 35+ hard-working, outgoing individuals to assist with our Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP) this summer as ISAP Summer Technicians.

These positions are based at 30+ partner agencies within Ontario (including two positions at the OFAH Conservation Centre near Peterborough).

COMPLETE LOCATION LIST"

<https://www.ofah.org/jobs/summer-technician/>

Application Deadline: April 14, 2019 @ 11:59PM

9. We are wondering if BPSA should launch a video campaign to try to improve the behaviour of anglers. These productions called "Responsible Behaviour" would be similar to public service videos already targeting an area east of Toronto. Perhaps a BPSA member would be willing to take on this project and try to seek funding to cover part of the project? Maybe OFAH Zone H would be willing to cover part of the cost? We would feed these videos to Youtube and various angler sites to promote responsible fishing methods.

Responsible fishing part 1

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=public+service+video++ofah+port+hope+responsible+fishing&&view=detail&mid=CF36FE4D9BB910A12A55CF36FE4D9BB910A12A55&rvmid=513E265B0A2CD49AC0E3513E265B0A2CD49AC0E3&FORM=VDQVAP>

part 2

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=public+service+video++ofah+port+hope+responsible+fishing&&view=detail&mid=513E265B0A2CD49AC0E3513E265B0A2CD49AC0E3&FORM=VDRVRV>

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=public+service+video++ofah+port+hope+responsible+fishing&&view=detail&mid=CF36FE4D9BB910A12A55CF36FE4D9BB910A12A55>

10. BPSA Kids Fishing Chair Mike Smith is contacting Zone H secretary/treasurer Dennis Wiseman to apply for the same amount as last year (\$400) to support our club's 2019 Kids Fishing event. Our BPSA Kids Fishing derby takes place at the BPSA Hatchery Pond On May 25. Each year OFAH Zone H awards several grants to deserving conservation organizations such as BPSA.
11. The next OFAH Zone H quarterly meeting is the April 21st zone H session in Orangeville and the June 7 meeting in Barrie. The location of the Zone H annual meeting September 28 remains TBA. The club hosting this annual meeting receives one thousand dollars for expenses and a 500 dollar donation from OFAH.





Here is something to think about as we look forward to doing some trolling or standing on docks seeking a spring rainbow or brown:

“a trout is a moment of beauty known only to those who seek it“
author unknown

Photo credits – OFAH, Paterson Media
With more than 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters, and 740 member clubs, the OFAH is the province’s largest fish and wildlife conservation-based organization — and the VOICE of anglers and hunters. For more information visit us online at www.ofah.org, follow us on Twitter @ofah and find us on Facebook or Instagram @theofah.

***Stu Paterson reporting on OFAH for the
Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen’s Association***

**BPSA NOW CELEBRATING
57 YEARS OF CONSERVATION**

