

# OFAH ZONE "H" report for BPSA Stu Paterson - July 2020

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

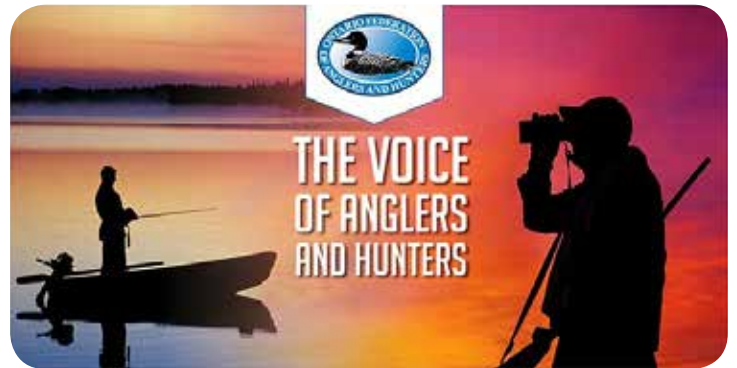


*This report includes coverage of the 2020 OFAH Annual General Meeting which this year, for the safety of attendees during the COVID-19 PANDEMIC EMERGENCY DECLARATION, was a “virtual” meeting.*

## 1. OFAH ANNUAL VIRTUAL MEETING JUNE 18, 2020.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) may join the court fight over Ottawa’s firearms ban. The Liberals outlawed a wide range of firearms by cabinet order, saying the guns were designed for battle not hunting or sport shooting.

The Canadian Coalition for Firearms Rights, the Canadian Shooting Sports Association, the Canadian Sporting Arms and Ammunition Association, the National Firearms Association and the province of Saskatchewan are launching or considering launching lawsuits aimed at striking down the order that put the ban in place. They say the Order in Council to ban thousands of makes and models of commonly used firearms is illegal and unconstitutional. Gun advocates say the Liberal ban penalizes law-abiding citizens, while ignoring criminals who obtain their firearms illegally, and are responsible for much of the gun violence in Canada.



At the OFAH annual meeting, held on-line, the federations Matt DeMille called the firearms ban “badly thought out.” DeMille the OFAH Fish and



Wildlife manager said our federation is engaging with multiple groups including the firearms community, to oppose the ban. He reminded members “we are not a gun lobby group, but many of our members are against the ban, so we may take part in lawsuits to strike down the law. We can’t just walk away from these bans”. One group calls the firearms prohibition “fundamentally unjust because it deprives people of their property”.



*The Canadian Coalition for Firearms Rights welcomed the BPSA Handgun Clubs participation in its lawsuit. It said “A huge CCFR thank you to the members and executive of the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen Association Handgun Club for their support and generous donation of \$2,000.00 to assist in our legal battle against the gun ban.”*

Ontario Out of Doors has the very latest info on federation actions on firearms  
<https://oodmag.com/news/whats-happening-with-firearms/>

## 2. Fishing and hunting can stimulate post-pandemic economies

In recent weeks OFAH sent a letter to Premier Ford outlining the importance of using fishing and hunting as a way to help with economic stimulus and recovery in Ontario following the COVID-19 pandemic. The letter included ideas for expanded fishing and hunting opportunities, recruitment of new anglers and hunters, and investments in habitat and other 'green infrastructure' projects.

A 2019 study commissioned by the OFAH and the Canadian Sporting Arms and Ammunition Association showed that fishing, hunting, trapping, and sport-shooting contributed \$4.7 billion to Ontario's GDP and supported 36,900 jobs. These segments of society present an opportunity to help kick-start the post-pandemic economy.

A previous letter to Premier Ford strongly urged the government to prioritize outdoor recreation opportunities in the early phases of reopening the economy. The government's strong consideration of outdoor activities and economies has been encouraging so far.

### Have Your Say

As OFAH continues discussions with all levels of government, we want to know what your ideas are for how fishing and hunting can help with jobs and the economy. Please let us know.

Angelo Lombardo, OFAH Executive Director email: [angelo\\_lombardo@ofah.org](mailto:angelo_lombardo@ofah.org)



**3. OFAH President Rob Hare called it an honour to chair the first OFAH annual general meeting** in 92 years that was held entirely on-line. He said "digital and online engagement has been a growing part of the OFAH experience for decades, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to accelerate the modernization of our online presence. This on-line meeting highlighted one of the many ways OFAH has embraced the changing world."

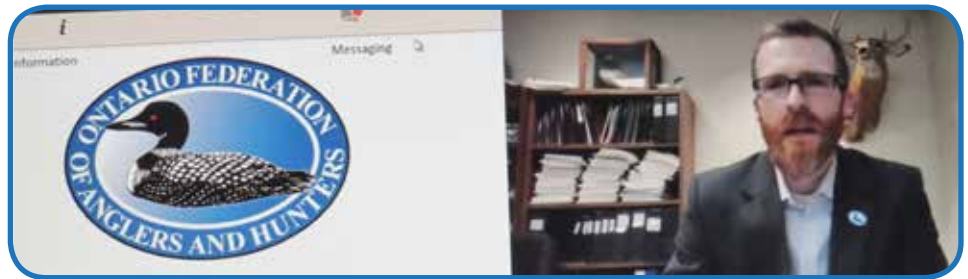
"I was encouraged that we had 234 people register for the virtual AGM. The annual general meeting has traditionally been a time when we come together from around this great province to get re-acquainted with old friends and meet new ones. We are disappointed we were not being able to meet face-to-face. But we are thankful knowing that we can still meet, while ensuring the safety of our families, friends and those most at risk. We look forward to our 2021 OFAH AGM where we can celebrate our achievements once again."

**4. Questions during the meeting included concerns** over the demand for a resumption of Hunter Education firearms training classes. Covid-19 restrictions forbid such classes due to safe distancing concerns. Bill Blackwell of Port Elgin asked: "Now that we are able to meet in groups of 10 why has the MNRF not allowed Hunter Ed Instructors to hold classes of 10? Will we push for that?" Former OFAH President Kerry Coleman agreed: "The province is entering into stage 2 of opening the economy with things like haircuts, etc. Are there discussions about allowing OHEP classroom courses?"





The Federation's Matt DeMille responded that Hunter Education courses, which OFAH administers for the province, "are a work in progress...we will know soon if they can go ahead... we will alert instructors when we know".



## 5. OFAH FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE - annual report:

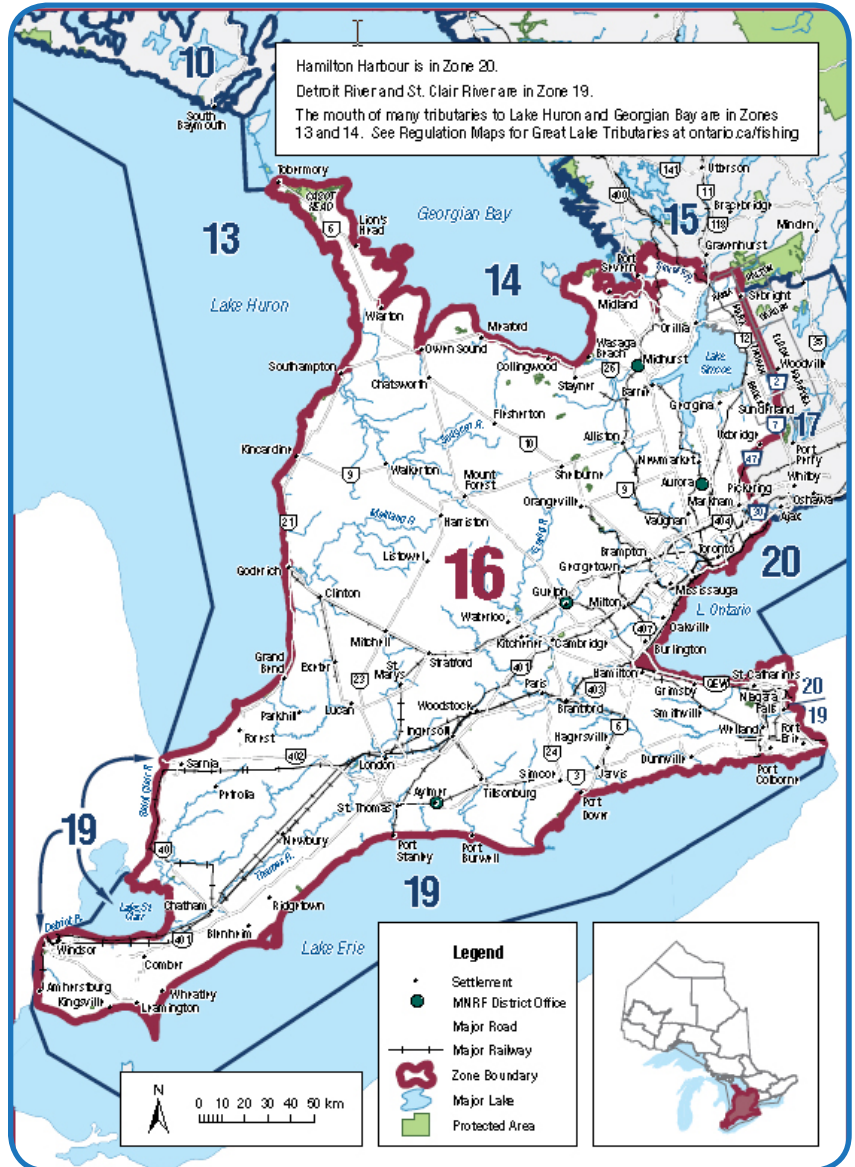
Much of the committee's time is spent discussing the activities of the various Ontario Fisheries Management Zone Councils (FMZ's). There has been frustration over the last year or so, because of the lack of meetings taking place. At least three of the FMZ councils have yet to be formed. A number of FMZ councils, particularly in the Northwest, have gone dormant after initial planning processes and have not met in several years. Others have been shut down for a year or more as they go through planning processes. Others await final environmental registry (ERO) notices to be posted so fisheries management plans can be implemented. BPSA President Kevin Harders represents us on FMZ's 13 and 14 which cover Lake Huron and Georgian Bay

The proposed Zone 16 council was scheduled to have been formed by now. It would cover a vast area of inland lakes, rivers, and streams from Tobermory to Windsor east to Barrie, Toronto and Niagara.

**About FMZ 16:** the most southerly inland fisheries management zone in the province; has important recreational and tourism-based fisheries; many large and small river and stream systems; includes Simcoe and Couchiching both large popular lakes; large urban populations and high fishing effort, FMZ 16 is one of 20 fisheries management zones in the province.

In 2017 I attended meetings in Hanover at which MNRF staff asked for input on the issues the FMZ 16 council would handle. We have heard very little about this FMZ 16 council other than "it is still in the works".

Here is what the MNRF is saying: For the first phase of this process we hosted Listening Sessions in 2017. These Listening Sessions provided Indigenous communities, Conservation Authorities, stakeholders (such as BPSA) and the public, a chance to share their thoughts on what a fisheries management planning process in FMZ 16 should include and consider. The next phase includes the development of a Discussion Paper by MNRF. The Paper will outline what was discussed at the various Listening Sessions and propose an approach to sustainable fisheries management planning in FMZ 16. A draft of the Discussion Paper was expected to be posted on the Environmental Registry by late 2018. We were to be able to comment and provide input on the content of the Discussion Paper through the Environmental Registry posting. We are still waiting for this "discussion paper."



**6. The OFAH Indigenous Affairs Chair chair Dan Elliott** reported to the annual on consultations on the development of a new MNRF fish stocking plan for Lake Huron/ Georgian Bay. The consultations include reps from the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON), Metis Nation of Ontario, other First Nations, the FMZ 13/14 council and the general public. The aim is to merge inputs from these groups and have a new plan within 30 months. The MNRF suggests “all participants exercise patience and take part in these discussions with an open mind and willingness to find a path forward.” The report also noted the Ministry Upper Great Lakes Management Unit has two Indigenous advisors who are working ”to improve relationships between the MNRF and First Nations with a focus on Lake Huron.”



**7. We wondered if we would have a new OFAH President after this virtual meeting.**

The issue was clarified by our present federation President Rob Hare: “There was no election for the executive positions at the AGM. The Election for the Executive Positions is tentatively scheduled for the September OFAH Board of Directors Meeting. I hope I have done a good job as president and fully intend to run for the position of President at that Board Meeting”.



**8. The annual report by the OFAH Executive Director referred to the victories our federation has had in recent years:**

- we have A CORMORANT HUNT in the works
- we convinced the province to reinstate a full SPRING BEAR HUNT
- we helped the province develop new policies on CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE and WILD PIGS
- we have fought for and won Sunday Gun Hunting in dozens of Ontario municipalities
- we now work with an impressive coalition of outdoors groups which makes OFAH efforts more effective in dealings with government
- we are continuing strong advocacy for Coyote and Sandhill Crane hunts
- OFAH draws and lotteries awarded \$397,000 in prizes in 2019 taking in \$580,000 to support our conservation work
- we have seen a massive increase by young people using social media to connect with OFAH including interactive subscription services, online newsletters, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- we continue to successfully manage the Community Hatchery Program which is funded by the province
- as part of our advocacy in 2019 OFAH made over 40 formal submissions to governments on dozens of topics involving fishing, hunting, firearms and conservation
- our federation is growing - we attracted more than 1,700 more members last year compared to 2018

**9. This is my last OFAH report for BPSA until September.** I am reminded that anglers, hunters, sport shooters and trappers generate 19 billion dollars a year for the Canadian Economy. We play an active role in that economy enhancing and preserving fish and wildlife with our conservation projects in Grey-Bruce region. Remember each fish stocked is worth 30 dollars to the community where it is stocked. We are all about the conservation and outdoors recreation. We are thankful that we live and play in a region where we have so many opportunities to enjoy and share our outdoors.

Keep up the good work.  
Stay healthy and be safe. Enjoy summer 2020!

*Stu Paterson  
OFAH liaison for BPSA*



Files from: PATERSON MEDIA, OFAH, MNRF