

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

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



1. One of the big stories at the summer Zone H meeting was about the province extending the Community Hatchery Program (CHP) until March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Why is this important? BPSA gets more than half of the funding for our hatchery from this program. We may be getting a new generator due to our participation in this program.

CHP co-ordinator Matt Burley told the 40 community hatcheries if they applied for continuing funding before the end of April, we would all qualify for continuing financial support for this year. OFAH is working with the province on getting funding of the CHP extended beyond next March. We have often told MPP Bill Walker that the Community Hatchery Program is vital to the future success of our stocking to support the sports fishery.



2. It was interesting this year for us to hear Ontario Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Minister John Yakabuski talk about the good relations his ministry has with clubs like ours.

At the OFAH annual conference, Minister Yakabuski urged us to have a “strong voice” on fishing and hunting issues, so anglers and hunters opinions will be heard by provincial decision makers.

Well at the summer Zone H OFAH meeting there was serious criticism of the way our clubs that stock fish have been treated. And a regional leader in conservation WAS speaking out with a “strong voice” on a serious issue.

Leading this discussion was Mike Hahn of the Lake Huron Fishing Club.



Hahn spoke emphatically about the decision by senior levels of government to remove the only two biologists from the Owen Sound MNRF office. This left important decisions affecting our clubs to be made by as one delegate noted “ by individuals with questionable skills and ...with



little understanding of the landscape of the two counties involved.” Hahn noted the folks in Midhurst have “no clue as to our needs”. In his words “ we need boots on the ground to help us continue with our conservation work.” He reminded us that our six clubs represent two thousand members and suggested this is not how we should be treated considering all the good community work we do.

An example he used was the loss of 40 mature spawning rainbow trout this spring that were trapped when floodwaters receded on the Saugeen. 150 mature spawners were trapped and there was no local biologist for stakeholders to consult on this problem.



Stakeholders ended up scrambling to contact someone in the ministry to approve a large scale rescue of the rainbow trout. Because of the delay, which turned from hours into days, 40 of the 150 mature spawners died.

Hahn said this was an insult to the six clubs in our region that depended on a solid working relationship with these biologists. He reported on meetings with MPP Bill Walker on this issue involving these clubs including BPSA. The Lake Huron Fishing Club rep noted this move was made without any notification to our clubs in Grey-Bruce. He noted “our clubs work closely with these biologists on various environmental, fishery and wildlife projects.” Hahn said “we often rely on these biologists to help us with our projects”.



The OFAH President who attended the Barrie meeting said our situation is not unique. Rob Hare revealed that there are other Ontario regions where 9 biologists have been transferred or have retired and were not replaced. In another example of MNR cuts Hare noted that Dufferin County has had no conservation officer for two years.

Zone H Fisheries rep Dennis Wiseman expressed his frustration over the biologist controversy saying “decisions vital to our clubs are now being made in Midhurst by staff that have zero knowledge of the needs of Grey-Bruce conservation clubs such as the Sydenham Sportsmen and the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen.”



### 3. PREMIER GETS A LESSON ON THE VALUE OF SPORTSFISH STOCKING

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019 a former Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) President was one of several federation folks who welcomed Ontario premier Doug Ford to Grey-Bruce. The occasion was the largest event of the year in our region, the Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular Fishing Derby. The giant derby ran for ten days. The Premier made an unannounced visit to the derby tent on day two.





*(Left to right John Ford derby co-chair, MPP Lisa Thompson, Bill Douglas derby co-chair, Premier Ford, Chris Geberdt derby co-chair, Fred Geberdt derby co-chair, Bill Walker MPP)*

John Ford (no relation to the Premier) an ex OFAH President, Fred Geberdt former OFAH Fisheries Chair, Jim McKane Chair of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) as well as BPSA member Jim Martell both OFAH members, were among those greeting the Premier.



*(MPP Lisa Thompson Minister of Government Services and Consumer Affairs , Premier Ford, MPP Bill Walker Associate Minister of Energy, Jim McKane Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Ted Lawrence Great Lakes Fishery Commission)*

Alongside Ford MPP Lisa Thompson Minister of Government Services, experienced the suction power of a sea lamprey at the Great Lakes Fishery display at the Salmon Spectacular. The suction power of these invaders is ten times that of your home vacuum cleaner. This allows them to easily suck the blood from fish and kill them. The visitors were encouraged when told about the success of the Commission's lamprey control program.

Ford approached the OFAH Invasive Species display and congratulated the federation rep on "the great job you guys are doing." The OFAH person replied " thanks Mr. Premier, but we could do a lot more if your government hadn't cut our budget by 40%."

The visitors watched anglers weighing in their fish and they seemed impressed with all the tent action and the excitement of the derby.

If Premier Ford was not aware of the importance to this region of fish stocking and sports fishing, he is now. This big fishing derby attracts 45-hundred anglers. Concerts and other events at the big derby tent, attract 50-thousand people from far and wide. This visit by Ford gave him a look at the massive economic benefits of fish stocking. This derby alone pumps 2-million dollars into the Grey-Bruce economy. It attracts anglers from many US states and several Canadian provinces.



Premier Ford took time to talk to and pose with anglers and served fish at one of two fish fries featured at this derby.

As reported by Postmedia Ford said "it is so refreshing getting out of downtown Toronto and coming up to Owen Sound. I would say it is the real people up here."

Before being whisked away in a black SUV, Ford had some supportive words for the Salmon Spectacular.



"I think it is amazing, absolutely amazing, great food. I absolutely love it". "We support Grey County."

One member of the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association which stages this derby said he was glad to see the Premier and suggested this was not a time to talk politics, it was a time to catch fish and have fun.

This was year 32 for the Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular.



4. We know our fish stocking has helped pump millions of dollars into the Grey Bruce economy. One study said we BPSA stocking efforts have helped generate 17 million dollars for our region.

There's a new study on the impact of sports fishing, hunting and trapping in Canada.  
Please check the link here:

<https://www.ofah.org/2019/09/outdoors-community-billions-canadian-economy/>

5. There's a new coalition of twelve Canadian fishing and hunting organizations which includes OFAH. It's called the National Fishing and Hunting Collaborative (NFHC). Its aim –

***“to make fishing, hunting and trapping a national priority”***

The NFHC is a group of non-partisan, non-profit fishing and hunting organizations. They will work collaboratively to provide national leadership on important conservation issues and a voice for more than 375,000 Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Key objectives will be public and political advocacy to ensure all Canadians recognize and better understand the heritage value and modern relevance of fishing, hunting and trapping.

“The affiliate organizations of the NFHC have a long history of working together and have enjoyed successes over the years. We felt this collaborative could demonstrate greater national unity and a stronger presence on core fishing, hunting, and trapping issues,” says OFAH executive director, Angelo Lombardo.

To kick-start this advocacy, the NFHC launched a pre-election campaign to engage the major federal political parties on issues important to the outdoors community. The NFHC has identified promotion of fishing, hunting, and trapping, firearms policy, chronic wasting disease, conservation funding, and aquatic invasive species as the National 5 top priorities for the next Government of Canada to tackle.



“By working together, we are making it more difficult for political parties and the next federal government to ignore or dismiss our issues,” Lombardo explains. “We have created one of the largest stakeholder groups in the nation, representing millions of Canadians and billions of dollars for the economy. We feel it's high time our interests get the recognition they deserve on Parliament Hill.”



For more information about the NFHC, and to view political party responses to our National 5 priorities as they become available, please visit ..... <https://www.ofah.org/nfhc/>

Contact: Matt DeMille, OFAH Manager of Fish and Wildlife Services — 705-748-6324 or [matt\\_demille@ofah.org](mailto:matt_demille@ofah.org).

#### 6. REMOVAL OF ACCESS ROADS AND CULVERTS CAUSE SAFETY CONCERNS:

Zone Director Mike Evers now chairs the OFAH Land Use Advisory Committee. One issue his committee is working on is concern over the removal of culverts at stream and gully crossings on crown land used by ATV riding hunters and anglers. He explained that when logging projects are completed logging companies remove culverts along logging roads regularly used by anglers, hunters and trappers. These folks often trek into remote areas and on the way out find giant holes where a culvert was removed. This creates unsafe conditions for OFAH member users of these remote roads who have asked our federation to bring this to the attention of the province.



#### 7. -----FISH FARMS and their pollution-the chance of escapees mixing in with natural fish-----

For many years OFAH has campaigned against these farms. This from the OFAH President Rob Hare:

" Stu, you are correct. The OFAH has concerns about the effluent from theses open water pen operations. There are also concerns about escaping fish from these pens that may carry parasites. There is a potential that escaped pen fish might breed with natural fish stocks "

This conversation was renewed by the recent news story about new rules for Ontario Fish Farms such as the ones in the North Channel off Manitoulin which supply millions of rainbow trout to southern Ontario grocery stores.

<https://www.owensoundsuntimes.com/.../province-to-allow-longe...>

For many years former OFAH President Bill Blackwell has been vocal about the downside of fish farms. But the province has continued to ignore claims that they cause environmental and other problems.

8. The latest studies show there are approximately 105,000 bears in Ontario. In the Great Lakes region there are 24.7 bears per 100 square kilometer, 10 per square kilometer on our Bruce Peninsula. That from zone H Big Game expert Glenn Meads. He reports the MNR is recommending that bear baiting be done no closer than 200 metres from roads and trails and 500 metres from public buildings. OFAH is pushing to have those distances reduced to 30 metres from roads and 100 metres from buildings.
9. This is a reminder about the OFAH Indigenous Relations Liaison Committee.

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



I have Dan's email address in case any BPSA member wants to get his advice on any of our issues re first nations commercial harvesting of our stocked rainbow and brown trout.



10. Zone H secretary/treasurer Dennis Wiseman has yet to receive a thank you from BPSA for the support grant the zone donated to our club's 2019 Kids Fishing event. Each year OFAH Zone H awards several grants to deserving conservation organizations such as BPSA. Wiseman said at the latest meeting if these grants go unrecognized, there will be no more grants.



11. (photo courtesy Abeline Reporter News )

In several US states authorities have resorted to using choppers and machine guns to keep wild pig populations down.



(courtesy  
Helibacon/REUTERS)

There's new information about the spread of WILD PIGS in Ontario. An OFAH survey found there are some of these destructive critters in Grey-Bruce north of Wiarton near Tobermory. More on the story from Ontario Out of Doors.

[https://oodmag.com/news/wild-pigs-threaten-ontario/?fbclid=IwAR0yQwnmbjezWsPb1ytRit\\_GdXfHX5-cpQdt53S49QePOFU8Xb7nQe81M8](https://oodmag.com/news/wild-pigs-threaten-ontario/?fbclid=IwAR0yQwnmbjezWsPb1ytRit_GdXfHX5-cpQdt53S49QePOFU8Xb7nQe81M8)



12. By the time you read this I will have attended on your behalf, the OFAH Zone H quarterly meeting which was also the annual meeting. It featured elections for positions on the Zone H executive. The meeting was on Saturday September 28<sup>th</sup> at the Kincardine Legion. In my report next month I will update you on this meeting. The annual Zone H OFAH dinner was at 6pm at the Legion costing \$60.00 a couple. I did not attending this dinner.

OFAH Zone H now has 12-thousand members. The total OFAH membership is 78,305.

Like thousands of other Canadians I wore camo on National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day.





What is it? It's an **official day set in law** to respect and recognize hunting, trapping and fishing as part of Canada's national heritage.

When is it? The third Saturday in September every year this year it was on -- Saturday September 21.

Who is involved? **All Canadians, particularly hunters, trappers, anglers and supporters.**

All great fishing, hunting and trapping experiences are built on the foundation of heritage connections, outdoor respect and responsibility. Staying true to our outdoor roots has always been the OFAH motivation for supporting a NATIONAL HUNTING, TRAPPING AND FISHING HERITAGE DAY.

We encourage all BPSA members to support the 2020 National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day.

*Be proud of your heritage*



Stu Paterson reporting on OFAH for the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association.

Laura Ingalls Wilder:

"If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere."

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](http://www.ofah.org), follow us on Twitter @ofah and find us on Facebook or Instagram @theofah.