

OFAH ZONE “H” report for BPSA Stu Paterson – March 2023

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



1. OFAH WELCOMES FIREARMS MOVE:

OFAH calls the removal of two contentious firearms law amendments that would have banned hundreds of guns, many used by hunters, as “a very welcome development.” The amendments to Firearms Bill C21, that caused a furor among hunters and sports shooters, were introduced without warning last November. The motion to withdraw them was tabled February 3. Amendment G46, introduced a 307-page list of firearms that included semi-automatic centrefire and shotguns that held over five rounds, as well as firearms with a bore diameter of 20 mm or greater or 10,000 joules of muzzle energy or more.

Both amendments were initially tabled without public consultation. They were seen by hunting, shooting, and firearms organizations as a further attack on firearms ownership and an ill-concealed attempt to confiscate some hunting rifles and shotguns.



OFAH Manager of Policy Mark Ryckman:

“We’re pleased that the Liberal government has recognized the negative implications of the proposed amendments and have withdrawn them. The changes would have impacted untold numbers of firearms that are widely used for hunting in Canada. The Standing Committee will now undertake broader consultation with gun owners, including Indigenous communities – something they should have done a while ago.”

Ryckman warned *“the removal of the amendments, while welcome by the hunting and shooting communities, does not impact Bill C-21, which still includes a ban on handguns and what the government refers to as ‘assault-style rifles’.”*

In mid February Ryckman provided testimony on the firearms issue to the Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. This is a link to that testimony.

<https://www.ofah.org/insider/2023/02/ofah-testimony-to-secu-on-firearms-bill-c-21/>



2. The Canadian Coalition for Firearms Rights - “ firearms controversy FAR FROM OVER”

“We must continue to push with the same vigour and force to ensure C21 is scrapped in its entirety. Don’t forget there is still the airsoft ban, the handgun freeze and a variety of other measures still within C21 itself.

We now focus our efforts on scrapping the rest of C21 and working on our federal court challenge against the 2020 gun ban. Thanks to everyone who helped write letters to their MPs, engaged on social media and helped fight this amendment. We MUST maintain this level of unity. They will never stop banning guns from legal owners.”

3. As was expected OFAH was on the job reacting quickly to the news of the amendment withdrawal. Within 2 hours of release of this info, Mark Ryckman of OFAH was on several News outlets discussing the bill as a whole, and the implications of the withdrawn amendments.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH

https://cbchls.akamaized.net/delivery/news/2023/02/04/nn-Ryckman-invu-030223-00-50-38/nn-Ryckman-invu-030223_5000kbps.mp4

4. OFAH asked Ontario to help!

In mid January in a letter to Ontario Premier Doug Ford, Ontario’s Natural Resources Minister and the provincial Solicitor General, OFAH reminded us there are :

“400,000 licensed hunters in Ontario, who contribute over \$4.7 billion a year to the province’s economy. Hunting is a very safe activity, with per-capita injury rates far below those of the most popular sports in Canada.”



In the letter OFAH Executive Director Angelo Lombardo continues:

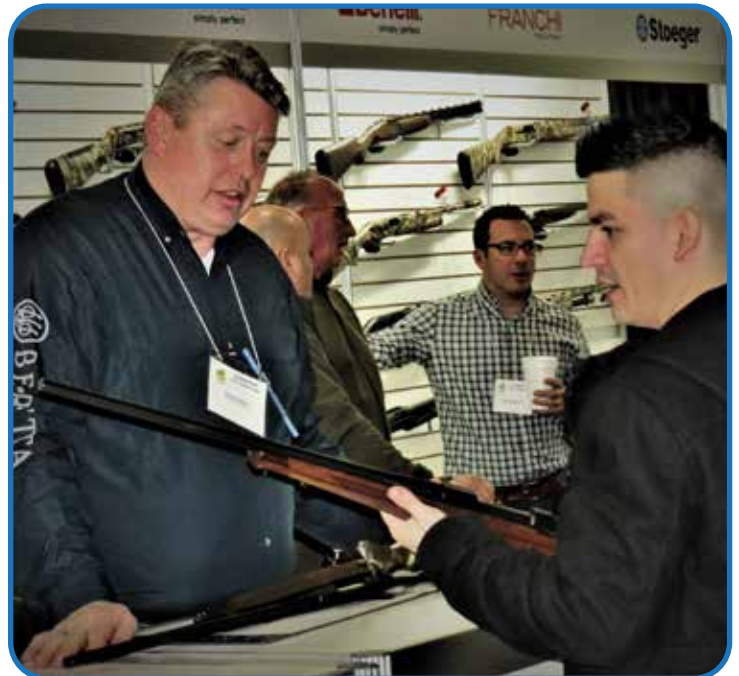
“As a vocal supporter of Ontario’s hunting community, we are asking your government to take a public position on Bill C-21 and consider:

• The impact on Ontario Indigenous and non-Indigenous hunters and hunting-related importers, dealers, hunting retailers and outfitters.

- The capacity and competing priorities of police services that would be responsible for enforcing any prohibition.*
- The need for resources to be used to reduce the criminal use of guns and gun violence in Ontario.”*

5. FOR MOOSE HUNTERS:

OFAH recently held an online seminar on how MNRF does aerial moose population studies which determine the number of moose tags issued. During the session experts explained how monitoring results play a key role in the tag allocation process and overall moose management. Watch it here: <https://www.ofah.org/insideaccess/>



6. BPSA HOSTS OFAH :

We had a full house on January 15th 2023 as our Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association (BPSA) hosted the winter meeting of Zone H of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).



Dozens of subjects were discussed by more than sixty delegates including:

- the threat of the spread of wild pigs and the "wild pig watch" by Ontario government agencies
- the advantages of net pens to transition hatchery fish into the wild resulting in larger fish stocked and increasing their survival rate when released
- regional co-operation between volunteer-based fish stocking clubs
- OFAH zone grants to college and university students studying biology and other fields related to hunting and fishing

FIREARMS:

At this meeting we had a live feed from Ottawa allowing our MP Alex Ruff to update us on Ottawa's Firearms plans.

The MP attacked Ottawa's proposals as "doing nothing to reduce or prevent firearms crime in Canada." He pointed out that, "Legally licensed firearms owners are the least likely to commit firearms crimes," and asked "why are they being unfairly targeted by the government"? Ruff urged every Canadian firearms owner to write protest letters to all MP's, the Prime Minister, and other Ministers involved in the controversy, to express outrage on the Federal firearms moves.



In an email Zone H chair Mike Evers said about the meeting *"I sincerely want to thank you, President Carl Jones and your club, for a flawless meeting and a meal that was second to none. You all did an excellent job."*



7. OFAH HELPS BPSA:

During BPSA's hosting of the OFAH Zone meeting we learned Zone H has donated \$500.00 for our hatchery operation, \$100.00 for use of our building and \$90.00 to pay for directors meals. Zone H OFAH extends on Lake Huron from Grand Bend north to Tobermory including the Bruce Peninsula and the eastern boundaries run from Orillia to Orangeville. These meetings attract people with a keen interest in conservation and outdoors recreation including hunting and fishing. A zone meeting is perhaps best described as "an information clearing-house" on all matters related to fishing, hunting and conservation.

8. For a wrap up on the OFAH meeting hosted by BPSA check the coverage in The Saugeen Times. We were all very impressed with the questions asked by BPSA and OFAH delegates and with how knowledgeable MP Alex Ruff is on the firearms controversy.

<https://saugeentimes.com/bpsa-winter-meeting-discusses-proposed-federal-firearms-ban-with-local-mp/>

9. CATCH AND RELEASE CHANGES

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) is proposing changes that will allow anglers to delay the release of a fish caught during the open season for that species only long enough to photograph, measure and weigh it. That would give anglers time to check if the fish is of a restricted size or over the daily catch and possession limit. The new rule will require the immediate release of fish that are out of season, are species at risk or are otherwise prohibited under the existing rules. The MNRF says these changes would improve the overall angling experience providing clarity to anglers on how they can document their catch and fishing outing. The target date for implementation of any changes related to this proposal is January 1, 2025. OFAH urges you to take part in the survey. Provide your feedback by April 21, 2023.

<https://survey.alchemer-ca.com/s3/50161935/Release-of-Fish>



10. MONEY FOR BPSA CONSERVATION PROJECTS:

The OFAH Community Conservation Fund, in its second year, supports community based Fish and Wildlife Conservation work done by volunteers clubs such as ours. Projects that:

- Benefit game species conservation and management in Ontario, including academic research and citizen science - \$10,000
- Restore or protect fish and wildlife habitat, including fish spawning areas, wetlands, water quality, land stewardship, - \$10,000
- Control Invasive Species, does biodiversity protection, restoration, and enhancement, developing or implementing nature-based solutions for climate change. - \$10,000
- Make Fishing and Hunting Accessible (including youth engagement), builds or repairs angling and hunting infrastructure – including fishing platforms/docks, accessible hunting trails and platforms – on publicly accessible land.

The application deadline is 11:59 p.m. on April 2, 2023. Successful applicant clubs do not have to be officially affiliated with OFAH.

Apply here https://www.ofah.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/OFAH_Club-Grant-Application-2023.pdf

11. WETLANDS THREATENED:

OFAH is among the Conservation groups concerned about provincial legislation aiming at encouraging new home construction by reducing fees and removing barriers to development. Critics say the law could replace southern Ontario's farmlands, forests, and wet-lands with more subdivisions. Bill 23, the "More Homes Built Faster Act" became law on November 28, 2022.



Conservation Ontario represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities:

"The changes in the bill may have significant impacts on conservation authorities, municipalities, and the overall protection of Ontario's environment."

OFAH Policy Manager Mark Ryckman: "Parts of the bill have implications for the anglers and hunters of Ontario. Conservation Authorities (CA's) have been asked to identify lands in their watersheds that may be suitable for development...the legislation greatly restricts a CA's ability to effectively review/comment on development proposals...they will no longer be able to consider a proposal's impact on the conservation of land or pollution, which could have serious implications for water quality and fish and wildlife habitat....residents, including anglers and hunters, will no longer have the opportunity to appeal questionable land use decisions that will directly impact them. We have not seen any persuasive or convincing evidence to justify this change and, therefore we do not support it."

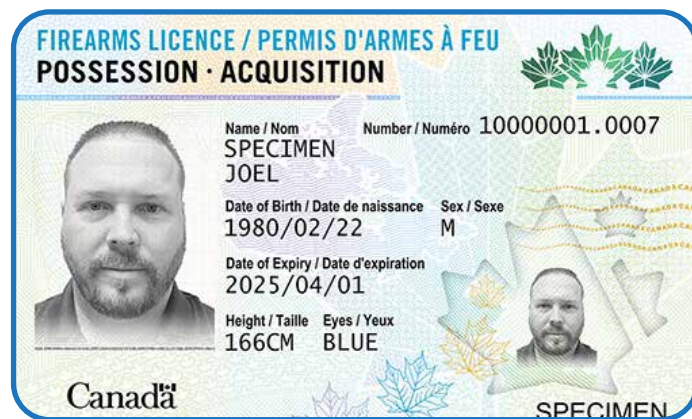


12. PAL CARDS:

Firearms Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) cards now sport a new look with enhanced security features. The announcement from the RCMP. The Canadian Firearms Program transition to the new PAL sees these valid versions circulated over the next five years including:

- standard cards issued from December 1998 to May 2022
- interim cards issued between May and December 2022 that do not contain a magnetic strip on the back.

Previously issued PAL cards will remain valid until they expire, with the final batch set to lapse in December 2027. New PALs will be issued on renewal — those with a valid PAL do not need to do anything.



13. TORONTO INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW

More than 65,500 people, including thousands of anglers, attended the 2023 Toronto International Boat Show. It was the largest event in Canada in January. I thanked the show producers for the comp tickets they sent for use by BPSA members.

The big news this year was the new ELECTRIC OUTBOARDS and PERSONAL WATERCRAFT. Thousands of anglers bought boats, accessories and services, at the show and will be ready to launch in style this spring.



Also of interest to BPSA members:

The Toronto Sportsmen's Show March 16-19 at the International Center near Toronto's Pearson Airport. It gives you a chance to check the latest gear and learn new techniques at angler seminars. For the first time in three years OFAH will be very visible at the Sportsmen's Show, spreading the word on the good work done by our federation and hopefully attracting new members.

14. If you see one of these high tech orange sailboards on Lake Huron or Georgian Bay, leave it alone.



Saildromes study fish school density, fish size, the position of fish in the water column, surface water temperatures, algae concentrations and wave height. They are wind and solar powered. These unmanned units use echo sounders and will be on Lakes Huron and Erie this year. They can travel 100 km a day and don't emit engine noise that traditional boats do, noise that can cause fish to scatter. OFAH looks forward to studying the information gathered by the Saildromes. The 4 year research project is under the guidance of the U.S. Geological Survey and its partners which include the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

15. BPSA Family Day Open House

After a three year absence, the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association's annual Family Day Open House resumed, attracting record numbers. More than 300 kids, parents, aunts, uncles and various other categories of visitors, attended the event February 20th at BPSA club west of Wiarton.

This BPSA is best known for fish stocking, something it has done since the sixties to benefit the recreational fishery in local waters. BPSA volunteers have stocked more than 4-million fish in regional waters as well as completed rehabilitation projects in two Colpoys Bay Bay streams.

Most visitors headed first to our hatchery to view thousands of rainbow and brown



trout to be released into Georgian Bay in the next year. Other BPSA programs were in the spotlight on Family Day.

After touring our hatchery, our guests enjoyed outdoors archery lessons, checked our indoors shooting range, got tips from firearms range masters, and had a chance to examine rare firearms some dating back to the eighteen hundreds.



The next quarterly Zone H OFAH meeting at the Orillia Fish and Game Conservation Club is scheduled for Sunday, April 23, 2023. Thanks to

Kat McCulloch who manages to skillfully edit these reports.

Our next OFAH report will be issued in May.

Stu Paterson - Chair Community Relations for BPSA, OFAH liaison for BPSA, Director OFAH Zone H, freelance outdoors writer .

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