

OFAH ZONE "H" report for BPSA Stu Paterson – December 2024

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



1. OFAH CONCERNS – MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR BRADFORD BYPASS

This huge project is one of two the Ontario Conservatives put at the heart of their 2022 re-election bid, promising billions of dollars in new roads as a solution to gridlock. Early work and preparations on the project, including the construction of a new bridge, are ongoing.

Our OFAH Fisheries Biologist Adam Weir:

"From our perspective, a project of this scale will inevitably cause harm to the local fisheries and potentially beyond.



Therefore, at the very least, Ontario must apply for a Request for Review" of this massive construction project.

"We hope this will eventually lead to better conservation of the impacted waterways."

The proposed route passes over the Holland River which flows into Lake Simcoe. The River cuts through part of the Holland Marsh, which has some of

the province's richest and rarest soil.

In October the Ford government awarded a new contract to manage the construction part of the Bradford Bypass, which will connect two highways north of Toronto.



Transportation Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria said, *"We are full steam ahead in building the Bradford Bypass."*

He says this Bypass will be a vital link for communities in York Region and Simcoe County, providing better connections to jobs and housing. During construction, the project is expected to support up to 2,200 jobs annually and contribute up to \$286 million to the province's gross domestic product (GDP).

Earlier OFAH Policy Manager Mark Ryckman spoke out on Bill 23 which removed protections of Ontario's environment. Ryckman said *"parts of the bill have implications for anglers and hunters...the legislation restricts Conservation Authorities ability to review and comment on development proposals...under Bill 23 anglers and hunters will not have the opportunity to appeal questionable land use decisions that will directly affect them...we do NOT SUPPORT Bill 23."*

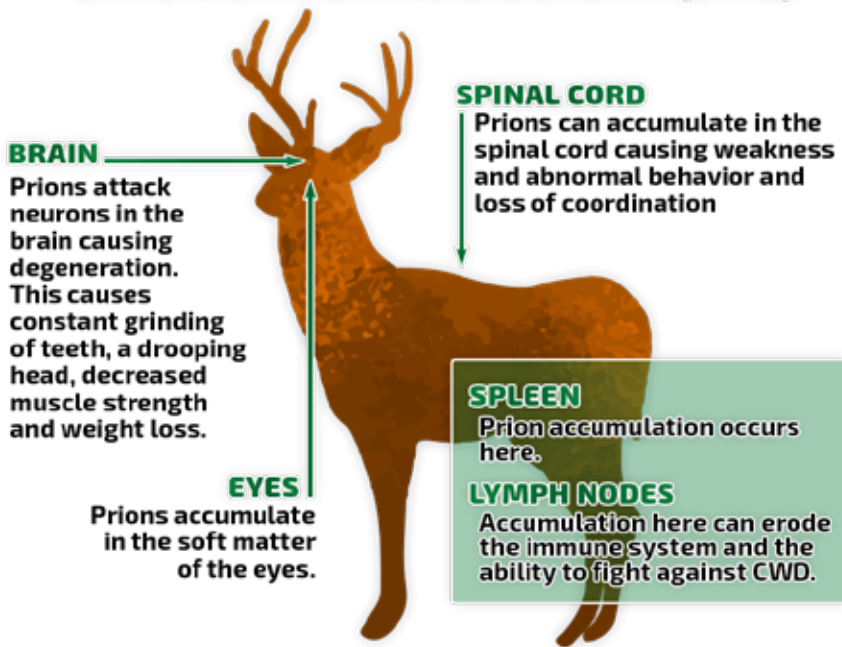


2. ONTARIO REMAINS CWD FREE, BUT:

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been detected in 5 Canadian provinces, and most of the U.S. states. CWD has been found in every U.S. state and province that we share a border with. CWD has been found as close as 100 kilometres from our southern border, and 150 kilometres from our northwestern border.



ORGANS AFFECTED BY CHRONIC WASTING DISORDER (CWD)



We've learned from our neighbours and partners what has worked best to prevent and control CWD. New York and Quebec were able to control CWD by including rapid targeted removal of cervids (members of the deer family) immediately around the CWD positive case to prevent the spread.

Early detection is critical for a successful response if CWD is detected in Ontario. This is why we rely on hunters to submit samples from the deer they harvest in the annual CWD surveillance zones. We also test sick and strange-acting cervids reported by the public throughout the year and across the province.



You may not know that South Grey and Bruce Counties were included in the Ministry of Natural Resources 2024 testing areas for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) surveillance. Wildlife Management Units: 81A, 81B, 82A, 82B, 82C, 84, 85B, 68A, 71, 74A, 74B. Learn about specific drop-off locations and information about CWD at www.ontario.ca/cwd. Together, we can ensure Ontario remains CWD free.

Learn more about how you can help at ontario.ca/CWD Ontario Fish and Wildlife

3. DEER HUNTERS – A REMINDER FROM OFAH & MNR

Use of bait to attract deer...

Pee is for prions. You may not know it that Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) prions (abnormally folded proteins that cause CWD) from body fluids such as saliva, urine and feces, can remain infectious in the soil for years!

And that products like imported bait or lures made from cervid parts may contain infectious prions that, when used, could introduce CWD to Ontario.

So it is simple. keep CWD out of Ontario by only using:

- locally produced bait
- synthetic (artificial) or plant-based lures



Or make your own attractant - check this link
15 Ideas on How to Make Deer Attractants At Home!

Learn more at ontario.ca/CWD



4. ALL TOO CLEAR – DISAPPEARING WHITEFISH

The TV Ontario documentary ALL TOO CLEAR, produced by Zach Melnick and Yvonne Drebert who live in Grey-Bruce, is worth watching and studying.



This three-part study follows the lifecycle of so called “hero” species, the lake whitefish, with never-before seen footage of spawning, eggs hatching, baby fish struggling to find food, and adult fish trying to survive in an ecosystem totally transformed by invasive zebra and quagga mussels. Mussels have completely changed the way the Great Lakes work, re-organized the food web, and made the lakes about three times clearer.

One MNR scientist Erin Dunlop told the researchers lake whitefish populations that once numbered 100-million, are disappearing. Why? Because the mussels are consuming tiny plankton and other nutrients and are wiping out whitefish populations especially in Georgian Bay. Baby white fish are starving. Whitefish have all but disappeared in Georgian Bay.

The whitefish crash is described by several documentary participants as “a dire situation.” Parts two and three deal with possible solutions.



5. PROVINCE INVESTS IN INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM



Our folks with the OFAH Invasive Species Awareness Program (ISAP) are thrilled with the announcement that the Province is investing an additional \$16 million dollars towards protecting Ontario from harmful invasive species.

Invasive species are the second leading threat to global biodiversity, only being surpassed by habitat loss. This investment will benefit many programs, including the ISAP as we work towards protecting Ontario’s environment and economy.

To learn more about this investment, visit <https://news.ontario.ca/.../ontario-protecting...>

6. INVADING SPECIES DISCUSSED

In August the OFAH Invasive Species Awareness program (ISAP) team attending the 36th annual Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular. Thousands of folks chatted with our ISAP team at the Georgian Shores Marina in the giant derby tent. They learned how they can help protect our fisheries from the negative effects of invasive species.

I chatted with technicians Jeff Berthelette and Morgan Daniels at the display. They were interested in the story I did earlier about the huge number of ROUND GOBIES in Georgian Bay specifically Owen Sound Bay. I told them about a MNR electro-shock study which found over 144 million gobies between Cobble Beach and Owen Sound. That comes to 237 tons. Concern has been expressed by anglers about gobies eating zebra and quagga mussels which concentrate toxins on the lake floor. GOBIES eat the mussels, so the question was “since our trout and salmon eat gobies, how does this affect the health of fish we consume”?

Jeff and Morgan promised to discuss the question with OFAH biologists to see if we can get an answer. Maybe in the new year?



7. PROTECTING MOOSE FROM ILLEGAL HARVESTING

The Ontario government is safeguarding moose populations by ensuring tourist outfitters and their guests hunt safely and legally. In a Northern Ontario courtroom 20 defendants were fined a total of \$178,400 and ordered to pay \$44,525 in surcharges for a variety of moose-hunting violations. The court also issued a total of 59 years of hunting licence suspensions.



Bob Green's Fly-in Camps Ltd. pleaded guilty to:

- hunting moose without a licence,
- discharging a firearm from a motorboat
- possessing wildlife illegally killed
- making a false statement in a document and obstructing a conservation officer. The business was fined a total of \$32,500.

Green Airways pleaded guilty to hunting moose without a licence, discharging a firearm from a motorboat, possessing wildlife illegally killed, making a false statement in a document and obstructing a conservation officer. The corporation received a suspended sentence. The tourism moose tag shares and bear management areas held by the corporation were revoked. Also, Robert A. Green of Red Lake, pleaded guilty to hunting moose without a licence, discharging a firearm from a motorboat, possessing wildlife illegally killed, making a false statement in a document and obstructing a conservation officer. He received \$30,000 in fines, a five-year hunting licence suspension and is prohibited from guiding big game hunters for two years.



8. CONSERVATION OFFICER HONOURED:

Conservation Officer Mike Evers Jr. gets the “MNR OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD” as “The Ministry’s Conservation Officer of the Year.” Mike is the son of OFAH Zone H Chair Mike Evers Senior, who served 14 years as a Conservation Officer.

In 2014 Evers Jr. accepted an OFAH Zone H bursary to help with his education. Mike accepted the cheque from former Zone H chair Wayne Forgrave.



Mike’s reaction to his “Conservation Officer of the Year” honour: *“I’ve been very privileged in my career to work under the tutelage of many great mentors, supportive supervisors and colleagues. We are blessed in Northwestern Ontario, the Red Lake area in particular, with vast expanses of wilderness and abundance of fish and wildlife.”*



The citation thanked Mike for his service and dedication! Evers Jr. was also named as a recipient of a North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association 2024 “outstanding achievement award for service in the field of Wildlife Law Enforcement.” This association is dedicated to professionalism and excellence in wildlife conservation law enforcement. Mike is one of 5 Ontario Co’s to receive this honour.

We have known Mike Jr. for many years as he attended OFAH Annual meetings with his dad, receiving many awards for his participation in outdoors and conservation activities. Thank you officer Evers for your service and dedication! Mike worked on the case (see above) where 20 defendants including eight Americans, were fined a total of \$178,400 and ordered to pay \$44,525 in surcharges for a variety of moose-hunting violations. The court also issued 59 years of hunting licence suspensions.

Court heard that Robert A. Green, Robert W. Green, Bob Green's Fly-in Camps and Green Airways Ltd. operate a fly-in-only tourist outfitting business, with a main lodge on Mamakwash Lake, northeast of Red Lake.

An investigation by conservation officers determined that Robert A. Green, with the assistance of Robert W. Green, guided clients in wildlife management units where the clients were not licensed, directed clients to shoot moose from power boats and knowingly assisted with the retrieval and possession of moose killed illegally by these clients.

The defendants falsified mandatory tourist industry moose hunter reports to conceal the fact moose were killed without a license.



9. VIRTUAL FISHING INFO:

Have you seen it yet?

The OFAH Hunting & Fishing heritage Center's newest Virtual Lesson all about Fishing Facts. If you haven't, you can head over to youtube.com/@ofahheritagecentre and check it out. Learn about the history of fishing, and some interesting facts about the pursuit of fish and fish themselves!

10. WILD PIGS:

Have you seen a wild pig?

These two escaped from their Big Bay pen in September. They could become "wild" if they are on the loose much longer. The term 'wild pig' refers to any pig outside of an enclosure, and includes domestic pigs that have become wild, Eurasian wild boar, and hybrids of the two. While not established in Ontario, they continue to cause widespread problems across the prairies.



OFAH reminds us to keep an eye out for any wild pigs and report any sightings by snapping a photo, marking your location, and calling the Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711

11. BPSA COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

In July twenty BPSA members manned the Warton Homecoming Weekend fishing booth spreading the word about our conservation club. At our display hundreds of "fish" were caught by more than 300 youngsters. Each child got a prize thanks to BPSA. It was a co-operative effort involving Warton Rotary, and Bill Slot of Willie & More Tackle. There were lots of smiles and squeals of delight as the kids were thrilled with many their first ever catch.



Thanks to our club volunteers, a moment they will not forget.

BPSA members handed out information on our club and its programs as well as info about the good works done for years by OFAH which often represents the interests of angler, hunters and conservationists. This is the kind of community outreach we have been talking about for years. Even if it costs a club to buy prizes, the presence of this kind of display enhances awareness of our volunteer-based 300-member club, and what our club does in our community.



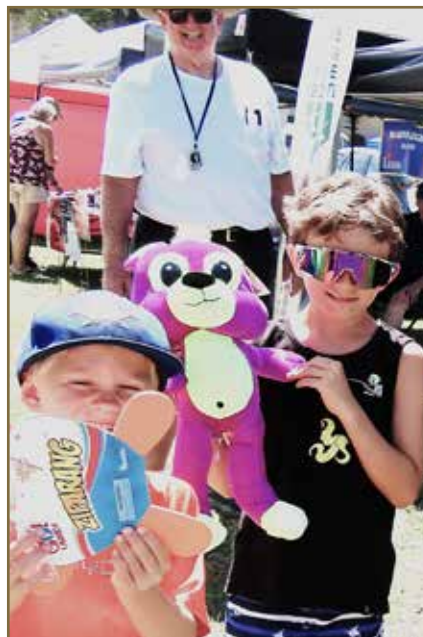
The Homecoming Weekend celebration involved dozens of organizations including BPSA and was designed to replace the legendary Warton Rotary Village Fair which ran for over 80 years but ended 3 years ago.

12. INVASIVE GRASS CARP:

Grass carp WERE SIGHTED in Ontario's waters this year. The Invading Species Awareness Program and the OFAH fish biologists urge all anglers and boaters to remain on the lookout FOR THESE INVADERS.

Why worry about Grass Carp?

Grass carp can eat 40% of their body weight a day in aquatic plants. They only digest about half of the plant material they consume each day and expel the remaining material, which pollutes the water and promotes algal blooms. These eating habits change ecosystems by reducing food availability, shelter, and spawning areas for native fish. Although grass carp are not yet established in Ontario, your help is crucial in preventing an established population. If you suspect you have seen a grass carp:



CALL toll-free 1-800-563-7711

13. GLFC THANKS to BPSA:

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission sent BPSA a pre-Christmas note of appreciation:

"Thanks to members of the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association for your ten years of support of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and its efforts to control Sea Lamprey in our Great Lakes. Your help promoting the Ontario launch of the documentary 'The Fish Thief' during the 2024 Salmon Spectacular, made the screening a total success. We appreciate all that your members do for us! Your friends at the Great Lakes Fishery Commission."

Dr. Marc Gaden, Executive Secretary

For ten years BPSA members helped spread the word about the Commission's Sea Lamprey control program volunteering at the Commission's display at the Salmon Spectacular tent.



14. THE STREAMLINED OFAH:

BPSA member and OFAH NXT-GEN Ambassador Natalie Mechalko has been elected to the board of the new OFAH Foundation. Under a major reorganization there are now two distinct organizations, The OFAH Membership and The OFAH Foundation.

Natalie is in her 4th year as an OFAH NXT-GEN Ambassador. She is a University of Waterloo grad with a Bachelor of Environmental Studies in Environment, Resources & Sustainability Honours, with a minor in biology and diplomas in Ecological Restoration and Environmental Assessment. Natalie is a Planning Ecologist with Grey County reviewing development applications to assess potential impact to natural heritage.

NXT-GEN Ambassadors are selected to bring a younger view to the workings of our federation.

Under the governance model for the OFAH Membership Board of Directors, Stu Paterson is one of two Directors from Zone H. The number of Directors on the board from each zone has been reduced from three to two.



Mike Evers a former MNR Conservation Officer, remains as Zone H Chair. Other Zone H committee members are Chris Geberdt, John Ford, Chris Junck, Wayne Forgrave and Rob Little. If you need more info on the reorganization of the OFAH, check recent editions of Ontario OUT OF DOORS.

A SPECIAL THANKS goes out to contributors Kat McCulloch, Jane Beggs and Mike Evers who help support the preparation of this report. Their efforts are much appreciated!

So there goes another year. Please set aside some down time over the Christmas-New Years Holiday period. We will return in 2025 with more news on issues affecting anglers, hunters and conservationists as we head into a new year of enjoying, appreciating and protecting the resources in our great Ontario outdoors.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and here's to a HAPPY HEALTHY NEW YEAR!!

Stu Paterson.

- OFAH Zone H rep. for BPSA since 2003
- Director Zone H OFAH

"Stu Paterson with BPSA secretary Dennis Morton and Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound MP Alex Ruff"

