

OFAH ZONE "H" report for BPSA Stu Paterson – December 2025

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



1. TWO RODS UPDATE:



It's the latest chapter in the quest for two rod use trolling on Georgian Bay.

Ministry of Natural Resources reps accepted the petition signed by 11-hundred anglers, asking for a rule change allowing two rods per person fishing for cold water species. Representing the Ministry were biologist Ron Green and technician Ben McGill. The presentation was made by Georgian Triangle Anglers member Jamie Barry who launched the petition. Jamie thanked Zone H and OFAH biologists who have been pushing the two-rod issue.



The petition was a major discussion point at the Salmon Spectacular derby where many participants signed the document.

Barry said *"Georgian Bay is the only part of the Great Lakes, where on the Canadian side, we are limited to one rod per person....allowing two rods ensures that enthusiasts, especially children, remain engaged and excited throughout their fishing adventures."*

OFAH has been advocating for fifteen years for two-line rules to be standardized across the Great Lakes. A two-rod policy would not affect how many fish can be kept and would not have a negative effect on Georgian Bay fish populations.

As Barry noted *"this adjustment is crucial for cultivating a vibrant fishing community and ensuring the sustainability and enjoyment of this tradition for future generations."*

2. FISH STOCKING CLUBS HELPING EACH OTHER:

It happened at a meeting of the 300-member Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association. The Vice-President of the neighbouring Sydenham Sportsmen's Association, showed up at the BPSA clubhouse with an offer of THANKS.

Chris Geberdt presented BPSA President Carl Jones with a special painting. It thanks BPSA volunteers for decades of



helping the Sydenham club stage the huge Salmon Spectacular derby.

From tent raising, to kitchen and bar duties, to helping at a booth explaining the Sea Lamprey control program, BPSA has been on the job. Geberdt said “we couldn’t do it without you...thanks BPSA, your efforts are much appreciated...we wanted to make sure we publicly recognized your contributions towards making our big derby a huge success over many years.”



3. ANOTHER FISH STOCKING CLUB:

Last summer the President of the Lake Huron Fishing Club (LHFC) issued a statement suggesting that for financial reasons, the club could close its two hatcheries and stop stocking fish. For decades this volunteer run club has supplied BPSA with rainbow trout eggs and milt to keep the BPSA hatchery operating. So, the LHFC has been very generous, helping BPSA in a big way. Now the club’s new President Craig Reiner is more optimistic about the future.



“The Lake Huron Fishing Club and your club have had a great partnership over the years and we would not change a thing. In our statement last summer, we were just letting our club members know if things don’t change, our club will be in trouble in the next 5 years. If we lost one of our big donors, we would have money issues. In 2025 our Chantry Derby did very well with ALL new committee members. The derby generated \$30,000 for the club and our hatcheries. That’s a good start for a new committee and we are working on bigger things for 2026.

We are always looking for help and donations. We also would like some younger volunteers to step up and help out as you know our experienced volunteers are moving on in this world and we need to learn from them.

We are encouraged that we do have some new executive members that are eager to help and improve the fishery.”

Craig Reiner
President - LHFC



4. OPPOSITION GROWS TO GEORGIAN BAY POWER PLANT:

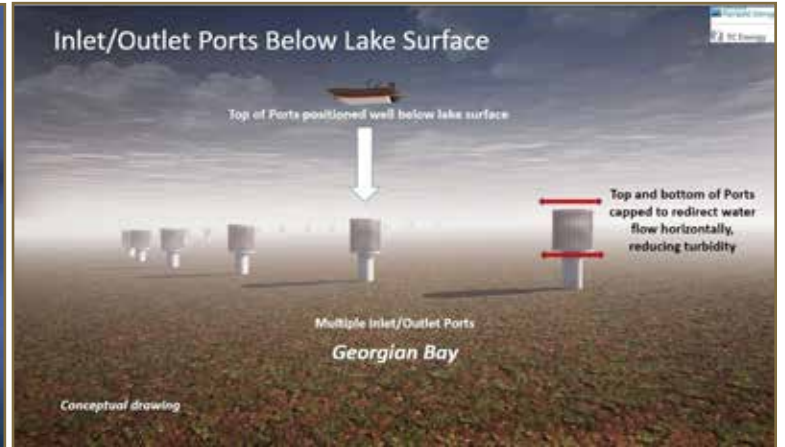
This is the large research platform that anchored off the Meaford Military base for most of the summer. Here scientists core sampled, checked turbidity, water quality and studied currents.

This is where TC Energy hopes to lay giant pipes to pump water from Georgian Bay at night into a huge pond. Then in daytime, when power demand is high, release the water back into the bay to generate electricity. It’s a 7-billion-dollar project.

The Province says: “the plant will provide flexible, reliable energy to Ontario’s electricity system — enough to power a million homes for up to 11 hours.” Ontario taxpayers donated \$285-million towards this research which suggests Queen’s Park totally backs the giant pumped storage plant project. However, there is increased concern that the plant will have negative effects on the environment and fish populations.



As the number of Georgian Bay municipalities opposing the project grows, NINE so far, environmental group SAVE GEORGIAN BAY staged an on-water protest near the research barge.



The group says “We oppose the use of federal military lands for exploitation by a \$50-billion corporation. We oppose TC Energy’s proposed \$7-billion pumped storage project in Meaford which would:

- excavate 375 acres for a massive reservoir on the Niagara Escarpment and surrounded it with a 4.2-kilometre dam 20 metres high
- bore subway-size tunnels beneath Georgian Bay’s lake bed one kilometre out from shore
- suck in and discharge 23 billion litres of Georgian Bay water each day, almost 20 times the daily water used by Toronto and southern York Region
- risk contaminating the drinking water of thousands around the bay with toxic chemicals from 80 years of live-fire weapons training on the active military base
- threaten Georgian Bay’s marine ecosystem and imperil and degrade it’s fish habitat

Save Georgian Bay also points out: “Ontario’s Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) determined the proposal is of no economic value to Ontario’s power customers. Contemporary battery storage technology is cheaper, more efficient, faster to build and does not require Georgian Bay’s fresh water resource. Let’s preserve Georgian Bay for future generations.”



5. NATIONAL PARK HUNTING

Trekkers walking the Bruce Trail in Northern Bruce Peninsula have been warned to look out for folks who are “harvest participants carrying hunting equipment, including rifles and transporting harvested wildlife.” The reminder from Parks Canada was that aboriginals are allowed to hunt and harvest wildlife in part of the Bruce Peninsula National Park. The park statement continued “visitors who are sensitive to such sights, are encouraged to visit other areas of the park at this time.”

Park officials say aboriginals “always undertake hunts that ensure mutual safety and respect.” Sections of the Bruce Trail were closed to allow hunting with signs notifying trekkers of the shutdowns. The Park highly recommended that visitors “wear high visibility clothing while hiking in remote areas of Bruce Peninsula National Park.”



6. GILL NET CONCERNS:

An active participant in the annual Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular complained to the MNR about commercial fishing gill nets in Colpoy’s and Owen Sound Bays. Mark Westerbrook of Annan asked about nets set from Wiarton to Owen Sound just before the big derby.

“The current situation is that nets are deployed and poorly marked. Local recreational boating is at risk. Sport fishing has declined due to the over-fishing and no control. We all live in Ontario and we all take responsibility for our natural resources. So why are there no regulations or restrictions for native fishermen who don’t have any respect for the rest of us who have licenses to fish?”

Several anglers reported commercial nets set in the weeks before the derby left in the water for days. Then anglers shot video of the fishers emptying dead salmon into the water for gulls to devour.



The MNR Upper Great Lakes Manager Bruce Mighton responded:

“The Ministry is aware that fish are of central importance to Indigenous communities across Ontario. Fishing plays a significant role in the lives of Indigenous Peoples, contributing to the dietary, social, cultural, and economic needs of communities in Ontario.

Indigenous communities in Ontario have constitutionally protected rights to fish. The ministry recognizes and respects these rights, whether it be for food, social, ceremonial, and sometimes commercial purposes. These rights are fundamentally different than the privileges given to licensed recreational anglers.



For example, this may mean Indigenous people fish with different means or at different times than under Ontario’s fishing regulations.

Just as the ministry respects these rights, we ask that licensed recreational anglers do the same. For more information on fisheries management in Ontario, please visit Fisheries in Ontario | ontario.ca.”



Ministry of Natural Resources

G. Bruce Mighton - (pronouns he/him)

Manager Upper Great Lakes Management Unit | Fish and Wildlife Services Branch, Ministry of Natural Resources

When it comes to the rights of legally licensed taxpaying non-native recreational anglers? The bottom line.....he courts rulings stand! So far, I have had no response from the Ministry re. reports SON (our First nations Neighbours) are pushing for a rule change allowing them 10 per-cent of the money we non-natives pay out in fishing and hunting license fees.



7. OFAH REPRESENTING ANGLERS AND HUNTERS

In Mid October OFAH Membership reps were again advocating on behalf of Hunters & Anglers. Federation staff met on Parliament Hill with officials from Public Safety Canada.

They discussed the firearms compensation program. OFAH reiterated our opposition to recent firearm prohibitions and the compensation program. We also voiced our concerns about:

- How information from gun owners would be used for enforcement purposes
- The need to ensure that people in remote and northern areas have equal access to the program
- The accuracy of the government's estimates of the number of previously non-restricted firearms in circulation
- The fact that compensation is not guaranteed, even after a gun owner submits a declaration about the firearms in their possession



OFAH continues to push the government to rethink the compensation program and instead divert those significant resources to proven initiatives that address the root causes of gun violence and smuggling.

And Rick Moore the OFAH President in a message to members says the final pieces are in place for the government's gun confiscation plan, and the OFAH has serious concerns.

"I had hoped the government would either come to their senses and scrap the buyback program or fail to find a practical way to implement it. But they found a way. The government has launched a six-week pilot program in Cape Breton to work out any kinks in the process, from the online portal to the collection and destruction of guns. To accommodate the buyback program, the government is extending the amnesty for another year. The government's attacks on legal gun owners have eroded trust and the structure of this compensation program threatens to make the problem even worse. The government has spent years gaslighting Canadians into believing that two-million licensed and vetted people are a threat to their safety. But even the general public is waking up to the reality that, at a time when many Canadians are struggling and our economy is sputtering, the government is willing to spend almost a billion dollars to buy firearms from law-abiding individuals. Not only will this fail to reduce gun violence and improve public safety, it's also an 'opportunity cost' that misdirects vital funding that could be better used to improve border security through increased staffing and new technologies, address the upstream determinants of involvement in gangs, tackle gun smuggling, and reform the justice system." Rick Moore – President OFAH Membership



In a later meeting the OFAH – alongside our partners in the National Fishing and Hunting Collaborative – we were in Ottawa again making sure your voice is heard. We met with decision-makers, including officials from Public Safety, Fisheries and Oceans, Finance, Environment, and Agriculture, as well as the Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus, to advocate on the issues that matter to Canada's outdoors community.

From standing firm against unfair firearms bans and a flawed compensation program, to addressing chronic wasting disease, aquatic invasive species, and protected area management. Our coalition is pushing government to recognize and actively support hunting, fishing, and trapping as vital parts of Canada's heritage, conservation, and economy.

We continue fighting for your access, your traditions, and the future of conservation in Canada.

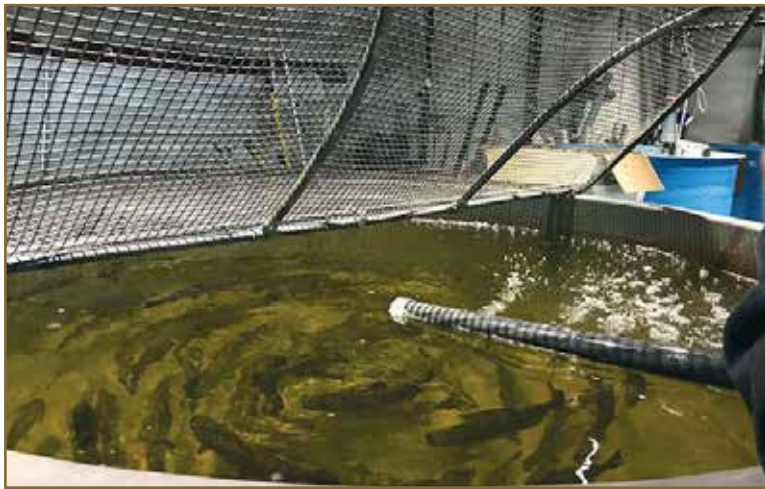


8. KEEP HATCHERY FISH MOVING:

"to ensure the health and well being of your hatchery fish, keep them moving. Following this practice creates a healthier environment for your fish leading to better growth rates and increase productivity"

New research suggests hatchery fish that are kept moving, produce healthier produce for the table.

From Springhill Farms a respected Grey Country Commercial Fish hatchery.



"When other fish farmers visit Springhill's, they're usually shocked at how much swimming our fish do. An old school of thought says fish should barely move so all their energy goes into growth. Keep the water flow low, keep the fish still. But at Springhill's we turn up the current. Our raceways rush, and our pens are anchored out in lively currents. Over decades of farming, our family learned that active fish are healthier fish:

- stronger immune systems
- cleaner water, more oxygen
- firmer fillets
- feed efficiency? Just as good... often even better than in traditional slow-moving tanks

More and more research shows that swimming against stronger currents makes fish more robust. Trout, salmon and char are travelers in the wild, built to push upstream and cross lakes. At Springhill's Farms, we let them keep doing what comes naturally... and we think the taste proves it!"

9. THE IMPORTANCE OF OFAH ZONES

Rick Moore President – OFAH

Why are our nine OFAH Zones such as Zone H important?

"Our zones are where members see our federation come to life close to home. Zones are where anglers and hunters speak about their concerns. Their issues are then brought before the various federation advisory committees for their action.

We want to ensure our members are more engaged. A big part of that is the development of a new communications strategy. You'll soon notice more zone updates being shared through OFAH social media channels, e-newsletters, and a new series of zone websites that build off the hub we've already created, but takes it to the next level with zone-specific content. This new approach will amplify



zone news, events, and opportunities so that every member, no matter where they live, can see and celebrate our successes.

On behalf of the OFAH, I want to thank every volunteer who gives their time and energy to make it all happen.

Want to connect with your zone? You can reach out directly to our zone chairs.

OFAH Zone H Chair is Mike Evers
Zone H, Michael Evers, 705-436-4521
d_evers@rogers.com

And South of us is Zone J, Mark Braet, 519-328-2354
markbraetofah@gmail.com

10. BIRD SAFE - OFAH ENDORSES NEW STUDY

If you work with or handle wild or domestic birds or animals you may be eligible to take part in “**BIRD SAFE**” a research study led by the University Health Network. Participants will receive regular bird flu (avian influenza) testing over the course of a year to help researchers understand how bird flu affects people. This study is exploring whether bird flu is present in humans who work closely with at-risk animals, to determine what symptoms may be associated with this condition. The study is led by researchers at Toronto General Hospital (UHN).



No hospital visits are required.
Learn more or sign up by contacting: bird.safe@uhn.ca

11. WHY JOIN OFAH?:

We know there are many advantages to belonging to a club with OFAH affiliation. OFAH is on the front lines representing our interests with governments, wildlife scientists, the media and the public. Our federation offers our anglers and hunters “*industry leading insurance coverage.*”

As OFAH Executive Director Matt Demille points out “*we proudly promote our superior insurance coverage that surpasses insurance coverage offered by any other organization.*”



From OFAH Head Office:

From fish and game clubs and public shooting ranges to private hunt camps, for generations, OFAH-affiliated clubs have been the backbone of outdoor tradition and conservation in Ontario. By joining an existing OFAH club or forming your own club, you can tap into all the tools and support your club needs to thrive, grow, and lead in your community.

INDUSTRY-LEADING CLUB PROTECTION:

- \$5 Million Club Liability Insurance – Fully covered by OFAH
- Shooting Range Coverage (\$375/yr value) – Paid by OFAH
- \$2 Million Directors & Officers (D&O) Insurance – Optional, low-cost protection for executives
- \$5000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment - Paid by OFAH
- Lyme Disease Diagnosis and Medical Expense Coverage
- Preferred Property & Commercial Insurance Rates – For camps, clubhouses, etc.
- Event Management Support – Waivers, safety protocols, and insurance guidance

12. COMMENTARY :

As we head into a new year, a question: Are you a “giver” or a “taker”?

Givers...we are the givers - we give our spare time, our volunteer hours raising fish and completing conservation projects for the takers and we enthusiastically participate in our club's activities. We volunteer teaching kid's archery, firearms safety, staging our kid's fishing events, planting trees and are active in many other activities that are good for society.

The TAKERS? They don't join volunteer-based clubs. They hunt and fish. They don't care who stocks fish. They don't belong to clubs that report to OFAH on fish and wildlife trends. I was a TAKER most of my life. But Since 2003 I have been a giver. Let's try to convince more hunters and anglers to be givers. If everyone reading this, convinces a taker to join our movement, think how much more effective we will be.

LOOKING AHEAD:

In the new year we look forward to updates on:

- A proposal to translocate bears from other Ontario regions to Grey-Bruce, to improve the gene pool.
- The citizen fight against expansion of gravel mining near the Saugeen River in West Grey. In September I presented on behalf of the OFAH calling plans for gravel extraction close to the Saugeen “insane” as this is a major sports fishing river.
- The push to allow two rods trolling for cold water fish on Georgian Bay
- Your concerns about hunting, fishing and conservation issues. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

Once again, we wrap up our reports on OFAH and its valuable work.

Hope your fall hunt was successful. Set aside some down time over the Christmas/New Years period. Enjoy yourself and look forward to new outdoors adventures in 2026.

Thanks to Kat McCulloch, Al Hunter and Jane Beggs at head office for their help in compiling these reports.

Your comments are always welcomed. *More in 2026.*

Stu Paterson - Your BPSA OFAH rep. since 2003

- Director Membership section of OFAH Zone H

