

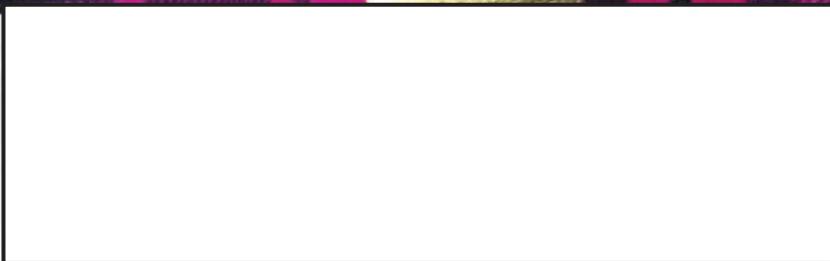
# Northwestern Ontario

# FREE

# Outdoors

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*In The Next Issue:*

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- **Bear Hunt Tips**

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G. Ellis Photo

# Winter Lakers Explained

By Gord Ellis



Gord Ellis with winter laker

While it's a bit sobering to admit, I've been winter fishing lake trout for about 4 decades. My first trips were via snowshoe with my father into a lake into a couple lakes in the Dorion area. Getting in was done via snowshoe, and it was hard work just getting to the lake. Then there was the job of cutting a hole through the ice with what amounted to a giant, sharpened spoon called a spud. Lots of sweating and grunting. We did catch fish, although they were pretty small lake trout.

Fast forward a decade to the early 1980s and the Lake Superior lake trout boom was underway. It's hard to believe it now, but people flocked onto Superior back then like they do to Lac des mille Lacs or Black Bay today. When the ice conditions were right, it looked like a Wal Mart parking lot off of the west side of Caribou. We would jig with one ounce silver Krocodiles and Swedish Pimples and catch some beautiful trout. Yes, it could be windy and gnarly, but that was just part of the game.

Today, lake trout remain the most exciting game in town when it comes to ice fishing. Catching winter lake trout is not complicated, but there are some tricks to the game.

## Location

Location is always the most problematic part of fishing, no matter the season or the species. However, there are some general rules for lake trout that have rarely steered me wrong. No matter what the lake, you can be sure there will be lake trout in the deep water. When I say deep, I'm talking 60 to 100 feet. It's been my experience that if there is 60 feet of water in a lake, there will be trout there. It's a starting point. Personally, I prefer to fish them a bit shallower, off of humps or main lake points. Depths of 25 to 35 feet are consistent assuming there is structure close by.

Fishing close to sharp walls that drop into deep water can also pay off. Lake trout will push smelt and herring up against these underwater cliffs and attack them. The trout will also roam quite shallow at times. I recall fishing Squeers Lake years ago and getting some of our largest lakers from ten feet of water. If the food is there, lake trout will be around.

Owning ice fishing electronics is a serious game changer when it comes to winter lake trout. A flasher like the Humminbird 55C will improve your ability to not only find the right depth, but see your lure, and the reaction of fish to it. All ice anglers will benefit from owning electronics. Lake trout anglers are the ones who have the most to gain.

## Lures and Bait

Like every angler born, I go through lure and bait phases. This is certainly true when it comes to lake trout angled under the ice. There will be years when I'll jig spoons and have good success doing so. Other years the focus will be hanging a frozen herring or sucker minnow. Last year was largely a 4 inch white tube year. Sometimes that tube was rigged "normally" with the jig head inside the rubber body. Other times it was used as a "teaser" addition on the main hook of a Northland Airplane Jig. You can use any colour tube but white or pearl is the mainstay. This "matches the hatch" in any lake that has smelt or herring as a primary bait fish. However, there are times when blue, purple and even pink tubes will make the difference.

I've seen bucktail jigs take some monster winter lake trout. A white half or three quarter ounce bucktail can be enough to fool a monster fish. Some people tip the bucktail with a minnow or minnow head, but many don't. Just drop the jig to the bottom, and gently swim it up and down. Mighty Mitch and jungle Joes Jigs from Terrace Bay make some winter lake trout specials that are worth a look.

Vertical jiggging spoons throw a lot of flash and call in trout from a long way. There are many choices, but some of the best include the Swedish Pimple, Krocodile Spoon, Snakie Spoon, Crippled Herring, Pillki, PK and Fergie. There really is no spoon that won't work when jigged, but the more streamlined the spoon the better. A half ounce spoon is a good choice for most winter lake trout situations but in deeper water, or for really large lake trout, you can bump up to an ounce or more. Obviously, you will need to adjust your jigging rod and reel - and line test - accordingly. Trying to pull a one ounce spoon on a perch rod will not go well. Spoons that are silver, gold or bronze all have a place in your lure box. A touch of colour doesn't seem to hurt. I like to add glow tape strips to a spoon, but have used chartreuse, yellow, pearl and blue as well.

## Tackle

You can be go pretty simple with winter lake trout, but I've broken a lot of gear on them over the years, primarily rods but a few reels as well. These are large, hard fighting fish, so quality gear will make a huge difference. If jigging a heavier spoon or bucktail, use a baitcast reel and baitcast ice rod. My go to rig for tubes, bucktails and most spoons is a Frabil ice fishing "Gussy" rod matched with a Repeal R type reel and 20 pound Suffix braided line. Use a 10 or 12 pound monofilament leader between the wire snap and the braid.

Winter lake trout are a fun and exciting quarry and the can grow very large indeed. Give them a shot this winter before the spring takes all our ice away.

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J. Kaplanis Photo



John Kaplanis and a massive male wolf he trapped this winter

# Trapping the Grey Ghost

By Richard Brochu, NOSA Member

I remember as a young boy living in my home town of Longlac, hearing stories of trappers trying to catch wolves and often being unsuccessful. Most of the stories related to how smart these canines were and what a challenge it was to trap one. It seemed that if you caught a wolf it meant you officially had become a trapper.

Very seldom had I seen wolves in the wild as a young man but as I got older and honed my skills as a hunter, I experienced more encounters. Wolves are generally a very shy animal and in most cases avoid humans at all cost. That being said, spending a good part of my time in the bush hunting and fishing, I've ran into more wolves within the last five years than I have in the last twenty years. A warming trend in the weather, in my opinion, has played a part in increased deer populations and in turn, wolf numbers have also grown. Unfortunately, the last two brutal winters has had a negative impact on deer. Deer numbers are still high within city limits as well as some of the areas outside of Thunder Bay. Further west and south the deer populations have suffered from deep snow and winter mortality has taken a toll on many. In turn this increases wolf predation on our dwindling moose herd within the Thunder Bay District and for them creates unwelcome added pressure. Wolves do play a vital part in the eco-system but managing their numbers is equally important.

A few years ago I decided to try my hand at trapping due to the increase in wolf sightings south of the city near a property I purchased. One encounter included seven adult animals in pack formation. I read up on wolf trapping as well as asked fellow trappers their advice on how these incredible creatures could be caught. Needless to say my first year attempting to catch a wolf was unsuccessful. It was a riddle I was determined to figure out. More research on my part would be needed and in time I was able to be successful.

The first thing I needed to do was create a bait pile. I put the fall harvest leftovers such as bones, fur and other goodies out and set them up in an area frequented by wolves. As a trapper I also incorporated beaver carcasses in the mix. I prefer to trap wolves once winter has arrived as their pelts are at their prime. I let the wolves enjoy the bait pile a few weeks before I set up my snares. The next important aspect includes covering human scent. Wolves have the best sniffers in the forest! There is no doubt in my mind that human scent is very difficult to cover up from wolves. Once the wolves are comfortable with the bait site they will start using the same trails to access the food source.

The next step is to set my snares on the trails away from the food source. Wolves will become very cautious as they approach the bait pile so you want to catch them a short distance away, before their senses become hypersensitive. Ten to twenty yards away has worked best in my experience. I use Ram Powered Snares, Wolf master and DMD Wolf Snare with 3/32 Aircraft Cable/Cam Lock, both dispatch the animal quickly. I put as many snares as possible on the commonly used trails as well as off their beaten paths. I found that once I'd return to add feed to the bait pile, the wolves would often change their patterns and create different trails or waypoints to access bait pile. The more snares the better the chance of success. A trick I was taught was to put a twig at the base of the snare to make the wolf lift his head as he walks into it. Wolves keep their nose to the ground most of the time so it makes sense that an obstacle in eyesight would encourage them to lift their head.

Wolf trapping is not for the faint of heart. Caution must be utilized in skinning a wolf and preparing it for taxidermy. Wolves do carry parasites as they enjoy rolling around in carrion in order to increase their attraction among each other. Wolf trapping is a challenge for most beginner trappers. It is the ultimate predator and catching one is not as easy as some may think.

As a trapper and outdoorsman I feel I am privileged to be connected to nature and all it has to offer. Trapping, hunting and fishing has been a part of my life since childhood. If you're interested in trapping, take the course. It gets you out in the wild and can be a rewarding experience!

Corinne Armstrong and a chunky perch

T. Armstrong Photo



# A day in the Perch Palace

By Tom Armstrong

Close to home, lots of fish, comfortable digs, and excellent table fare; sounds like an ice anglers dream. While not terribly common to many ice anglers, these things can be your reality on Black Bay of Lake Superior. An hour East of Thunder Bay, it's a unique piece of water; generally shallower and warmer, offering anglers a multitude of year round opportunities, one being excellent ice fishing for jumbo perch. Over the last several years it's become a hot spot for perch anglers looking for plenty of action hooking up with plump and tasty perch.

I always make a few trips to black bay, and spend my day in the comfort of an ice hut from Bear Trak (beartrakoutfitters.com). Corey Hayward of Bear Trak has a number of huts for rent, sitting atop some of the most productive perch grounds. With a number of huts, including an 8x16 "Perch Palace", accommodating 7 anglers, it makes for a great day on the water. When fishing Black Bay, you're usually miles from shore, exposed to the elements, and having somewhere warm to warm up, take a lunch break, or fish in, is certainly a welcome option. Another great advantage for ice angler without snowmachines, who don't relish the idea of walking 5 miles out, they offer a shuttle service, taking your group and gear from your car straight to the shack, opening up more opportunities for anglers.

Bear Trak's huts have been the site of an ongoing annual event, when my wife and her group of girlfriends converge on Black Bay for her annual birthday girls fishing trip. We've coined it, the annual "Broads with Rods" trip. It's been a total success as a fun outing for her and her friends, but also provides great opportunities for new and infrequent anglers to have some fun on the ice.

When gearing up for black bay, I use 22-30" med/light ice rods for jigging, with a sensitive tip, but enough backbone for solid hooksets and for fighting bigger fish. When you get into a 13 or 14" perch, or the odd other surprise species out there, you don't want a wimpy rod. For set lines, I use a jigging rod on a rod balance, but tip ups rigged with light line will work just as well. Setup a small to medium minnow just above bottom, and your set line's sure to produce for you throughout the day. On both setups, I'll spool up with 4# line.

As far as tackle goes, you can catch jumbos on a plain jig and a minnow, and some days this is the ticket, although I like a variety of baits. You can downsize your baits, fishing with micro panfish jigs and tiny minnows, catching perch all day, however when targeting the jumbo's, I like to upsize my bait, to weed out the smaller fish. If you're unconcerned about size and just want to catch fish, or for kids or anglers just looking for some fun and action, use small baits and you'll be hard pressed to keep fish off your line.

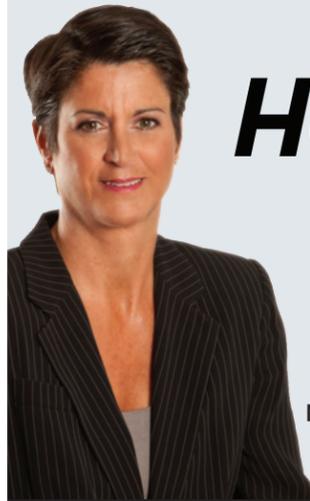
Small baits certainly will catch big perch as well, but they just may not get a chance to get to your bait. When looking at slightly larger baits, a couple go to baits would be a medium buckshot spoon, or small Rapala jigging shad, both tipped with a small minnow. Perch are generally very bottom oriented, so jigging tight to bottom is key, and having a flasher at your disposal makes you even more effective. I can spend all day watching my Humminbird Ice 55, as there is nearly always fish below to keep me entertained.

Whether you're a first time anglers looking for a place to start, or a seasoned ice angler looking for something different look no further than Black Bay.



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## THIS MONTH'S NEWS

# A report from the Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus

By Robert D. Sopuck, MP, Dauphin - Swan River - Marquette



**Bob Sopuck is an avid angler and member of the Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus.**

Members of Parliament come to office with many different motivations. For some it is health care, for some it is defense, and for others it is simply to be a parliamentarian. In my case I represent a wonderful rural constituency in west central Manitoba where people farm, ranch, work in forestry, run small businesses and simply revel in the vast and beautiful landscapes that make up my region. And of course hunting and angling are enjoyed by the majority of my constituents simply because of the abundance of fish and wildlife in this region. Throw in a passionate commitment to conservation and one can understand the strong desire among my constituents to preserve and protect their cherished way of life. And that, fellow hunters and anglers, is one of the main reasons that I and a number of my Conservative colleagues became Members of Parliament in the first place. We are determined to use all the levers at the disposal of the federal government to conserve, protect, and defend a way of life that we all cherish.

Shortly after I became an MP, I struck up many enduring friendships with other Conservative colleagues who feel the same way about protecting hunting, angling, and trapping. And what started out as a dedicated, and ultimately successful, effort to repeal the long-gun registry has evolved into a formal organization within our federal Conservative Caucus known as the Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus. The banner from our Facebook Page says it all:

“Conservative Members of Parliament dedicated to the protection, preservation, celebration, participation, and education related to hunting and angling.”

Naturally protection of our trapping heritage and the fur/sealing industry are also strong priorities.

When we proposed the creation of the caucus my colleagues responded and we have over 30 members and the strong support of the Prime Minister. In fact Canada's entire hunting, angling and trapping community has the strong support of Prime Minister Harper as was evidenced by his trip to Sault St. Marie in October 2014, the first meeting of its kind ever. There he participated in a question and answer session with representatives from Northern Ontario's hunting, angling, and trapping community on a wide variety of topics ranging from the long gun registry, to our National Conservation Plan, and to the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (RFCPP). I had the honour to be there along with Conservative MPs Bryan Hayes and Jay Aspin. The audience of over 200 hunting, angling, and trapping advocates greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister.

The Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus had a great deal of input into the development of our National Conservation Plan (NCP). Like all hunters and anglers the members we take great pride in the conservation legacy of our community and the NCP certainly reflects that. Indeed my vice-chair Blaine Calkins (MP Westaskawin) worked as a fisheries biologist and National Park warden while my other vice-chair Ryan Leef (MP Yukon) was a conservation officer and big game outfitter. Under the NCP the budget of the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program was doubled. The RFCPP, in cooperation with hundreds of local angling groups, has funded over 200 projects across Canada to date and will eventually support almost 400 projects when the funds are expended. The RFCPP results speak for themselves: 2.5 million square metres of spawning habitat enhanced and almost 2000 km of riverbank conserved and protected. The NCP made a 50 million dollar commitment to the restoration of threatened wetlands and another 50 million dollars was allocated to the conservation of habitat on the agricultural landscape.

We were also very proud when Ontario MP Rick Norlock introduced, and was able to pass, his private members bill to create the National Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Heritage Day Act.

Our Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus and our Conservative government are working closely with the Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel, a group that advises our government on hunting, angling, trapping, and firearm's policy. The HAAP is composed of representatives from most of Canada's hunting, angling, trapping, and firearms communities and has performed a valuable advisory role. The HAAP and our caucus were instrumental in the development of our new Migratory Bird hunting regulations designed to reduce the red tape for Canada's waterfowl hunters.

Finally, members of the Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus have been meeting with hunting, angling, and trapping groups from across Canada. These meetings are invaluable and allow us as parliamentarians to receive input from concerned citizens across Canada. Please follow our activities on our Facebook Page.

*Tight lines and straight shooting.*

# Thunder Bay Family Featured in CBC Trapping Documentary



**Sydney Deans watches father Mark Deans as he teaches skinning and trapping skills.**

It's no secret, all of our so called "consumptive" outdoor activities, hunting, angling and trapping are constantly under attack from a small but, at times, very vocal minority of the general population. How we conduct and portray these activities to the vast majority of the general public, is important. This is how society will judge acceptance of our outdoor heritage for generations to follow.

Mark Deans is a trapper from Thunder Bay, Ontario. He and his wife also feel it is important to expose their children to the lifestyle that comes from spending time in the bush, learning about the wild and using skills that are rarely seen any place else in our modern world. Recently the CBC did a short video documentary about kids and trapping. The Deans family was the centerpiece of the news expose by CBC. The CBC conducted a very fair report.

The subject of trapping can be a sensitive one with some, but it shouldn't be. Trapping is a sustainable industry that uses an abundant natural resource in natural fur bearers. The challenges of explaining why we do what we do, become more evident when someone is pushing a microphone and tv camera in your face, but Mark Deans and family did a fantastic job. I especially liked the comment by Mark about how some trappers want to "keep it in the shadows....but he does not....I agree, we can only educate the public by bringing trapping out of the shadows.

During the video documentary, the CBC interviewer asks about the trapping industry "having more blood on its hands than any other Canadian industry..." And this is a question that keeps the anti's coming back to the media, because it's so tough to deny the fact that getting bloody is a part of the reality of trapping....HOWEVER....there is not another phenomenon on earth that features blood-letting more so than Mother Nature herself!

The color of the natural world is not always GREEN! It's also red. That's right, blood-letting is synonymous with the life and death cycle of nature itself....of which we are all part of! Commercial farming of livestock for meat, coupled with commercial fishing are certainly good parallels to trapping in that these activities depend on utilizing a sustainable, renewable resource where animals die so that humans may live. The average person does not recognize this, or in many cases they may even deny this natural relationship. But like farmers and fishermen, trappers take responsibility for their role in this cycle of life and give something back to nature so that the renewable resource remains healthy and sustainable.

Mark Deans and his family deserve a huge thank you from the trapping and outdoor community, for standing up for our healthy and sustainable outdoor lifestyle. Mark and his wife make it clear that trapping or hunting isn't necessarily for everyone, but rather it's a choice and we're fortunate to live in a land of certain freedoms to be able to choose to do these activities. And that's something else that sets our community apart from the self-righteous "antis" who want the entire world to see and do things, their way.

For the complete news video clip go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Py-AUmLeFec&sns=fb>

## Lakehead Archers Inc. sponsors Westgate Highschool NASP

NOSA is pleased to highlight the introduction of the National Archery in the Schools Program for Westgate Highschool. This program was made possible in part due to the financing and volunteer efforts of NOSA affiliate organization, the Lakehead Archers Inc. The local archery club sponsored the program for Westgate High School such as NOSA sponsored the Nipigon George O'Neil elementary school.

The NASP program is designed to introduce school kids to the sport of archery. The NASP program has been facilitated by the assistance of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) and with partnership funding by groups like NOSA and the Lakehead Archers Inc. it is expected that the program will expand to many other interested schools in Northwestern Ontario. The program is very inclusive, as a physical education program it allows for participation by all students including many who are physically challenged or disabled.

NOSA looks forward to future partnerships with OFAH and clubs like Lakehead Archers Inc. in order to promote the NASP program to more schools.



THIS  
MONTH'S  
NEWS

## NOSA Critical of Moose Focus Sessions



In response to growing concerns from stakeholders, OMNRF recently completed 5 provincial Moose Focus Session workshops. This comes after many years of little to no management direction being taken by OMNRF after the "Moose Review" process of 2008. The "Moose Review" morphed into a new term called the "Moose Project" which was seemingly more top secret than plans for launching a space craft to Mars. Why? Because since 2008 little-to-nothing has been done on the moose management front, while OMNRF's policy emphasis seemed concentrated on caribou, among other things.

That all changed last year when the spectre of Minnesota's crashed moose population was brought home here to the north when an intensive OMNR Moose Aerial Inventory (MAI) effort revealed many of the Northwest Region's most productive wildlife management units (WMU's) had moose populations that were in an alarming state of decline. But while moose hunters and conservation groups in these units were quick to offer their support for change to turn the population decline around, many have argued that OMNRF's response is not taking the decline seriously enough. Certainly OMNRF is a mechanism that works with a process of very slow moving cogs and wheels.

But here we are in 2015 and moose hunting stakeholders are still waiting and expecting OMNRF to make meaningful changes to how moose are managed on the landscape. The Minister of Natural Resources Hon. Bill Mauro, certainly put some of the wheels in motion to get OMNRF's bureaucracy in gear to work on moose management direction to focus on a declining moose population in the Northwest and Northeast Regions of Ontario. But after this, NOSA is left asking two questions: First, do the Moose Focus Sessions really provide stakeholders with the information needed to make informed recommendations? And second, is the OMNRF committed to doing more than simply managing the hunter, in order to improve moose population health and sustainability?

Let's look at the issues examined within the framework of the focus sessions. The sessions opened up with OMNR asking stakeholders three questions 1) What do you think the total moose population in Ontario should be? 2) What tools should be used to get there? and 3) How long should this take?

NOSA's response was offered by Exec. Director John Kaplanis who provided this report with his responses to all three questions. Here they are:

1) Ontario's habitat has already demonstrated it can achieve a population of 120,000 plus moose - so that is the benchmark we should be trying to achieve. Don't lower the bar. Instead, maintain a high expectation for our moose population goals and with it will come greater ecological and socio-economic benefits.

2) Tools? Use as many tools as possible to achieve the goal. Why use only a hammer to frame a house when you can frame it and finish it 10 times faster with a nail gun and assorted accessories! Find better tools! Only through research can you improve these tools. Currently in Ontario we manage moose one way - with adult tag allocations. This is outdated and failing.

3) How fast should we try to get the tools in place and the population turned around? Kaplanis answered..."we needed to do these things years ago...so we're already playing catch up....ASAP is when we need to get these changes made..."

In the opinion of the NOSA representatives and partners who attended the Moose Focus Sessions, it was agreed that ultimately OMNRF seemed intent on the "focus" of managing the hunter. Habitat management challenges in addition to acknowledging the role of managing predators in order to mitigate their moose population "limiting" role, were obviously downplayed by OMNRF.

The commitment to address these other issues MUST come from the Minister himself. That is why he is in that position; to make sure the agency is diligently following its own policies and guidelines, and to ensure that if these policies are not working to the benefit of the resource, new and better policies are put in place. NOSA remains committed to working with the Minister toward these goals.

In the Spring Issue of NWO Outdoors News we will re-visit this subject to examine options for moose management change moving forward.

## Black Sturgeon River: NOSA Supports Minister's decision for EA

By John Kaplanis, Executive Director



A recent report in the OFAH "Angler & Hunter HOTLINE" (Jan/Feb 2015) by Angelo Lombardo Exec. Director of OFAH, characterized the ongoing Black Sturgeon River Environmental Assessment (EA) process as "controversial." NOSA wholeheartedly disagrees.

If there was ever a process to be used to demonstrate how transparency and openness should work, it is the entire process used by OMNRF while considering options for dam removal on the Black Sturgeon River, and what it will really mean for that river system and all of the native fish species that will benefit from an entire run-of-the-river "ecosystem". At least the current Minister of Natural Resources and three before him have kept this process open, transparent and on the table for all to see.

The position of the OFAH Exec. Director does cause some to raise their eyebrows. What Lombardo didn't state in his report was that not one but two Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) councils, Zone 6 and Zone 9, both were in favor of the option of Camp 43 dam removal and the construction of a second barrier for Sea Lamprey protection much farther upstream. The Zone councils are comprised of local civilian stakeholders. The Zones based these decisions on extensive work presented by OMNRF detailing costs of dam removal vs reconstruction with a fish passageway. Still Lombardo states that OMNRF should, "... show how they have exhausted all possible means of funding before moving on to the next option." Really?

The reality of this is that it was determined very quickly throughout this process that repairing the current dam was not cost effective at all due to its run down condition, plus it was determined that, from an engineering perspective, there is no method at all of providing a reliable "fish passageway" that would effectively or efficiently serve the needs of all the fish species wanting to use this river to spawn. Any "lift" passage device would require 24/7 monitoring, for the entire period of ice-out in any given year. This is most unrealistic and economically unfeasible, and I suspect Lombardo knows this all too well.

Further there is no alarming science to say the additional habitat will create a lamprey explosion. When put in context of additional access for the lamprey, the lake wide effect is marginal at best and could be mitigated by a very modest increase in lamprey control. Lamprey control is already in place with cooperation on both side of the lake. The lamprey scientist's data does not support the "chicken little" theories of devastation. The political positions like that of OFAH's should not be confused as "science".

Interesting to note is that OFAH was a very strong opponent of hydro electric dam construction on the Steel River not that long ago. Their decision at that time, which was supported also by NOSA, hinged upon keeping the natural integrity of the river in place to protect and ensure the health and sustainability of the river's ecosystem. Nothing different is being proposed here on the Black Sturgeon. In fact if the logging dam had not been constructed decades ago, I would suggest OFAH would likely be one of the strongest opponents of one being built now, simply in the name of preventing Sea Lamprey from swimming upstream. I could be wrong.

Keep in mind, the Camp 43 dam was not originally placed there for the purpose of Sea Lamprey control, it was historically placed there for the purpose of logging back in the days when rivers were used to move massive log booms downstream to then be transported to the mills. But by this process, an entire river ecosystem was altered. The science surrounding such barriers is very well documented; barriers such as this one, never designed with fish habitat in mind, do not benefit any of the fish species that are native to the water body. Period.

Do these barriers later serve a defacto purpose for activities such as Sea Lamprey control? Yes, but that single minded focus forsakes all the other benefits of opening up an extensive stretch of river spawning habitat to myriad other fish species. In cooperation with stakeholders, a risk/benefit analysis has been conducted by OMNRF. This opportunity will also allow for managers and stakeholders to work together to compromise and find workable solutions to this fisheries management challenge that will, in the end, provide far greater benefits with easily identified and manageable risks. NOSA has suggested to OFAH repeatedly that we share in finding common ground to this end. Let's hope they do.

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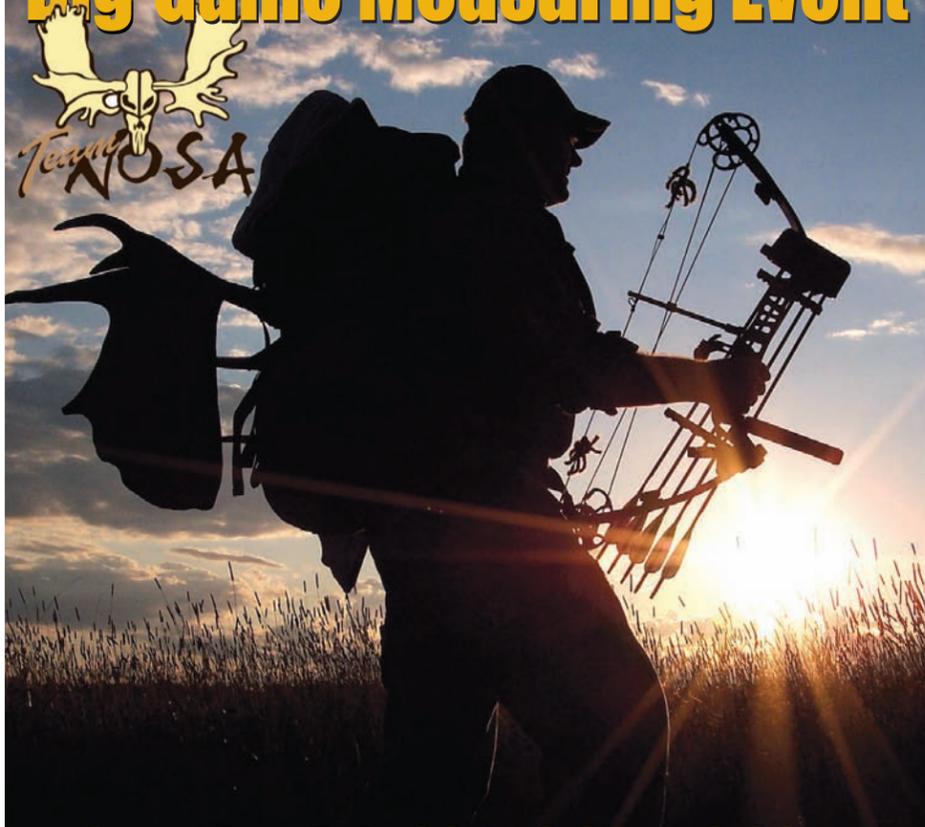
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# TEAM NOSA Big Game Measuring Event



**Saturday Feb. 28th, 9:00AM-3:00PM**

**At the Northwestern Fur Trappers Convention**

**(Held in the CLE Coliseum Building)**

**Categories in Whitetail, Moose, Bear**

**Bring your antlers and skulls for measurement  
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**\$10 per entry**



THIS  
MONTH'S  
NEWS

## NDP Want to Bring Back Gun Registry

Ottawa, ON- Robert Sopuck, Member of Parliament for Dauphin-Swan River-Marquette, is concerned with NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair's promise to bring back a long-gun registry and the provincial NDP's support for their Federal NDP cousins.

Thomas Mulcair, the leader of Stan Struthers and Minister of Agriculture Ron Kostyshyn's Federal NDP party made it clear recently that he was going to bring back the gun registry saying:

"I think that it is possible to provide the police with the tools to better protect the public and themselves by making sure they're able to follow every gun...allowing the governments, federal and provincial, to keep track of those guns. That's our bottom line." Mulcair went on to say just to be sure that no one could be mistaken as to his meaning that "We will bring in something that allows the police to track every gun in Canada."

"It is shocking that the NDP would want to take us back down that road again after the enormous failure of the Liberal gun registry," said Sopuck, "The long gun registry was a billion dollar bureaucratic boondoggle of epic proportions."

Estimates of the cost of the Liberal gun registry was well into the billions during the years it was in place while it failed to ever get an accurate accounting of the firearms in the country. The Liberals recently announced they want to maintain bureaucratic aspects of the past firearms laws, stating they oppose the Common Sense Firearms licensing act that proposes to simplify licensing, reduce redtape and improve safety requirements.

"Federal Members of the NDP like Stan Struthers and Minister of Agriculture Ron Kostyshyn should tell their leader Tom Mulcair that Manitobans don't want any part of his long gun registry," said Sopuck "They should repudiate their leader for ignoring their constituent's wishes and demand that he retracts this pledge to build an NDP Gun Registry."

## NOSA Questions MNR Fee Hikes

With constantly changing budget demands and a seemingly dwindling source of revenue, OMNRF has recently increased license fees by implementing a \$2 "transaction fee" for every hunting, fishing or trapping license purchased. This direction has been met with criticism by many outdoorsmen and women, many of whom have had enough of OMNR's cash grabbing over the years, and with little to show for the investment.

NOSA is concerned that the trend toward simply raising the fees for licenses, will result in a net loss in revenue over the long term as more hunters and anglers simply give up the activities altogether. NOSA Exec. Director John Kaplanis states, "...people are getting fed up and they don't see OMNR doing anything to generate other sources of revenue to offset the cost of resource management."

OMNR's own data reveals an alarming trend in the loss of sport angling lic. sales as an aging population of sport anglers eventually become fewer in number. This combines with a lack of new sport anglers being recruited from the younger generations, thus the loss of revenue becomes more significant since roughly 2/3 of the OMNR Fish and Wildlife budget comes from license sales to hunters, anglers and trappers.

It's as though OMNRF has the attitude that hunters and anglers will continue to "pay to play", no matter the cost - however that's not happening. The drop in license sales is evidence of this. This should be just as alarming to OMNRF staff who collect pay cheques that are largely afforded by hunting and fishing lic. dollars.

NOSA also contends that raising fees is not the way to sustainably fund an agency that many feel is not doing enough now to spend appropriately on field research, fish and wildlife monitoring or game law enforcement. The cost to manage the agency is largely eaten up in its Policy Branch where a good chunk of OMNR's budget is spent. It begs the question then; maybe OMNR's policies for wildlife management need to change in order to foster an improved attitude for investing in activities related to resource usage in terms of hunting and angling opportunity.

NOSA Exec. Director John Kaplanis explains, "Take the cancellation of the spring bear hunt for example or even reducing the walleye catch limits here in the north....all these policies have done is turned people away from hunting and fishing in Ontario." He says there needs to be a change to OMNR's policies related to these activities, in order to invite and encourage people to invest in hunting and fishing here in Ontario. Kaplanis adds that other jurisdictions actively promote hunting and fishing programs and offer lottery funded projects to stay well ahead of funding challenges.

If OMNRF was a business, they'd be broke. It's time for OMNRF to adopt a new attitude and draft a new business model to encourage investors (hunters and anglers) to spend in Ontario, and this combined with a marketing plan to allow for profitable partnerships, will get OMNRF budget challenges under control while also keeping license fees affordable for Ontario residents and tourism.

# NOSA Members In The Field



Photo Courtesy of Storm Carroll Photography

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## Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus

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