

Media Release



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For Immediate Release

O.F.A.H. partners save Ringwood fish hatchery

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is celebrating another milestone in conservation history: the *O.F.A.H. / Toronto Sportsmen's Show Ringwood Fish Culture Station*. As of today, the O.F.A.H. – Ontario's largest nonprofit, charitable fish and wildlife conservation organization -- is now licensed to operate Ringwood, the former MNR fish hatchery that was slated for closure.

Together with the Toronto Sportsmen's Show and the Ringwood Hatchery's new host club, Metro East Anglers, the O.F.A.H. and its many partners will be directly responsible for stocking millions of fish into Lake Ontario's \$140 million dollar recreational fishery over the next several years. Other major partners include Pizza Pizza, Shimano rods and reels, Lund Boats, Rapala, Cannon Downriggers, Yamaha and Ontario Out of Doors.

The O.F.A.H. did everything it could in an effort to keep Ringwood running as an M.N.R. program. On June 28, the Ontario Government announced it was "planning on taking Ringwood out of production and consolidate production in the remaining nine hatcheries." As a result, the O.F.A.H. mobilized its volunteers and placed an emergency call to the outdoors industry, starting first with the Toronto Sportsmen's Show.

Walter Oster, Chair of the Toronto Sportsmen's Show said, "We applaud the O.F.A.H. for putting together a plan to save the Ringwood hatchery and to maximize fish production in this facility. The Toronto Sportsmen's Show looks forward to our growing relationship with the O.F.A.H. and we are pleased to be involved in this major project that has so many benefits for conservation, anglers and the local economy."

The O.F.A.H. firmly advocates that provincial fish stocking must remain a core business of the Ministry of Natural Resources. While anglers and hunters already contribute enormously to conservation programs, O.F.A.H. members and partners are once again stepping up to the plate.

Mike Reader, O.F.A.H. Executive Director said, "O.F.A.H. involvement in the health of our fisheries is not unlike the work of other great charities that enhance our provincial health care system. Yes, we must hold governments accountable and make sure our tax dollars are properly reinvested; but at the same time, we must also support our community volunteers that help provide essential hospital services and equipment. Community partnerships are the way of the future, and in the outdoors community, O.F.A.H. partners know that investing in the Ringwood Hatchery is the right thing to do for the future health of our fisheries."

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