

2014-2019 Sustainability Strategy for the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

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Introduction

Ontarians benefit from healthy fish and wildlife resources through recreation, employment, tourism and enhanced biodiversity. This paper discusses the importance, challenges and options to sustain future funding for fish and wildlife management.

In 2013, Ontario had 1.3 million licensed anglers and over 400,000¹ hunters. Recreational fishing contributes almost \$2.5 billion² to the Ontario economy.

The economic contribution of recreational hunting has not been assessed since the 1996 survey, *The Importance of Nature to Canadians: the Economic Significance of Nature-related Activities*. This survey estimated that Ontario hunters spent a total of \$200.6 million on direct hunting-related expenditures, generating an additional contribution to the provincial gross domestic product of \$199.7 million³.

In addition, the commercial fishing industry harvests approximately \$35 million to \$40 million in fish annually, creating additional economic value through the processing and retail sale of resultant food products ([see Text Box 1](#)).

Tourism activities associated with fish and wildlife-related activities support approximately 1,575 resource-based tourist operators generating hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue annually. It also accounts for a significant portion of tourism revenue for northern Ontario.

Under a variety of statutes, including the Provincial Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) has the legal responsibility for managing Ontario's fish and wildlife on behalf of all Ontarians.

The province's fish and wildlife program is funded mainly by a special purpose account (SPA) established in 1995 under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act and in part by the public treasury.

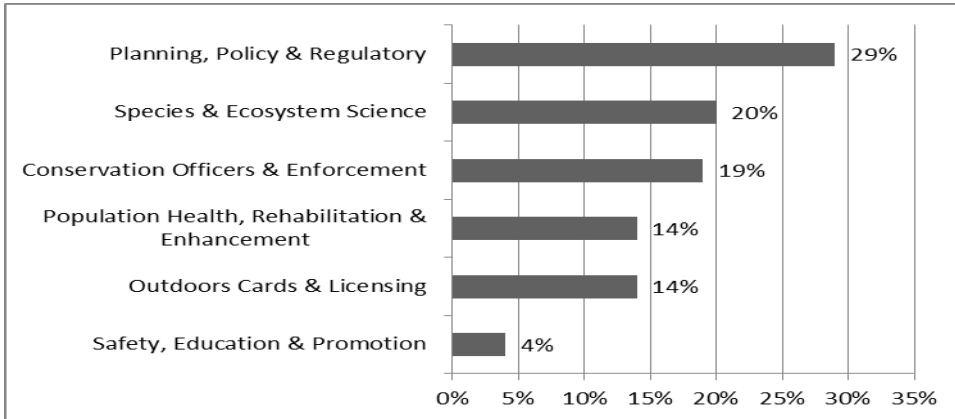
¹ Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Licence Automation System, 2013. Based on licence sales.

² Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Survey of Recreational Fishing in Canada, 2010. Based on Ontario angler responses, Ontario's economy benefited from \$912,785,206 spent on package deals, food and lodging, transportation costs and fishing services and supplies, and from \$1,573,687,354 spent on fishing, boating and camping equipment, special vehicles, and land and buildings. [Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Survey of Recreational Fishing in Canada, 2010](#)

³ Environment Canada, The Importance of Nature to Canadians: the Economic Significance of Nature-related Activities, 2000. [The Importance of Nature to Canadians: the Economic Significance of Nature-related Activities, 2000](#)

Revenues from hunting and fishing licence sales and other fish and wildlife permits, royalties, fines and fees are held in the SPA and used exclusively to fund MNRF's fish and wildlife programs.

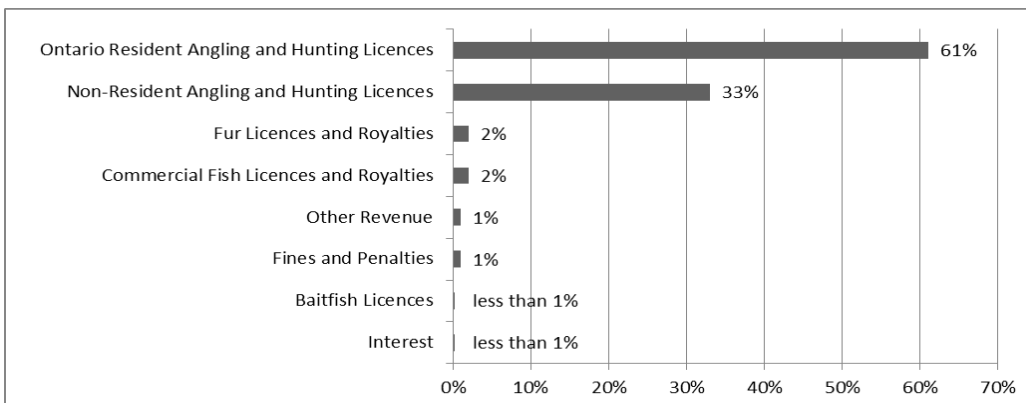
Figure 1: Planned distribution of SPA funding for Fish and Wildlife activities (2014-2015).



The sustainable management of Ontario's fish and wildlife resources requires a wide variety of activities. This includes monitoring fish and wildlife populations; population restoration; developing policy and programs; setting harvest levels; research; fish culture and stocking; administering licences; managing commercial harvest information; consulting stakeholders; and supporting an enforcement program.

Resident and non-resident recreational fishing and hunting licence sales contribute approximately 94 per cent to SPA revenues ([Figure 2](#)) with revenues from commercial fish licences and royalties, bait fish licences, fur licences and royalties and fines and penalties contributing approximately six per cent.

Figure 2: Actual distribution of revenue streams to the SPA (2012–2013).



Text Box 1: Commercial fishing in Ontario

The Ontario commercial fishery operates across Ontario, but primarily on the Great Lakes. Fish processing occurs throughout the province, with the largest concentration of processing plants found in southwestern Ontario.

While some fish are consumed in Ontario, 90 per cent of the fish are exported either to the United States (75 per cent of exports) or Europe (15 per cent of exports), mainly to large retailers or restaurant supply companies.

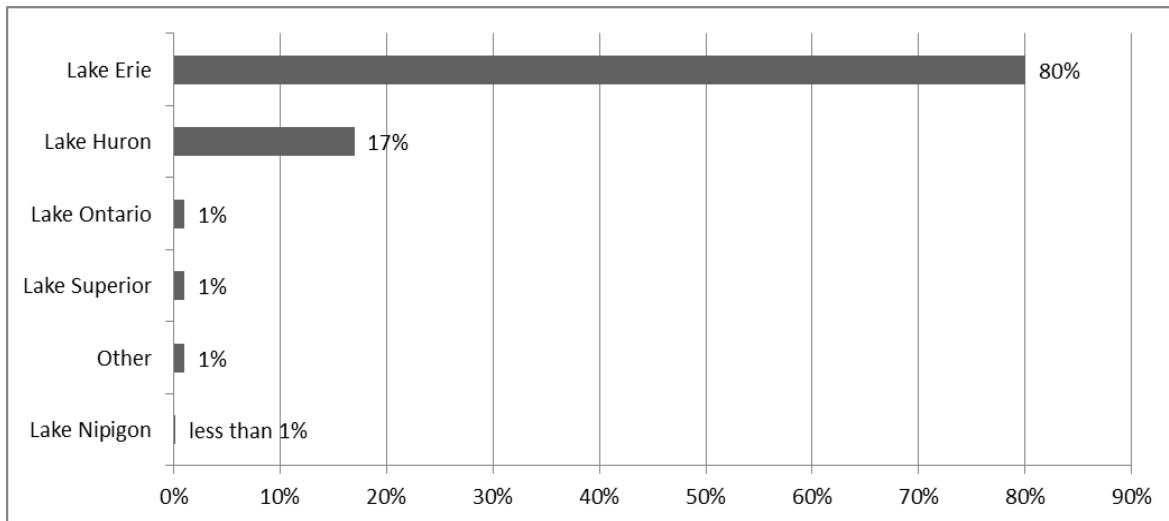
Each year, approximately 400 commercial fish licencees harvest a freshwater fish catch worth between \$35 million and \$40 million, employing hundreds of people, either directly in the fishery or indirectly in associated industries.

Based on economic research carried out by the commercial fishery, it is estimated that the Lake Erie fishing industry contributed \$346 million to the provincial gross domestic product in 2003^a. This is the most recent information available and is based on economic data collected in 2003, and reported in 2004.

The annual program cost of MNRF activities that support the commercial fish industry (including salary, operational expenses and capital replacement and repair costs) is approximately \$6 million.

Of this amount, \$650,000 is transferred to the Ontario Commercial Fisheries Association to carry out commercial fish harvest data entry, royalty billing and a lake-wide fisheries assessment program and weight observer program on Lake Erie.

Figure 3: Value of the commercial fish harvest (2012) from each of the major commercial fisheries in Ontario. In 2012, the landed value of fish in Ontario was \$39.5 million.



^a Charette, M. and A. Morgan. 2004. The economic impact of Lake Erie commercial fishing and fish processing industries. Report to the Ontario Commercial Fisheries Association. 30 pp.

The Challenge — SPA Revenues are Forecast to Decline

Fish and wildlife management is a core responsibility of MNRF. Natural resources are public or “common property” resources, and the ministry has an important role in ensuring that they are managed in a sustainable manner for the public good.

Over the years, the cost of managing Ontario’s fish and wildlife has increased as a result of cost of living (inflation) increases and work demands associated with new threats, such as invasive species and wildlife diseases. Recreational fishing and hunting licence prices have generally kept pace with inflation since MNRF regularly implements incremental increases.

The ministry’s fish and wildlife program costs approximately \$100 million annually, with two-thirds funding received from the SPA and one-third from the public treasury. The cost of delivering these programs is expected to be stable or to increase and inflationary pressures will further escalate costs.

While delivery costs are projected to increase, revenues to the SPA are forecasted to decline in the future as a result of declining participation, changing demographics and increased program costs.

There are several trends at the center of this challenge of declining revenue, including:

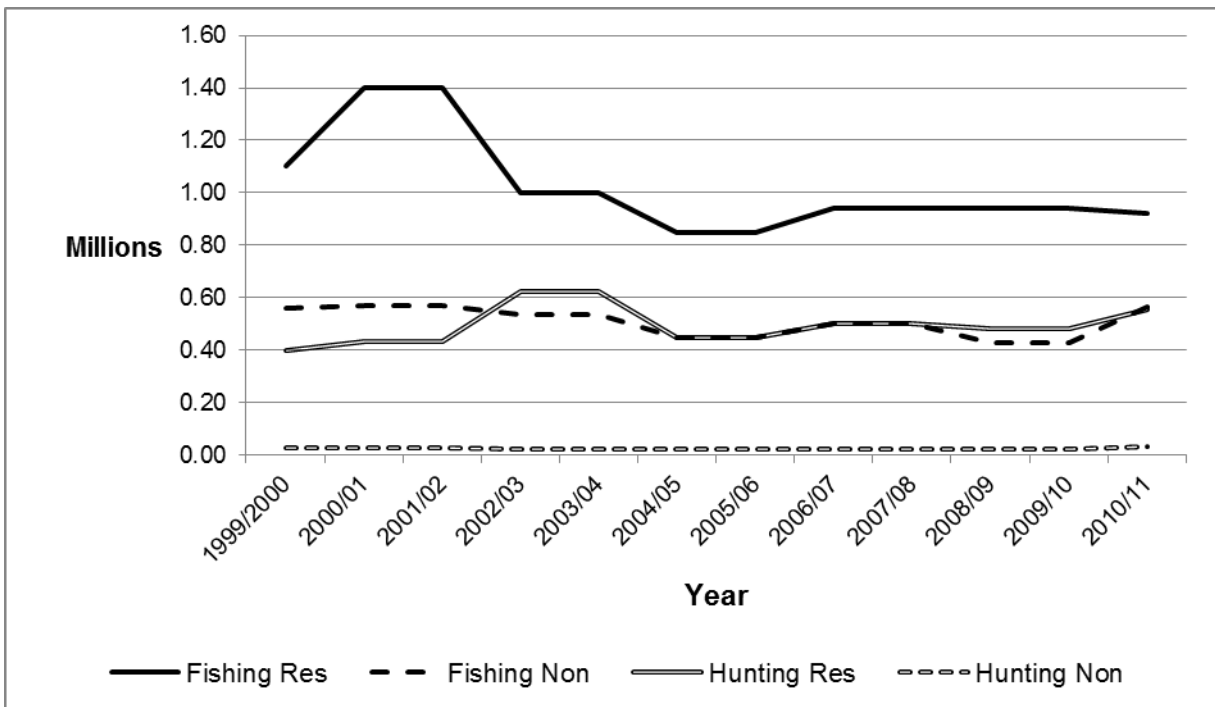
1. Declining participation in fishing by Ontarians as indicated by trends in licence sales ([Figure 4](#))
 - The number of resident fishing licences declined from 1.4 million in 2000 to 932,000 in 2011. If those 468,000 Ontarians still fished and bought the least expensive Conservation Fishing Licence, the SPA would have \$6.7 million in additional revenues.
 - Other licence sales have had minimal gain:
 - The number of non-resident fishing licences gradually declined from 560,000 in 2000 to 432,000 in 2008–09, and then increased to 566,000 in 2011.
 - The number of resident hunting licences had flattened; however recently they increased from 432,000 in 2000 to just over 557,000 in 2010.

- The number of non-resident hunting licences remained stable at around 25,000 from 2000 to 2010, and increased slightly to 31,000 in 2011.

2. An aging Ontario population

- The baby boomer generation began to reach age 65 in 2011. The number of seniors in Ontario is projected to more than double over the next two decades, increasing from 1.8 million in 2009 to 3.7 million by 2030.
- The average age of Ontario’s fishing and hunting licensees continues to increase, and the largest group, the baby boomers, will retire in the next decade, resulting in a decline of fishing licence sales as those aged 65 and older are currently not required to purchase a fishing licence.

Figure 4: Trends in resident and non-resident fishing and hunting licence sales from 1999 to 2011.



- Static participation rates and an aging population are expected to create a downward trend in the graph in Figure 4. In addition, Ontarians now participate in a broader range of outdoor activities. A study by the [Department of Fisheries and Oceans in 2010](#) has found that anglers do not fish as much as they would like to because of certain constraints, such as time and proximity to satisfactory fishing locations, and competition for their limited leisure time (primarily gardening, reading, television, golfing, hiking, fitness activities, youth organized sport, and computer/internet use).

In a 2013 MNRF survey, some Ontarians also mentioned barriers to start or return to fishing, including a lack of knowledge of where to fish and lack of fishing skills.

3. Ontario government fiscal management responsibilities and requirements for all ministries to recover costs for services consistent with government pricing policies.
 - The Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services report (the Drummond report) observed that the Ontario government – including MNRF – is not doing enough to recover costs, and recommended that, when the beneficiary of the service can be identified, they should shoulder the fiscal burden, rather than the public.

For example, Ontario's commercial fishery licence fees and royalty rates are lower than those assessed in a number of other jurisdictions. Ontario's commercial fishing licence fees are based on quotas: \$25 for licences with less than 15,000 pounds of quota or \$100 for licences with allocations over that amount. Licence fees have not changed since 1982.

Commercial fish operators also pay royalties based on the annual landed value of the fish harvested. The 3.3 per cent royalty rate has not been adjusted since 1999. Royalties to the Crown have ranged from \$900,000 to \$1.3 million annually over the last five years.

Royalties collected also vary due to annual fluctuations in landed value of fish that are subject to changing factors such as market conditions, the level of harvest and sustainable harvest allocations. Commercial fish licence fees and royalties only recover some of the costs of MNRF's commercial fisheries management program.

For example, on Lake Erie, approximately 31 per cent of costs associated with monitoring fish populations, setting harvest levels, administration and management of commercial harvest information, and supporting an enforcement program are recovered by revenues.

Given this, it can be argued that MNRF is not doing enough to recover costs, nor return a fair value to the public for this resource.

MNRF Response to the Challenge

Similar declining participation trends are apparent throughout Canada, and until recently, in the United States⁴. Like other jurisdictions, Ontario now faces a challenge in maintaining sustainable funding for fish and wildlife management.

Jurisdictions in the United States and Canada's western provinces have been able to achieve sustainable funding for fish and wildlife programs by using an innovative blend of initiatives. These include:

- introducing new licence offerings to better meet client needs
- improving client services to respond to emerging needs
- broadening the client base to include non-traditional users who enjoy fish and wildlife-related activities
- increasing licence prices by economic factors, such as the Consumer Price Index
- increasing transparency and public reporting to show how licence dollars are spent
- improving cost efficiencies
- diversifying revenue streams

This 2014–2019 Sustainability Strategy for the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account represents the first comprehensive re-examination of the SPA since it was established almost 20 years ago.

It reflects engagement with 23 key stakeholder groups and thousands of resource users, and draws from the experience of jurisdictions elsewhere in North America. The result is a practical and strategic framework for sustaining funding for Ontario's fish and wildlife program.

⁴ In the United States, for the first time in 15 years, the 2011 national survey identified increases in hunting and fishing participation of nine per cent and 11 per cent, respectively (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, National Overview, issued August 2012, 20 pp.)

Purpose

This 2014–2019 Sustainability Strategy for the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account represents a five-year framework for building sustainable revenues to the Fish and Wildlife SPA.

It has three main goals:

1. Increase fish and wildlife SPA revenue by enhancing relationships with existing clients, increasing participation, and diversifying revenues.
2. Apply fair cost recovery and value by ensuring licence fees and royalty rates are transparent and based on costs, benefits and a fair rate of return to the province for the use of the resource.
3. Enhance efficiency by improving program delivery and finding opportunities for savings, thereby allowing more fiscal resources to be directed to fish and wildlife conservation.

The following sections discuss options, strategies, and tactics for achieving these goals.

Options for Sustainable Funding

Ontario is not alone in experiencing challenges with sustainable funding of fish and wildlife programs. For example, in 2012, the State of Wyoming launched their Funding for the Future campaign. [Scott Talbott](#), the Director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, has stated:

“The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is directed by law and expected by its residents to provide for the needs of all wildlife in the state. The single most important challenge facing the future management of wildlife is the lack of adequate funding for management and conservation.”

Agencies in Canada and the United States are responding to these challenges in a variety of ways, including:

- Offering more licence types to meet client needs and attract new clients (e.g., a family fishing licence, priced to appeal to young to middle-aged couples that have small to adolescent children, and who are looking for educational and fun activities).

- Enhanced marketing and promotion of outdoor activities as part of a healthy, active lifestyle and as a mechanism for inter-generational sharing of traditions and experience.
- More varied revenue generation opportunities, including fundraising and fees for non-consumptive use.
- Products and licences that address an aging population.
- More convenient access to information and transparent reporting on program results.

Ontario's current fish and wildlife funding model relies heavily on licence fees paid by recreational anglers and hunters. This limits the province's ability to maintain current levels of management while responding to external factors.

External factors include trends in demographics participation and tourism; a changing environment (e.g., climate change, extreme weather, invasive species, wildlife disease); and the economy. Elsewhere in North America, a much wider range of products and funding options are in use ([Figure 5](#)).

Experience in Other Jurisdictions

Fish and wildlife programs in other jurisdictions use a variety of approaches to generate revenue to support fish and wildlife management. A scan of other Canadian provinces and American states identified a number of potential options that could be explored for Ontario, as described in the following.

Fishing and hunting licence products

In other jurisdictions, as in Ontario, the majority of revenue is derived from recreational licence sales. Some jurisdictions, however, offer youth, adult and senior licences at different price points.

Newer additions to the suite of licence products in other jurisdictions include family, lifetime, couples, and "bundled" licence packages; licences for multiple rods; permits for access to specific sites or facilities; permits for ice huts and ice fishing; and surcharge "stamps" for certain high value species (serving both as a licence and as a conservation tool).

Many jurisdictions also charge a processing fee for licence applications or transfers. Examples include Manitoba's [Big Game Draw](#) (\$7 application fee) and Michigan's [Public land licence draw](#) (\$4 application fee). Commercial fishing

regulation models in other jurisdictions can include a licence and a royalty, based on the landed value, species, and in some cases, type of equipment used.

At present, Ontario offers fishing licences based on the number or amount of fish harvested. The recreational Conservation Fishing Licence generally allows a harvest of approximately half the number of fish as a Sport Fishing Licence (as well as requiring release of muskellunge, Atlantic salmon and Aurora trout). Both recreational fishing licences have a flat rate for adults (aged 18 to 64), with no licence required for those aged 65 and over.

Commercial fishing licences are also based on the amount of fish harvested, with one licence for those harvesting less than 15,000 pounds annually and a more expensive licence for those harvesting more.

Premium privileges

In some jurisdictions, access to particular species, geographic areas or unique opportunities is offered at an additional cost. Some systems (e.g., Wyoming, Montana) allow hunters to purchase bonus or privilege points to increase chances of obtaining a certain kind of tag. In others, such as the Dean River, B.C., anglers can purchase a Classified Waters Angling Licence (\$44.80/day) allowing access to a high-value, limited-access fishery.

Examples of Innovative Funding and New Product Approaches

- **Bundled licence packages**, such as [Wisconsin's Conservation Patrol Licence](#) or Maine's [Superpack](#)
- **Programs aimed at specific audiences or regions**, such as the [I Fish NY](#) program in New York City.
- **Premium privileges**, such as Wyoming's [Preference Points](#) system, in which a hunter can buy points to improve the odds of drawing a licence in a hard-to-draw hunt area.

Donation programs



Donations can include cash or non-cash (e.g., estates, securities, memorials and bonds) contributions. This is a popular non-licence revenue tool in the United States, where donations are often targeted to specific programs.

The donation opportunity is promoted through an agency or organizational website, and triggered at the point of licence

purchase. The State of Ohio has integrated their donation mechanisms online: [Support Ohio's Wildlife](#).

Other donation programs invest in creating more opportunities for hunting, such as the [Minnesota Walk-In Access Program](#). Ontario permits donations to the SPA, but to-date has not promoted those opportunities. Without marketing, MNRF receives on average only about \$500 per year in donations to the SPA.

Product sales



Product sales have a dual purpose of generating a small amount of revenue while promoting fish and wildlife programs. Examples include gift certificates, magazines, clothing, hats, licence plates and collectable stamps.

The potential for increased revenues is negligible however considering additional postage and handling costs for online sales.

In addition to collectables, some American states require the purchase of a stamp to complete their hunting licence. For example, Ohio's waterfowl hunters must purchase a stamp for \$15, but it is also available to the general public.

Ducks Unlimited has been Ohio's long-time partner in this endeavor, receiving 40 per cent of sale proceeds to secure wetlands in Canada, which are the nursery areas for many migratory waterfowl that pass through Ohio. The Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp typically generates one per cent of annual revenue to that state's fish and wildlife programs.

Fees for other resource users



There are real costs associated with managing any natural area, even if it is not used for hunting and fishing. In the spirit of user pay, some jurisdictions apply fees (both voluntary and involuntary) to a broader range of outdoor recreation activities.

For example, Washington State's Discover Pass allows individuals or families to access boat launch points, state parks, certain recreation sites, and trails. Marketing campaigns advise users that "when you buy the Discover Pass, you are helping to keep these wonderful outdoor opportunities open and accessible to the public."

In some jurisdictions, boats, all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles must display a sticker or decal in addition to the vehicle licence, with the revenue from sales directed to special programs like invasive species prevention. Oregon's Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program is one example of this approach. To date, Ontario has not applied fees to these kinds of activities.

Corporate sponsorship

In many places, including Ontario, government agencies partner with organizations or the private sector to sponsor events and support the promotion of fish and wildlife programs. In return, the sponsor receives promotional value and demonstrates community support (corporate social responsibility).

Some jurisdictions offer conservation loyalty cards. For example, Alberta's Wildlife Identification Number (WIN) card and Michigan's Passport Perks program provide discounts on merchandise and services to anglers and hunters. Organizations may provide in-kind support through donation of prizes, sponsored events/websites, discounts or the offer of a privilege card with discounts. In Ontario, an example is Coleman's support of Ontario Parks' Learn to Camp programs. These relationships benefit both parties, and can provide a way to match funding or in-kind contributions, such as outreach and education support.

Partnerships

Collaboration with partners can also provide multiple benefits by attracting more clients. An example is the [Interagency Annual Pass](#) offered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. Frequent visitors to multiple federal agency lands may save money by buying this pass, rather than multiple single-agency passes. In this case, 80 per cent of the \$80 purchase price is retained to support local recreation opportunities.

Partnerships are also commonly used to deliver specific programs. In Ontario, for example, MNRF currently partners with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters to lead the Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program in Lake Ontario. This collaborative effort involves more than 40 partners and sponsors, including non-government organizations, conservation organizations, local clubs, private land owners and the public.

Marketing and promotion

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS!

Share Your Photos!



Washingtonians have a new way to share their outdoor adventures with others who enjoy hunting, fishing and observing the natural world. WDFW is now accepting photos for a new online gallery of images submitted by people enjoying the great outdoors.

Many agencies now use targeted outreach programs to engage with existing and potential clients. Typical messages include [Come Home to Hunt](#) and [Family Fishing Waters](#) both in Montana, and [Neighborhood Explorers](#), a Minnesota program targeted at children and youth. New York City's [I Fish NY](#) program is an example of outreach aimed at a particular urban population.

Technology and social media can be used to provide information or value-added services, increase participation and promote responsible practices. Examples include mobile apps for licence sales and social media to engage clients, promote programs, and provide easy access to information.

A number of jurisdictions provide on-line maps, such as British Columbia's [Where to Fish](#) in BC and Ontario's [Fish ON-Line](#). Montana has a map showing family fishing locations that are easy to get to, relatively safe and offer the best possible chance of fishing success: "Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has taken some of the guesswork out of family fishing trips." Other states use social media to engage users, share stories, experiences and promote the agency's messages.

General tax and excise tax

In the United States, a variety of federal and state coordinated taxes are used to support state-level hunting and fishing programs. Examples include a Real Estate Transfer Tax (Florida and South Carolina), gas taxes, diversion of speeding fines (Florida), and a specific Conservation Sales Tax (Missouri, Arkansas).

Since the 1930s, the United States federal government has used excise taxes paid by manufacturers to support federal fish and wildlife programs.

Under the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937 (Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act), manufacturers of firearms, ammunition and archery equipment pay an excise tax that provides grant funding to the Wildlife Restoration Program. Funds are used for wildlife and habitat conservation projects, projects to provide public

use and access to wildlife resources, hunter education, and development and management of shooting ranges.

Under the Dingell-Johnson Act of 1950 (Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act) and the Wallop-Breaux amendments of 1984, manufacturers of fishing gear and motorboat fuels pay a federal excise tax that provides about \$650 million in grant funding annually for the Sport Fish Restoration Program.

Typical projects include fishery conservation, improved boating access, and aquatic education. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs rely heavily on these funding sources, which typically provide between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of their annual funding.

Figure 5: Fish and wildlife management funding sources used in selected jurisdictions.

Revenue Streams	Great Lakes										West			East
	Ontario	Manitoba	Quebec	New York	Pennsylvania	Michigan	Ohio	Wisconsin	Minnesota	Illinois	Wyoming	Alberta	British Columbia	Maine
Diversified Fee or Licence Options (e.g., lifetime licence)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Premium Privileges for particular species or locations			✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Donation Program				✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Product Sales					✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Fees for other resources users			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Corporate Sponsorship/ Partnership	✓	✓				✓						✓	✓	✓
General Tax and Excise Tax				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Product and Licence Raffles/ Lotteries					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Raffles and lotteries

Many jurisdictions use fundraising activities to generate funds for fish and wildlife management. Examples include lotteries for special tourism or equipment packages (Michigan, Arizona, Colorado) or high-value game tags (British Columbia), raffle tickets for cash prizes, and auctions to sell unique items to the highest bidder.

In Arizona and Colorado, state lottery programs provide a portion of proceeds to fish and wildlife programs, generating \$10 million and \$8.75 million, respectively,

each year. In other jurisdictions, such as Maine, the legislature has created a specific lottery ticket dedicated to fish and wildlife conservation.

Engagement with Ontario Stakeholders and the Public

The previous section described a wide range of revenue generation practices used in other jurisdictions. Not all will be appropriate or effective in Ontario. In September 2012, MNRF began to explore consumer response to a variety of options for improving the sustainability of the SPA.

- In the first stage, MNRF invited suggestions from the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and staff.
- In the second stage, from December 2012 to March 2013, the ministry undertook a stakeholder consultation on about 80 suggestions. In that process, 160 members of 23 key stakeholder groups listened to a 20 minute presentation about the project and then completed a paper survey. Also participating in this survey were 90 visitors to MNRF's licence sales booth at the February 2013 Toronto Sportsmen's Show. All participants were invited to suggest ideas and opportunities for revenue generation.

This engagement process demonstrated a surprisingly high level of agreement among participants on (1) suggestions with strong support to sustain the SPA and (2) suggestions that were not generally supported, such as premium privileges; fees for other resource users; or increasing licence fees beyond the cost of living.

From this exercise, a short list of opportunities including some suggested by participants, that have the most promise for Ontario was developed. A detailed feasibility study was then conducted on those opportunities.

The short list included:

- Bundling licences in convenient packages.
- Restructuring licences to improve clarity and better meet client needs (e.g., restructuring the existing Conservation Fishing Licence to catch-and-release only, to avoid confusion with the Sport Fishing Licence).
- Introducing new fees for services currently provided for free, to reflect actual costs and ensure that use of the resource is properly valued

- Attracting new participants through enhanced marketing and outreach activities.
- Other opportunities, including donation programs, corporate sponsorships and lotteries

In June 2013, the ministry worked with Harris/Decima to undertake a consumer research survey on the short-listed ideas.

The survey included participation from licenced and lapsed clients from Ontario, Canada and the United States (1,506 respondents), and 499 members of Ontario’s general public.

Harris/Decima Consumer Survey, 2013

- Telephone survey of 2005 consumers including:
 - Current fishing and hunting licence holders in Ontario, Canada and the United States
 - Lapsed licence holders in Ontario, Canada and the United States (lapsed refers to a client that has not renewed their licence in three years)
 - Non-licenced (general public) in Ontario
- Sampling of Ontarians ensured all regions were represented equally (e.g., the Greater Toronto Area, southern and northern Ontario).

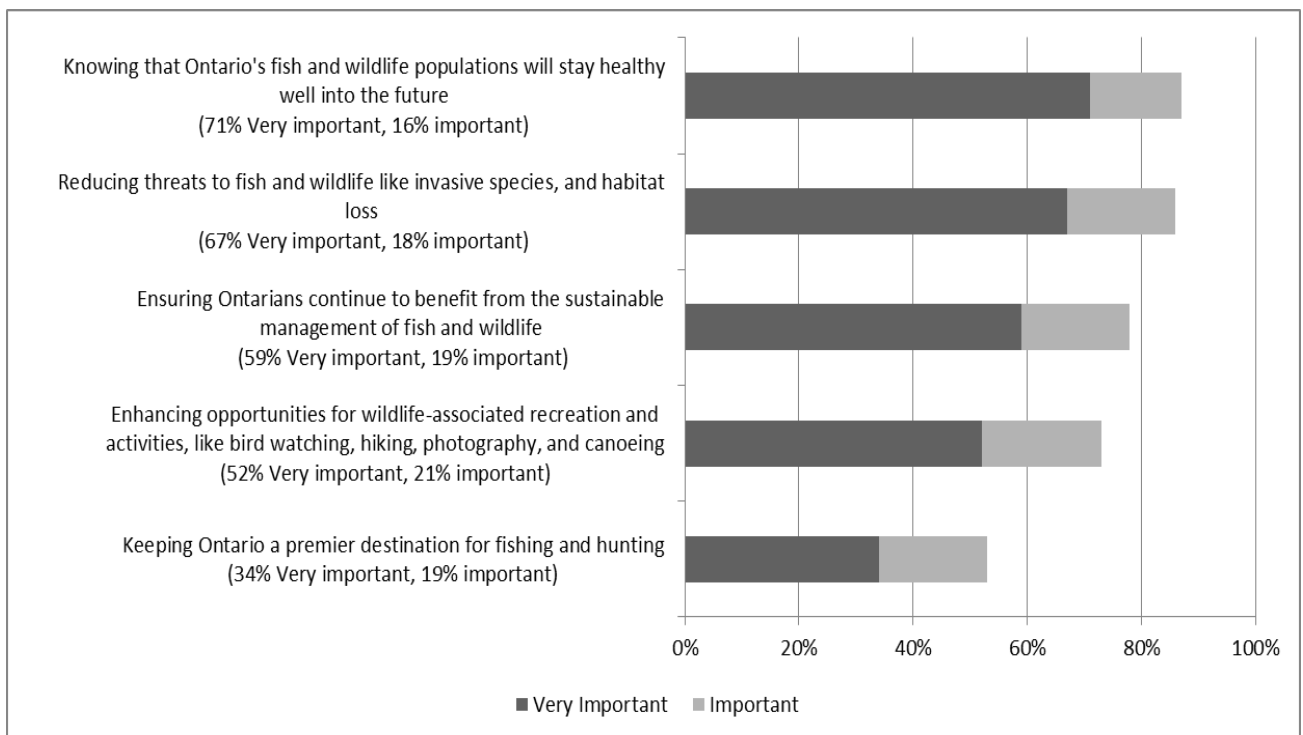
Its purpose was to understand their knowledge of how the fish and wildlife program in Ontario is funded; what programs and/or licence products might engage them in fishing and hunting; and the level of importance they place on knowing Ontario’s fish and wildlife populations will stay healthy well into the future.

The results revealed that all Ontario survey participants placed a very high level of importance on knowing that Ontario’s fish and wildlife

populations will stay healthy well into the future; that threats to those resources will be reduced; and that benefits will continue for future generations ([Figure 6](#)).

Survey participants were also asked about their preferences for trade-offs, given the forecasted decline in fish and wildlife program funding. Results indicate that approximately 95 per cent of respondents favour alternatives to increase funding and sustaining the program through various new revenue initiatives (e.g., increased private-public partnerships and some increased fees). Only five per cent of respondents supported reduction of the fish and wildlife management program.

Figure 6: Consumer views on the importance of fish and wildlife management in Ontario (Source: Harris/Decima 2013). Average of responses from 1,505 Ontario residents surveyed.



The survey also provided insight into the preferences of Ontarians and non-residents, and revealed good to excellent support for:

- Use of mobile apps to purchase licences, market-specific fishing opportunities, and reward participants with loyalty points that can be redeemed for merchandise at local retail stores.
- Web-based information, such as maps that help anglers find good fishing locations close to home.
- A review of licence structures and age limits to ensure they reflect client needs and interests (e.g., introduction of a family fishing licence at a reduced cost).
- A lottery to win big game tags and merchandise.
- The opportunity to donate to specific fish and wildlife activities (e.g., a youth fishing education program).

- A surcharge across Canada on outdoor equipment, to fund fish and wildlife conservation programs.

Ontario's Outdoors Card

Ontario's Outdoors Card was introduced in 1992 and is the base for all fishing and hunting licensing in the province. Anglers and hunters must have a valid Outdoors Card plus a tag (where required) for the relevant activity.

For example, Ontario residents must have a valid Outdoors Card plus a deer licence tag and game seal to hunt deer in the province.

- Nominal fees to cover the processing of purchases of Outdoors Cards, fishing licences and hunting licences (suggested \$2 service fee).
- Additional hunting opportunities, where sustainable. As demonstrated by the many additional hunting opportunities that have been developed since the 1980s ([Text Box 2](#)), MNRF will continue to effectively and sustainably manage wildlife based on the ongoing collection of population monitoring data.

- Building value into the Outdoors Card to provide discounts on outdoor sporting equipment, lodging, and restaurants.

By contrast, there was much less support for:

- Opportunities that created privileges for those with greater financial means to access more or better fishing or hunting access/opportunities.
- A lottery for better odds of success in a big game draw.
- Large or across the board increases to existing licence fees to cover the cost of the fish and wildlife program.

Text Box 2: Sustainable hunting opportunities provided by MNRF since 1980

Hunting has a long history in Ontario and today's opportunities are a means to access local food and experience traditions, nature/the outdoors and camaraderie. MNRF has continuously expanded and adjusted hunting opportunities in Ontario as information about the management of species evolves.

As the following examples demonstrate, these wildlife management strategies have been effective in maintaining the populations of key game species while providing additional hunting opportunities over the last three decades.

Sunday Hunting

In 2006, the province introduced significantly increased Sunday gun hunting opportunities in southern Ontario, and continues to add municipalities to this program every year.

Deer

The province's deer population doubled between 1980 and 1987. White-tailed deer can reproduce quickly, and can impact native plant communities and biodiversity conservation. In response, the ministry opened new gun and archery seasons and lengthened 77 others.

The deer population continued to increase until the mid-2000's, and the ministry has responded by opening new archery seasons and new gun seasons in specific northern wildlife management units. The current population is estimated at about 400,000 animals.

Elk

Elk restoration efforts have proved to be very successful, with populations now self-sustaining in some parts of the province. In 2011, the ministry opened Ontario's first modern-day elk hunt in the Bancroft area, with 70 tags available; in 2012, the season length was extended to two weeks.

Moose

In 1980, Ontario's moose population was estimated at 80,000 animals. Under Ontario's selective harvest system the population grew to almost 120,000 moose in the early to mid-2000's and has since declined to an estimated population of approximately 92,000 moose in 2015. Recent moose declines have been attributed to a range of factors influencing moose population abundance such as harvest, predation, parasites, climate and habitat quality. MNRF is undertaking the Moose Project to address these concerns, set new moose population objectives and sustain the population to support current and future harvesting opportunities.

Text Box 2: Sustainable hunting opportunities provided by MNR since 1980

Wild Turkey

Wild turkey populations were decimated by human activities in the early part of the 20th century. The province began a wild turkey restoration initiative in 1984, and it was so successful that the first hunt for turkeys was introduced in 1987. By 2000, the turkey population had reached 30,000; by 2007, it was at 70,000 and growing.

Other Innovations

Ontario has introduced a number of other innovations to address the needs and interests of specific client groups. For example, hunters with a qualifying disability may be authorized to hunt from a motorized vehicle, and may participate in special moose seasons in two wildlife management units.

Hunter education and youth opportunities have also been enhanced over the years. Hunter education began in 1960, when Ontario became the first Canadian province to require hunter training before issuing a licence. A Hunter Apprenticeship Safety Program was initiated in 1998 to assist hunters 12 years and older in safely developing their hunting skills.

2014-2019 Sustainability Strategy for the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA)

The following section outlines the Sustainability Strategy (the Strategy) for Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account. A key component of the Strategy is revenue generation to cover the costs of fish and wildlife programs while also enhancing client experiences. It is framed around three levels of guidance with short term (2014–15) and medium term (2015–16 to 2018–19) tactics:

1. Aspirational goals that reflect ideal future conditions. Goals can also be expressed in more detailed terms as desired outcomes of the Strategy.
2. Overarching strategies that represent categories of activity.
3. Detailed tactics and specific actions that MNRF staff would undertake immediately to help achieve strategies and goals.

A summary at the end of this section ([Table 2](#)) provides all of the goals, strategies, tactics and specific actions. MNRF may implement these and additional actions, pending interest of partners and further feasibility analysis.

Goal 1 Increase Fish and Wildlife SPA Revenue

The principal focus of Goal 1 is to increase revenues to the SPA. No specific revenue target is proposed, but the goal is to attain sustainable levels of revenue to meet current and future fish and wildlife program costs.

Proposals range from increasing participation in fishing, hunting and wildlife-related activities — by better understanding and addressing the barriers, needs and interests of clients — to offering a broader range of products and services.

As MNRF considers these new directions, there will also be a commitment to monitor results and adjust strategies over time, consistent with an adaptive management approach.

Strategy 1.1: Retain, re-engage and attract new participants

Strategy 1.1 strives to increase revenues to the SPA by improving access to the resource; providing opportunities for new anglers; meeting the needs of existing and future clients; and making licence purchases more convenient.

It aims to increase participation in hunting, fishing and related activities and emphasizes the need to build strong relationships with clients through regular communication in a variety of formats and media.

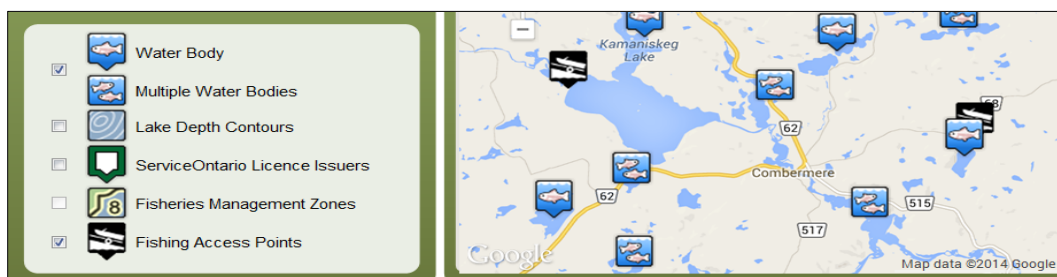
This could include regionally-based information on fishing and hunting opportunities, leveraging news releases, local groups, hatcheries, gun clubs, and disseminating information through similar channels.

Periodic review of policies such as Provincial Fisheries and Wildlife Management Strategies and Fisheries Management Zone plans also offers an opportunity to identify and evaluate new, enhanced or targeted opportunities for fishing and hunting.

Tactics

1.1.1 Create a multi-year marketing and communications strategy that includes:

- Profiling Ontario Parks fishing opportunities and exploring the ability to sell one-day and seven-day fishing licences at most operating park stores.
- Marketing and promoting outdoor activities as part of a healthy, active lifestyle.
- Producing a brochure, “Your Licence Dollars at Work”, made available on the internet and written in plain language to increase transparency of the activities supported by recreational licence dollars. This brochure would be in addition to the annual report to the legislature on the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account.
- Regularly communicating with clients about hunting and fishing opportunities; monitoring and reporting on value for money (effectiveness, efficiencies and customer satisfaction), including contributions from the public treasury to the fish and wildlife program, through a small number of indicators.
- Developing an annual communications plan with themed messages and social media that highlight seasonally relevant activities.
- Highlighting access and promoting the Fish ON-Line Tool.



Fish ON-Line interactive mapping Tool [Fish ON-Line](#)

- Highlighting affordable fishing by promoting equipment sharing programs, local access and existing Licence Free Family Fishing Week and Weekend opportunities.

1.1.2 Facilitate participation in hunting and fishing, by:

- Improving services such as making purchase information easy to find on the website, including where to buy or renew a licence; reducing the number of individual licences and paper tags; making fish species stocking information available; and simplifying rules and regulations without compromising the sustainability of fish and wildlife populations.
- Exploring the feasibility of offering e-licences for fishing via smartphone.
- Improving the automated on-line licence sales system and exploring the use of email for licence renewal notifications.

1.1.3 Build participants' skills, by:



In 2014 Learn to Fish attracted 4,243 adults and children in 273, two-hour sessions delivered at six provincial parks.

- Expanding the Learn to Fish program outside Ontario Parks.
- Building opportunities for youth through partners and discussions with the Ministry of Education.
- Modernizing delivery of the Hunter Education Program, including offering on-line options

for convenient training to support different learning styles; implementing follow-up for new hunters; and monitoring the number of graduates who buy a licence.

- Developing a hunter retention and recruitment strategy. The top suggestion for engaging non-licencees in hunting was increased promotion, such as providing information and education on how to get started (Harris/Decima 2013).

1.1.4 Monitor client needs and satisfaction on an ongoing basis. For example, by:

- Engaging clients through seasonal newsletters and emails.
- Using social media to communicate, obtain feedback and create opportunities for sharing stories, photos and experiences from fishing,

hunting and wildlife—associated recreation to engage a range of demographics.

- Conducting consumer research surveys every three to five years.

Strategy 1.2: Diversify revenue sources

Recreational fishing and hunting licence revenue currently provides 94 per cent of the SPA's annual value. Experience in other jurisdictions suggests that there are many opportunities to diversify the revenue base while accommodating the interests and needs of clients. The following tactics are aimed at accomplishing this.

Tactics

1.2.1 Introduce voluntary, non-licence funding sources, by:

- Developing opportunities to accept donations to specific activities or projects (e.g., habitat conservation, wildlife monitoring activities, or educational activities, such as an urban youth fishing program).

1.2.2 Collaborate with corporations on promotion and outreach, by:

- Seeking corporate sponsorship opportunities.
- Working with the private sector to augment the value of the Outdoors Card with a loyalty program to include discounts on things like outdoor sporting equipment, lodging and restaurants. Over 70 per cent of current and lapsed licencees (Ontario, Canadian and American) supported an Outdoors Card that included discounts.
- Developing sponsorship opportunities for the Learn to Fish program.
- Developing advertising opportunities for [Fish ON-Line](#).

1.2.3 Provide voluntary opportunities for others to support fish and wildlife conservation. For example, by:

- Marketing a voluntary Outdoors Card to those that participate in wildlife-associated recreation (bird watchers, hikers, canoeists, kayakers) to provide them with an opportunity to support fish and wildlife management.

Goal 2: Apply Fair Cost Recovery and Value

Goal 2 aims to ensure that natural resource goods and services are appropriately valued by ensuring licence fees and royalty rates are transparent and based on costs, benefits and a fair rate of return to the province for the use of the resource.

Guiding principles – the concept of non-tax revenue

When considering new fees or fee increases, MNRF must comply with the Ontario government's Non-Tax Revenue Guiding Principles ([Text Box 3](#), next page). In summary, these principles, issued by the Ministry of Finance, mean that:

- Resource users should pay a fair rate for the benefits they gain from Crown resources (“fair return to the Crown”).
- MNRF should strive to recover the full costs associated with the delivery of goods and services, including staff time and overhead costs
- There is a need for continuous improvement of structures, products and procedures
- User fees should reasonably reflect the cost of the service provided (see Eurig Test below)

The Eurig Test

[Eurig v Ontario](#), a 1998 Supreme Court of Canada decision, concluded that (user) fees could be considered unlawful if there is no “reasonable connection” between the cost of the service provided and the fee.

Strategy 2.1: Ensure fees are fair and transparent

Provincial policies emphasize the need to ensure that user fees reflect the real costs of service delivery. MNRF incurs direct and increasing costs to offer goods and services; some of these are currently provided free of charge. Consultation over the last year suggests that there is support for introducing modest fees to recover those real costs.

MNRF's Modernization of Approvals initiative, which provided an opportunity for some regulatory streamlining and to move some permit and licence applications to an on-line system, includes a review of fees charged for approvals.

That report emphasized the need to ensure that the full range of costs and benefits to natural resources and to Ontarians are considered in determining appropriate fees for natural resource-related activities and use.

This would be achieved by assessing such factors as the market value of the resource, the ability of the client to pay for use, and how fees can be used to help ensure the wise use and protection of Ontario’s natural resources.

Text Box 3: Summary of the Ontario Government’s Non-Tax Revenue Guiding Principles	
Full Accounting: Costs and Benefits	Values benefits of the resource
	Reflects management costs
	Ecosystem Services Valuation
Cost Recovery	Strive for 100 per cent, where appropriate
Reconcile Competing Objectives	Sustainable use
	Fair access
	Economic development
	Fair charges
Effective and Efficient Instruments	Minimum administration cost
	Drives desired behaviour
	Targets appropriate users
Current, Transparent, Predictable	Clear formula
	Indexing
	Communication

Tactics

2.1.1 Improve cost recovery and reflect resource use by:

- Introducing a \$2 service fee for the Outdoors Card and licence purchases, to recover administrative and overhead costs.
- Increase the commercial fishing licence fee and royalty rate to recover administrative and overhead costs ([Text Box 4](#), next page) and provide a more fair return on the value of the fishery.
- Strategically review all fish and wildlife related fees.

Text Box 4: Increases to Commercial Fishing Licences and Royalty Rates to Recover Administrative and Overhead Costs

As noted previously, commercial fishing licence fees have remained unchanged for more than 30 years. In fact, a commercial fishing licence for up to 15,000 pounds of fish currently costs \$25 – less than the recreational Sport Fishing Licence Tag (\$29.46 in 2015).

As commercial fishing licence fees have not increased incrementally over time to keep pace with inflation, those fees have, in effect, been discounted year by year. The price of a commercial fishing licence for more than 15,000 pounds is currently \$100, a price that was established in 1982. In today's dollars, that \$100 translates to \$234.57⁵.

In addition, current commercial licence fees do not reflect the real and significant costs of administering the commercial fishing system in Ontario. Those costs have risen steadily due to changing technology, resource management challenges, such as invasive species, and simply because of changes in the cost of living.

A similar challenge exists with commercial fishing royalties. At present, commercial fishers pay a royalty of 3.3 per cent on commercial fish harvests. This value has not changed since 1999 and is low relative to royalties paid for other Ontario natural resources such as fur (five per cent; and varies with pelt prices).

It is also low compared to commercial fish royalties elsewhere in the world, which typically range from seven per cent to 10 per cent where royalties are collected. There is a need to update Ontario's commercial fishing royalty to reflect the true value of the resource.

⁵ Fees are based on the Canadian Consumer Price Index as calculated from [Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator](#).

Table 1: Changes to commercial fishing licences and royalties, based on Non-tax Revenue Guiding Principles.

Changes	Rationale based on Non-tax Revenue Guiding Principles	
Increase commercial fishing licence fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Values benefits of the resource:</i> A licence to harvest less than 15,000 pounds (lbs.) currently costs slightly less than the recreational Sport Fishing Licence Tag priced at \$29.46 for 2015. In 2014, revenue from commercial licence fees totaled \$33,000. <i>Indexing:</i> Fees have not been increased since 1982; a \$100 licence for more than 15,000 lbs. should now be valued at \$234.57 <i>Reflects management costs:</i> Current licence prices do not reflect the significant management costs associated with the commercial fishery 	
Licence Type	1982 – 2015 Annual Licence Fee	2016 Annual Licence Fee
Greater than 15,000 lbs. quota	\$100.00	\$218.56
Less than 15,000 lbs. quota	\$ 25.00	\$ 54.56

Increase current 3.3 per cent royalty rate on landed commercial fish harvests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Values benefits of the resource:</i> At 3.3 per cent, the royalty rate for commercial fish harvests is low compared to other fish and wildlife related royalties (e.g., fur is five per cent and varies with pelt prices) and commercial fish royalties in other countries where royalties are collected (range from seven per cent to 10 per cent). Other Canadian provinces and American states have significantly smaller commercial fisheries on the Great Lakes and set fees based on gear type, number of nets and net length. The commercial fishery generates a freshwater fish catch worth between \$35 million and \$40 million. For the use of this resource, the current royalty of 3.3 per cent recovered \$1.1 million (2014). Ontario's royalty rate for commercial fish harvests has not changed since 1999, and a gradual 1.7 per cent increase over three years is planned.
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Influence of Incremental Royalty Rate Increases on Different Size Licences

	Large Licencee	Medium Licencee	Small Licencee
Landed Value	\$1,905,751	\$262,882	\$26,791
New Royalty Rates	Royalty for each licence based on Annual Landed Value		
3.3 per cent (current rate)	\$62,890	\$8,675	\$884
4 per cent (2016)	\$76,230	\$10,515	\$1,071
4 per cent (2017) no increase	\$76,230	\$10,515	\$1,071
5 per cent (2018)	\$95,288	\$13,144	\$1,339

For example, a large licencee with a landed value of \$1,905,751 currently pays 3.3 per cent in royalties, which equals \$62,890. If the royalty rate were gradually increased to five per cent in 2018, a large licencee would pay \$95,288 on the same size of catch.

2.1.2 Develop tools to support proper valuation of fish and wildlife resources, cost recovery and a fair rate of return to the province, by:



Figure 7: The cost of a deer licence was \$5 in 1959. In today's dollars, that \$5 is now worth \$41.51 – very close to the \$42.86 (excluding HST) cost of a resident deer licence in 2015.

- Working with staff economists and biologists to develop a full valuation framework incorporating costs to the province, management of the resource, economy and benefits to users. The framework would be based on available data on economic impact, resource use and consumer research.

2.1.3 Review fees on an annual basis, to ensure they remain current and accurately reflect real costs, a fair rate of return to the province, and the ability of the client to pay for use, by:

- Reviewing fees on an annual basis

Goal 3: Enhance Efficiency

Goal 3 addresses the Ontario government's commitment to improve the fiscal sustainability of its programs. As the ministry reviews options for improving the sustainability of the Fish and Wildlife SPA, there is an opportunity to identify ways to reduce program costs and improve efficiency.

For example, this could include providing some services on-line, streamlining processes and restructuring licence offerings to better meet the needs of clients.

Strategy 3.1: Identify potential program efficiencies and savings

Ensuring program efficiency and finding opportunities for savings means that more fiscal resources can be directed to fish and wildlife conservation.

Tactics

3.1.1 Review the return on investment by examining program costs, licence sales and purchasing trends. This could include:

- Reviewing and adjusting program costs, sales, practices and procedures, such as offering more services and programs on-line, similar to the Hunter Education Program.
- Sharing monthly licence sales reports to inform operations, policy and decision-making.
- Monitoring how new tactics impact client purchasing preferences.

3.1.2 Conduct a strategic review of licences, by:

- Taking a comprehensive approach to reviewing the existing suite of licence offerings, purchasing trends and investment levels with the potential to introduce new, and restructure other, licences to support resource management goals.
- Developing and offering licences that meet changing client needs, demographics, reflect participation rates and help achieve resource management objectives.
- Streamlining costs by reducing the number of licences or simplifying regulations on associated catch limits.

Strategy 3.2: Collaborate with others to achieve common goals

This strategy reflects the need to collaborate with other Ontario ministries, key stakeholder groups, the tourism sector and communities to increase participation and revenues associated with fish and wildlife activities.

Tactics

3.2.1 Market fishing and hunting opportunities with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC), promoting Ontario as a world-class destination for fishing and hunting, by:

- Exploring integration of [Fish ON-Line](#) and [GoFish Ontario](#) in OTMPC's Ontario: Yours to Discover tourism website. This would provide visitors with convenient access to information, enabling them to plan all parts of a trip, including where to fish and stay, and other activities they can do.

3.2.2 Develop partnership opportunities to profile fishing and hunting, including promotion, research, education and enhanced access (i.e., shoreline fishing), by:

- Developing a framework for partnerships that lays out guiding principles.
- Exploring partnership delivery models to expand Learn to Fish beyond Ontario Parks Learn to Camp locations, potentially including integration into secondary school physical education curriculum.
- Exploring the potential of partnerships to support focused projects, such as public access, urban fishing, fish stocking and educational signage.
- Leveraging small scale, local public–private partnerships, including investments in enhanced or new fishing opportunities.

The Path Forward

Fish and wildlife management benefits all Ontarians by conserving biodiversity and providing a range of employment, recreational and cultural experiences.

This sustainability strategy for the SPA therefore aims to stabilize and increase revenues for fish and wildlife management, while increasing efficiency and building value into the ministry's existing programs and products.

The objectives and tactics focus on:

- increasing participation
- enhancing relationships and retaining clients
- diversifying revenues
- improving cost recovery
- modernizing fees and royalties
- collaborating with partners to achieve shared goals

The ideas and feedback reflected in the previous sections provide many options for MNRF to explore in the coming years. Some, like development of corporate sponsorships, will require time to develop and assess. Others can be implemented immediately.

Table 2: Summary of the Sustainability Strategy for the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account 2014–2019

Goal 1: Increase Fish and Wildlife SPA Revenue	Goal 2 : Apply Fair Cost Recovery and Value	Goal 3: Enhance Efficiency
<p>Strategy 1.1 Retain, re-engage and attract new participants</p>	<p>Strategy 2.1 Ensure fees are fair and transparent</p>	<p>3.1 Identify potential program efficiencies and savings</p>
<p>Tactic 1.1.1: Create a multi-year marketing and communications strategy Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile opportunities • Promote outdoor activities as part of a healthy, active lifestyle • Highlight how licence dollars fund fish and wildlife conservation • Regularly communicate with clients (E-blasts, social media) • Develop an annual communications plan • Highlight access and promote Fish ON-Line • Highlight affordable fishing opportunities <p>Tactic 1.1.2: Facilitate participation in hunting and fishing Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve services • Explore the feasibility of offering e-licences for fishing • Improve the automated on-line licence sales system and explore use of email for licence renewal notifications <p>Tactic 1.1.3: Build participants' skills Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the Learn to Fish program • Build opportunities for youth • Modernize delivery of the Hunter Education Program • Develop a hunter retention and recruitment strategy <p>Tactic 1.1.4 Monitor client needs and satisfaction Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage clients through newsletters and emails • Use social media to communicate and obtain feedback • Conduct consumer research surveys every three to five years 	<p>Tactic 2.1.1: Improve cost recovery and reflect resource use Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a \$2 service fee for Outdoors Card and licence purchases to recover administrative and overhead costs • Increase the commercial fishing licence fee and royalty rate to recover administrative and overhead costs and provide a fairer return on the value of the fishery • Strategically review all fish and wildlife-related fees <p>Tactic 2.1.2: Develop tools to support proper valuation of fish and wildlife resources, cost recovery and a fair rate of return to the province Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with staff economists and biologists to develop a full valuation framework incorporating costs to the Crown, management of the resource and benefits to users <p>Tactic 2.1.3: Review fees on a regular basis Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review licence fees annually 	<p>Tactic 3.1.1: Review the return on investment by examining program costs, licence sales and purchasing trends Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and adjust program costs, sales, practices and procedures • Share monthly licence sales reports to inform operations, policy and decision-making • Monitor how new tactics impact client purchasing preferences <p>Tactic: 3.1.2 Conduct a strategic review of licences Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the existing suite of licence offerings • Develop and offer licences that meet changing client needs, reflect participation rates, and help to achieve resource management objectives • Streamline costs by reducing the number of licences or simplifying regulations on associated catch limits

Table 2: Summary of the Sustainability Strategy for the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account 2014–2019 (continued)

Goal 1: Increase F&W SPA Revenue	Goal 2 : Apply Fair Fees	Goal 3: Enhance Efficiency
<p>Strategy 1.2 Diversify revenue sources</p>	<p>[no further strategies]</p>	<p>Strategy 3.2 Collaborate with others</p>
<p>Tactic 1.2.1 Introduce voluntary, non-licence funding sources Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop opportunities to accept donations to <u>specific</u> fish and wildlife activities or projects <p>Tactic 1.2.2 Collaborate with corporations on promotion and outreach Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek sponsorship opportunities for the Outdoors Card, and Learn to Fish program and advertising opportunities for Fish ON-Line Develop a loyalty card with discounts for fishing and hunting clients <p>Tactic 1.2.3 Provide voluntary opportunities for others to support fish and wildlife conservation Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market a voluntary Outdoors Card that would also include loyalty card discounts 		<p>Tactic: 3.2.1 Market fishing and hunting opportunities with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC) Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore integration of Fish ON-Line and GoFish Ontario in OTMPC's Ontario: Yours to Discover tourism website <p>Tactic 3.2.2 Develop partnership opportunities to profile fishing and hunting, including promotion, research, education and enhanced access (i.e., shoreline fishing) Specific Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a framework for partnerships that lays out guiding principles Explore partnership delivery models to expand Learn to Fish beyond Ontario Parks' Learn to Camp locations, including integrating the program into secondary school physical education curriculum Explore potential partnerships to support public access, urban fishing, fish stocking and educational signage Leverage small scale, local public-private partnerships, including investments in enhanced or new fishing opportunities

Timelines

Short Term Actions (2014–15)

In the short-term, to address forecasted declines in SPA revenues, MNRF must focus on actions that can be implemented immediately, including:

1. **Introduce a \$2 service fee** to recover administrative and overhead costs associated with administering licences.
2. **Create a multi-year marketing and communications strategy** to retain existing clients, re-engage lapsed clients, and attract new anglers and hunters.
3. Offer the **Learn to Fish program** at participating provincial parks while seeking opportunities to expand its scope and increase participation rates.
4. **Initiate the modernization of the Hunter Education Program.**
5. Initiate a framework to **collaborate with others on marketing, outreach and partnership opportunities.**
6. Develop the necessary business processes for **ongoing reviews of the return on investment by examining program costs, licence sales and purchasing trends.**

Medium Term Actions (2015-16 to 2018-19)

Additional work will be undertaken to seek approvals to implement the following:

1. Increase **commercial fishing licence fees and royalties** to provide a fairer return to Ontarians.
2. Develop and implement opportunities for **collaboration on marketing, outreach and partnerships.**
3. Develop opportunities for **corporate sponsorships as part of the Marketing Strategy.**
4. Develop opportunities for **voluntary donation programs** for specific fish and wildlife management activities. This could include support for habitat conservation, wildlife monitoring activities, or educational activities such as an urban youth fishing program.

5. **Conduct a strategic review of the angling and hunting licensing system,** including associated regulations, with a view to simplify licences and reflect resource management goals.
6. Initiate the development of tools to support proper valuation of fish and wildlife resources, cost recovery and a fair rate of return to the province.
7. Develop a hunter retention and recruitment strategy.

Additional considerations for the strategic review of recreational fishing and hunting licences may include:

- Implications for sustainable management (e.g., what was the original intent or purpose of the current licence and can that purpose be achieved in a different way?)
- Implications for the regulatory oversight and compliance effort necessary to mitigate risk and monitor potential impacts on the sustainability of natural resources.
- Implications for information on the use of the resource (e.g., the ability to monitor additional users, modified catch or harvest limits, and associated impacts on fish and wildlife populations).
- MNRF's legal responsibilities and commitments.
- Fairness of fees and cost recovery aspects.