



MINISTER PROMISES BETTER DIALOGUE WITH ANGLERS

March 31, 2008

For Immediate Release

Toronto, ON: An open dialogue with fishing and hunting stakeholders, promotion of the benefits of recreational fishing and respect for the environment were recurring themes in the recent address by **The Honourable Donna Cansfield, Minister of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources** to members of the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association (CSIA).

The Minister was the keynote speaker at the Annual General Meeting of the CSIA on location at the Toronto Sportsmen's Show earlier this month. It was Cansfield's first opportunity to address members of the Association since being appointed Minister of the MNR in 2007.

In addition to promising better dialogue with members of the CSIA, Cansfield touched on the importance of promoting recreational fishing and positive environmental practices to young people across the province. The Minister said that since she was appointed to head up the MNR portfolio, she has traveled the province to meet outdoor partners. At a family fishing derby in Kempenfelt Bay on Lake Simcoe during the Ontario Family Fishing Weekend in February, Cansfield said she was struck by the participating anglers' respect for the environment noting the area was returned to its original pristine state upon conclusion of the day's activities.

Understanding the vital role and economic benefits that fishing makes to the Ontario economy, Cansfield said she wants to work towards ensuring a healthy fish population for many years to come so future generations will have the opportunity to get outdoors and get hooked on fishing.

Minister Cansfield was asked what specific plans she had to address the funding crisis in Ontario's Fish & Wildlife core programs, including science and research, fish and wildlife inventory, assessment and field operations funding and critical staff levels?

The Minister responded the Ministry functions within a budget it is given and gave an example of Conservation Officers having new responsibilities in monitoring commercial fishing and the difficulty in retaining trained CO's within MNR.

When it was suggested by a member of the CSIA that the MNR start enforcing the sections of the Act to protect anglers against harassment, the Minister insisted recent instances were the responsibility of the OPP and not MNR Conservation Officers. While awaiting the final report of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Minister is calling for an open dialogue within the community affected by these incidents. The Minister

added the translation of the fishing regulations into other languages such as Mandarin will help to educate Asian anglers about provincial fishing rules.

The CSIA membership also asked Minister Cansfield if she will take direct action to exempt the Atlantic salmon restoration project from being compromised by the “Ontario Species at Risk Act”?

The Minister answered in the affirmative noting the Ministry is working to exempt the salmon project and will coordinate the same with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). She promised to invite partners to engage and be involved in the creation of future regulations to create a comprehensive document. The Minister urged members to call her or her staff if they have any questions or concerns about any issue affecting fish and wildlife.

The Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association’s Annual General Meeting also featured the awarding of three Chairman’s Awards.

Walter Oster of the Canadian National Sportsmen’s Shows was honored for his many years of support of grassroots recreational fishing initiatives, especially for kids. Working on behalf of the CSIA, **Phil Morlock** received an award for his outstanding contributions in the establishment of the Outdoor Caucus and Foundation, the largest Canadian parliamentary caucus. Well-known fishing personality and tournament angler **Big Jim McLaughlin** who is the publisher of Just Fishing was honored for his decades of being a ‘bigger-than-life’ booster of recreational fishing, especially among young people. Real Fishing’s Bob Izumi accepted Big Jim’s award on his behalf. McLaughlin is undergoing treatment for prostate cancer and was unable to attend this year’s AGM.

The CSIA Annual General Meeting also included information about this year’s **National Fishing Week** campaign – Catch a memory! Take someone special fishing!

The Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association is a national alliance of fishing-related businesses including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, outdoor media and other fishing-related organizations. The CSIA and its members serve the interests of 8 million anglers who contribute over \$7.5 billion to the Canadian economy. Its mandate is to ensure the stability of the recreational fishing industry while advocating sound fisheries management. Through its sister foundation, the Canadian National Sportfishing Foundation, they receive overwhelming, national support for their National Fishing Week, Canada’s largest coast-to-coast awareness program promoting our angling heritage.

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