

Brief History - Conservation Legacy

By Gary Anderson

There has always been, and most likely there will always be a "fish and game club" in Belleville and the surrounding area.

According to [The Daily Ontario, June 7, 1890](#), it was called **The Forest and Stream Club** and had its own by-laws and constitution with rules for trap and rifle shooting and a synopsis of the game and fishery laws.

The [Daily Intelligencer, January 19th, 1909](#), advertised a "clay pigeon shoot" under the auspices of the **Belleville Gun Club** on Coleman's commons, tomorrow afternoon, near the club house.

In 1927, Mr. Joe E. Shortt came to Belleville to be secretary of the Y.M.C.A. Five years later, Joe and fourteen other wildlife enthusiasts formed **The Belleville and District Fish and Game Protective Association**, with Joe as President. Members were required to sign the following pledge –

In becoming a member of the Association, I hereby subscribe to and will support the following aims of the Association:

- 1) The observing of all Fish and Game laws.
- 2) Encouraging the stocking of lakes and streams with suitable game fish.
The using of rods, line and reel only when catching game fish, so the sport of fishing will be ensured in the years to come.

In the January 27th, 1947 issue of [The Ontario Intelligencer](#), we learn that Joe presided as President for fifteen years. Mr. Elmer Sandercock then became President in 1947 with Joe as his secretary. It is interesting to note that the Association also elected an Honorary Executive as follows:

Honourary President:	The Honourable Harold Scott, Minister of Lands and Forests
Honourary Vice-Presidents:	J. Fred Wilson, M.P.P. Roscoe Robson, M.P.P. J. deC. Hepburn, M.P.P.

According to [The Ontario Intelligencer, January 18th, 1961](#), President Bruce Kerr reported that the Association has made application for Incorporation and expected to receive a charter shortly.

On February 16th, 1961, The Honourable John Yaremko, Provincial Secretary, by Letters Patent, issued a Charter to the persons herein after named, that is to say:

Bruce Bishop, Merchant; Frederick Henry Clarke, Foreman; Donald Ian McKinnon, Probation Officer; James Gordon Magee and Kenneth Harrison Yorke, Superintendents; Bruce Merritt Kerr, Director; and John Alexander Layton, Electrician; all of the City of Belleville, in the County of Hastings and Province of Ontario; constituting them and any others who become members of the Corporation hereby created a corporation without share capital under the name of **The Belleville and District Fish and Game Club Incorporated** for the following objects, that is to say:

- a) To establish, maintain and conduct a fish and game club and to promote among the members of the Corporation and others an interest in fishing, hunting, marksmanship and other sports;
- b) To promote among the members of the Corporation and others an interest in conservation;
- c) To provide a clubhouse and other conveniences for the members of the Corporation and to equip, furnish and maintain the same; and
- d) To purchase, lease or otherwise acquire lands for the practice of conservation and for establishing fishing ponds and streams thereon;

The Directors and members endeavoured to fulfill these goals, always hoping to obtain land for a clubhouse and conservation activities. After many years of toil, numerous gifts of donated time, money and materials, the support of the Elmwood Drive community, Thurlow Township Council and Wintario, their dream came true. On May 14th, 1983, the new clubhouse and meeting hall was officially opened on Elmwood Drive.

Over the past one hundred years, "The Fish and Game Club" has always encouraged the wise use of our natural resources. Environmental stewardship and protection of our outdoor heritage have become much more important than just "shooting and catching". As the climate and environment change, the Club continues to educate our youth and their parents about the role of hunters and anglers in our conservation legacy.