



Staff Report

To: Council
From: Curtis Shelswell, Manager, Municipal Law
Meeting Date: March 27, 2024
Report No.: DS2024-036
Subject: Sunday Gun Hunting
Type: Requires Action
Motion No.:

Recommendation

It is recommended:

1. That Report No. DS2024-036 be received and adopted.
2. That Council consider one of the options provided within the body of the report.

Option #1

Continue with the prohibition to not allow gun hunting on Sundays within the Township of Oro-Medonte.

Or;

Option #2

To defer the topic, go out and seek public consultation through an online survey and report back on the results prior to a decision.

Or;

Option #3

To permit Sunday gun hunting and staff submit the resolution of Council to the MNRF so that amendments can be made to Ontario Regulation 663/98 and advise the public of the change through the Township's website and social media feeds.

- That if Council chooses to permit Sunday gun hunting, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry be advised of this decision and request that the Ministry make the appropriate amendments under Ontario Regulation 663/98 to allow Sunday gun hunting in the Township of Oro-Medonte.

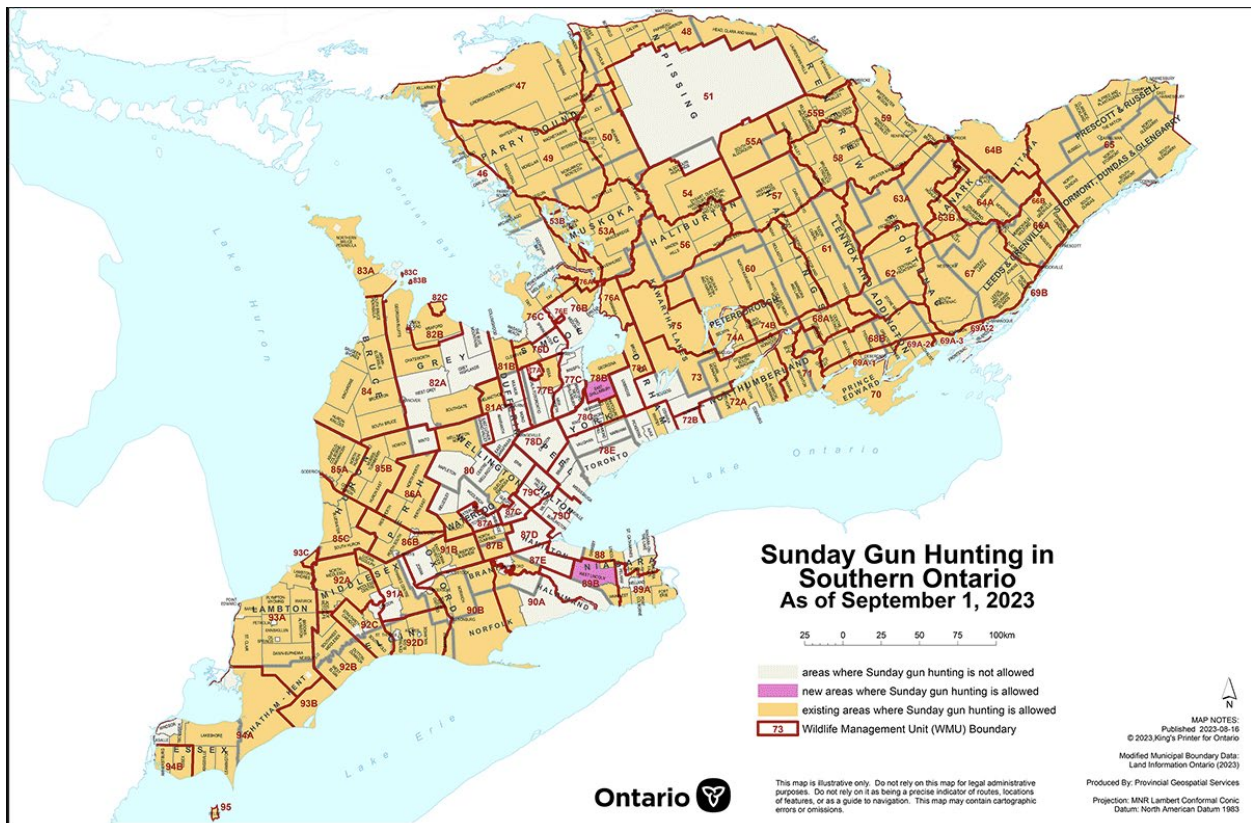
Background

The purpose of Report DS2024-036 is to provide Mayor and Members of Council with background information on Sunday gun hunting and to obtain direction and a decision regarding requests to permit Sunday hunting.

The Township continues to receive requests and inquiries from stakeholders related to Sunday gun hunting questioning why the municipality hasn't followed in the footsteps of most of Ontario municipalities and enacted a By-law to permit such.

Sunday gun hunting was first introduced in areas north of the French River and Mattawa River. All municipalities south of those two rivers have been provided the option to enact a By-law to permit Sunday gun hunting.

Back in 2006, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Ontario Federation of Agriculture and then Ministry of Natural Resources Forestry (MNR) launched a program that lobbied municipalities to open up opportunities to permit hunting on Sundays.



As you can see on the map from the province (updated September 1, 2023- www.ontario.ca/page/sunday-gun-hunting), several municipalities have permitted Sunday gun hunting.

Analysis

The MNRF is responsible for the enforcement, approval and regulation of Sunday gun hunting. Municipalities who wish to support Sunday gun hunting must provide MNRF with a written resolution to that effect.

This debate has come up in the past, and both sides (support/objection) have their points on this topic which include:

Concerns

- Safety concerns, with an increase in individuals/domestic animals engaged in outdoor activities on Sundays.
- Disturbance of gun fire seven (7) days a week.
- Sundays are for family time, a day of rest.
- Concerns for the wildlife population.

Supportive

- Hunting seasons are limited already, allowing one more day on the weekend would expand an individual's opportunity to hunt.
- Residents who partake in the sport would not have to drive to another municipality to take advantage of the extra day.
- Within the applicable season an individual can archery hunt on Sundays, why not allow guns as well.
- Traditionally, Sundays were a day of rest, shopping malls/store were closed, and most occupations provided the day off.

Currently, a hunter can hunt with a bow (archery) within the applicable season in the Township seven (7) days a week. Further, on Sunday's a gun can be discharged for the purpose of target shooting safely on private lands or at a gun club. Whether permitted or not, landowners still have the choice to allow or not allow hunters to partake on Sundays. If permitted, it would provide 7 additional days.

To date, the following surrounding municipalities have permitted the Sunday gun hunt.

- Springwater- Fall 2023
- Severn (Same Wildlife Management Unit as Oro-Medonte)
- Ramara
- Clearview
- Tay
- Tiny

Attached to this report is a map published by the province, it is updated twice annually with any new municipalities that have permitted Sunday gun hunting.

Financial/Legal Implications/ Risk Management

N/A

Policies/Legislation

www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-hunting-regulations-summary

www.ontario.ca/page/Sunday-gun-hunting

Corporate Strategic Goals

- Community Engagement
- Community Safety

Consultations

Senior Municipal Law Enforcement Officer
Director, Development Services

Attachments

- Sunday Gun Hunting in Ontario Map, updated September 1, 2023
www.ontario.ca/page/sunday-gun-hunting

Conclusion

The topic of Sunday gun hunting continues to come up each year as we approach specific hunting seasons. I provide the following options for Council to consider.

Option #1

Continuing with the prohibition to not allow gun hunting on Sundays within the Township of Oro-Medonte.

Or;

Option #2

To defer the topic, go out and seek public consultation through an online survey and report back on the results prior to a decision.

Or;

Option #3

To permit Sunday gun hunting and staff submit the resolution of Council to the MNRF so that amendments can be made to Ontario Regulation 663/98 and advise the public of the change through the Township's website and social media feeds.

Respectfully submitted,

Curtis Shelswell
Manager, Municipal Law
March 6, 2024

Approvals:

Brent Spagnol, Director, Development Services
Nelly Morrow, Director Finance/CFO
Robin Dunn, CAO

Date of Approval

March 11, 2024
March 19, 2024
March 21, 2024