



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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**For Immediate Release:** July 24, 1981

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Federal, State and Tribal leaders held their third meeting in Ann Arbor on July 21 and 22 in the search for solutions to problems concerning the northern Great Lakes fishery off Michigan's coastlines.

The group, composed of representatives of the Secretary of the Interior, Michigan Governor's office, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and leaders of the Bay Mills, Grand Traverse and Sault Ste. Marie Tribes issued the following statement:

"The third meeting of this group continued the frank and open discussions which characterized the previous meetings. Genuine progress was made toward the goal of a comprehensive agreement, which will protect both the fishery resources, and the interests of the Tribes and the State.

"The group received progress reports from the tripartite working groups established at earlier meetings including the following:

State of the fishery resource,

Fishing gear conversion

Enforcement

"The working group on the fishery resource presented its preliminary report and will complete the final report within two weeks. The report will discuss the status of selected fisheries in the lakes and identify preliminary total allowable catch levels for species in selected areas.

"The gear conversion group provided preliminary data regarding the numbers of treaty fisherman who might be able to convert from gill nets to selective gear and identified related cost factors. In addition, the group reported that the Department of the Interior issued a grant of \$180,000 to the Grand Traverse Band for a pilot gear conversion program. The Band will use the funds to purchase trap-nets and related equipment.

"The enforcement group reported that there appears to be no legal barrier to establishing joint management and enforcement programs between the Tribes and the State. The Interior Department and the Tribes also reported that two additional Federal enforcement officers and four additional Tribal officers were committed to the field to enforce the Tribal fishing regulations.

"The Tribes and the State presented early draft proposals outlining possible comprehensive plans to resolve the issue. Each party will respond to these draft proposals and continue the dialogue to determine areas of agreement and the extent of disagreements. There was also agreement that the negotiation process needs to be accelerated. "The parties also agreed that each may raise issues in certain forums to protect their interests. However, these representations shall not impair the negotiation process and the parties remain committed to pursuing a settlement. .. Twenty-one persons attended the meeting, chaired by Interior Deputy Under Secretary William P. Horn. The group will meet again in Ann Arbor on August 4, 5 and 6.

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