

## Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians



### MEDIA RELEASE

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### LAC DU FLAMBEAU DECLARES SPEARING LIMITS FOR 2014

The Lac du Flambeau Band has historically been the most active and proficient spearmen of the six Chippewa Bands in the state. LdF Representative Scott Smith recently attended a Voigt Inter-Tribal Task Force meeting and reported the Tribe has increased the number of lakes to be speared this year to 273. The Tribe has declared a total of 27,868 walleye and 886 musky. The maximum safe walleye harvest for all six Chippewa Tribes is calculated at 81,011, with the Tribes declaring 63,488.

The Tribes have never taken 100 percent of the number of fish declared, always coming in dramatically under the submitted number. The most walleye ever taken by the LdF Tribe in a single year was 15,427 in 2012.

Several variables played into this year's harvest declarations. For more than two decades, the Tribe and others have ventured to Mille Lacs Lake in Minnesota to spear and gill net. This year, the harvest totals allowed for Mille Lacs will be significantly less than years past, thus creating a need for an increased take in Wisconsin waters.

This year the Tribe will venture for the first time since the Voigt decision into the inland waters of Michigan's Upper Peninsula to spear lakes near the Lac Vieux Desert and Keweenaw Bay Chippewa Reservations. A total of 21 lakes in the Upper Peninsula in Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw and Marquette counties have been named for Tribal harvest.

Public perception generally has been that spearing damages the environment and harms tourism. The reality is that the Tribes take a marginal number of fish. The DNR estimates non-Indian sport anglers take between 700,000 to 900,000 or more walleye annually. Every fish harvested by the Tribes is counted, measured, weighed and sexed by a designated creel team. In contrast, the state DNR does not have the ability or resources to conduct such stringent monitoring of non-Indian sport anglers. Over the years the Wisconsin DNR has created and developed a sport angling bag-limit system that is dictated by the number of walleye taken by Indian spearmen. This flawed practice continues to fuel contempt and animosity toward Tribal Chippewa Tribes.

LdF Tribal President Tom Maulson, is confident that the spearing quotas pose no risk to the state's fisheries. "As Indian People, nothing matters more to us than the resources, as they provide sustenance for Tribal Members and their families," said President Maulson. "It is a common misnomer that if Indians have casino gaming, they are wealthy. This is a misconception. Smaller Tribes, such as Lac du Flambeau who live in remote areas, do not always enjoy the economic success needed to meet the general health and welfare needs of their community," continued president Maulson. "We have lived for generations on the bounty of our natural resources and have successfully managed those resources for hundreds of years. Many of our Members retain their connection to the land and depend on the resources for their basic needs."

The Chippewa Tribes of Wisconsin work diligently through the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission to monitor and protect the environment within the Ceded Territory. The Commission works closely with the Wisconsin DNR in the management of all aspects of the Chippewa Tribal harvest.

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