

August 22, 2017

Dear Commissioner Landwehr,

We recently acquired a copy of an agreement called "Consensus: Mille Lacs Fishery Harvest Plan, 2017-2020", dated March 31, 2017 between the DNR, GLIFWIC, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (copy attached).

We were shocked to say the least. No one from the DNR had ever spoken to MLFAC about this agreement, either before or after its signing. This agreement was never disclosed to the public at any time. Why would the DNR secretly negotiate a settlement like this without disclosing it to anyone? This is exactly the type of thing, which reinforces our position that more transparency is needed in connection with DNR and Band discussions and negotiations. It is an example of why we have requested participation of some kind in FTC meetings.

We also need to consider that this agreement resulted from an overharvest of 6,800 pounds in 2016. It was an estimated hooking mortality, not an actual harvest. These numbers come from expansions of creel census data, which have always been suspect to us, as well as an estimated hooking mortality study, which we have questioned since its release. We also believe that this overage may well be within the margin of error of all of these calculations, as well. In addition, the DNR has stated several times that they do not believe that any harm was done to the spawning stock biomass, the 2013 year class or any part of the walleye population as a result of the overage. So why, given the insignificant overage and its minimal impact, did the DNR give up so much?

The DNR gave the Bands 50% of any harvestable surplus over 64,000 pounds. They set harvestable surplus levels, which could severely reduce our potential harvest in the future. They locked us in to a hooking mortality based on the suspect hooking mortality study. They locked us in to an overage program which all comes due in 2020 and will probably significantly reduce our harvest potential in 2018-2020.

At this point, what did you have to lose by letting them go back to court and fighting it? Maybe a Phase II lawsuit would settle the allocation issues with a more favorable outcome for Minnesota sportsmen.

We believe MLFAC, as well as the public deserves answers to these and many other questions and we request an open meeting with the DNR, MLFAC and anyone else who is interested within 2 weeks. Please respond to this as soon as possible.

Dean Hanson

Co-Chair, MLFAC