



ITFAP SPEARHEADS LAKE TROUT EXPERIMENT

CEDARVILLE, Mich.—Great Lakes tribal and federal agencies pitched in equipment and personnel for a cooperative lake trout stocking effort in Lake Huron this past fall as part of a long term experiment to imprint lake trout to spawning reefs.

The experiment, successful in Lake Superior, stocks protected lake trout eggs on a historically important spawning reef to establish a spawning population of lake trout. In fall 1997 and again in 2001, lake trout eggs, sandwiched in AstroTurf bundles, were taken 16 miles offshore to Spectacle Reef.

Biology staff from CORA's Inter-Tribal Fishery Assessment Program, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Bay Mills Indian Community and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians cooperated to bundle 1.8 million lake

trout eggs into crates of layered AstroTurf and deploy them over the reef.

Several years ago, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron Lake Committees agreed to stock surplus hatchery eggs on historic offshore spawning reefs, either in AstroTurf "sandwiches" or as newly hatched fry. The Lake Committees are made up of tribal, state, federal and Canadian agencies working on the Great Lakes.

Spearheaded by ITFAP, the experimental stocking tests the theory that lake trout are not reproducing well because they spawn in the wrong areas. The long-term experiment will tell biologists if eggs hatching on the reef will "home" on the reef as spawning adults. ITFAP recommended Spectacle/Reynolds reef site as the best location for the Huron experiment, beginning in 1997 when the agencies stocked 2 million lake trout eggs on

Spectacle Reef.

Lake trout stocked in an early life stage imprint to their habitat. The hatching site becomes the location they choose for spawning when they are adults.

As in 1997, biologists chose to use a diverse genetic stock to help ensure survival—1.3 million of the eggs were Yellowstone National Park's Lewis Lake stock, a wild strain from Saratoga National Fish Hatchery. Pendills Creek provided .5 million of its Superior-Marquette domestic strain eggs. Lake trout in general are difficult to raise in a hatchery. Strains like Lewis Lake are even more difficult because they retain their wild characteristics, which may give this strain an advantage in Lake Huron waters.

The bundling process is labor intensive. Eggs are unpacked and measured by volume (they change size throughout their development) to calculate how

many will be placed between each layer of turf. Scooped into shakers made from peanut butter jars, the eggs are handed off to staff waiting with AstroTurf soaking in large tubs filled with water scooped from the bay. Eggs are carefully sprinkled between six layers of AstroTurf placed in a frame tight enough to hold and protect the eggs until they hatch. Anchors and buoys are attached to keep crates upright and anchored to the reef. Eggs had to be kept wet throughout the entire process, so finished crates were tied to the dock and lowered into the bay.

The project has been deemed a success in the Apostle Islands of Lake Superior. It will be some time before the Lake Huron experiment can be deemed a success or a failure.

Unfortunately, lake trout eggs stocked last fall may have already hatched, said Ebener. Lake Huron

waters were warm last fall, and the eggs were pretty far along, he said. Eggs sent to CORA's Nunns Creek Fish Hatchery hatched a few weeks after arrival.

The survival of these hatchlings is debatable, said Ebener. Although one might think there would be no food available, Canadian hatch is going on now.

Fish stocked in 1997 hatched in April 1998. Surveys by ITFAP and the Michigan DNR have not turned up a significant increase in unclipped young lake trout.

Changes in the number of background levels of unclipped fish (about 5 percent) indicate effects, and will help judge success or failure of the experiment. But the real test is yet to come. The 1998 lake trout will be sexually mature and ready to spawn when they are five years old. If they have survived and imprinted on Spectacle Reef, they will show up beginning in 2003.

A busy day on Lake Huron: small boat gill net fishery



Above, Bay Mills Fisheries staff Ken Gebhardt and Scott Koproski sampled Jaques LeBlanc's (L-R) catch.

Photos by Jennifer Dale



Bobo Malloy was next to pull up, his helper pulling the boat to shore.

It was a busy day at the Hammond Bay Biological Station last fall with small boat gill net fishermen pulling up. Bay Mills Fisheries staff Ken Gebhardt and Scott Koproski were there to sample catch. After weighing the fish, collecting scales and sometimes otoliths for aging, they took information on gender and condition, and then returned the catch.



Bay Mill Conservation Officer Dean Schofield was on the spot keeping eye out, and did not mind pitching in to help get the boats to shore and the fish unloaded.



REGIONAL FISHERMEN CAUGHT BY MARKET SLUMP

By Ryan Schlehner
The St. Ignace News

The decline of the national economy has had a ripple effect throughout the commercial fishing industry, leaving the supply of Great Lakes fish greater than demand. That could mean lower prices to fishermen next year, or a reduced supply for buyers.

"I've heard in the marketplace that our economy has been depressed since September 11 and the fish market is very soft," said Ron Kinnunen, Upper Peninsula District Sea Grant Extension agent. "Restaurants across the country have been slow to buy fish. I'm not sure how much people are going to travel next year and how much demand for fish the restaurants across the country will have. These markets (fishermen) might haul in a lot of fish, but that doesn't mean they'll get the same price for them as they did this year."

Cameron McMurry, owner of Big Stone Bay Fishery in Mackinaw City, said the supply of fish is great this year, but demand is low.

"Overall, we're getting lots of fish," said McMurry. "This year, because of the attacks on Sept. 11, people aren't going out to restaurants or spending much money. It's not just affecting us, but everywhere in the U.S."

McMurry, who started his company in 1983, ships fish to New York, Detroit, Chicago, Saginaw, and Grand Rapids

and has a local retail business.

Fulton Fish Market in New York, the nation's largest open air fish market and one of McMurry's biggest customers, closed after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

"They were only three blocks away from the World Trade Center," said McMurry. "They closed for awhile and now have relocated in the Bronx, but their business has been slow since."

"This fall, there has been a lot of fish (caught)," McMurry said, "but right now there's not much of a demand. I'm probably selling 25 percent less than the year before. Last year there was a lot of fish and lots of demand."

McMurry said fish are so plentiful that his business is capable of handling 500,000 pounds of fish in a three week period. "But," said McMurry, "you have to know people who will take and freeze the fish. Fortunately, I was able to sell pretty much all the fish I had."

Mackinac Straits Fish Company in St. Ignace has felt the economic downshift in the industry. Owner Jill Bentgen said sales have been slow since Sept. 11, but, overall, this year's business is about even with last year's figures.

The company ships gutted and frozen fish to markets in Detroit, Chicago, and New York and provides local restaurants with fillets. The company also has a retail and mail order store and a smoked and specialty business which serves

Petoskey, Traverse City, and Detroit.

"There's no rebound in the market that I've seen yet," said Bentgen.

For Clearwater Fishermen's Cooperative in Moran, which services and supplies Gordon Foods as well as retailers in Detroit, Chicago, and New York, business has been good this year.

"We've taken in the most fish ever this season," said Clearwater Director Jamie Massey. "We've probably doubled what we had last year. Overall, it seems to be a strong year."

Massey said many Michigan fish markets are feeling the effects of the Sept. 11 attacks because those markets have many ties with New York consumers, who are struggling financially right now.

"A big portion of Great Lakes whitefish sales are in New York," said Massey. "There's a tremendous market in New York City and it declined a lot after the Sept. 11 attacks. The base of our sales is not in New York, so we weren't as affected as many of the fish markets around here may have been."

According to Massey, production at the many smokehouses in New York City has dwindled, and many Michigan fish markets are now stuck with an abundance of dressed fish.

"A lot of markets have closed early this fall," said Massey, "because no one is buying their fish. The market is so soft right now that a lot of markets have struggled to sell all of the fish they've caught."

Clearwater has been able to dodge any economic windfalls because its main business is from Michigan-based Gordon Foods, and because of a new technique in preparing its fish products, mainly whitefish.

Clearwater's best seller, whitefish, which comprises 50 percent of the company's business, is still going strong in the market.

Clearwater has begun to focus on a more complete product for its consumers by providing ready-to-cook fish in a boneless, vacuum-packed fillet package.

"Our business is geared to promote value-added type products," said Massey. "We're putting more processing into our fish to make it as ready-made as possible, which gives it more value to our consumers."

"It's more user-friendly," he said. "Nowadays, moms don't want to come home and spend a lot of time scaling the fish, picking the bones out, they want to get it prepared quickly and eat."

"If we're going the traditional route, dressing fish for the smokehouses, we would probably be struggling just like the other fish markets," said Massey.

The extra steps in the processing and packaging of fish has also added extra employees.

"When you add another step to the processing and packaging system, that means you need to add more hands to the process," said Massey. "We have all sorts of jobs in the processing and packaging areas available right now."

Massey credits the 1836 Treaty between the Federal Government and Michigan tribes for much of the company's success this year.

"The (2001 Consent Agreement) opened waters to us down to the Alpena area and over in Big Bay de Noc," said Massey. "Our success had quite a bit to do with that."

Salmon, according to Massey, have been abundant for the past three years. Since 1999, Clearwater, through a state salmon contract with the DNR, has operated six of the Department of Natural Resource's salmon harvest weirs, places where salmon are trapped and harvested.

"We've had a big run of salmon," said Massey. "We've hauled in about a million pounds this year." Clearwater was so overwhelmed with salmon it donated 10,000 pounds to Gaylord to go toward the American Red Cross Relief Fund for the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks. Each salmon was sold for \$5 and all of the proceeds went to the fund.

Because of its overabundance, however, salmon has not moved so well in the market.

"Salmon is a slow mover because there's such a surplus of farm-raised fish available from all around the world," Massey said. "It's gotten to be very cheap and that makes our Great Lakes salmon tough to sell in the market."

Whitefish became the popular aquatic entree ever since the decline of lake herring, which used to be just as popular as whitefish.

"Lake herring, not a big market like was years ago, is now rebounding," said Massey. "It used to be the king of fish in the market. But once lake herring declined, so did the markets, and the whitefish stole the spotlight."

"Lake herring is a beautiful and cost effective fish," said Massey. "It's a third less in price than the whitefish and it's lean and healthy for you."

Massey said this year's biggest problem was zebra mussels. The small, fingernail-sized shelled species, native to the Caspian Sea region in southern Russia, were brought to the Great Lakes in the ballast water of saltwater vessels entering the lakes.

The exotic mussels filter nutrients from the water, exposing deeper water areas to ultraviolet rays from the sun, which, in turn, causes plants to grow larger and closer to the surface. Massey said, however, the exotic species do not seem to alter fish populations in the Straits Area, but do alter fishing techniques.

"The algae from plants gets caught in our gill nets, which are supposed to be invisible to the fish," said Massey. "Because they can see the nets, they run along side of them (instead of into them)."

"Trap net fishing, however, is a better technique," Massey said. Trap net fishing involves a series of nets that guide, or funnel fish toward a live trap at the core of the trap net system, called a pot. "It's a different style of fishing," said Massey, who said he has been trap net fishing for 20 years. "We use an impoundment type of net for trap net fishing. There's more going into fishing now."

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Vic Matson Sr., Conservation Committee Chairman, GLRC chairman

* "Great Lakes Resource Committee," which serves as the inter-tribal management body for the treaty fishery in 1836 treaty waters.

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TRIBE SUES TO BLOCK LAND EXCHANGE

In a related development, U.S. Rep. Bart Stupak asks federal government to take back a 115-acre parcel on the southern end of South Fox Island

By John Flesher
Associated Press Writer

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP) — An American Indian tribe has filed a lawsuit aimed at voiding a land swap on South Fox Island between the state and businessman David V. Johnson.

The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians contends the Michigan Department of Natural Resources violated state law and its own procedures with the deal, which DNR Director K.L. Cool approved Dec. 7.

“The bottom line is that this transaction doesn’t meet the statutory requirements governing exchanges of state land,” tribal attorney Brian Upton said Jan. 4.

The state attorney general’s office, representing the DNR, filed a response defending the exchange and questioning the tribe’s standing to intervene.

The tribe filed suit Dec. 26 in Leelanau County Circuit Court. During a hearing Jan. 3, Judge Thomas Power declined the tribe’s motion to block the transfer until the case is decided. He ruled the exchange could be reversed if the suit prevails.

Power was expected to set a trial date the next week.

Following years of negotiations, the DNR and Johnson agreed to exchange parcels totaling nearly 220 acres each on South Fox, a 3,400-acre island in Lake Michigan about 30 miles north of Leland.

Johnson, a Bloomfield Hills developer, owns two-thirds of the island and the state one-third. He wants to clarify ownership boundaries and reduce trespassing on his property.

Environmentalists and sporting groups say the public would sacrifice better-quality land it would gain under the deal.

The tribe’s suit says DNR policy allows disposing of state-owned property on the island only if the new owner “will guarantee protection of the island to an equal or greater degree” than the state does. The South Fox deal

makes no such guarantee, the suit says.

It also says the DNR didn’t sufficiently evaluate natural features of land being transferred to Johnson — particularly the ecological value of “globally rare” dunes on the western shoreline — as required under the Michigan Environmental Protection Act.

Additionally, members of the Grand Traverse tribe claim ownership of 90 percent of the land the state would receive, contending the parcels were wrongfully taken from their ancestors.

The Indians have no claims on the land Johnson would get. If the courts upheld the claims, the state would forfeit some 200 acres while Johnson loses nothing, the suit says.

In its brief, the attorney general’s office said the tribe has not shown it would suffer direct harm from the exchange and thus is ineligible to challenge it.

The brief said the swap would benefit the public by consolidating over 860 state-owned acres on the northern end of the island, allowing better DNR management.

“State ownership on the island is currently scattered and access from the water is difficult,” it said, adding that the swap would improve “recreational opportunity, including hunting, and public access.”

Johnson was not named as a defendant in the suit. But a spokesman, Cam Piggott, said it was “unfortunate that the controversy continues when the exchange has so many pluses for the public.”

In a related development, U.S. Rep. Bart Stupak has asked the federal government to take back a 115-acre parcel on the southern end of South Fox Island that it gave the state three decades ago.

The DNR’s management of the area is “appalling,” Stupak said in a recent letter to Fran Mainella, head of the National Park Service. The state has allowed a historic lighthouse to deteriorate, has not protected endangered species and acted irresponsibly by

agreeing to relinquish rare dunes, he said.

DNR spokesman Brad Wurfel said the lighthouse wasn’t in much better shape when the Park Service transferred the property to the state.

“If the congressman wanted to enact real change, he might consider working to direct some federal funds to improving the lighthouse instead of trying to channel away more state control to the federal government,” Wurfel said.

Bad River restores hatchery

ASHLAND, Wisc. (AP) — The Bad River Chippewa are using a \$246,000 federal grant to help restore its fish hatchery, including installing alternative energy sources.

Savings from the solar panels and a wind turbine recently installed at the Bad River Fish Hatchery at Odanah will free up funds to improve production of walleye and sturgeon, said hatchery manager Rick Huber.

The grant, from the Administration for Native Americans in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, also funded other hatchery improvements, including new water pumps and back up propane generator. The grant is part of a three-year deal.

Next year, the tribe plans to design two new walleye rearing ponds. In 2003, the grant will contribute another \$276,000 to construct those ponds.

Huber said he attended a symposium about a year ago and heard the tribe’s environmental specialist talk

about alternative energy. He was working on the grant at the time and added the alternative energy request as part of the plan.

The 2.5 kilowatt wind turbine on a 184-foot tower and the 40 solar panels will not only save the hatchery money but may generate revenue, Huber said.

In northern Wisconsin, it is important to have a dual system for producing alternative energy, he said. Often, the winds are strong when the skies are cloudy and vice versa.

This may not be the only building powered with alternative energy on the reservation in the future. Huber said the tribe is already starting to discuss using wind and solar power for two other buildings.

The Bad River Chippewa, who operate the fish hatchery, annually stock more than 15 million walleye into reservation rivers and other area lakes and streams.

Munising Bay: CONTROVERSY CONTINUES

MUNISING, Mich. (AP)— Michigan Department of Natural Resources officers say they found no evidence of tribal gill nets on Munising Bay during the second week of December.

Sport fishermen had reported that a tribal gill-netter had taken boxloads of fish from an area near the East Channel Lighthouse.

Gill netting in the bay is currently legal for members of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the Bay Mills Indian Community and three Lower Peninsula tribes under a 20-year court agreement signed last year.

However, that privilege was granted through an error in drawing a boundary line that state officials didn’t detect until two months after the signing.

A local sport fishing group is pushing the DNR to fix the mistake. The agency has talked with the tribes but reached no solution.

Jim Ekdahl, DNR field deputy for the Upper Peninsula, said investigators determined that a tribal fishing boat entered Munising Bay that week and came ashore with fish on board. However, it was unclear whether the fish were netted inside or outside of the bay.

Either way, it would have been legal, The Mining Journal reported.

BLACK ASH AVAILABLE

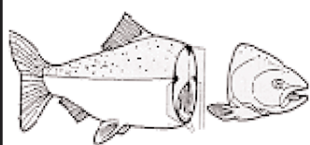
BAY MILLS — Black ash lumber is being made available to local tribes this winter, due to conservation logging in Cheboygan County. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Sault Ste. Marie office announced intentions to log the black ash this winter sometime after the ground is frozen. The NRCS would like to put this lumber to good use by offering it to tribal members for basket making. These tribal members would be responsible for pick-up and delivery of the lumbered trees, which will be of various sizes.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is also interested in helping to identify treatment and management of black ash stands for sustainable yields.

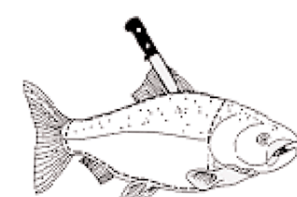
Any interested parties can contact Tracey Brown at Bay Mills Biological Services, 906-248-3241.

CLEANING GREAT LAKES FISH

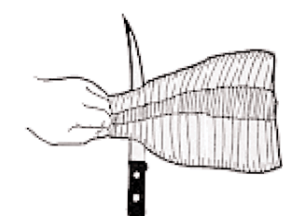
1. Low levels of halogenated hydrocarbons tend to accumulate in fatty parts of the fish and should be removed.



2. Carefully fillet the fish with a sharp, ong-bladed knife.



3. Skin the filets, holding the tail section firmly. Run the blade between the skin and the meat along the table surface.



4. Trim fat along top center of the fillet.



5. Trim fat along edges of fillet.



6. Bake, broil or barbecue fish on a rack to allow fat to drip off.



LEARNING MORE ABOUT ROUND GOBIES

From the USGS Great Lakes Science Center

WHAT IS A ROUND GOBY?

The round goby, *Neogobius melanostomus*, is a small, bottom-dwelling fish that was first found in the Great Lakes region in 1990. Originally from the Black and Caspian Sea areas of Eastern Europe, it is believed that this exotic species arrived in the ballast water of vessels coming into the Great Lakes. Since the first sighting in the St. Clair River, round gobies have spread to all of the Great Lakes and are working their way inland through the rivers and canal systems.

WHAT DOES A ROUND GOBY LOOK LIKE?

Round gobies can reach up to 10 inches in length as adults, but usually they are less than 7 inches long in the Great Lakes. Females and immature male round gobies are a mottled gray and brown color. Spawning males turn almost solid black. Round gobies have a soft body and a large, rounded head with eyes that protrude near the top. Round gobies look similar to our native sculpins, but the two species can be easily separated by the fused pelvic fins on the underside of round gobies. Sculpins have two distinct pelvic fins, not one large fin. This fin can be used by gobies as a suction cup to anchor to rocks and other hard substrates during times of high water flow.

RESEARCH AT THE GREAT LAKES SCIENCE CENTER

Scientists at the Great Lakes Science Center, in cooperation with the University of Michigan, Smith-Root, Inc. and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, recently finished a project evaluating the potential for using an electric barrier to

slow the spread of round gobies from Lake Michigan through the Illinois Waterway System and into the Mississippi River drainage. Our scientists first worked with round gobies in the laboratory to determine the most effective electrical parameters and then participated in a small-scale field study to test the barrier in a more realistic setting. We were able to establish electrical parameters that successfully deterred passage of the majority of round gobies present. These tests provided guidance for the operation of the electrical barrier scheduled to be built soon in the Illinois Waterway System.

Current research at the Great Lakes Science Center involves comparing the interactions of round goby and Eurasian ruffe, another exotic species. Ruffe were introduced via ballast water to the Duluth Harbor of Lake Superior in 1986. Both species use similar bottom habitats and share the traits of voracious appetites, prolific spawning, and aggressive behavior. The two species are known to occur together in the Duluth Harbor area of Lake Superior and in the Thunder Bay River, a tributary to Lake Huron. Given the impacts both species are already having on native species individually, there is concern over what will happen when these two species occupy the same space. Current studies are focusing on competition for limited food, shelter and space with special interest in aggressive interactions. New work will be starting soon to see if these interactions change in low light conditions, as both species are generally more active at night.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Round gobies are found in all of the Great Lakes with the greatest numbers in Lake Erie, Lake St. Claire and southern

Lake Michigan. Many of the areas with round goby populations are best described as infested. Once round gobies arrive they can become the dominant fish species. Round gobies prefer rocky, shallow areas, but have flourished in a variety of habitat types. Regardless of the habitat, round gobies are very aggressive fish that compete with native fishes for food and space. Anglers who fish in areas with round gobies often find that the gobies steal their bait and appear to be the only type of fish in the area.

Round gobies spawn from April-September with females visiting multiple nests to spawn with several different males. Round gobies attach their eggs to the underside of rocks, in pieces of pipe, or in other types of shelter. Male round gobies stay in the nest to provide care for the developing young and will ferociously defend their nests from any intruders. As a result, round gobies can produce a large number of healthy offspring in a very short time.

Round gobies can eat zebra mussels in addition to fish

How to Identify a Round Goby (adult shown)

General Characteristics

- No other native fish in the Great Lakes has the single pelvic fin
- Young are solid slate gray
- Usually 3-6 inches (7.6 - 15.2 cm) long; may be up to 10 inches (25.4 cm)

Contact your SeaGrant agent or nearest MSU Extension Office for these ID cards. A photograph of the exotic species appears on the flip side.

eggs, plankton, fish, and benthic invertebrates. Because zebra mussels are filter feeders that accumulate contaminants in their body tissues, round gobies that eat zebra mussels may be consuming a high level of contaminants. When a predatory fish such as a walleye eats a round goby that has fed primarily on zebra mussels, they may be getting a much larger load of contaminants than they would from eating other types of prey fish. This could put dangerous concentrations of contaminants into sport-fish at a much faster rate.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Do not use round gobies as bait.

Dump bait buckets on land. Help stop the spread of all aquatic exotics by cleaning your boat and trailer before going to a new water body. Drain the water from your boat motor and wells on land. Remove plants and debris from your trailer before leaving the launch ramp.

See our Website!
www.1836cora.org

BLM will display wild horses for adoption at Olympics

MIDWAY, Utah (AP) — The Bureau of Land Management will use the 2002 Winter Games to display nine wild horses and three wild burros that will be up for adoption.

The animals were removed from public lands in the West, primarily Utah.

They will be displayed at the Soldier Hollow venue for the cross country and biathlon events. The venue is expected to get about 15,000 visitors a day during the Feb. 8-24 games.

"The adoptions won't actually occur during the Olympics," said Janet Greenlee, marketing coordi-

nator for the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program in Sacramento. "But the visitors will get to see them and how they are gentle and have been halter trained."

Those interested in adopting the horses, which will be on exhibit through the Paralympic Games, will then fill out an application on the Internet, with bidding starting March 13 and the winners decided March 27.

Also on display at Soldier Hollow will be a small herd of buffalo removed from state lands. There also will be pioneer and Indian exhibits.

\$2,000 reward

offered for information about fishing gear theft in the Cheboygan River last October

Reward money has been pledged in the investigation of the theft of fishing gear from the trap net boat Shamrock docked in the Cheboygan River. The theft took place between October 14 and October 18.

Stolen items are six 73-pound anchors, a 30-foot green poly trap net, and a brown canvas tarp.

All information will be treated confidentially. Rewards of \$1,000 each have been posted by CORA and the Shamrock's owner. The

"Tribal Fishing" is published by the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority (CORA) Public Information program. The program is administered by the Bay Mills Indian Community Newspaper Department.

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