# HONORING NATIONS
# ALL-STARS PROFILE



## The Red Lake Walleye Recovery Program
## Red Lake Nation

Photo courtesy of John Rae/NYC.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A deep appreciation to the Red Lake Nation for sharing its remarkable story. This case profile was written collaboratively by Jamie Dolan, Ian Record, Miriam Jorgensen, and Eileen Briggs.

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*"We have to remember that we don't inherit our land and resources from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children and grandchildren."*

**—Judy Roy, Red Lake Nation**

In 1997, the members of the Red Lake Fisheries Association (RLFA), a cooperative established by commercial fishermen from the Red Lake Nation,[1] voted to discontinue all commercial gillnet fishing on Red Lake for the upcoming season. An overwhelming majority of the RLFA's members supported the decision, despite its direct impact on their livelihoods. Less than a year later, the Red Lake Tribal Council passed a resolution banning hook-and-line subsistence fishing for walleye, effectively ending all fishing on tribal waters. Hundreds of families lost income from the demise of commercial walleye fishing, and with the overall fishing ban, every tribal citizen lost access to a significant food source. But witnessing firsthand the stark decline of the walleye and recognizing that a vital cultural and economic resource was slipping away, the Red Lake Nation had taken a stand: it needed to do everything it could to save the walleye and make its iconic lake healthy again.

The RLFA and the Tribal Council actions were impressive, brave, and risky. They did not know if a recovery effort on such a large lake, overfished for decades, would be possible. They did not know if Red Lake Nation citizens would abide by the fishing ban for as long as was necessary. And because the Nation controlled a majority but not all of Red Lake, they did not know if the state of Minnesota would join them in the fishing moratorium or if fishing from the Minnesota side would compromise the Nation's efforts to revive the walleye population.

Yet by 2006, walleye recovery was essentially complete. Red Lake Nation citizens were fishing again and utilizing practices that reduced pressure on the fish population. Economic opportunity through fishing was open to an even larger number of tribal citizens, and the tribe had strong and respectful relationships with partner government agencies engaged in fish and lake recovery. So what explains the tribe's trajectory from near-loss of it fish resources to recovery and sustainability? How did the Red Lake walleye population reach its low point? What did the Red Lake Nation do to turn things around? As this case story explains, the Nation's resounding success was the result not only of sound environmental science but also of effective tribal governance.

1 Red Lake Nation was formerly referred to as the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians.

# THE RED LAKE NATION'S LAND AND WATERS

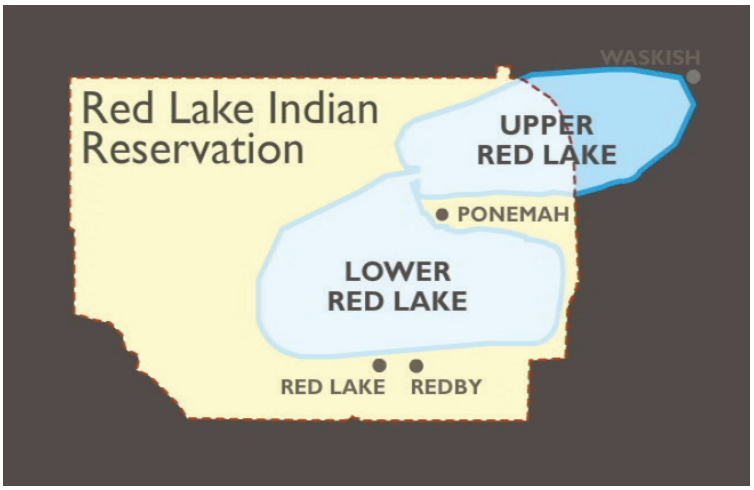
The Red Lake Nation is an Ojibwe nation, sharing kinship and cultural ties with the Ojibwe peoples that span the Great Lakes region. The Red Lake Reservation, home to more than 5,000 of the Red Lake Nation's 11,000 citizens, shares a geography with northern Minnesota. Red Lake, the reservation's namesake, is a pre-eminent feature of the landscape. At 288,800 acres, it is the largest lake in Minnesota and the sixth largest natural lake in the United States.[2]

In the late 1800s, the Red Lake Nation's leadership experienced unusual success in preventing allotment (the division of reservation land into individually assigned parcels)—success that in turn prevented the sale of "surplus" reservation land to non-Indians. But Red Lake's leaders were unable to fully thwart resource-hungry settlers. While they believed their 1889 negotiations concerning allotment and the reservation's boundaries had secured the reservation land base and the entirety of lake for the Nation, final treaty documents assigned the eastern portion of upper Red Lake to the state of Minnesota. As a result, the Red Lake Reservation is a contiguous land base with no interspersed non-Indian parcels and under the joint jurisdiction of the Red Lake Nation government and US Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)—as is 83 percent of the lake. The remaining 17 percent of the lake is under Minnesota's jurisdiction.

**Figure 1: Location of the Red Lake Reservation**


Source: US Geological Survey 2003.

**Figure 2: Map of the Red Lake Reservation**




Source: Record 2010.

2 This count considers lakes by surface area, not volume, and excludes lakes under the joint jurisdiction of Canada and the US, man-made lakes, and Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana, which many consider to be an estuary rather than a lake (US Census 2012).

## FROM PLENTY TO FEW

The Red Lake Ojibwe view their lake as a gift from the Creator and have long relied on its fish, especially the prized walleye, as a primary source of nourishment. They even have referred to the lake as their "food store" (Haga 2006, Kolpack 2006). Historically, subsistence fishing on Red Lake was a way of life. For several months each year, families would move to lakeside fish camps, working together to bring in the harvest. Men and older children would set and pull the nets; women and younger children would remove the fish and dry the nets. It was hard work, but the walleye were plentiful and the people were grateful, offering their thanks each fishing season with a gift of sacred tobacco to the lake.

Despite the loss of a portion of the lake in 1889, the Red Lake people's relationship with the lake remained largely unchanged until 1917, when the United States entered World War I. The war effort caused regional food shortages, and Minnesota was hard hit. Widespread hunger and the threat of substantial illicit and unregulated fishing compelled the state to open several of its large lakes for commercial fishing. Minnesota also developed a plan for commercial fishing on Red Lake, which the BIA permitted on the condition that the plan provide "certain benefits" to the tribe (Avery 1918, p. 58). The state responded by offering to help the Nation establish and operate its own commercial fishery. From 1920 to 1928, Red Lake citizens sold their catches to the state,

Photo courtesy of the Red Lake Nation.

which then sold the fish wholesale in Midwestern and Eastern markets (Meyers 1992).

Red Lake fishermen soon became dissatisfied with this arrangement. In 1922, tribal leaders objected to state involvement, arguing that the presence of state fishing crews disadvantaged tribal fishermen. They contended that the state's control of marketing did not bring the best price for the tribal catch and that the state underpaid Indian fishermen by weighing their fish inaccurately (Walter Butler Company 1978, Meyers 1992). Nevertheless, crews of both tribal and state commercial fisherman continued to fish on Red Lake, and were able to provide food to Minnesotans and others at affordable prices for the remainder of the decade. Because it was the practice at the time, all fishing occurred with an eye toward market demand—not fish population sustainability.

In 1929, a non-Indian fish wholesaler from southern Minnesota sued the state for unfair competition. It was this challenge—not the tribe's concerns—that led to the state's exit from the fishing business at Red Lake. The suit resulted in a Minnesota Supreme Court order ending non-regulatory state involvement in the commercial fishing industry. Complying, the state legislature transferred the fishing operations on Red Lake to the US Bureau of Indian Affairs.

To fulfill its new responsibilities, the BIA developed fishery regulations that mandated harvest monitoring and scientific resource management. If followed, these federal regulations might have worked. But as contemporary tribal managers have observed, it was as if the Bureau put a regulatory framework in place in 1930 and then forgot about it—at the cost of fish and lake health. Except for a brief period of scientific management in the 1970s, the BIA tended to forgo monitoring in favor of a static, non-scientific walleye harvest quota and to limit enforcement activity.

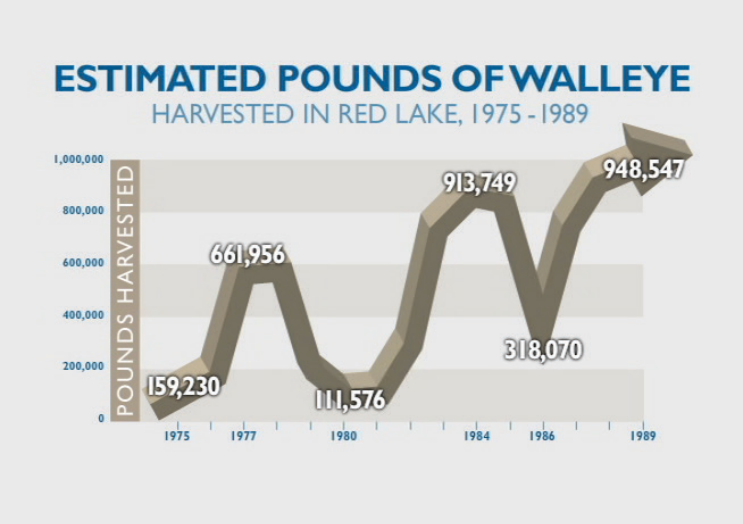
Yet regulatory monitoring and enforcement was sorely needed. On the Indian-owned portion of the lake, there was essentially no limit on the number of Red Lake citizens setting gillnets on Red Lake or the number of nets each was allowed to set. The tribal fishermen's cooperative, the RLFA, routinely asked the BIA for quota extensions, and they were routinely granted (Haga 2006). On the lake's state-controlled waters, scores of non-Indian anglers regularly exceeded their walleye catch limits.

The BIA's and the state's lack of quota enforcement also fueled a flourishing black market. Fish were provided to family and friends as gifts or in trade. They were sold for quick cash to people passing through the reservation. And tremendous amounts of walleye were sold out of car trunks across the Twin Cities, in parking lots, at schools, and at Vikings football game tailgates (Anderson 2006, Niskanen 2006). These illicit sales reportedly doubled the annual legal take of walleye, which already was well above a sustainable harvest level (Gunderson 1998).

In the 1970s, after five decades of overfishing, Red Lake's walleye population began to experience boom-and-bust cycles, an omen of the species' collapse. But soaring walleye prices, which continued through the 1980s and 1990s, lured more and more Red Lake citizens in search of a good living into commercial fishing. The RLFA saw its membership surge to 700 by the early 1990s and its documented annual harvest top out at 950,000 pounds—eclipsing the BIA's static quota and

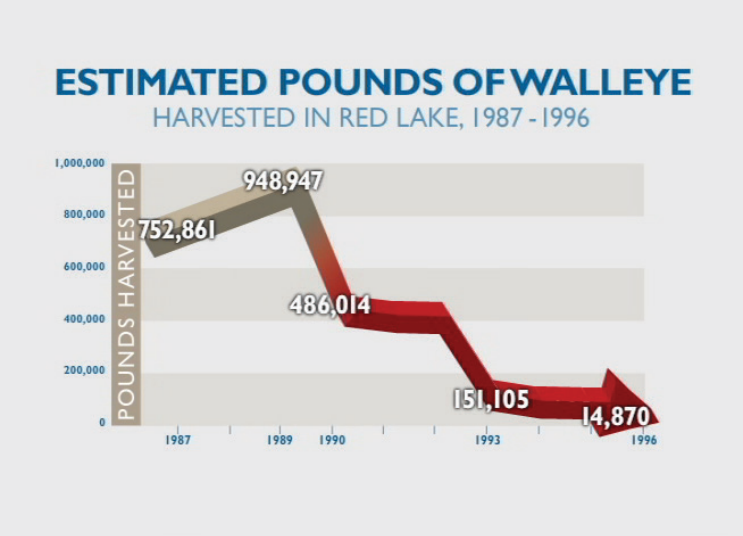
far exceeding the lake's capacity (Niskanen 2006). By 1996, however, RLFA processed a meager 15,000 pounds. How many population recoveries (booms) and population collapses from overfishing (busts) could the Red Lake walleye survive? Might things reach a point where the population simply died out?

**Figure 3: Ups and Downs of the Red Lake Walleye Population, 1975-1989**




Source: Record 2010.

**Figure 4: Impending Walleye Population Collapse, 1987-1996**




Source: Record 2010.

# WORKING TOWARD RECOVERY

It was at this point that the RLFA decided to act. In 1997, in an effort to save the walleye before it was too late, its members voted to end all gillnet fishing on Red Lake. Fishermen left the work that had sustained their families for generations, sold their boats and gear, and began looking for new ways to make a living. In fact, even prior to the RLFA vote, a number of tribal fishermen already had stopped fishing, sensing that something was going terrible wrong in the lake. Standing strongly behind the fishermen's commitment to restoration, the Tribal Council passed a resolution in 1998 to ban all hook and line fishing. The state of Minnesota was slower to respond, but by 1999 the state legislature also had placed a moratorium on fishing in the Red Lake waters it controlled.

What made these decisions possible, and what made them sustainable?

## Regaining Tribal Decision-Making Authority

In part, the Red Lake Nation's success was born of its ability and desire to take advantage of changes in federal law. In 1988, the US government began testing (through a demonstration program) a policy it called "Self-Governance." Under the traditional funding model, the BIA would hire its own personnel to manage federally funded tribal programs. Under the new policy, tribes could sign a Self-Governance agreement, take over a program that the federal government had managed on the tribe's behalf, and manage the program and program monies as it saw fit. When Congress expanded the program in 1994, allowing all tribes to pursue Self-Governance agreements, the Red

Photo courtesy of the Red Lake Nation.

Lake Nation seized the opportunity. In 1997 it began operating its own natural-resource programs, free of the BIA's bureaucracy. Streamlined decision-making allowed the Nation to act quickly and authoritatively, particularly in regard to the fishery, which was one of its first major projects as a Self-Governance tribe (Simcosky and Holmes 2005).

## Building a Relationship with the State

Given its partial jurisdiction over Red Lake's waters, the Nation knew that state of Minnesota involvement was critical to walleye recovery. In 1997, even before the Tribal Council took decisive action, then-Chairman Bobby Whitefeather initiated a dialogue with the state's Department of Natural Resources. These early meetings took place in cafes and restaurants—neutral points that removed each government's representatives from their seats of power. Despite initial tensions, the participants openly discussed their shared goals and, remarkably, made an explicit decision to leave behind any blame.

The discussions culminated in an historic memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the Red Lake Nation, state of Minnesota, and US Bureau of Indian Affairs. A first in the history of tribal-state relations in Minnesota, the 1999 agreement reaffirmed the Red Lake Nation's walleye ban, prohibited walleye fishing on Red Lake's state waters, and mandated strict regulation of the moratorium on both parts of the lake. It established a multi-partner technical committee—composed of scientists and other representatives from the Red Lake Department of Natural Resources (Red Lake DNR), RLFA, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Minnesota DNR), University of Minnesota, BIA, and US Fish and Wildlife Service—and charged it with devising, managing, and sustaining walleye recovery. At the signatories' option, the MOU could be renewed every ten years.

Following the operating principles of mutual respect and shared science, the technical committee launched an unprecedented recovery plan designed to bring the walleye back to Red Lake. This aggressive plan incorporated massive fry stockings,[3]

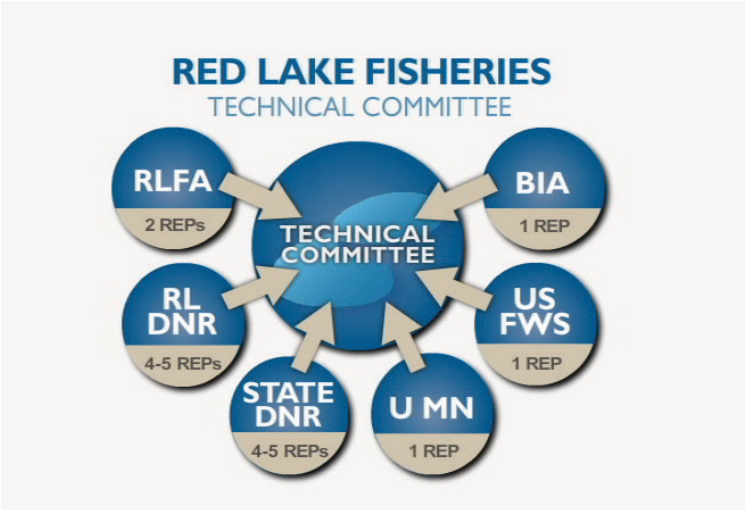
3 "Fry" are juvenile fish, generally those just hatched. "Stocking" refers to the process of rebuilding a fish population by introducing fish reared elsewhere.

stringent enforcement of the fishing ban, public education, and comprehensive data collection (and sharing) to assess the quantity, maturity, diversity, and natural reproduction capability of the walleye population as it recovered (Rivers 2006). In testament to the spirit of their cooperation, the Red Lake Nation and state of Minnesota agreed to share the cost of the restoration.

The technical committee was a key vehicle for tribal-state collaboration. If it did not work well, the cooperation necessary for Red Lake walleye recovery could break down. Three aspects of technical committee design and operations were particularly helpful to sustaining collaboration:

1. *Strategic representation*. Appointments to the technical committee included biologists, fishermen, politicians, and a professor—and this diversity was strategic. Tribal, federal and state representatives were able to keep key stakeholders within their respective governments informed. Many also brought environmental and program management expertise. The University of Minnesota representative brought both scientific know-how and historical perspective—in the 1980s, he had helped start the Red Lake Nation's fishery programs. As a neutral party, he also could help reconcile any opposing state and tribal views. Appointees from the RLFA represented the tribe's fishermen and kept the committee focused on real-life implications for fishermen. They also brought knowledge from multiple generations of fishing experience on Red Lake and a grounded perspective that could cut through technical jargon and bring the conversation "back down to earth."

**Figure 5: Composition of the Red Lake Fisheries Technical Committee**

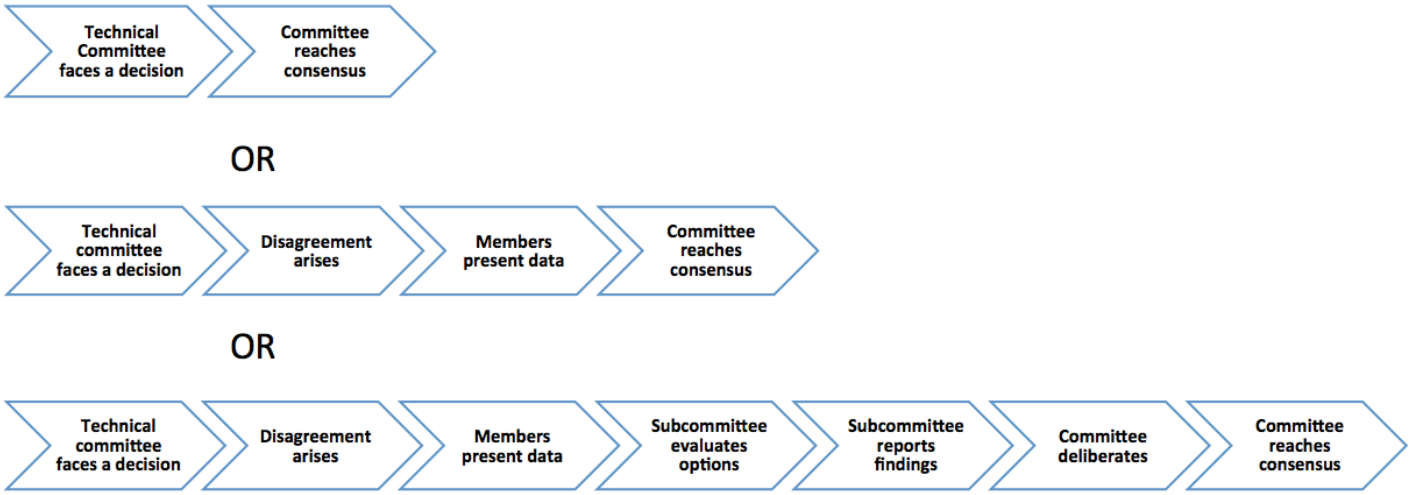



Source: Record 2010.

2. *Consensus decision-making*. Early on, the technical committee agreed to make all decisions by consensus. The committee's protocol was to discuss disagreements until everyone could agree on a course of action. These discussions helped committee members understand and respect each member's commitments and develop trust in the process.

   Stocking was one of the contentious issues the technical committee faced: should it recommend rebuilding the walleye population with juvenile fish reared outside Red Lake or not? Committee members discussed their arguments for nearly a month. They formed a subcommittee to look more closely at the various options. Eventually, the technical committee found a compromise that all members could accept. As one member put it, "We just had to work through it."

**Figure 6: Technical Committee Decision-Making Pathways**




*"I really listened to what the guys [on the technical committee] had to say, and everything they said made a lot of sense to me… The biologists were using all their techniques to develop a plan. And what I liked about it is nobody in the group was there to say, 'It's because of you guys.' Never did that attitude come out. It was just this group of people saying, 'What can we do together?'"*

**— Bill May, former RLFA officer and technical committee member**

3. *Freedom from political interference*. Without question, numerous state and tribal government constituents were dissatisfied with the fishing ban. Sport fishermen lost recreational opportunities, and commercial fishermen lost income. Yet successive tribal chairmen, tribal councilors, governors, and state legislators did not play politics with these constituent concerns. They respected and supported their experts, freeing the technical committee to make decisions based on biology, not politics. When some tribal members voiced concerns about the technical committee "taking their fish away," for example, the Tribal Council itself took responsibility for the moratorium and stood behind the committee's recovery goals.

## Communicating with the Public

In addition to building a relationship with the state, Red Lake Nation leaders knew they needed to keep the tribal community informed about walleye recovery efforts. There would be no chance of success if tribal citizens failed to cooperate with the fishing moratorium—so the Nation undertook a systematic and conscientious citizen-information campaign.

Elected leaders and tribal DNR staff organized forums and town hall meetings to share the technical committee's recommendations and get grassroots feedback. These were held across the reservation and in several off-reservation metropolitan areas in an effort to reach both resident and non-resident Red Lake citizens. Tribal Council representatives and the Nation's seven hereditary chiefs served as local points of contact for tribal members. Up-to-date information about the recovery also was available in Tribal Council minutes and in the tribal newsletter, which were distributed widely across the reservation.

This transparency generated important support from tribal citizens for the fishing moratorium and for moratorium enforcement. The Red Lake DNR documented only one gillnet violation by a Red Lake tribal citizen between 1997 and 2006, which is strong evidence of the effectiveness of the Nation's outreach campaign and of the tribal citizens' commitment to the recovery process. A 2004 survey conducted by researchers from Bemidji State University offered further evidence of this commitment: 82 percent of tribal citizens favored the development of tribal (not BIA) regulations and almost 85 percent favored increasing the number of tribal conservation officers.

*"Bringing the walleye back was the easy part. The hard part was managing the people."*

**— Pat Brown, Red Lake Nation fisheries biologist**

Photo courtesy of the Red Lake Nation.

Of course, citizen engagement and commitment was critical on both sides of the lake: successful walleye recovery required buy-in from tribal citizens and non-Indians. Messaging off the reservation included information about the recovery project and how state-tribal collaboration made the project possible. For example, the technical committee worked with the Bemidji Area Race Relations Council to host several meetings in and around Bemidji. These engagements taught about the joint recovery effort and presented the state-tribal collaboration as a lesson in inter-agency cooperation. The meetings also provided the public with opportunities to interact with officials from the tribe and state. For a time, the technical committee convened a (Minnesota) citizens' advisory committee to help them vet and refine key messages and better understand possible public reactions.

## THE RECOVERY

Many fisheries biologists doubted the Red Lake walleye recovery effort could succeed. Even some members of the technical committee were skeptical of its chances for success. Other walleye recovery projects, even on lakes that had prohibited fishing for 20 years, had failed (Anderson 2006). Red Lake's immense size and jurisdictional complexity made this attempt all the more

Photo courtesy of John Rae/NYC.

difficult. Among those who thought that success was possible, most estimated that it would take at least ten years for the Red Lake walleye to return to a naturally reproducing, self-sustaining level.

## Ecological Restoration

These predictions were proven wrong. The speed and the extent of the recovery far exceeded even the most optimistic expectations. Rebounding from an all-time low of roughly 100,000 fish at the beginning of the recovery effort, the walleye in Red Lake numbered 7.5 million in 2006 (Niskanen 2006). While the technical committee had relied on stocking to kick-start the recovery process, population data showed that by the mid-2000s, natural reproduction alone could sustain a healthy number of fish—a clear sign of the renewed health of the species (Anderson 2006). According to several members of the technical committee, the Red Lake walleye revitalization is among the most successful inland fishery recoveries ever undertaken in North America (Robertson 2006).

## Economic Revival

The walleye's resurgence prompted the Red Lake Nation and state of Minnesota—with the technical committee's endorsement—to reopen Red Lake to subsistence and sport fishing in the spring of 2006, well ahead of schedule. In late 2007, the Nation re-established the commercial fishery on Red Lake. With $2 million in grants from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, the Red Lake Nation also was able to restore, update, and re-open its fish processing facility (Robertson 2008). Today the Nation sells and ships fish all over the country

through Red Lake Nation Foods, a tribal enterprise initially developed during the moratorium to market other traditional foods.

Both the Red Lake Nation government and its citizens are resolved to maintain a sustainable walleye population. They also believe that community subsistence and cultural needs take precedence over commercial fishing. Therefore, the Nation's and state's mutual decision to open the lake to sport fishing and the Nation's decision to reopen the commercial fishery were taken with great care and a commitment to changed practices.

Initial post-recovery regulations were quite conservative. Only hook-and-line fishing was allowed. On state-controlled waters, the sport fishing catch limit was set at two walleye (of appropriate size) per day. Tribal citizens fishing on tribal waters who fished just to feed their families were limited to 10 fish per day; commercial fishermen were allowed 50 walleye a day, provided they first registered with the tribe (Robertson 2008). If experience proved that these maximums were too restrictive, policy also allowed Red Lake's fishery managers to adjust the allowable catches (within the 800,000-pound harvestable limit proposed by the technical committee and made law by the tribal government).

Prior to the collapse, processed fish were sold to off-reservation wholesalers. Post-recovery, the Red Lake Nation cuts out the middleman. The fishery sets a price and buys walleye from tribal-citizen fishermen, processes the fish, and sells them directly over the counter or through Red Lake Nation Foods. This vertical integration helps the Nation and its citizens reap more of the economic rewards from fish sales—and provides another means for monitoring the total catch. In 2011, the fishery processed 650,000 pound of fish, and in 2012, it generated approximately $2.5 million in revenues (Allen 2012).

With the recovery's success, many Red Lake Nation citizens once again have been able to support their families through fishing—to become "full time fishermen." Because hook-and-line fishing requires minimal gear and expertise, and because the opportunity to sell fish at the lakeside processing plant makes commercial fishing accessible to virtually any interested tribal citizen, it

*"I brought in…22 pounds [of walleye], and three perch, so we got $38.50 for the walleye and $5.25 for the perch. Totals $43.75, which isn't bad for three hours of fishing."*

**— Wayne Lussier, Sr., Red Lake Nation citizen**

*"The tradition of fishing has been passed down from generation to generation. It is part of who we are as a nation, so when the fish left, so did part of our identity."*

— *Maamakaadenbaagwad:* The Miracle of the Walleye

also has become easier for tribal citizens to supplement their incomes with fishing. In fact, just weeks after the fishery re-opened, over 400 tribal citizens had registered with the tribe to fish commercially on the lake (Robertson 2008).[4] Members can drop a line in the lake after their other workday has ended. Grandmothers and the grandchildren fish together to earn a few dollars. Teenagers fish with friends for recreation and to earn spending money. The practical benefit of this income is clear: One father reported that his supplemental fishing earnings paid for his daughter's braces (Record 2010).

The processing facility also provides incomes to tribal citizens. By 2012, up to 90 employees worked at the plant during the high season, cleaning, filleting, and packaging fish for sale (Allen 2012). Many are young people working their first jobs. They are not just earning incomes, but gaining confidence and workforce experience that will generate benefits for years to come.

## Community Renewal

For Red Lake Nation citizens, the recovery has led to new pride in themselves and in the tribe. Together, they accomplished something rare and remarkable—they restored a resource given by the Creator to the people. Although the moratorium created a gap in tribal citizens' engagement with fishing and in the generation-to-generation sharing of knowledge about fishing, interest in fishing did not decline. When Red Lake was once again open for subsistence and commercial fishing, tribal citizens (even younger tribal citizens, who had limited experience with fishing) seized the opportunity. As noted, fishing became an occupation again, and many more tribal citizens engaged in small-scale "recreational commercial" fishing. But many have found that financial benefits are only the tip of the iceberg. While fishing, parents spend quality time with their children; youth learn work values; and family members strengthen their bonds with one another, the lake, Ojibwe culture, and the Nation.

4 Red Lake Nation law restricts fishing on tribally controlled Red Lake waters to tribal citizens.

## GOVERNANCE SUCCESS

While many factors contributed to the success of the Red Lake walleye recovery effort, much credit is due to the Red Lake Nation's effective exercise of self-determination, sovereignty, and self-governance. For example:

- The Red Lake Nation acted proactively in taking a leadership position on the fishing ban. It greatly desired the state of Minnesota's cooperation but wasn't willing to wait for the state before itself taking steps to encourage the walleye's return. The Nation's decision to become a "Self-Governance" tribe was helpful in this regard. Self-Governance status allowed the Nation to assume administration of vital tribal programs (including the Red Lake DNR), swiftly enact the fishing moratorium, and implement recovery efforts free of the BIA's bureaucracy.

- The Nation invested people and money in the process of walleye recovery. It hired knowledgeable biologists and enforcement personnel, invested in cutting-edge scientific data collection and data assessment capacities, and split the financial costs of the recovery effort with the state. The tribe's investments in skilled personnel and data capacities had the additional payoff of positioning the Nation as an authority on Red Lake's health and how best to manage it.

- The Nation's leaders did not politicize recovery management. Three different tribal chairmen served during the walleye fishing moratorium and Tribal Council membership varied, but these political changes did not alter the tribe's support for the technical committee. Nor did new elected leadership recall appointees and replace them with political allies. Throughout these critical years, Red Lake leaders were committed to the strategic composition of the technical committee and to allowing the Nation's natural resource managers to do their jobs.

- Tribal government operations and decisions relating to the recovery were made transparent to Nation citizens. Citizens were kept informed through public meetings, print media, and identified points of contact. This engagement was essential to gaining tribal citizens' trust, generating a community-wide commitment to the recovery effort and motivating adherence to the walleye fishing ban.

*"I haven't spent this quality time with my boys since they were young."*

**— A Red Lake Nation citizen and mother**

- The Red Lake Nation engaged with the state of Minnesota on a government-to-government basis, which positioned the tribe as an equal rather than a subordinate in all work that followed. The MOU memorialized and institutionalized this understanding, which has helped it last. The government-to-government approach also generates respect for treaty rights, gives legitimacy to tribal ways of doing business (consensus decision making, for example), and creates respect for tribal ways of knowing.

Today, "business as usual" is very different that it was in 1999, when both the Red Lake Nation and state of Minnesota finally suspended all walleye fishing on Red Lake. Red Lake produces so many walleye that some have dubbed it a walleye "factory" (Smith 2012). Where a lack of regulation once was the norm, the walleye harvest now is managed methodically and cautiously in accordance with a strategic plan for long-term sustainability. A lake-wide quota, based on the health of the spawning walleye stock, is allocated proportionately to the Nation and the state based on their fractional ownership of Red Lake. Renewed in 2010, the Red Lake Nation-State of Minnesota MOU continues to guide the two governments' mutually beneficial management activities on Red Lake (Dokken 2014). The Nation and the state regularly collaborate to educate the public about fish population management, enforce walleye fishing regulations, collect and share data, and plan new projects. The Nation has proven that a hook-and-line commercial fishery is feasible—even for one of the largest freshwater fisheries in the United States. Ecologically viable economic ventures—walleye harvesting, processing, and sales; sport fishing (on the state side) and pleasure fishing (on the tribal side); camping and other lakeside recreation; wild rice cultivation; pleasure boating; and so on—are thriving. In the midst of all of this activity, the technical committee serves as an effective, dynamic mechanism through which the Red Lake Nation can advance the prerogative of its citizens to "never again allow their self-proclaimed 'food store' or 'storehouse' to run dry" (Kolpack 2006, p. 1).

Because of the Red Lake Nation's governance success, the walleye can bring untold future generations of Red Lake people the same physical and cultural sustenance that they brought their ancestors. The Red Lake Nation's walleye recovery was not just a short-term success, but a long-term one as well.

Photo courtesy of Al Pemberton.

*"If someone would have said to me in 1999, 'Where would you like to be in 2014?' I would describe right where we're at right now. If they'd asked the likelihood of that happening, I would have said 'remote.' [Today] we're in a really good place."*

**— Henry Drewes, Bemidji region fisheries supervisor, Minnesota DNR**

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