

MEDIA RELEASE



Maw-lukutijik **Saqmaq**
Assembly of Nova Scotia
Mi'kmaw Chiefs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Potlotek and DFO Find a Cooperative Way Forward

Since the launch of the Mi'kmaw Treaty Rights-based fishery last fall, many Mi'kmaw harvesters have had First Nation authorized gear and equipment seized. Tomorrow, that will change for the harvesters from Potlotek First Nation. Potlotek's authorized harvesters, fishing under their community's Netukulimk Livelihood Fisheries Plan, will return to the waters to fish for a moderate livelihood, in the Spring 2021 fishery, on Saturday, June 5th.

Like many Mi'kmaw communities, Potlotek has been working with community members to develop a Netukulimk Livelihood Fisheries Plan, that outlines and provides community authority and management for their Constitutionally protected Right to fish for a moderate livelihood. Potlotek's authorized harvesters will be able to fish and sell, pursuant to their Right and according to their community Plan, with the cooperation of Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

"We didn't sign any agreements – I told my community members that we wouldn't. Through talks, we were able to come to an understanding with DFO," said Chief Wilbert Marshall, Potlotek First Nation. "We were open and transparent. We built a solid Plan, that laid out our tagging and reporting structures, and are developing Enforcement Protocols with DFO's Conservation and Protection branch. We went through all the formal processes and consulted on every part of what our harvesters wanted to do."

More discussions will need to be had on future seasons and fisheries.

"We know that this is an interim solution, but it is a good first step. We wanted to see our people be able to earn a good, honest living. For us, that included doing so through what has been a part of our culture since time immemorial - fishing," said Chief Marshall.

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs supports decisions made by the Mi'kmaw communities on how they will proceed with their Netukulimk Livelihood Fishery and sees today's announcement from Potlotek as part of rebuilding the Nation-to-Nation relationship with Canada on this extremely important matter.

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