

MEDIA RELEASE

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

Kespukwitk Communities' Livelihood Harvest Moves Forward

Since the launch of the Mi'kmaw Treaty Rights-based fishery in Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaw communities in the traditional Mi'kmaw district of Kespukwitk - Acadia, Annapolis Valley, Bear River and Glooscap First Nations - have been working together on a livelihood plan for their shared waters and resources. On October 14, 2021, understanding that not all communities will be launching their fisheries on that date, the Kespukwitk District Netukulimk Livelihood Fisheries Plan will take effect.

The Kespukwitk district has been working with community members to develop a Netukulimk Livelihood Fisheries Plan to provide an interim approach to collective administration of communal livelihood fisheries access and management for the Constitutionally protected Right to fish for a moderate livelihood.

"For the Kespukwitk district, it was important that we built a collective approach to livelihood fisheries for conservation and stewardship reasons," said Chief Gerald Toney, Annapolis Valley First Nation and Assembly's Fisheries Lead.

"We are neighbours and Treaty partners here in Kespukwitk," said Chief Carol Potter, Bear River First Nation. "That is why it was so important for our communities to work together on how we would manage and use the resources in our district."

The Kespukwitk communities continued the path established by Potlotek First Nation to see their harvesters take to the waters with mutual understandings and cooperation with DFO.

"It is important that Mi'kmaw harvesters can exercise their Rights without fear of their gear and equipment being seized. That is why we have been open and transparent, sharing our plan with DFO from the onset," said Chief Sidney Peters, Glooscap First Nation and Assembly Co-Chair.

"Our communities have worked together to build a solid plan, and we took it through all the formal processes, including consultation with Canada. DFO is fully aware of our plans moving forward," said Chief Deborah Robinson, Acadia First Nation and Assembly's Governance Lead.

For the interim, the Kespukwitk District Collective Fisheries Committee will be testing collective Mi'kmaw self-governance strategies, with the management of 3500 lobster traps, to support livelihood opportunities fishing lobster in the waters in and around the Kespukwitk District.

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs continues to be supportive of how the Mi'kmaw communities decide to proceed with their Netukulimk Livelihood Fishery plans.

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