MEETINGS WITH LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERS
ON REVISIONING LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

A REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Attachments

Attachment A: Record of Community Meetings

Attachment B: Meetings with Fishers, Concerns with Revising the Fisheries Management Plan. A presentation to the Lake Winnipeg Fishery Co-Management Board. Power Point Presentation April 28, 2016

Attachment C: Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. Power Point presentation given at meetings with fishers.

Acknowledgement

Fishers gave generously of their time to enter into discussions about revising fisheries management for Lake Winnipeg. It was particularly interesting and productive to meet with fishers in their home communities. Their gracious reception was most appreciated.
MEETINGS WITH LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERS
ON REVISING LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

1. Introduction

In November 2015 the provincial government announced it would; “undertake comprehensive action on the sustainability of Manitoba’s fisheries …… by developing and implementing modern and comprehensive management plans in co-operation with the province’s commercial fishers.” This action follows the release of a report by Seafood Watch in October 2015. That report gave four species (walleye, lake whitefish, northern pike, and yellow perch), an overall “Avoid” recommendation, advising consumers not to purchase these fish from Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba or Lake Winnipegosis.

Developing a fisheries management plan for Manitoba that meets international standards requires collaboration with fishers. Successful management strategies require acceptance and compliance. Fishers, however, have deep concerns about the impact of regulatory changes on their incomes and assets. Coming to an understanding with the fishers on core concerns is a path that may lead to agreement on making the management changes that balance fisher’s concerns with changes required to implement a different way of managing the fishery. Reaching a potential agreement requires a process that is respectful, incorporates local knowledge and addresses concerns of the participants.

In undertaking this work it was proposed to:

- Define parameters of a revised management plan: actions, costs, timelines and responsibilities;
- Work with commercial fishers to identify their concerns about a new management structure;
- Identify solutions; and
- Create a negotiating table to seek resolution of points of conflict.

The important step in this approach was to meet with fishers and identify concerns that the government needs to address. Meetings were held with fishers in ten communities around Lake Winnipeg. At each meeting a presentation was made as to the broad nature of what might be involved with a revised management plan. Fishers were then asked to comment and describe concerns they might have with changes necessary to working within a new structure. This process was sometimes less than smooth because fishers felt strongly that the Seafood Watch report (and especially how it was reported in the media) was flawed and the fact that there is still a successful fishery on the lake after more than 100 years of commercial fishing demonstrates that it is a sustainable fishery that doesn’t need change.

Following the community-based meetings, a meeting was held of the Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Co-Management Board on April 28, 2016. The results of community meetings with fishers were presented in summary form and then distilled into core issues. Management Board representatives were asked to

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1 Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch: Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg, and Lake Winnipegosis
Midwater Gillnet, October 6, 2015
confirm whether the core issues reasonably reflected what the government would need to address in order to proceed collaboratively with a revised management system. The fishers listened to the presentation of issues but decided not take the next step of agreeing with it. The expressed concern was that agreeing to a list of issues was tantamount to agreeing to a process that would lead to a new management structure. And fisher’s deep concerns about impacts on operations made them reluctant to take this step which would be seen as a commitment to proceed.

While there was little direction coming from the Co-Management Board meeting, there is at least one overarching issue that came out at every community meeting and has been raised in technical reports and supported by professional opinion, some of which are noted later in this report: that is the need to put in place a better process for determining the status of fish stocks on Lake Winnipeg. This is a necessary pre-condition for any modern management plan and is the “the fundamental issue “why the Seafood Watch report gave Manitoba an avoid rating.

A sustainable fishery is a great benefit for all Manitobans. A basic objective of natural resource management, in every sector, is to manage resources on a sustainable basis. Achieving sustainability produces a stream of employment and income and a wholesome food supply in perpetuity. It is a valuable outcome.

The following report presents concerns and issues that came out the meetings with fishers and provides rationale for making a single recommendation respecting the need for a better process to monitor and assess stocks. While this work with fishers was focused on Lake Winnipeg, the recommendation has application throughout the Manitoba commercial fishery.
2. Fisheries Management Overview

The intent of the government was to work with fishers to develop an enhanced fisheries management plan that has the potential to:

1) Maximize long term yields;
2) Make the fishery capable of certification and to not receive an "avoid" rating by uninvited NGOs;
3) Enhance the supply chain, increasing returns to fishers;
4) Maintain quota value; and
5) Conform to international standards.

This is not a technical report. Some background, however, is useful to understanding the issues. At a high level, the Lake Winnipeg commercial fishery is allocated to fishers on the basis of individual transferable Quota Entitlements (QE’s). The QE system was introduced in the early 1980s to replace the previous system of lake quota. There is a limit as to how many QEs can be held by any one fisher, and quotas are restricted to community licence areas to try to maintain the fishery in communities around the lake.

QE’s, which have been in place for about 30 years, give fishers a property interest in the fishery and they can be bought, sold, traded and transferred. Many of the QEs held by commercial fishers have been purchased. Some fishers have loans associated with their QEs and many see the value of their QEs as being an important retirement asset. The value of quota is a significant issue.

The QE system, however, is problematic when compared to international standards. The QE gives fishers the right to fish irrespective of the status of the stocks. Whether fish are abundant or under stress, fishers are entitled to catch whatever amount is listed on their licence. At a very broad level, in a plan that were to meet international standards, the annual quota would be based on an assessment of stocks. In fisheries jargon there would be an “adaptive co-management process of stock assessment”. If commercial stocks are deemed to be under stress, the quota is reduced and vice versa. There are other factors as well, but the core change would be that the amount of fish that could be caught under the existing QE would be subject to change from time to time rather than fixed.

Some fishers argued that this is a moot point. They have argued that the fishery effectively operates in exactly the same way as has been proposed. Fishers have experienced cycles in the fishery. And as stocks are in decline, fishers reduce their effort due to declining economic returns. In other words, it is maintained that there is already a self regulating mechanism within the fishery.

Certification\(^2\) of the fishery is a distinct issue but one that can only be achieved with a modern management plan. It is not clear, however, whether certification would bring much in the way of improved sales and prices to Manitoba fishers, especially in the immediate term. There are major food chains in Canada and Manitoba that only sell fish that are certified. Their policies, presumably, would preclude selling fish from Manitoba lakes. For the most part, however, these chains are not the market for Manitoba fish. While one of the risks faced by Manitoba fishers is lack of certification (buyers may

\(^2\) Certification: generally, a third party process to provide assurance that a commercial fishery is sustainable. There are number of certifying agencies. The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification is one that is recognised worldwide.
one day demand it) the majority of fishers (with some notable exceptions) have yet to be convinced that it is a material consideration.

3. Meetings with Fishers

Broad categories of fisher’s concerns include economic impacts and management impacts. The solutions to the first category likely include the willingness of government to finance transition costs to a new management structure. The second includes possible roles for fishers to participate more fully in management decisions and in particular in assessment of stocks.

In February and March meetings were held in 10 communities around Lake Winnipeg.

Each meeting was recorded and notes sent back to each community to ensure meeting notes accurately reflected discussion in the meeting. The Record of Meeting for each community are presented in full in Attachment A.

At the April 28th meeting of the Lake Winnipeg Fishery Co-Management Board a presentation was made as to the discussions held with each of the ten communities (Attachment B).

To facilitate discussion topics raised at communities were summarized into categories:

- Financial Issues
- Management
- Certification
- Environment
- Equity
- Seafood Watch Report; and
- Questions

There were common themes at the community meetings. Some issues (described here as consensus issues) came up at every meeting. Other issues were unique to two or three communities and north basin communities had particular issues related to their higher costs and other disadvantages.

These issues were not prioritized, analyzed or subject to commentary – they were presented to the Co-Management board, and in this report, simply as the opinions as expressed by fishers and recorded at each meeting. Fisheries managers and staff have a different understanding of some of the issues presented here but this report is about identifying fisher’s issues and concerns and as much as possible
in their own words. The exploration of other opinions will come about if and when the process for a revised management strategy unfolds.

3.1. Fisher's Comments and Concerns

**Financial Issues**

- **Any reduction in quota is a serious issue for fishers.** It affects income and value of the quota. Many of the fishers on Lake Winnipeg have acquired their quota through purchases and many have debts/loans associated with their quota. Individual fishers have a lot at stake and have deep financial concerns about regulatory change that affect quota value.

- Any notion of a variable quota must be in the context of quota buy-out not a percentage reduction in quota.

- Buy-out must be in the nature of willing buyer/willing seller

- Smaller fishers are most at risk from quota reduction

- Cutting quota in small and remote communities is an issue. The industry is already precarious and a cut in local quota could put the local fishery over the tipping point. In remote communities there are not many alternative sources of work – fishing is it. Reductions hit harder in those circumstances and will also cut employment insurance (EI) earnings

- Selling quota is a short-term solution for fishers. It is money upfront but also a permanent loss of annual income. Selling quota is only a solution when a fisher wants to retire. It is a retirement asset.

**Management Issues**

**Ability to determine status of stocks**

- Fishers don’t believe government has the capability to estimate the status of fish stocks
  - Budgets have been cut
  - Fishers have not been part of the assessment process

- It was noted that it would take some years of gathering scientific data and collaboration with fishers to develop a reasonable and reliable estimate of the fish stocks on Lake Winnipeg.

- Fishers stated that government relies on deliveries as an indication of stock condition and availability. However, deliveries do not account for the impact of flood related evacuations on production in area six (Dauphin River). Catch data since 2011 reflects the lack of access to the lake more than the health of the stocks. Additionally, fish landings usually reflect more what is required by the market than availability of fish stocks.

- Fishing effort needs to be tracked.
**Fishers Participation**

- Fishers opinions are not sought out and/or ignored. Any new initiative on the part of government has to be done in the context of co-science; fishers and scientists working together to determine the status of the fish stocks.

- Fishers self-monitor. They know better than anyone the health of the fish stock. Any determination about the health of the stock has to include much greater input from fishers. “Fishermen are the knowledge-holders but government does not involve fishers in management decisions”.

- There are fishers who would like to see eco-certification but they want to be much more involved in determination of the status of the stocks. They need to see greater use being made of local knowledge.

**Single Species Quota**

- A system that involves single species quota was seen by the fishers as impractical and unworkable.

- Fishers noted the nature of the fishery is that every net will catch what it catches – not a fish mandated by government. A new management plan that includes single species quota will fail.

- One community suggested that to reduce waste, whitefish should be taken off the quota. This would allow delivery of all fish that are caught. Since some of the unwanted fish are bushed it would not change mortality by opening the quota but it would reduce waste, increase deliveries and fisher’s income.

**By-Catch**

There has to be a better way to manage by-catch. While there have been attempts to find markets this has to be improved so as to augment fisher’s income and to reduce waste.

**Enforcement Issues**

- There is a need to better monitor and enforce fishing regulations.

- Better enforcement against black market practices.

- Keep quota within the community Licence Areas.

- Review the practice of renting out quota.
**Government relations**

- Biologists don’t attend / rarely attend community meetings
- Government/ fishers relationship is poor and needs to be fixed

**General**

- Historically the lake has governed itself. When stocks are low, effort is reduced and vice-versa.
- The Co-Management board has failed. Fishers attend but do not believe it has influence over management decisions

**Certification**

- There is soft support for certification but there is a deep suspicion of government. Fishers would need to see how certification could be accomplished without the cost being borne by the fishers.
- It is not clear to fishers that certification will result in increased prices or other benefits
- Fishers do not believe that a revised fisheries management plan, as a pre-cursor of certification, would produce tangible benefits for the fishery
  - Is there any example of a before and after that shows the outcomes?
- There is lack of trust – if quota becomes variable it is seen as a one-way street. Reductions but never an increase
- **Before any steps are taken on certification the government has to first resolve how it will properly monitor and assess fish stocks.**

**Environment**

- Government inaction on the environmental health of Lake Winnipeg is affecting the fishery.
- The health of the fish stock has been adversely affected by a number of things:
  - Reach (3) of the Emergency Outlet Channel (emergency outlet from Lake St. Martin to Lake Winnipeg built in 2011) has brought debris into the lake, silted spawning beds and diverted spawning fish into the Reach 3 channel where they were stranded and die;
  - The operation of the Portage Diversion has continued to impact fisheries; and
  - Inability of the government to deal with run-off and pollution has promoted algae growth
• It is unreasonable for the government to look to cutting back on quota when the health of the fish stock has been affected by environmental factors that are within the responsibility of government. “Fishers don’t damage the lake – they are there to catch fish”.

• Making changes to quota should only be done while taking steps to improve the health of the lake.

• Fishers do not want to manage the fishery to satisfy environmentalists

**Equity**

• North basin fishers feel they are at a disadvantage compared to south basin. Higher costs, less quota.

• Sports fishery should not be given a free ride. If commercial fishery is reduced – sports fishery should see a similar reduction.

• Cutting back on the commercial harvest to support angling would impose a hardship. Income from the sports fishing trade does not come to commercial fishing communities. People catering to sports fishing may make more money but cutting back on commercial fishing in favour of angling will be at the expense of small communities. Benefits and costs fall unevenly around the lake.

**Seafood Watch Report**

• Fishers were not pleased that the government and media did not support the fishers and the Lake Winnipeg fishery.

• Seafood Watch did not talk to any of the fishers when they completed their assessment. If they had engaged fishers, they would have come to a different conclusion.

**Questions**

• Can an example (case study) be provided of a “before and after” where a revised management system has been put in place so fishers can see what benefits have been achieved elsewhere?

• Would a variable quota apply to the whole lake or could it be different for north and south basins?

• Under the proposed new management system what happens when the quota for each species is reached? Fishers can’t control by-catch. If they have filled their walleye quota and continue to fish for whitefish, they will certainly still catch some walleye. How will this be managed?
Would the government consider going back to trap net fishing? There are days where fishers have to discard thousands of pounds of fish because they cannot check their nets for three days.

4. Other Perspectives

The Lake Winnipeg Quota Review Task Force\(^3\) in their Technical Assessment of the Status, Health and Sustainable Harvest Levels of the Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Resource in 2011 stated that:

“As a result of our work the Task Force has reached three major conclusions as follows:

1. The available fisheries information and analysis from MFB [Manitoba Fisheries Branch] monitoring and research programs, fisheries harvest data from the FFMC, fishers’ knowledge of the fishery, and results from other government, university, non-government organizations and the private sector are inadequate to determine absolute estimates of current or past biological productivity for Lake Winnipeg. The proper application of standard stock assessment methods based on biomass or indices is impossible with the data at hand.

2. Due to the lack of data we are unable to recommend either increases or decreases in the total RAH [recommended annual harvest] of 6.52 million kg for the Lake.

3. The uncertainty and lack of adequate information to make informed decisions about possible changes in RAHs will continue unless there are changes made to data collection systems by the MFB, FFMC and fishers, and additional research is carried out to enhance our understanding of the fishery, the fish and the broader ecosystem.”

\(^3\) Lake Winnipeg Quota Review Task Force\(^3\): Technical Assessment of the Status, Health and Sustainable Harvest Levels of the Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Resource, January 11, 2011
The Seafood Watch Report stated that: “Ultimately, the four assessed species receive overall “Avoid” recommendations. The fundamental issue that precludes higher scores is a pervasive lack of stock status and fishing mortality information (emphasis added) and a secondary contributor is an apparent lack of reference points and harvest control rules”.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the meetings with fishers several issues emerged which could be classified as consensus issues. These are issues that came up at every community meeting, which seemed to be well grounded, and held by most, if not all, of the fishers at each meeting. These consensus issues were presented at the meeting of April 28th as those issues that reflected the core concerns of fishers and as those issues that the government needs to address in order to move forward with a revised management plan on a collaborative basis.

These consensus issues as presented were:

**Respect**
- Lake Winnipeg fishers have a long and proud history in the fishing industry and changes (if any) need to be introduced in a collaborative and respectful manner.

**Financial Considerations**
- Regulations must not cause quota to lose value and/or reduce incomes
  - If there is to be a reduction in quota it must be a buy-out on the basis of willing buyer/ willing seller and not a general reduction in QE.

**Fisheries Management**
- The government needs an Improved ability to estimate stocks
  - Greater use must be made of fisher’s/ local knowledge
- Multi-species quota must be maintained; and
- There has to be a better way to manage by-catch. While there have been attempts to find markets this has to be done to augment fisher’s income and to reduce waste.

At the point in the Co-Management Board meeting when the fishers were asked for commentary on the consensus issues, there was reluctance to proceed. While one community spoke in favour and stated that the core issues as presented did reflect the fisher’s opinions, the concern expressed at the table was that any form of agreement with the results of the meeting would be taken as tacit agreement to proceed with developing a revised management strategy for the lake. And fishers were simply not prepared to do that.
As shown in the community comments (Attachment A) fishers expressed a deep suspicion of government. There was a fundamental concern that in the end this would all work out badly for the fishers, either with increased expenses or reduced quota or other impediments to their incomes and way of life.

**Where to From Here?**

The consensus comment from community visits, the critique by Seafood Watch and others in the science and fisheries community is that there is a great need for a better understanding of the state of the fishery resource. The community meetings also stressed the importance of greater fisher participation in assessing stocks and use of local knowledge.

Based on the stated opinions of fishers, and supported by technical reports and opinion, it is recommend that the government develop a plan to better monitor and assess fish stocks in Lake Winnipeg and that this plan incorporate fisher’s knowledge, experience and expertise.

While focused on the commercial fishery this work should encompass broader conservation and sustainability concerns, indigenous rights based harvest and recreational interests.

It is hoped that implementation of an assessment process incorporating local knowledge will provide an opportunity to improve relations with fishers and that an improved understanding of fish stocks will help remove the “avoid” rating by certification agencies. Successful management requires all participants working together to support common and important objectives.
ATTACHMENT A:

RECORD OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS
RECORD OF MEETINGS
LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERS
February/ April 2016
Thursday February 5, 2016

Meeting location:
The Parsonage
Fisher River First Nation

Attendance:
- Samuel Murdoch, Co-Chair Lake Winnipeg Fishery Co-Management Board and commercial fisherman
- FFMC representatives Dave Bergunder, John Binding
- 17 fishers – Fisher River and McBeth Point-
- Harold Westdal/ Chris Petkeau

Summary of Discussion

Presentation:
A power point presentation explained the purpose of the meeting and helped guide discussion. The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The meeting process was to explore the differences between current management practices and what could be expected under a plan that meets international standards. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with the new plan. The notion is that once the issues are well understood that we would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system. Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

Financial
- Reductions in quota will mean a loss of income for fishers; and
- Quota reductions will affect the value of Quota Entitlements.

Management
- There are concerns about how to plan annual and long-term operations. If fishers agree to the EFMP they want to know how much advance warning they will have about quota changes so they can make appropriate plans for the coming season;
- If the Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan (EFMP) is agreed, fishers want to know the time frame for implementation;
- The EFMP depends on the assessments of the stock and the fishers want their perspectives included and voices considered in these assessments. They need assurance local knowledge will be considered;
• Fishers are uncertain that government biologists and scientific method can accurately assess the condition of stocks. As the EFMP relies extensively on assessment of the stock and adaptive management and as fishers income is affected by these decisions there is concern as to process and accuracy of the assessments;
• Who is going to conduct the science? And, what evidence is there that stocks can be reasonably estimated?
  o Fisher River cited cases where they felt misinformed on fish stocks and noted the government has cut biologist and technician jobs on Lake Winnipeg and reduced index netting. Given the current state of management can an accurate picture of stocks be developed?

Equity
• Commercial fishers don’t want to singled out in this plan, or be the first ones affected by a variable quota system. If quotas are reduced they want to see sport fishers having to make adjustments as well.

Environment
• Fishers noted that environmental health of the lake may be as much a factor in the health of the fish population as harvest levels. Reducing quota when the population is under stress due to pollution means that fishers are paying the price for poor environmental standards. Agriculture, land drainage and hydro operations were cited.

Questions
• Are variable quotas going to affect the whole lake or just parts of it? For example, could there be a quota reduction in the north basin but not the south?
• If there are individual quotas for each species what happens when one of the quotas is filled. Can the fishers continue to fish their quotas for other species?
• Fisher River wants to know where EFMP plan is coming from:
  o Who developed it?
  o Is it an adaptation of many plans?
  o Which test cases were used in generating this plan?
• Who will manage Lake Winnipeg and the fishers?
• How will the province handle bushing and the potential for a growing black market trade?
Tuesday February 9, 2016
10:00 AM

Meeting location:
Norway House Fisherman’s Co-op
Norway House First Nation

Attendance:
- Langford Saunders, commercial fisherman and co-op manager
- 23 fishers
- Harold Westdal/ Thomas Henley

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Presentation:
A power point presentation explained the purpose of the meeting and helped guide discussion. The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The meeting process was to explore the differences between current management practices and what could be expected under a plan that meets international standards. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with the new plan. The notion is that once the issues are well understood that we would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system. Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

Financial
- Norway House quota is held by the co-op and does not trade. The value of the quota is not an issue for Norway House fishers but a reduction in quota will hurt fisher’s income and is an issue.
- For Norway House fishers there is not a lot of opportunity to earn other income. While fishing is an important part of Cree culture and heritage the income derived from fishing is more important in Norway House than it is in southern communities. Fishers noted that as they are mostly a whitefish fishery that their incomes are less than fishers who have greater access to walleye.

Management
- There was substantial concern about the ability of government to determine the health of the fish stock. They were particularly skeptical of the ability of anyone to assess fish stocks by largely relying on data provided by FFMC. Fishers made the case that they needed greater involvement in stock assessment. They “need to be involved”.
Norway House fishers noted substantial differences in the north basin fishery compared to the south basin. They noted it may not be possible to have a plan that suits all parts of the fishery. They noted that even now fishers in the south basin seem to use different mesh sizes that are required in the north basin.

It was noted that as quota is reduced there will be a growing need for enforcement to deal a potential increase in black market sales.

In general Norway house fishers would like to see eco-certification and are amenable to variable/adjustable quotas that would be part of a new management structure but they want to be much more involved in determination of the status of the stocks. They need to see greater use being made of local knowledge.

Environment
Fishers expressed concern about the potential impact of zebra mussels and the unknown effect it might have on fish stocks. They would like an update on the zebra mussel situation and how far north they have spread.

Other
Fishers have concerns that as they are forced to move further into the south basin that they are at greater risk from bad weather. Some of the creeks that they had used as shelter are silted in and no longer available to fishermen. They want some consideration given to emergency shelters.

Questions
Is it possible to implement the Enhanced Fishery Management Plan in the north basin?
Will variable quota be set by region or will they be lake-wide?
Is there an explanation as to what has happened to the smelt population and how this has affected other species?
There is a need to better understand fish migration between the north and south basins.
Tuesday February 9, 2016
1:30 PM

Meeting location:
Parish Hall
Grand Rapids First Nation

Attendance:
- Albert Ross, commercial fisherman and representative on the Lake Winnipeg Fishery Co-Management Board
- Ken Cook and Gabriel Cook, commercial fishermen
- Harold Westdal/ Thomas Henley

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Presentation:
A power point presentation explained the purpose of the meeting and helped guide discussion. The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The meeting process was to explore the differences between current management practices and what could be expected under a plan that meets international standards. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with the new plan. The notion is that once the issues are well understood that we would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system. Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

Financial
- Reductions in quota will mean a loss of income for fishers but of equal concern is the potential impact on Employment Insurance benefits. For a small quota these benefits are $780 bi-weekly. An important source of income for the local community.
- Quota in the Grand Rapids CLA sell in the range of $12,000 for a 2727 kg quota and $15,000 to $20,000 for a 3810 quota (about $2 per pound for whitefish and walleye and more in the south basin)

Management
- Typically, the fishers in Grand Rapids hold 2.5 Quota Entitlements with fishers new to the industry holding one;
- Fishers noted that the fishery in the north basin is different than the south basin fishery. The south basin gets to use smaller mesh size. They note that in the south basin that the winter
whitefish quota can be filled mainly with walleye but the Grand Rapids fishers have difficulty catching walleye in the winter.

- Whitefish and whitefish roe were noted as important to fisher’s income
- From time to time fishers may be unable to fish their quota. Another fisher may help out and fish the quota. However, there are other fishers who have quit fishing and essentially rent out their quota. This is a problem for the industry and these quotas should probably be bought out.
- If quota reduction was necessary, it was suggested that government look at quota buy-out but just for a period of five years.
- In recent years the government has opened up the north basin too early. The reason being fish in the south basin have spawned but the north basin has only spawned 60-70%. Pressure to open up the north basin as the same time as the south has hurt the north basin fishery.
- There was concern about the ability of government to assess fish stocks for the purposes of setting quota.
  - The government does not provide enough resources to monitor the fishery. Grand Rapids only has one resource officer to monitor both Lake Winnipeg and Cedar Lake.
  - First Nations need to be involved by hiring reserve technicians to monitor fishers
- Lack of enforcement. The government does not have the willingness to enforce regulations. Fishers with rotten fish in their nets only get a fine and are allowed to continue to fish. This demoralises the Resource Officer and sends the wrong message to fishers
- The importance of stewardship of fishing for future generations and the Cree culture was noted.

**Environmental**

- Fish migration to south basin may be a response to algae blooms and has implications for regional management and abundance studies;

**Questions**

- Under the proposed new management system what happens when the quota for each species is reached? Fishers can’t control by-catch. If they have filled their walleye quota and continue to fish for whitefish, they will certainly catch other species. How will this be managed?
- Would the government consider going back to trap net fishing? There are days where fishers have to discard thousands of pounds of fish because they cannot check their nets for three days.
Tuesday February 23, 2016
10:00 AM

Meeting location:
Victoria Inn
Winnipeg

Attendance:
- Chief John Stagg, Councillor Leonard Sumner, Dale Einarsson (Area 6 Representative on the Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Co-Management Board)
- 10 commercial fishers
- Harold Westdal

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Presentation:
A power point presentation explained the purpose of the meeting and helped guide discussion. The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The meeting process was to explore the differences between current management practices and what could be expected under a plan that meets international standards. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with the new plan. The notion is that once the issues are well understood that we would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system. Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

Financial
- Fishing has an operations side and a business side. Most fishermen don’t have time to adequately deal with the business side. This is especially true of the smaller fishers.
- Reductions in quota would be hardest for small fishers to deal with. There is a concern that a reduction for single quota fishers would effectively put them out of business.
- Fishers don’t have pensions but their efforts create jobs with pensions for staff at FFMC. There needs to be consideration given to fishermen on retirement.
- Changes in definitions of medium whitefish imposed by FFMC has cost fishers a lot of lost income.
- The cost of certification is an issue. Fishers cannot afford the cost of maintaining the certificate.
Management

- Current resources and staffing of Conservation and Water Stewardship would not allow the department to reasonably determine the health of fish stocks. There have been cut-backs in staff and budgets. In recent years they have only set test nets as far north as Hecla with no test netting at all in the north basin.
- Government has cut back on stocking. There used to be a fish hatchery a Dauphin River but it was closed in 1985.
- Fisheries statistics do not reflect the lack of fishing in area six due to evacuations. Using catch data since 2011 reflects more the lack of access to the lake than the health of the stocks.
- Seafood Watch did not talk to any of the fishers when they completed their assessment. If they had engaged fishers, they would have come to a different conclusion.
- Fishers self-monitor. They know better than anyone the health of the fish stock. Any determination about the health of the stock has to include much greater input from fishers. “Fishermen are the knowledge-holders but government does not involve fishers in management decisions”.
- Steps need to be taken to ensure quota held for area 6 are kept under the control of people living in the area. Otherwise the fishing industry will gradually move away from Dauphin River and fishing is the one reliable sources of income available in this region.
- There is a difference between south basin and north basin that need to be addressed.
- Any change to the quota system has to accommodate the small fishers or they will all be driven out of the industry.

Environmental

- The health of the fish stock has been adversely affected by a number of things:
  - Reach 3 of the Emergency Outlet Channel has brought debris into the lake, silted spawning beds and diverted spawning fish into the Reach 3 channel where they were stranded and died;
  - The operation of the Portage Diversion has continued to impact fisheries; and
  - Inability of the government to deal with run-off and pollution has promoted algae growth
- It is unreasonable for the government to look to cutting back on quota when the health of the fish stock has been affected by environmental sources within the responsibility of government. “Fishers don’t damage the lake – they are there to catch fish”.
- Making changes to quota should only be done while taking steps to improve the health of the lake.
- Fishers are concerned that government buy-outs in Dauphin River are for the purpose of making it easier to operate Reach 3 and the Portage Diversion.
Questions

- Fishers have had inquiries from Europe about certifying individual fishers for the purpose of purchasing northern pike from them. Can this be accommodated under a revised management system?
- Can an example be provided of a “before and after” a revised management system has been put in place so fishers can see what the impacts and benefits have been elsewhere?
- Would a variable quota apply to the whole lake or could it be different for north and south basins?
Wednesday March 2, 2016
10:00 AM

Meeting location:
Health Centre
Poplar River

Attendance:
- George Franklin, Guy Douglas (Area 8 Representatives on the Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Co-Management Board)
- 9 commercial fishers
- Harold Westdal

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Presentation:
A power point presentation explained the purpose of the meeting and helped guide discussion. The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The meeting process was to explore the differences between current management practices and what could be expected under a plan that meets international standards. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with the new plan. The notion is that once the issues are well understood that we would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system.

Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

Financial
- Fishers had concerns about the financial impact of a reduction in quota. Poplar River fishers typically catch all their quota and any reduction in quota would have a direct impact on income and EI earnings.
- Poplar Rivers fishers are looking for more quota not less.
- Small cuts to fishers that rely on relatively small quotas will have a much bigger impact on than on fishers who have access to much larger quotas. If quota is to be cut the government should first look to fishers who have larger quotas. In Poplar River there are not many alternatives to earning an income.
Management

- The fishers noted that “it would be impossible to have single species quota”. Fish simply will not co-operate. Some whitefish will always be caught while fishing for walleye and vice versa. There is no way to simply catch one species at a time.
- Fishers are uncertain/ unconvinced that a revised management plan would produce much in the way of benefits.
- There was a lack of confidence that government could reasonably determine the health of the fish stocks.
- Delivery of fish is an issue. The “Poplar River” takes too long to pick up and transport fish and in the event of a storm can become wind bound.
- The government must deal more aggressively with the black market for walleye. This practice is distorting the industry.
- Any changes to the fishery should be done with a lot more engagement. Use of local knowledge is important. The people who did the SeafoodWatch review did it without the benefit of talking to fishers. This should not happen again.

Equity

- Poplar River fishers are faced with higher operating costs and higher transportation costs than south basin fishers and are more frequently faced with FFMC delivery restrictions forcing them to cut back or suspend fishing near the beginning of the season. In addition, they note that south basin fishers have larger quota.

Environmental

- There is concern about alga in the north basin. Algae fouls nets and blue-green algae seems to be presenting a health hazard.
Wednesday March 2, 2016
1:30 PM

Meeting location:
Residence of Valerie Disbrowe

Attendance:
- Valerie Disbrowe, Harrison (Area 9 Representatives on the Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Co-Management Board/ board members Berens River fishery)
- Harold Westdal

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Presentation:
A power point presentation explained the purpose of the meeting and helped guide discussion. The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The meeting process was to explore the differences between current management practices and what could be expected under a plan that meets international standards. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with the new plan. The notion is that once the issues are well understood that we would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system. Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

Financial
- The number one issue with a revised management plan is money. Anything that reduces quota affects fisher’s income and will impose a hardship on Berens River fishers. The money issue has to be addressed before fishers would agree to collaborate in a new management plan.

Management
- It was questioned as to “how can fish stocks be determined?”. We go from one year with more fish than we can handle to poor fishing then back again. In poor fishing years it’s hard to break even.
- Any process to determine the health of fish stocks will fail unless there is greater uses made of fisher’s knowledge. The government has to spend more time with fishers. Fishers don’t believe that government can estimate the health of fish stocks unless they work a lot closer with fishers and use their knowledge of the lake.
- More attention has to be paid to the interests of the fishers. You “can govern the lake until you are black and blue but there is no point to it unless the fishers are looked after.” “Look after the fishers before the fish.”
Improvements need to be made to fisheries management. We “need to deal with a lot of poor current practices” before we start making other big changes. We need better enforcement but enforcement has to be based on trust and it is not there.

There is a lack of interest in youth to enter the fishery. This is a great concern to Berens River and needs to be addressed.

**Trust**
- Fishers will not believe that a variable quota system would go up in good years and down in bad. They feel that the quota would be reduced in the new system but never increased. It’s a one-way trip that lacks balance.

**Environmental**
- There is concern about alga in the north basin.
Thursday March 3, 2016

7:00 PM

Meeting location:
Lady of the lake Theatre, The New Iceland Heritage Museum
94 1st Ave. Gimli MB

Attendance:
- Kris Isfeld, Bill Buckles (Area 2 Representatives on the Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Co-Management Board)
- Approximately 50 fishers
- Dave Bergunder, Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation
- Harold Westdal

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Kris Isfeld made opening remarks. Written comments made in an invitation to this meeting included the following:

“What about last years SeaChoice report, that recommended consumers to not buy Manitoba Fish? Surely this report justifies the 2 biologists opinions? This report, created out of California, based on information largely supplied by the aforementioned two biologists, is loaded with inaccurate information, and only really serves to point out that very little "hard" data is available regarding fish stocks in Manitoba Lakes. The Author of this report has likely never set foot in Manitoba. The Report says our Lake is basically "unmanaged ", and that as a result "many fish stocks have collapsed or are severely depleted". Based on the continued consistent success of our Fishery, these statements are completely untrue. “

“So what is the true status of the Lake Winnipeg Fishery? This is a traditional Fishery. A gill net Fishery, largely unchanged for well over 100 years. Fourth and Fifth generation fishers continue their work in nearly identical ways their grandfathers and great grandfathers had so many decades ago. Our marketing system, and our quota system, and our methods of harvest haven't significantly changed in nearly 50 years. Our current management system hasn't changed significantly for nearly 50 years as well. The flexibility built into the current management system (ie multi species quota) has resulted in decades of balance, and success for both fish stocks and for the industry. We have created a system here that works, yet our government is determined to destroy it, by adopting a management system created for ocean fisheries that have repeatedly collapsed. “
Presentations:
Bill Buckles made a presentation (to be attached) summarized as follows:

**Fisheries management**
- Facts demonstrate/prove that theories about the adverse effects of a multi species quota are incorrect. Multi-species quota “remains a sound factual practice”
- The Lake Winnipeg Fishery is in the “healthy zone”. It is low risk.
- Reference indicators are inappropriate and don’t work on Lake Winnipeg

**Economics**
- The equity value of quota is intertwined with the multi-species nature of individual transferable quota. Any change to this will have a negative and unacceptable impact on values
- Declining real prices of fish is a core issue for the Lake Winnipeg fishery. Prices have been declining in real terms and costs have been going up.

Westdal presented slides to explain the purpose of the meeting and to help guide discussion. The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with a new management plan. The notion was that once the issues are well understood that government would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system.

Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

**Seafood Watch Report**
- Fishers felt personally insulted by a report that was characterized in the media as “the worst-managed fishery in the world”
  - They were distraught that the Winnipeg Free Press would report this characterization / slighting the industry and the fishermen without taking a fuller look at the history, management and current state of the fishery.
  - They were upset that the Minister did not defend the industry; and
  - They were upset that staff from the department likely collaborated with Seafood Watch in the preparation of this report.
- Fishers noted that the report was prepared without a single meeting with fishers
- Fishers noted that applying marine standards to a freshwater lake is unreasonable
- The report was seen as blackmail by environmentalists from California who don’t have the interests of the lake or the fishers at heart. “Why would we change a successful fishery just to please a handful of people from California?”
Relations with government

- Never been worse – absolute refusal to attend meetings with fishers
- Quota awarded to north basin fishers without any discussion at the co-management board. The co-management board is seen as a token of cooperation with the fishers

Willingness to collaborate with government on a new fisheries management plan

- Not much:
  - Multi-species quota cannot be touched
  - Any action on quota that is not in the nature of willing buyer- willing seller will be met with legal action
  - “Fishers have always been willing to meet and talk but it is inconceivable that government wants to take us down this path.”
  - Fishers noted that while they are willing to meet and talk it is government biologists who refuse to participate.

Management Issues

- The fishery is not poorly managed. The management system in place has served the fishers and the lake well for many generations but the fishers keep hearing from government that the fishery is on the verge of collapse. This is simply not true.
- Don’t believe characterization of the current model of fisheries management (shown in the presentation) indicating the quota is fixed is accurate – the quota is in fact already variable. And contrary to the presentation bycatch is not ignored.
- The current system of multi-species quota has worked well for generations and should not be touched.
- The middle of north basin has not been fished for years. How could anyone know the state of the stocks there? There is no commercial catch and no index netting there.
- Gimli fishers are not happy with the performance of the fisheries biologists
- Government predictions about the state of the stock have been grossly incorrect.

Economics

- Quota is the real property of the fishers. The government can’t take it and they can’t make changes without the willing consent of the fishers
- If the government wants “variable quota” is has to be done by buying QEs on the basis of willing buyer/ willing seller and not on the basis of some overall percentage reduction of every QE.
- What is really important to the Gimli fishers is maintaining and realizing the cash value of their quotas
Equity

Sports fishing is not subject to the same constraints as commercial fishing. Their season starts before spawning has finished and they are allowed to fish in creeks and rivers while commercial fishers have to set at least one kilometer out.
Tuesday April 5, 2016

10:00 AM

Meeting location:
Matheson Island Community Hall

Attendance:
- Approximately 27 fishers
- Harold Westdal

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Westdal presented slides to explain the purpose of the meeting and to help guide discussion. The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with a new management plan. The notion was that once the issues are well understood that government would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system.

Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

Management Issues
- Fishers noted that a single species quota cannot work. The nature of the fishery is that every net will catch what it catches – not a fish mandated by government. A new management plan that includes single specie quota will fail.
- Fishers believe that once quota is cut that it would never be increased. “Fishermen do not have faith that quota would ever come up.”
- Fishers do not believe that government can determine the status of the fish stocks. Government staff have been cut and they do not have any resources.
- Uncertain that government can work with fishers on a collaborative basis even though “fishers are the #1 source of reliable information”. There “is no better biologist than the fishermen on the lake”. Fishers need to be much more involved in assessing fish stock and management. The Co-Management board does not make any decisions based on the interests or opinions of the fishers. There is no actual co-management.
Fishing on the lake runs in cycles. The cycle is down now but it will come back. “The management system in the lake has been there for 50 years. Why not leave it alone?”

Fishers do not want to manage the lake to satisfy the environmentalists?
If lake certification can only be done by cutting quota there is no benefit to fishers
Matheson Island fishers have a long and proud history in the fishing industry and need changes (if any) to be brought in in a collaborative and respectful manner.

**Economics**
- Cuts to quota would become permanent and impose long-term hardship. This is especially troubling in communities like Matheson Island where there are few other opportunities to make a living. A cut in fishing income cannot be replaced by other sources of income.
- Matheson Island is one of the largest delivery points for walleye in the world and its fishery has to be protected not cut by government action.
- There has to be a better way to manage by-catch. While there have been attempts to find markets this has to be done to augment fisher’s income and to reduce waste.
- Selling quota is a short-term solution for fishers. It is money upfront but also a permanent loss of annual income. Selling quota is only a solution when fisherman want to retire. It is a retirement asset.

**Equity**
- There is concern that government priorities are leaning to sports fishing.
- If there is going to be more controls over commercial harvest, there must be more control over anglers. Anglers take a lot of fish with hardly any enforcement.
- Cutting back on the commercial harvest to support angling would impose a great hardship. Income from the sports fishing trade does not come to commercial fishing communities. People catering to sports fishing might make more money but at the expense of small communities around the lake.

**Seafood Watch Report**
- The authors of the report never talked to fishers and produced a flawed report because of it.
- The Seafood Watch report was a slap in the face.
- This is an issue of the local fishery being driven by environmentalists who have never been on the lake.

**Relations with government**
- Government can’t look after its current obligations. There is no faith that the government can take on new responsibilities. They have failed so far – why would they do better in the future.

**Questions**
• How do you establish a quota on a stock that is cyclical?
• How do you establish a quota on stocks that move between the south and north basin? Quotas will always be out of sync with the movement of the fish.
Tuesday April 5, 2016

2:00 PM

Meeting location:
Riverton Recreation Centre.

Attendance:
- Murray Olafson, Shaun Magnusson and 3 other fishers
- Harold Westdal

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with a new management plan. The notion was that once the issues are well understood that government would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system.

Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

Management Issues
- Fishers noted that government has no idea as to what the status of the stocks are:
  - There is a lack of funding and staff
  - There is a lack of test netting; and
  - No use made of local knowledge.
- It was noted that it would take 5 to 10 years of gathering scientific data and collaboration with fishers to develop a reasonable and reliable estimate of the fish stocks on Lake Winnipeg.
- Fishing effort needs to be tracked.
- Fish landings usually reflect more what is required by the market than availability of fish stocks. Yet government relies on deliveries as an indication of stock condition and availability
- Incorporating local knowledge could be as simple as making phone calls to fishers to check on conditions (which has never been done) to advertising amongst the commercial fishing community every year for a captain to take biologists to the right places for test netting.
- Fishers noted that government failed to predict the walleye build-up in the 2009-2013 period and tried to restrict whitefish harvest right at the time of a very large population in the south basin. Failure to use local knowledge was a big contributing factor to those events.
- Government has very low credibility which makes it difficult for fishers to agree to management changes
• Historically the lake has governed itself. When stocks are low effort is reduced and vice-versa.
• The Co-Management board has failed. Fishers attend but do not believe it has influence over management decisions

**Economics**
• Fishers feel they always lose in new management strategies. The annual income and value of quota is a big issue with all fishermen. Any action that affects quota value will not be accepted.

**Participation in Certification**
• There is soft support for certification but there is a deep suspicion of government. Fishers would need to see how certification could be accomplished without the cost being borne by the fishers. Especially since it is not clear that certification will result in increased prices or other benefits.
• Before any steps are taken on certification the government has to first get itself organized. It has to resolve how it will properly monitor fish stocks before taking other steps.

**Questions**
• What will certification cost the fishers?
Thursday April 7, 2016

2:00 PM

Meeting location:
Hollow Water First Nation Band Office

Attendance:
- Wesley Moneyas and 5 other fishers
- Harold Westdal

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was explained as to determine the interest of fishers in working collaboratively with government to develop an Enhanced Fisheries Management Plan. The discussion was focused on concerns and issues the fishers might have with a new management plan. The notion was that once the issues are well understood that government would look for solutions that would allow the parties to work together on a revised management system.

Listed below are comments and issues raised by the fishers:

Management Issues
- Renting out of quota is a serious issue for Hollow Water. While quota cannot be transferred out of the community licence area, quota is rented to fishers from other areas. This reduces deliveries the Wanipigow Producer Co-op affecting the viability of the station, reduces community income and keeps young people from entering the fishery. Hollow Water would like to see the practice of renting quotas phased out. In 2015 there were 20 quotas rented out.
- Enforcement of regulations seems to be inconsistent and favoring producers from the west side.
- Hollow water is skeptical that a “variable quota” would ever go up. “Once you take a quota away it does not come back. It is an empty promise”.
- Government has cut programs, staff and budget and can no longer properly assess that state of the fishery. The lack of data means there can’t be a new management system. The “fishery can’t be sustainable if you don’t know what the stocks are”.
- The state of the fishery cannot be determined from reading delivery reports. Fishers have to be more involved in assessing the state of the fishery. And right now the government does not make use of local knowledge.
To reduce waste, whitefish should be taken off the quota. This would allow delivery of all fish that are caught. Since most of that fish is bushed it would not change anything other than reducing waste, increasing deliveries and income.

By-catch will be difficult/impossible to manage. It's not clear that a revised management plan will be able to deal with this in a way that does not hurt fishers.

Economics

Cutting quota in Hollow Water is a big issue. The industry is already precarious and a cut in local quota could put the local fishery over the tipping point.

Environment

Water quality on Lake Winnipeg is a growing issue and fishers are being asked to pay the price for it.

Equity

Sports anglers get access to the fish before the commercial fishing season opens. Commercial fishers have to wait until the spawn is 85-90% complete but anglers start in early May. The weekend before the long-weekend. This takes spawning fish out of the lake and may be quite harmful.

It is likely that anglers brought Zebra mussels to the lake on their boats.

Anglers are increasingly moving into rivers on the east side. Directed by social media to hot-spots.

The spots angling issue is one that pits money vs culture and history.
ATTACHMENT B:

MEETINGS WITH FISHERS, CONCERNS WITH REVISING THE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

A PRESENTATION TO THE LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERY CO-MANAGEMENT BOARD
POWER POINT PRESENTATION APRIL 28, 2016
MEETINGS WITH FISHERS

CONCERNS WITH REVISING THE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN
A PRESENTATION TO THE LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERY CO-MANAGEMENT BOARD

April 28 2016
Summary of Issues

The issues identified by fishers were summarized into categories:

- Financial
- Management
- Certification
- Environment
- Equity
- Seafood Watch Report
- Questions
FINANCIAL ISSUES

• ANY REDUCTION IN QUOTA IS A SERIOUS ISSUE FOR FISHERS. IT AFFECTS INCOME AND VALUE OF THE QUOTA. MANY OF THE FISHERS ON LAKE WINNIPEG HAVE ACQUIRED THEIR QUOTA THROUGH PURCHASES AND MANY HAVE DEBTS/LOANS ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR QUOTA. INDIVIDUAL FISHERS HAVE A LOT AT STAKE AND HAVE DEEP FINANCIAL CONCERNS ABOUT REGULATORY CHANGE THAT AFFECT QUOTA VALUE.

• ANY NOTION OF A “VARIABLE QUOTA” MUST BE IN THE CONTEXT OF QUOTA BUY-OUT NOT A PERCENTAGE REDUCTION IN QUOTA.

• BUY-OUT MUST BE IN THE NATURE OF WILLING BUYER/WILLING SELLER
FINANCIAL ISSUES
(CONTINUED)

• SMALLER FISHERS ARE MOST AT RISK FROM QUOTA REDUCTION

• CUTTING QUOTA IN SMALL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES IS AN ISSUE. THE INDUSTRY IS ALREADY PRECARIOUS AND A CUT IN LOCAL QUOTA COULD PUT THE LOCAL FISHERY OVER THE TIPPING POINT. AND, IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES THERE ARE NOT MANY ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF WORK – FISHING IS IT. REDUCTIONS HIT HARDER IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES AND WILL ALSO CUT EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (EI) EARNINGS

• SELLING QUOTA IS A SHORT-TERM SOLUTION FOR FISHERS. IT IS MONEY UPFRONT BUT ALSO A PERMANENT LOSS OF ANNUAL INCOME. SELLING QUOTA IS ONLY A SOLUTION WHEN FISHERMAN WANT TO RETIRE. IT IS A RETIREMENT ASSET.
**MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

**ABILITY TO DETERMINE STATUS OF STOCKS**

- Fishers don’t believe government has the capability to estimate the status of fish stocks
  - Budgets have been cut
  - Fishers have not been part of the assessment process
- It was noted that it would take some years of gathering scientific data and collaboration with fishers to develop a reasonable and reliable estimate of the fish stocks on Lake Winnipeg.
- Government relies on deliveries as an indication of stock condition and availability. However, deliveries do not account for the impact of evacuations on production in area six. Catch data since 2011 reflects the lack of access to the lake more than the health of the stocks. Additionally, fish landings usually reflect more what is required by the market than availability of fish stocks.
- Fishing effort needs to be tracked.
MANAGEMENT ISSUES (CONTINUED)

FISHERS PARTICIPATION

• FISHERS OPINIONS ARE NOT SOUGHT OUT AND/OR IGNORED. ANY NEW INITIATIVE ON THE PART OF GOVERNMENT HAS TO BE DONE IN THE CONTEXT OF CO-SCIENCE; FISHERS AND SCIENTISTS WORKING TOGETHER TO DETERMINE THE STATUS OF THE FISH STOCKS

• FISHERS SELF-MONITOR. THEY KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE THE HEALTH OF THE FISH STOCK. ANY DETERMINATION ABOUT THE HEALTH OF THE STOCK HAS TO INCLUDE MUCH GREATER INPUT FROM FISHERS. “FISHERMEN ARE THE KNOWLEDGE-HOLDERS BUT GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INVOLVE FISHERS IN MANAGEMENT DECISIONS”.

• THERE ARE FISHERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE ECO-CERTIFICATION BUT THEY WANT TO BE MUCH MORE INVOLVED IN DETERMINATION OF THE STATUS OF THE STOCKS. THEY NEED TO SEE GREATER USE BEING MADE OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE
MANAGEMENT ISSUES (CONTINUED)

SINGLE SPECIES QUOTA

• A system that involves single species quota was seen as impractical and unworkable.

• Fishers noted that a single species quota cannot work. The nature of the fishery is that every net will catch what it catches—not a fish mandated by government. A new management plan that includes single species quota will fail.

• One community suggested that to reduce waste, whitefish should be taken off the quota. This would allow delivery of all fish that are caught. Since some of the unwanted fish are bushed it would not change mortality by opening the quota but it would reduce waste, increase deliveries and fishers income.
BY-CATCH

• THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER WAY TO MANAGE BY-CATCH. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTS TO FIND MARKETS THIS HAS TO BE IMPROVED SO AS TO AUGMENT FISHER’S INCOME AND TO REDUCE WASTE.
ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

• THERE IS A NEED TO BETTER MONITOR AND ENFORCE FISHING REGULATIONS

• BETTER ENFORCEMENT OF BLACK MARKET PRACTICES

• KEEP QUOTA WITHIN THE COMMUNITY LICENCE AREA

• ELIMINATE PRACTICE OF RENTING OUT QUOTA
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

• BIOLOGISTS DON’T ATTEND / RARELY ATTEND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

• GOVERNMENT / FISHERS RELATIONSHIP IS POOR AND NEEDS TO BE FIXED
MANAGEMENT ISSUES
(CONTINUED)

GENERAL

• HISTORICALLY THE LAKE HAS GOVERNED ITSELF. WHEN STOCKS ARE LOW, EFFORT IS REDUCED AND VICE-VERSA.

• THE CO-MANAGEMENT BOARD HAS FAILED. FISHERS ATTEND BUT DO NOT BELIEVE IT HAS INFLUENCE OVER MANAGEMENT DECISIONS
CERTIFICATION

- THERE IS SOFT SUPPORT FOR CERTIFICATION BUT THERE IS A DEEP SUSPICION OF GOVERNMENT. FISHERS WOULD NEED TO SEE HOW CERTIFICATION COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT THE COST BEING BORNE BY THE FISHERS.
- IT IS NOT CLEAR TO FISHERS THAT CERTIFICATION WILL RESULT IN INCREASED PRICES OR OTHER BENEFITS
- FISHERS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT A REVISED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN WOULD PRODUCE TANGIBLE BENEFITS FOR THE FISHERY
  - IS THERE ANY EXAMPLE OF A BEFORE AND AFTER THAT SHOWS THE OUTCOMES?
- THERE IS LACK OF TRUST – IF QUOTA BECOMES VARIABLE IT IS SEEN AS A ONE-WAY STREET. REDUCTIONS BUT NEVER AN INCREASE
- BEFORE ANY STEPS ARE TAKEN ON CERTIFICATION THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO FIRST RESOLVE HOW IT WILL PROPERLY MONITOR AND ASSESS FISH STOCKS.
ENVIRONMENT

• GOVERNMENT INACTION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OF LAKE WINNIPEG IS AFFECTING THE FISHERY.

• THE HEALTH OF THE FISH STOCK HAS BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY A NUMBER OF THINGS:
  • REACH (3) OF THE EMERGENCY OUTLET CHANNEL HAS BROUGHT DEBRIS INTO THE LAKE, SITED SPAWNING BEDS AND DIVERTED SPAWNING FISH INTO THE REACH 3 CHANNEL WHERE THEY WERE STRANDED AND DIE;
  • THE OPERATION OF THE PORTAGE DIVERSION HAS CONTINUED TO IMPACT FISHERIES; AND
  • INABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH RUN-OFF AND POLLUTION HAS PROMOTED ALGAE GROWTH
• IT IS UNREASONABLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO LOOK TO CUTTING BACK ON QUOTA WHEN THE HEALTH OF THE FISH STOCK HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY ENVIRONMENTAL SOURCES THAT ARE WITHIN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT. “FISHERS DON’T DAMAGE THE LAKE – THEY ARE THERE TO CATCH FISH”.

• MAKING CHANGES TO QUOTA SHOULD ONLY BE DONE WHILE TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF THE LAKE.

• FISHERS DO NOT WANT TO MANAGE THE LAKE TO SATISFY ENVIRONMENTALISTS
NORTH BASIN FISHERS FEEL THEY ARE AT A DISADVANTAGE COMPARED TO SOUTH BASIN. HIGHER COSTS, LESS QUOTA

SPORTS FISHERY SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN A FREE RIDE. IF COMMERCIAL FISHERY IS REDUCED – SPORTS FISHERY SHOULD SEE A SIMILAR REDUCTION.

CUTTING BACK ON THE COMMERCIAL HARVEST TO SUPPORT ANGLING WOULD IMPOSE A HARDSHIP. INCOME FROM THE SPORTS FISHING TRADE DOES NOT COME TO COMMERCIAL FISHING COMMUNITIES. PEOPLE CATERING TO SPORTS FISHING MAY MAKE MORE MONEY BUT CUTTING BACK ON COMMERCIAL FISHING IN FAVOUR OF ANGLING WILL BE AT THE EXPENSE OF SMALL COMMUNITIES. BENEFITS AND COSTS FALL UNEVENLY AROUND THE LAKE.
Seafood Watch Report

• Fishers were not pleased that the government and media did not come down in support of the fishers and the Lake Winnipeg fishery.

• Seafood Watch did not talk to any of the fishers when they completed their assessment. If they had engaged fishers, they would have come to a different conclusion.
Questions

• Can an example (case study) be provided of a “before and after” where a revised management system has been put in place so fishers can see what benefits have been achieved elsewhere?

• Would a variable quota apply to the whole lake or could it be different for north and south basins?

• Under the proposed new management system what happens when the quota for each species is reached? Fishers can’t control by-catch. If they have filled their walleye quota and continue to fish for whitefish, they will certainly still catch some walleye. How will this be managed?

• Would the government consider going back to trap net fishing? There are days where fishers have to discard thousands of pounds of fish because they cannot check their nets for three days.
WHERE IS THIS ALL GOING?
CORE ISSUES

THERE ARE OVERARCHING ISSUES THAT RELATE TO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
GROUP A
(CONSENSUS ISSUES)

RESPECT
• LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERS HAVE A LONG AND PROUD HISTORY IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY AND CHANGES (IF ANY) NEED TO BE INTRODUCED IN A COLLABORATIVE AND RESPECTFUL MANNER.

MONEY
• REGULATIONS MUST NOT CAUSE QUOTA TO LOSE VALUE AND/OR REDUCE INCOMES
  • IF THERE IS TO BE A REDUCTION IN QUOTA IT MUST BE A BUY-OUT ON THE BASIS OF WILLING BUYER/WILLING SELLER AND NOT A GENERAL REDUCTION IN QE.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
• IMPROVED ABILITY TO ESTIMATE STOCKS
  • GREATER USE OF FISHERS/LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

• MULTI-SPECIES QUOTA MUST BE MAINTAINED

• THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER WAY TO MANAGE BY-CATCH. WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTS TO FIND MARKETS THIS HAS TO BE DONE TO AUGMENT FISHER’S INCOME AND TO REDUCE WASTE.
ENFORCEMENT OF REGULATIONS

- ELIMINATE THE PRACTICE OF RENTING QUOTA
OTHER QUESTIONS

HOW WOULD YOU (FISHERS) INVOLVE FISHERS IN DETERMINING STATUS OF FISH STOCKS?
OTHER QUESTIONS

• IF THERE WAS A BUY-OUT OF QUOTA HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE:
  • BALANCED BETWEEN NORTH-SOUTH BASINS?
  • ANY WILLING SELLER UNTIL TARGET IS MET?
  • OTHER?
OTHER QUESTIONS

• HOW WOULD YOU RE-INTRODUCE QUOTA IF STOCKS WARRANTED GREATER CATCH?
  • OFFER IT FOR SALE?
  • EVEN PERCENTAGE ADDITION TO EACH QE?
  • OTHER?
THANK YOU
ATTACHMENT C:

ENHANCED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN. POWER POINT PRESENTATION GIVEN AT MEETINGS WITH FISHERS.
ENHANCED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN
INTRODUCTION

THE GOVERNMENT WANTS A NEW FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN.

THE ENHANCED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

THEY HAVE ASKED ME TO REVIEW PARAMETERS OF THE PROPOSED PLAN WITH LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERS AND DETERMINE IF THERE IS INTEREST IN WORKING COLLABORATIVELY TO DEVELOP THE PLAN.
WE HAVE PROPOSED A FOUR STEP PROCESS:

1. REVIEW DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CURRENT MANAGEMENT PLAN AND THE ENHANCED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN
2. IDENTIFY ISSUES FISHERS MIGHT HAVE WITH THE ENHANCED PLAN
3. CONSIDER SOLUTIONS
4. REVIEW ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS AT A DISCUSSION TABLE
IF THERE IS SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF ISSUES
AND AGREEMENT TO PROCEED

THE ENHANCED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN WOULD BE DEVELOPED, REVIEWED BY FISHERS AND
IMPLEMENTED BY GOVERNMENT

TODAY WE ARE ONLY GOING THROUGH STEPS 1-3
HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO CERTIFICATION OF THE LAKE WINNIPEG FISHERY?

IT IS A NECESSARY FIRST STEP

CERTIFICATION IS NOT POSSIBLE WITH THE CURRENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

ENHANCED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN
OBJECTIVES OF THE ENHANCED PLAN

• CONFORM TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS
• MAXIMIZE LONG TERM YIELD
• MAKE THE FISHERY CAPABLE OF CERTIFICATION, AND TO NOT RECEIVE AN "AVOID" RATING BY UNINVITED NGOS.
• ENHANCE THE SUPPLY CHAIN AND INCREASING RETURNS TO FISHERS.
• MAINTAIN QUOTA VALUE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th><strong>CURRENT PLAN</strong></th>
<th><strong>ENHANCED PLAN</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allowable catch of quota species</td>
<td>fixed</td>
<td>Variable – total allowable catch of each quota species would increase or decrease depending on stock status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bycatch</td>
<td>ignored</td>
<td>Action required if bycatch species negatively impacted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Fishery is managed by three controls (season, mesh and yardage) and fixed quota</td>
<td>To be determined with fishers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Walleye and Sauger are monitored with index netting</td>
<td>More index netting and other monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>no adaptive management</td>
<td>Adaptive management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Lake Winnipeg Fishery Co-Management Board</td>
<td>Maintain management board + greater use of fishers knowledge</td>
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TO MEET INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND SUSTAINABLE STOCKS FOR FUTURE YEARS THERE NEEDS TO BE THE ABILITY TO PERIODICALLY ADJUST FISHING TO THE STATUS OF THE STOCKS.

IT SHOULDN’T MATTER THAT THE QUOTAS ARE FOR THREE SPECIES (THREE-SPECIES QUOTA), BUT THAT EACH SPECIES REQUIRES HARVEST CONTROLS
EXISTING PLAN:

THE LAKE WINNIPEG COMMERCIAL FISHERY IS CURRENTLY MANAGED BY THREE INPUT CONTROLS AND ONE HARVEST CONTROL:

• **SEASON LENGTH** – THERE ARE THREE FISHING SEASONS, WHICH RESTRICT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS AVAILABLE FOR FISHING.

• **MINIMUM MESH SIZES** – ALLOWABLE MESH SIZE VARIES BY AREA.

• **ALLOWABLE YARDAGE** – HOW MUCH NETTING A FISHER MAY USE DEPENDS ON LICENCE TYPE AND SEASON.

HARVEST CONTROL

**QUOTA** – INDIVIDUALLY TRANSFERABLE QUOTAS AND COMMUNITY QUOTAS EXIST ON LAKE WINNIPEG AND ARE THE ONLY OUTPUT CONTROL. QUOTA IS MORE OR LESS FIXED AND BASED ON DECISIONS MADE IN THE 1960S.

ENHANCED PLAN

A PLAN THAT WOULD MEET THIRD PARTY CERTIFICATION REQUIRES ADJUSTABLE CATCH LIMITS, AND MANAGEMENT OF BYCATCH.
Sustainable and affordable? Incredible!

Choose MSC and ASC certified products to help keep our oceans healthy. Our stores carry the widest range of sustainably wild-caught and responsibly farmed seafood products in Canada.

Superstore Winnipeg
2016
Thank You