



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Interior Secretary James Watt announced today he has made available \$180,000 to the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa-Chippewa Indians of Suttons Bay, Michigan for new impoundment gear in their commercial fishing operation.

The funds will be used for a demonstration project in which the tribe will upgrade its fishing methods by switching from gill nets to trap nets. The trap net method of fishing allows more selective fishing -- taking only those fish that are easily marketable such as whitefish and chub -- and protects the Lake Michigan lake trout fishery.

"We are pleased we could make these funds available through Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service," Watt said. "With the cooperation of the Grand Traverse Band, we are taking a first major step in protecting the Indians' treaty fishing rights and the Great Lakes fishery. We think this is the kind of investment in America that the Interior Department can and should make."

The tribe plans to begin the demonstration project as soon as a tug and other necessary gear can be purchased.
