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For Immediate Release: May 8, 1981
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Federal, State and Tribal leaders met in Washington on May 6 and 7 to seek solutions to problems concerning the fishery in the northern Great Lakes off Michigan's coastlines.

The group, composed of representatives of the Secretary of the Interior, Michigan Governor's Office and Michigan Department of Natural Resources and leaders of the Bay Mills, Grand Traverse and Sault Ste. Marie Tribes, issued the following statement:

"These two days of meetings represent a good faith effort to solve the problems relating to the Great Lakes fishery. The discussions proceeded fully and frankly and the parties now have a greater understanding of each other's concerns. Substantial progress has been made in establishing a process which will permit the achievement of an agreement protecting both the fishery resource and the interests of the State and the Tribes. The participants recognized that continued progress will require patience, understanding, and a cooperative attitude among the citizens of Michigan.

"The group agreed upon the following course of action:

To continue initial progress with another meeting to be held in Washington, D.C. on June 4 and 5.

"2. A working group of biologists from the State, Tribal, and Federal governments was created to produce a report on the status of the affected fishery resource. All parties will share information with the working group.

The report developed by the task force will provide the common base of facts and projections necessary to derive and support future group decisions.

Another tripartite working group was created, headed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to examine factors related to some degree of conversion from large mesh gill nets to more selective fishing gear.

A tripartite working group, headed by a Tribal designee, will examine the problem of access to fishing grounds.

"'5. The State of Michigan will work with the Tribes and other affected groups to make necessary adjustments to the recently issued State emergency fishing regulations assuming these regulations are put in place by the Federal Court."

The meeting was attended by 22 persons. It was chaired by Interior Deputy Under Secretary William P. Horn.