



**For Immediate Release  
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## **GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION HONORS SAUGEEN OJIBWAY NATION**

### ***SON recognized for successful partnership to rehabilitate Denny's Dam to protect the integrity of Lake Huron***

**DETROIT, MICHIGAN**—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission honored representatives of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) with the C.D. “Buzz” Besadny Award for Fostering Great Lakes Partnerships during the Commission’s recent 64<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Detroit, Michigan. The award, which the Commission presents annually, recognized SON members for their commitment to rehabilitate Denny’s Dam, a critical sea lamprey control structure, on the Saugeen River in Ontario.

Commissioner Tracey Mill presented the award to Chief Lester Anokot of the Saugeen First Nation (represented by Head Councilor Conrad Ritchie), Chief Gregory Nadjiwon of the Chippewas of Nawash, Mr. Doran Ritchie, the Manager of Resources and Infrastructure for SON; and Ms. Kathleen Ryan, SON’s Energy Manager.

Denny’s Dam is located on the Saugeen River, a large tributary to Lake Huron with significant potential for sea lamprey production. In 1970, Denny’s Dam was reconstructed as a lamprey barrier, and since then the river has only been treated with lampricide once, in 1971. If sea lampreys were to breach this barrier, the Saugeen River would likely require treatment every 4 to 6 years at more than \$600,000 per treatment.

In presenting the award to representatives of the SON, Commissioner Mill stated: “The Buzz Besadny award is named after our former commissioner, who also was the secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Buzz believed firmly the Great Lakes and its irreplaceable fishery could not be managed sustainably without strong collaboration across borders and a firm commitment from all levels of government to work cooperatively. SON’s commitment to the partnerships necessary to complete the rehabilitation of Denny’s Dam, epitomizes all that Buzz stood for.

“Despite Denny’s Dam operating for nearly fifty years, the relationship between the Commission and SON is relatively new, having been initiated in 2015 as concern about the imminent failure of Denny’s Dam grew stronger,” Commissioner Mill continued. “Under the leadership of the Commission’s Chair, Jim McKane, members of the Commission reached out to the leadership within SON to determine if a common path forward could be achieved. This was the beginning of what would grow into a strong, constructive, collaborative, cooperative, and mutually respectful relationship based on a common commitment to pursue sustainable conservation of subsistence, ceremonial, social, and commercial fisheries of the Saugeen River, Lake Huron, and Georgian Bay.”

## **GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION**

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Mill continued: “The rehabilitation of Denny’s Dam was made possible by a shared understanding between the Commission and the SON that efforts to plan, design, engineer, construct and monitor the project would respect the SON’s aboriginal and treaty rights. The collaboration formed a basis of knowledge, trust, and a ‘sleeves-rolled-up’ environment where everyone was working ‘on the ground’ and issues could be immediately raised and thoughtfully addressed.

“Without the SON’s collaboration, the Denny’s Dam rehabilitation project would not have been completed,” Mill concluded. “It is an honor to celebrate this productive and meaningful partnership that future generations will remember because of the tremendous and lasting benefits Denny’s Dam will bring to the fishery.”

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*The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is an international organization established by the United States and Canada through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The Commission has the responsibility to support fisheries research, control the invasive sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, and facilitate implementation of A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, a provincial, state, and tribal fisheries management agreement.*



Great Lakes Fishery Commission Commissioner Tracey Mill (left) presents SON representatives (L-R) Head Councilor Conrad Ritchie, Saugeen First Nation (representing Chief Lester Anoquot of the Saugeen First Nation); Chief Gregory Nadjiwon, Chippewas of Nawash; Mr. Doran Ritchie, Saugeen Ojibway Nation with the 2018 C.D. Buzz Besadny Award for Fostering Great Lakes Partnerships. Not pictured: Ms. Kathleen Ryan, SON. The award was presented to the SON on May 29, 2019 during the Great Lakes Fishery Commission’s 64<sup>th</sup> annual meeting held in Detroit, Michigan. Photo: T. Lawrence, GLFC.