



Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

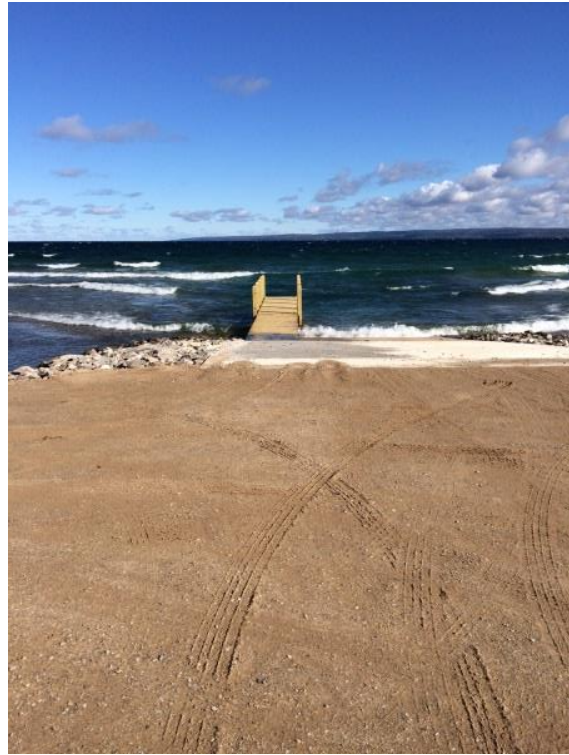
9-mile Point Fishing Access Project

Final report



Background

The goal of the 9-mile point project is to significantly increase access for Tribal commercial fishermen and in northern Lake Michigan by designing and constructing a boat launch on the southwestern shore of Little Traverse Bay. The launch is intended to provide safe access and parking for up to five Tribal commercial fishermen and strengthen the provisions of the 2000 Consent Decree by enhancing management and study of commercial fishery resources. Construction of the project began in summer 2016 and was substantially complete in early October. Overall the project was completed as originally intended, though on a slower time-line than expected. Our progress was substantially hindered by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality permitting process which resulted in 2 years of delays and changes to the structure of the project; however, the function of the project remains intact. Tribal fishermen have already used the site and several have expressed interest in expanded use during 2016. Fishermen whom have used the site have expressed great pleasure in the safety and convenience of the newly finished site. One Tribal fisher has reported that bikers from the nearby bike path frequently explore the launch area and have expressed interest in purchasing fish in the future. To date, whitefish, lake trout, and menominee have been harvested from waters near the launch.



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Ammentites

Contained on a little less than one acre, the 9-mile point access site consists of a paved access drive, a gravel maneauvering area, 5 gravel parking spaces, a 25ft wide concrete boat launch, and a wooden skidpier. A dredged channel extends from the launch at a depth of 6-10ft. The site has no electricity however dispesed camping by Tribal member is allowed on a permitted basis. Overnight accomodations are available at hotels in nearby Bay Harbor and Petoskey.



Fish species commonly caught at or near the site include lake trout, lake whitefish, cisco, menominee, walleye, perch, smallmouth bass, and suckers. Fishing methods employed by Tribal fishers usually include large and small mesh gillnets.

Related Efforts

This project was primarily a stand-alone effort however it may grow into a larger effort in the future. The access site at 9-mile point is fairly exposed to large waves during weather events and the Tribe as evaluated the feasibility of constructing a pier or providing additional amenities at the site in the future. In total, the project cost nearly \$350,000 and though it was primarily funded by GLFT, critical funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and from LTBB contributed to its completion.



Reflections

Throughout the course of the 9-mile Point Project, one particular lesson stood far and above the rest: Never underestimate the permitting process. We originally anticipated that this project would take a year and cost approximately \$275,000. Delays in the permitting process extended the project period to nearly three years. During this time the cost of several materials increased and pushed the project budget beyond its original scope. We recommend that organizations pursuing similar projects in the future set aside at least a year for the permitting process and adjust funding requests appropriately to account for inflation during that time.

