



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

CITATION

PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION AWARD

CASTING LIGHT UPON THE WATERS

In recognition of the Casting Light Upon the Waters - Joint Assessment Steering Committee and its tribal, state and federal, and nongovernmental partners for their collaborative, cooperative efforts to protect fishery resources and reduce user conflicts.

In January 1983, the courts agreed with the Lake Superior Chippewa that hunting, fishing and gathering rights were protected in a series of treaties between the Chippewa and the United States Government. But as the Chippewa tribes began implementing their rights over the next seven years in Wisconsin, they were met with widespread hostility. Tribal, State and Federal leaders and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission agreed that the controversy was being fueled by misinformation on the impact of Indian treaty fishing on the fishery. The decision was made to produce a joint assessment of the fishery resource in the State of Wisconsin. Published in March 1991, Casting Light Upon the Waters – A Joint Fishery Assessment of the Wisconsin Ceded Territory confirmed that Chippewa spearing had not harmed the resource and that fish populations in the ceded territory were healthy. Widely distributed, the report provided a vital resource in educating the public. The Committee also expanded fisheries assessments. In the spring of 2008, there were 11 adult walleye population estimates in ceded territory waters and an additional 29 conducted by the State; and that fall there were 94 juvenile walleye recruitment surveys in ceded territory and 73 by the State. These data are used to calculate safe harvest levels and to assess the health of the resource. The Committee holds an annual Partners Fishing Event to strengthen co-management relationships. The 2008 event was attended by 74 representatives of tribal, Federal, State, local and non-governmental entities. Discovery Mediaworks, Inc. filmed at the event and produced a segment for airing on the television show *Discover Wisconsin*. For of their strong management of the fishery resources in northern Wisconsin, the Casting Light Upon the Waters - Joint Assessment Steering Committee is granted the Department of the Interior's Partners in Conservation Award.