

Local sportsmen's club says fishing agreement should be renegotiated

ROB GOWAN
Sun Times staff

The Sydenham Sportsmen's Association wants the new commercial fishing agreement between the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Saugeen Ojibway Nation repealed and a new agreement negotiated.

The local outdoors group, whose conservation projects include major salmon and trout stocking programs, is asking "that a new agreement be renegotiated in consultation with all key stakeholders including the sports fishing community that will protect our most valuable sports fish including, but not limited to, chinook salmon, rainbow trout and brown trout." The SSA also puts on the Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular fishing derby each year.

The policy was posted on the SSA website and appears in the form of an advertisement in today's Sun Times.

"We came up with a policy with a direction our club would like to see things go and that is basically it, really," club president Mike Prevost said Wednesday. "We are asking for the agreement to be repealed, but more importantly renegotiated with the interested user groups."

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Saugeen Ojibway Nation last month announced a new five-year commercial fishing agreement that comes into effect as of Friday. Members of the public, as well as Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound MP Larry Miller and MPP Bill Walker, have criticized the agreement because they feel proper consultation did not take place.

Some major concerns about the new agreement include that it permits commercial fishing in Owen Sound and Colpoys bays year round and that it comes with an \$850,000 payment over five years to the SON.

Natural Resources Minister

David Oraziotti has said the MNR "very clearly represented the interests of non-aboriginal anglers" while negotiating the agreement. He also said the \$850,000 is to be used to ensure the "management and sustainability" of the fish resource.

Prevost said the club came up with the policy to let the community know "what we are doing, where we are at and what our thinking is on it.

"We just wanted to make our policy known," he said.

Prevost said SSA representatives have met with Chippewas of Nawash Chief Scott Lee, but didn't want to give details on those discussions at this time. Michael Morencie, director of the MNR's fish and wildlife branch, will be at the SSA's general meeting on May 2 to speak about the agreement.

"He will be answering questions regarding the agreement so hopefully we get some answers," said Prevost.