

# Band Council exploring commercial fishing license for Six Nations

By Donna Duric  
Writer

Six Nations Wildlife Officer Paul General is researching the possibility of obtaining a commercial/communal fishing license for Six Nations people and how it intersects with existing aboriginal fishing and hunting rights.

Existing Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources policies, guided by treaties, provide aboriginal people the right to hunt and fish without applying for individual licenses.

Licenses are required for non-native hunters and anglers in Ontario and

usually cost around \$10. General told Six Nations Band Council's Committee of the Whole, that a Six Nations resident recently approached him inquiring about obtaining a communal commercial fishing license for all Six Nations members.

General is looking into it. "We've never asked or received one so I don't know what the conditions are," he said. "I just wanted to let the committee know I was looking into that. We have one resident who wants to look into getting a commercial fishing license to work in the Grand

River or Lake Erie, or probably both, out of Port Maitland."

General has already researched the requirements of commercial fishing licenses for non-native people.

"It's a fairly extensive license for non-aboriginal people," said General. "There's quotas and they give you an area to fish in - it's like a boundary that you can't go beyond. You're fishing along with other people in the lake (so) you're not extending your fishing area into somebody else's and taking his fish from him. There's a whole bunch of

stuff you have to follow." He said the communal license would apply to all Six Nations members.

"The conditions (for individual hunting and fishing) are quite different for aboriginal people," General said. "I have to find out what those conditions are."

Coun. Carl Hill said he's aware that many aboriginal nations already have communal commercial fishing licenses throughout Canada, but it would be precedent-setting for Six Nations to obtain one. General agreed.

"This is a first for Six Nations. I'm just getting my

feet wet on this one."

General said he's not sure how far the commercial license would apply in Lake Erie.

Both he and Coun. Hill acknowledged Six Nations has hunting and fishing rights along the Grand River because of the Haldimand Deed, which granted Six Nations six miles of land on either side of the Grand River from its mouth in Dundalk to its source at Lake Erie.

But how far the rights would extend into Lake Erie, neither man is sure.

General said he was told in the past Six Nations'

fishing rights would extend to the international boundary line between Canada and the United States in Lake Erie.

"The authorities at (the MNR) don't know how that's going to apply or how they would even enforce it," he said.

General is not even sure if it would be council that would be applying for the license, an individual, or who would pay the fee.

General said he has more research to do.

"This would be precedent-setting," said Coun. Hill.