



# The Spearfishing Challenge

The Spearfishing Challenge is based on a true story.

Lake Louise is a 587-acre lake near Junction City, Wisconsin that is not located on the nearby Ojibwe reservation. Junction City is a popular vacation spot. It has many freshwater lakes that draw fishermen from all over the country to come and test their skill.

The town center has just a few small businesses that are primarily directed towards the tourist industry. A bank, a hospital, a beauty salon, a barber shop, several restaurants and a large grocery store make up the rest of the businesses in town. The nearby reservation uses some of these businesses, but they have their own health center and school funded, in part, by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. (The Bureau of Indian Affairs is a section of the government that funds and oversees Native Tribes all over the U.S.)

In the early spring of 1973, two brothers went off reservation land to fish in Lake Louise and were arrested for attempting to exercise their treaty right to spear fish. Four Department of Natural Resources (D.N.R.) officials took the two brothers into custody while a group of five townspeople from the Association of Wisconsin Fishermen looked on and cheered. The Lake Louise Lakeshore Owners heard about the incident the next day and went to the D.N.R. office to find out the details, because they do not like this kind of a demonstration taking place on their normally peaceful boat landing.

Lake Louise used to be part of native-owned land that was sold to the U.S. government in 1837. The two brothers had planned on getting arrested to bring the issue of treaty rights into the public eye for support. They were backed by a civil rights group that planned on taking their arrest to court with full newspaper coverage from local and national news sources.

During the past several years, there had been many racial incidents in Junction City with name calling, protesting spearfishing at boat landings, and a bumper sticker printed that said "Spear an Indian and Save a Fish." The treaty between the U.S. government and the tribe clearly states that Ojibwe people had the right to hunt and fish on all land that was previously owned by the tribe. Even though Lake Louise was not located within the reservation borders, it was a lake that was within the rights defined in the treaty.



The local businesses believe that spearfishing reduced the number of fish in the lakes and made the lakes less likely to draw large numbers of fishermen and tourists to the area. However, before this incident took place, local businesses had noticed a decline in profits and one of the local bait shops even went out of business.