



# **Ugpi'Ganjig Fisheries Management and Development Plan**

**May 2025**

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# 1. Report Summary

## 1.1 Why does Ugpi'Ganjig need a new plan for its fishery?

There is broad community agreement on the need to improve management and conservation in the fishery, and to bring the fishery into closer alignment with Mi'kmaq values and traditional knowledge.

There is also broad agreement that the whole community should receive greater and more direct benefits from the fishery than has been the case in the past.

## 1.2 How was this plan created?

At the direction of the Chief and Council, GTA Fisheries Consultants held in-depth discussions with fish harvesters, elders, women, youth, councillors, and other groups to provide all members of Ugpi'Ganjig First Nation with opportunities to be heard. Follow-up meetings were held with harvesters to discuss improvements to Ugpi'Ganjig's fisheries.

## 1.3 What are the community's concerns about its fishery?

The consultations identified a number of concerns about the governance and conduct of Ugpi'Ganjig's fisheries, with the most pressing being:

- The fishery is not always being managed and conducted according to Mi'kmaq values and traditional knowledge, or in ways that respect and protect Mother Earth.

In accordance with Mi'kmaq tradition, values, and Aboriginal rights, the fishery belongs to the whole community. The overall interests of the community come before the interests of individuals, but this does not always happen today. Many

members feel they do not see any direct benefit from their communal fishery.

- There have been serious overfishing issues taking place during the food fishery and that fishing activities are not being always being carried out in a responsible manner.
- Many community members are concerned about conservation and that fish stocks are not sufficiently protected for future generations.

#### **1.4 What will the new Management and Development Plan do?**

##### **1. The plan will introduce practical steps to govern, manage, and conduct Ugpi'Ganjig's Fisheries in ways that are more consistent with, and guided by, Mi'kmaq values, culture, and traditional knowledge, specifically:**

- Maintaining balance and harmony with the natural world and a spiritual connection with Mother Earth
- *Netukulimk* - using resources in responsible and sustainable ways, taking only what is needed for the present and leaving the rest for future generations
- *Etuaptmumk* (two-eyed seeing) – integrating modern science with traditional Indigenous knowledge and cultural beliefs to best manage the fishery
- Equity - treating all members of Ugpi'Ganjig First Nation equally and removing gender barriers
- Transparency and consultation -- full sharing of information
- Engaging the whole community on changes to fisheries policies
- Engaging the community on risks generated by external development proposals

**2. The plan will put in place mechanisms to share the benefits from Ugpi'Ganjig Fisheries more directly with all community members.**

- Ten percent of gross revenues from the lobster and snow crab fisheries will be put aside in a Community Fund and distributed at the end of each year in equal shares to all community members who register with the Fund
- Community members can choose to receive their 10% share of the value of the catch either as a cash payment or as a quantity of fish of equivalent value. (Depending on landings and fish prices in any given year, these distribution as of 2026 could range from \$500 to \$1,000 for each community member who registers with the Fund)
- As other fisheries develop and become more financially viable, revenues from them will also be distributed through the Fund

**3. The plan will re-organize communal commercial fishing to provide options for more community members to engage in the regular commercial harvest (i.e., boats fishing 300 lobster traps) or in smaller scale fishing operations to earn moderate livelihoods.**

- Commercial lobster fishing will only take place during the spring season
- The lobster harvesters who currently receive 300 trap tags will continue to do so until they leave or retire from the fishery
- When current harvesters retire or stop fishing their tags will return to the community. Chief and Council after having an independent evaluation carried out on preferred options will decide either to issue these tags to one boat and crew, or to

divide them among two or more boats and crews to fish fewer traps and earn moderate livelihoods

- Two new lobster community licences (or more if needed), will fish to generate the 10% of total revenues for the Community Fund, funds will not come from existing commercial fishermen

**4. In accordance with Aboriginal rights and tradition, the plan will establish a fall food fishery that is restricted to individuals fishing for themselves and for their immediate families.**

- The boats and gear that are used in the spring communal commercial fishery will not be used in the fall food fishery
- Tags will also be provided in the fall for members of Ugpi'Ganjig First Nation to fish for social and ceremonial purposes

**5. The plan will strengthen conservation and protection of fish stocks and marine habitats that the Ugpi'Ganjig Fisheries depend on.**

- The Fisheries Director will be responsible for the development of annual fishing plans for all the community's current fisheries along with new communal commercial fisheries that will be introduced over the next five years.

There is potential for new fisheries to harvest red fish, striped bass, seals, aquaculture projects, and possibly others. Chief and Council and the Fisheries Director will be responsible to plan and manage the development of these fisheries.

- Every fishing plan for both food and commercial fishing will set requirements for sustainable and responsible harvesting:
  - Allowable catch limits
  - Requirements to report catch levels





## **6. The plan will establish a Fisheries Oversight Committee**

The plan proposes the creation of an independent oversight committee to give the community a strong voice in safeguarding collective rights and ensuring that management decision-making and fishing operation all align with plan objectives and Mi'kmaq laws, values and priorities.

The committee will be comprised of an elder, a woman, a youth, a commercial harvester, and a councillor, all chosen by their member groups and appointed by the Chief and Council.

The Committee would provide guidance and feedback to the community on whether:

- The Fisheries Development and Management Plan and annual fishing plans are being followed properly
- Mi'kmaq values and cultural practices are being followed by fisheries managers and harvesters
- The economic, social and cultural benefits generated by the fishery are being shared fairly with the community
- Whether the Chief and Council, the Fisheries Director and Rangers and the fish harvesters are carrying their roles and responsibilities properly

## 2.Introduction

Ugpi’Ganjig First Nation is located on the North Shore of the Bay of Chaleur in Northeast New Brunswick. More than 500 Mi’kmaq live within 25 kilometres of Ugpi’Ganjig with a total of 877 individuals registered to the Community. Mi’kmaq people have called the land around the Benjamin and Eel Rivers and the Bay of Chaleur home for thousands of years.

Ugpi’Ganjig was blessed by the Creator with abundant marine resources which feed and economically sustain the Community and are vital to its culture and history. The area provides access to Heron Island and other marine habitats.

The Ugpi’Ganjig Mi’kmaq have lived in harmony with nature for millennia, relying on the area’s marine resources such as salmon, eels, oysters, and clams. More recently, lobster and snow crab have become mainstays for the Community, providing food, social and cultural benefits, and jobs and economic opportunity.

Colonization seriously disrupted Ugpi’Ganjig’s access to fisheries and its harmonious relationship with nature. Land and resources were taken away and over-exploited, and habitats were degraded. Some have argued that Community’s traditional values and practices were replaced by harvesting based on self interest and greed.

To provide for future generations, it will be necessary to again live in harmony with Mother Earth by learning from Mi’kmaq history and using ancestral knowledge. Ugpi’Ganjig must make full use of both traditional knowledge and modern marine science to protect the marine resources provided by the Creator.

Many Community members see a need for changes in Ugpi'Ganjig's fisheries to re-establish harmony within the Community and with Mother Earth. There is broad agreement that fisheries governance needs to be more transparent, marine habitats and resources need to be better protected, and the Community's fishery management needs to be strengthened.

Self interest and conflict over resource access should not be allowed to divide a community that has millennia of shared history. The fisheries and other natural resources need to provide for future generations. As one elder reminded the Community, the Mi'kmaq's first treaty was with Mother Earth and the animals, and that needs to be respected.

## 2.1 Overview: Ugpi’Ganjig’s fisheries

Ugpi’Ganjig’s Community fishery has two main components: fishing for food, social and ceremonial purposes, and the communal commercial fishery.

### 2.11 Food Fishery

The Community carries out its food fishery for lobster each fall, initially set up with 350 lobster tags for Community members. In recent years, however, that number has doubled to 700 tags, providing roughly two traps per household. The current fishing plan calls for around 35,000 pounds to be landed over an eight-week period in the fall.

Ugpi’Ganjig also has a salmon food fishery with each Community member receiving one salmon, with priority on providing food to elders first. The current plan limits the harvest to a maximum of 500 salmon.

### 2.12 Communal Commercial Fishery

Ugpi’Ganjig has several commercial fisheries, lobster and snow crab being the most important.

There are ten lobster enterprises (captains and crews) that are each issued 300 Community tags for a total of 3,000 traps fished during a 60-day spring season. An 11<sup>th</sup> Mi’kmaq harvester holds a regular commercial licence and fishes alongside the communal licence harvesters, also with 300 traps. Ugpi’Ganjig shares its fishing zone with three non-Mi’kmaq commercial harvesters. In 2024, total landings for the zone were 298,000 lbs.

The Community’s snow crab fishery lands from 300,000 to 600,000 lbs annually depending on the total allowable catch

level set each year by DFO. In 2025 the Ugpi’Ganjig quota is 379,381 lbs.

There exist also smaller commercial activities that are available for species such as clams, oysters, rock crab and tuna.

The Community is currently developing a commercial striped bass fishery, working in collaboration with the Pabineau First Nation (Oinpegitjoig).

Some Community members claim an individual right to fish commercially to earn a moderate livelihood, independent of the Community’s fisheries management rules. Others feel that it is the Community that holds the moderate livelihood right, not individuals, and that it is up to the Community to determine how this right will be exercised.

## 2.13 The Consultation Process

In October 2024 the Ugpi'Ganjig Chief and Council retained GTA Fisheries Consultants to consult with the entire Community on a comprehensive management and development plan covering the Community's communal commercial and food fisheries. To ensure every Community member had the opportunity to be heard, in-depth discussions were held with separate groups of elders, fish harvesters, women, youth, and other Community members.

Three meetings were held with each group on three separate topics:

1. Core principles and objective to apply for the whole Community fishery
2. Objectives and proper management of the food fishery
3. Objectives and proper management of the commercial fishery.

Additional follow-up sessions were held with commercial harvesters as a group to address their particular concerns and get their help in completing the plan.

## 2.2 What Was Heard from the Community

The following section summarizes the concerns, issues and ideas voiced by members of Ugpi’Ganjig First Nation in consultation meetings. There wasn’t consensus on all points, but each point has value and is presented here to feed into decision-making on a new fisheries plan.

### 2.21 Commitment to Mi’kmaq values

Elders and other Community members shared concerns about the Community losing touch with core Mi’kmaq values in the fishery is managed. Many Community members want to see the governance and conduct of the fishery brought into closer alignment with Mi’kmaq culture, spiritual beliefs and traditional knowledge.

### 2.22 Unequal benefits from the Community fishery

All Ugpi’Ganjig fisheries, including commercial fishing and harvesting for food, social, ceremonial purposes, are communal, meaning that they belong to the whole Community. There is broad agreement among Community members that everyone should receive some direct benefit, and that the overall interests of the Community come’s before any individual interest.

Many Community members expressed concerns that the economic benefits generated by the fishery are not now being widely shared across the whole Community.

### 2.23 Conduct of the food fishery

The Mi’kmaq people of Ugpi’Ganjig have fished, hunted and gathered to feed their families and enrich their culture for many centuries. Those who had more than they needed themselves would share with elders and other Community members.



Fishing for food, social and ceremonial purposes is an Aboriginal right, but the conduct and management of food fisheries has been a source of frustration, confusion, and division both within First Nation communities and between them and non-Aboriginal neighbouring communities. Many Ugpi'Ganjig Community members today feel that their food fishery is not managed and conducted in responsible ways.

Ugpi'Ganjig's fall food lobster fishery currently runs for eight weeks with more than 25 boats on the water and a catch limit of 35,000 lbs. However, Community members suggest that from 350,000 to 500,000 lbs of lobster are being landed by Community harvesters and others from neighbouring communities, and almost all this catch is being sold commercially. Some suggested that more lobster may be harvested during the food fishery than during the spring commercial season because lobsters are easier to catch in the fall. It was said that traps without tags are often set alongside traps with Community tags. Much of this lobster caught during the fall food fishery is being sold on the black market with no community benefit.

Commercial harvesters also shared serious concerns about the fall fishery in their meetings with the consultants. In the recent past they met with the Chief and Council to discuss problems in the fall fishery that they wanted addressed. They reported that too many traps, including untagged traps, were being fished, that some harvesters are landing under-sized and female lobster, and that harvesters from outside the Community are on the water during this fishery. They recommended changes in management of the fall food fishery including:

- Mandatory v-notching to protect female lobster

- Harvesting of male on lobster only during the fall fishery
- Stronger enforcement of a 350-trap limit (not 700) and strict requirements for tags
- A much shorter season of just two-week
- Harvesting by Ugpi’Ganjig members only

In the consultation meetings some members of Ugpi’Ganjig First Nation, including some commercial harvesters, expressed fears that if the fall fishery continues as it is now the local lobster stock will be destroyed. This problem was made worse, some suggested, after the Covid 19 pandemic when the Community moved from 350 to 700 tags in the fall fishery.

In summary, there would appear to be strong agreement across the Community that the food fisheries for lobster, salmon and other species should not be used for commercial activity.

## 2.24 Governance and Oversight

Community members expressed concerns about the governance and management of the fishery, suggesting that fishing efforts are not properly monitored, and rules are not well enforced. These concerns have led some members to see the fishery as a source of division and frustration within the Community rather than a gift from the Creator. Many want the fishery to be a greater source of Community pride, strength and unity.

There are concerns about decision-making and lack of transparency on access and allocations and the distribution of tags. Some suggested that there exists conflict of interest issues among Chief and Council, the Fisheries Director, Rangers, and harvesters. There are concerns that leadership is

sometimes not held accountable and that fisheries decisions are sometimes made to further political or personnel ends.

Some see the need for the Community to have a stronger voice to ensure that the resource is protected, and the benefits of fishery are shared with everyone. They suggested the creation of an oversight committee comprised of independent Community representatives to help make fisheries managers, Rangers and harvesters more accountable for the proper governance and conduct of the fishery.

## 2.25 Rangers

There was a general consensus among participants in the consultation meetings that the fisheries Rangers are not adequately trained and supported in their roles. Specific concerns included:

- The Rangers are not on the water enough overseeing fishing activities
- Landings are not being monitored and recorded properly
- A lack of respect between harvesters and Rangers
- Some Rangers also fish which may be a conflict or perceived conflict of interest
- There is confusion about the role of Rangers in relation to DFO Conservation and Protection officers
- Rangers should only be focused on their fishery role and not work as peacekeepers in the Community

In general, Community members want the Rangers to be better trained and equipped with a proper vessel to be able to fulfill their responsibilities in enforcing rules and protecting the resource.

## 2.26 Protecting fish resources and habitat

Community members agreed strongly on the need to improve resource and habitat protection and enhancement, particularly for lobster. There is strong support for a lobster seeding program and the construction of artificial reefs.

### **3. Proposed Ugpi'Ganjig Fisheries Plan**

As described above, the fisheries plan proposed here was developed in consultation sessions with fish harvesters, elders, women, youth, and other members of Ugpi'Ganjig First Nation, and directly reflects their concerns, hopes, and ideas. Information about fisheries management models from other Mi'kmaq communities was shared with Community members to inform their thinking about new approaches in Ugpi'Ganjig.

Ugpi'Ganjig is exercising its rights to harvest fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes and to generate jobs and incomes through commercial fishing. The Ugpi'Ganjig fishery will take place within its traditional territory and the Community will exercise its rights to govern its fishery according to traditional Mi'kmaq knowledge and values.

Before it can be finalized and put into operation the Fisheries Management and Development Plan will need to be approved through a vote by the Community.

The plan set out below proposes the development of annual harvesting plans for each species based on governing principles agreed to by the Community. While specific harvesting plans can be updated each year, the overall management plan can only be amended after consultations and approval by the Community.

The Fisheries Director will be responsible for implementation of the plan and the Chief and Council will provide guidance and oversight. It will be the responsibility of the fisheries Rangers to ensure that the plan is adhered to on the water and that harvesters operate safely and responsibly.

Following advice from Community members, it is proposed that an Independent Oversight Committee be established to

speak for the Community in ensuring that the plan is properly adhered to, Rangers are fulfilling their roles, and fishing operations are proceeding properly. Additional roles and responsibilities are further detailed below.

### 3.01 Governing Principles for the Ugpi’Ganjig Community Fishery

- ***Self-governance rights***

The governance and conduct of all Ugpi’Ganjig fisheries will be guided by the communities’ wishes and by traditional Mi’kmaq values, ecological knowledge and cultural practices. The Community will develop its own fishing plans, decide how access is allocated among Ugpi’Ganjig First Nation members and carry out its own enforcement of policies and regulations. DFO and the federal government will be kept informed on these plans and operational decisions.

It is not centered on any outside government laws and is based the following governing principles:

- ***Protection of Mother Earth***

The relationship of Mi’kmaq peoples with Mother Earth is deeply spiritual, reciprocal, and rooted in a profound sense of interconnectedness. The fishery is therefore viewed not as a resource to exploit, but as a living, life-giving being deserving of respect, care, and gratitude. Core aspects of this relationship include:

- *Spiritual Connection*: the spiritual bond is expressed in ceremonies, stories, and practices that honor the land, water, animals, and all natural elements.
- *Responsibility and Stewardship*: people are not owners of natural resources, but caretakers with responsibilities to

maintain balance and harmony with the natural world, ensuring its well-being for future generations.

- *Identity and Belonging*: Indigenous identities, language, traditions, and cultural knowledge are rooted in specific ecosystems and ancestral territories.
- *Oral Traditions and Teachings*: knowledge passed down through generations affirms the value of living in harmony with Mother Earth.
- *Resilience and Resistance*: protecting Mother Earth is an act of cultural survival and resistance against colonialism, land dispossession, and environmental degradation.

- ***Netukulimk***

Netukulimk is a Mi'kmaq concept that embodies the use of nature and natural resources provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the Community. It emphasizes taking only what is needed for a healthy life and leaving the rest for future generations. Key elements are:

- Achieving adequate standards of Community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of the environment.
- Using resources in responsible sustainable ways.
- Understanding and integrating spiritual elements that tie together people, animals, plants, and the environment.

- ***Conserving Nature and Resources for Future Generations***

Traditional Mi'kmaq knowledge passed down from Ugpi'Ganjig's ancestors teaches that decisions on resource use today should consider the impacts for future generations. The Chief and Council, the Fisheries Director, the Rangers, and

the harvesters should all take responsibility in their actions for the well-being of the Community far into the future.

- ***Sustainability***

Ugpi’Ganjig’s biophysical environment must be protected but the commitment to sustainability should also ensure that the Community’s way of life, cultural history, and economic well-being are also protected over time. A well-managed fishery will help preserve Ugpi’Ganjig’s cultural heritage and identity as well as its social well-being. Responsible fishing operations should also sustain economic opportunities and viability for future generations.

- ***Equity***

In conformity with Mi’kmaq communal traditions, the Ugpi’Ganjig fishery plan and the annual harvesting plans should benefit all Community members, treat members equally and remove gender barriers in the conduct of harvesting activity.

- ***Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed seeing)***

Etuaptmumk is a commitment to integrating traditional Mi’kmaq knowledge with modern science. It is to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together for the benefit of all. The fisheries plan and annual harvesting plans should make use of the best available science but remain grounded in traditional knowledge and cultural beliefs.

- ***Transparency and Consultation Rights***

Decision-making on the management and conduct of Ugpi’Ganjig’s fishery must be transparent to the entire Community and the whole Community must be consulted on



changes in fisheries policies and programs, and on external developments that may impact the Community such as mining or energy projects.

- ***Peace & Friendship***

While fully respecting and upholding inherent rights, the Ugpi’Ganjig’s fisheries should be managed and conducted in ways that foster harmonious relationships with neighboring communities. Fishing efforts cannot take place in isolation and marine species do not respect geographic boundaries or fishing zones, so cooperation and coordination with other groups is necessary. To maintain a thriving fishery with adherence to fishing plans and regulations will require close co-operation with other First Nations and with non-Indigenous organizations like the Maritime Fishermen’s Union, the mid-shore crab fleet, processors and other industry and conservation groups. Ugpi’Ganjig’s fisheries managers and harvesters will need to work in a collaborative way with DFO managers, conservation officials and scientists to support conservation and responsible fishing.

- ***A Commitment to Personal Safety***

The fisheries development plan and annual harvesting plans should make every effort to ensure the safety of all harvesters, Rangers, and other Community members through education programs, risk assessment and monitoring practices, and strict enforcement of safety-related policies and rules.

### 3.02 Enforcement of Plan Principles and Fishing Regulations

The successful implementation of Ugpi’Ganjig’s Fishery Development and Management Plan will require effective enforcement of guiding principles, plan guidelines and operational rules. Individuals who do not recognise and

respect these principles and operational rules will need to answer to the Community for their actions. However, enforcement practices should reflect Mi'kmaq values and cultural practices.

For example, if an individual harvests lobster with Community food fishery tags, or no tags at all, and then sells the catch, they will be held to account through the following steps:

1. The individual meets with the Fisheries Director who will explain why his or her activities go against the Community fisheries management plan and the importance of respecting the Community's wishes and decisions.
2. If the offense continues, the Chief and Council or its appointed representatives will meet with the offending party to try to persuade them to respect the rules and the Community's wishes.
3. If the offense continues, the Fisheries Director, on behalf of the Community, will advise DFO that the individual is not obeying the harvesting plan and request that DFO take over the case.
4. Offending parties who clearly violate the Community's wishes after being asked by the Fisheries Director and the Chief and Council, and are then prosecuted by DFO, will not be eligible for Community assistance with legal fees.

## 3.1 Roles & Responsibilities

### 3.12 Chief and Council

Ugpi'Ganjig Chief and Council will be responsible for guiding and directing the implementation of the fisheries plan. It is

important that Chief and Council be transparent in all of their decision-making responsibilities. The Council must ensure that annual harvesting plans are readily available to all Community members, so they are fully informed about the conduct of their fisheries.

### 3.13 Fisheries Director

The fisheries director is responsible for the implementation of annual fishing plans. This must be done in cooperation with the Chief and Council, harvesters and guardians. The fisheries director will also be responsible for:

- Harvesting plans
- Allocation of trap tags
- Training programs
- Compliance by Rangers and harvesters
- Communications with DFO and another government agencies
- Gaining access to government fisheries programs
- Communications and collaborations with other First Nations and neighbouring communities

### 3.14 Rangers

Rangers will be hired by the Chief and Council working with the Fisheries Director. Their role will be to promote and encourage compliance with the annual harvesting plans. They must have access to proper equipment and a suitable and safe vessel so they can operate on the water whenever anyone from the Community is fishing. The Chief and Council and the Fisheries Director should undertake negotiations with DFO to acquire the right type of boat for the Rangers to do their work safely and effectively.

Rangers should be responsible to carry out the following activities:

- Conducting patrols and monitoring activities in all areas where harvesters land fish
- Conducting inspections and investigations of possible violations of plan rules
- Conducting proper landings reports
- Promoting training programs for fisheries practices and safety at sea
- Reporting to Fisheries Director any activities that violate fishing plans
- Other duties as assigned

### 3.15 Harvesters

Harvesters will fish in adherence with the overall Fisheries Development and Management Plan approved by the Community and with annual fishing plans. While fishing they should always have with them documentation issued by Chief and Council confirming that they are authorized to fish and are operating in accordance with the Community's fisheries management plan. Such documents must be presented upon any request by a Council designate or Ranger.

Harvesters will be required to share information on the size and make-up of the catch along with their observations on the health and abundance of the stocks and changes in the marine environment (e.g., water temperature and quality, presence of pollutants, etc.). They should share any concerns they have about the conduct of fisheries and other important issues with the Rangers and the Fisheries Director.

### 3.16 The Community

Ugpi’Ganjig’s fishery should benefit the Community as a whole and also the people who work in the management and conduct of fish harvesting operations. To generate the most benefits for Ugpi’Ganjig, the Fisheries Director, Rangers, and harvesters should all come from within the Community.

As the fishery is communally owned, members of the Community should take an active interest in developments related to fishing operations and the annual harvesting plan. Community members have a responsibility to stay well-informed and to support the Chief and Council, the fisheries management team and the harvesters in their implementation of the development plan and in their day-to-day work in the fishery.

### 3.17 Creation of a Fisheries Oversight Committee

During the consultations Community members proposed the creation of an independent committee to provide Community oversight for the fishery. Ugpi’Ganjig’s fishery is owned communally, and such an independent oversight body can give the Community a strong voice in safeguarding collective rights and ensuring that management decision-making and fishing operation all align with plan objectives and Mi’kmaq laws, values and priorities.

It is proposed that the committee be comprised of an elder (aged 50+), a woman, a youth (aged 16-30), a commercial harvester, and a councillor, all chosen by their member groups and appointed by the Chief and Council.

The Committee would exercise a mandate to oversee fisheries decision-making and operations and provide guidance and feedback to the Community on:

- Whether the Fisheries Development and Management Plan and annual fishing plans are being followed and implemented effectively
- Whether the Guiding Principles (Netukulimk, traditional knowledge, respect for Mother Earth, etc.) are being followed properly by fisheries managers and harvesters
- Whether adequate economic, social and cultural benefits are being generated by the fishery and whether these benefits are being shared fairly with the Community
- Whether the Chief and Council, the Fisheries Director and Rangers and the fish harvesters are carrying their roles and responsibilities properly.

### **3.20 Ugpi'Ganjig Fishing Plans**

The Fisheries Director will be responsible for the elaboration of annual fishing plans for all the Community's fisheries. These plans will be developed in consultation with the harvesters, Rangers, Chief, and Council. These should be available to all Community members who wish to obtain copies. Individual plans should be properly documented and recorded.

There will be a documented annual plan for the following species:

- Lobsters
- Salmon
- Snow crab
- Tuna
- Rock crab
- Oysters
- Clams

There is potential to develop new Community fisheries including red fish, stripe bass, and seals, and also possible aquaculture projects. The Fisheries Director will be responsible to develop and make available operational plans

for these new fisheries as they take shape, and for any other fisheries harvesting project.

Each fishing plan will set out goals for maintaining sustainable harvesting levels and healthy stocks. The Chief and Council, the Fisheries Director, Rangers, and harvesters will all need to work together to ensure all of the Community's fishing efforts are being executed in compliance with fishing plans to guarantee a sustainable fishery.

### 3.21 Measures to ensure each fishery is sustainable

Every fishing plan for both food and commercial fisheries will set out requirements for sustainable and responsible harvesting in each fishery. These will include:

- Allowable catch limits.
- Information gathering to support ongoing stock assessment in conjunction with DFO or other agencies.
- Seasonal considerations to limit or prohibit fishing during breeding or spawning seasons.
- Identification of proper fishing techniques and gear to protect juvenile fish and prohibition of unsustainable methods.
- Use of advanced tools like GPS tracking and electronic monitoring to support catch monitoring and compliance with fishing regulations.

The fisheries Rangers, supported by the Fisheries Director, and Chief and Council, will enforce the rules set out in the fishing plans to ensure all harvesters are fishing sustainably, obeying Mi'kmaq law, and acting in the best interests of the Community.

Measures for not following fishing plans may include the removal of the privilege of using a community licence or community tags and further prosecution by DFO.

### 3.22 Protection of fish populations and marine habitat

To ensure the long-term health of fish populations, each fishing plan will be structured to protect the target species but also other interdependent species and the habitats that sustain the stock. This requires an ecosystem management approach which is consistent with Mi'kmaq values and holistic Indigenous views on the ecosystem and Mother Earth.

Understanding fishing population will require joint efforts with scientific groups, DFO, and other stakeholders in the spirit of peace and friendship.

### 3.23 Harvesting rules

Fishing plans will include specific rules for the conduct of each fishery, such as:

- Prohibition on catching lobster that are egg-bearing or moulting or that are below a minimum size.
- Rules against having on board the vessel, or fishing with, a trap that does not have a valid and properly attached tag.
- A standard allotment of traps to each harvester and rules against fishing with more traps than the maximum specified in their registration and certification documents.
- Requirements to report lost or stolen gear to the Fisheries Director within 48 hours.
- Requirements to report marine mammal interactions during fishing trips.
- Requirements to report maintain all safety-related items, including documentation, outlined in the Harvesting Plan.



### 3.24 Training Programs

Ongoing training for all Community members who participate in the fishery is vital for the long-term success and sustainability of the fishery. Everyone needs to understand and actively follow Mi'kmaq laws and holistic environmental and fisheries management approaches.

To ensure the sustainability and long-term success of the Ugpi'Ganjig fishery each group connected to the fishery will need to receive training in traditional Mi'kmaq knowledge and values and in best fishing practices and the latest scientific innovations. The Fisheries Director will coordinate training activities.

The training programs will cover the following topics and others as required:

- *For Harvesters*
  - Safe fishing operations
  - Conflict management strategies
  - Conservation measures
  - Proper handling, icing, storage of the catch
- *For Rangers*
  - Safe fishing operations
  - Conflict management strategies
  - Proper catch monitoring processes
  - Proper reporting
- *For Oversight Committee members*
  - Conflict management strategies
  - Proper monitoring of the fishing plan
  - Methods and tools for communicating with wider Community

### 3.25 Selection of new entrants to Community fishery

Community members will be free to apply for access to commercial fishing opportunities as they become available subject to the criteria set out by the Chief and Council and the Fisheries Director. Priority will be given to Community members who:

- Have fishing experience, for example by working as crew on fishing vessels
- Have demonstrated responsible fishing practices and adherence to fishing plans
- Have completed training related to the fishery
- Are in good standing with the Community

In recruiting people to serve as crew on their vessels Ugpi'Ganjig harvesters will hire from within the Community whenever possible. If no Community members can be found, preference should be given to individuals from another First Nation Community. If this is not possible, harvesters may hire an available worker but will need to provide evidence to the Fisheries Director that they tried to hire from the Community and another First Nation before hiring from outside the community.

### 3.30 Building Community benefits from fisheries

Aboriginal rights are communal and the Ugpi'Ganjig fishery therefore belongs to the whole Community. However, one of the core findings of the consultations was that many Community members do not feel the benefits of the fishery are shared fairly or that the Community receives sufficient value from it. In response to these concerns the new Ugpi'Ganjig's Fisheries Development and Management Plan provides an

opportunity to build new approaches that are more in keeping with Mi'kmaq values and Community interests.

This section of the new Ugpi'Ganjig Fisheries Development and Management Plan addresses these concerns.

### 3.31 Sharing access to the lobster fishery

After the Supreme Court's Marshall decision in 1999, Ugpi'Ganjig, like many other First Nations, allocated its newly acquired lobster licences to individuals on the same basis as happens in non-Aboriginal fisheries. This was done because of the need to set up commercial fishing activities very quickly without having knowledge of other models for how fishing allocations might be made.

With the ten lobster licences currently owned communally by Ugpi'Ganjig the Community received tags from DFO to fish 3,000 traps. The 3,000 tags are currently allocated to ten boats; each fishing 300 traps as happens in the local non-Indigenous fishery.

An alternative approach in future would be allocate traps to a larger number of Community members so more people can fish to earn moderate livelihoods. This will require careful analysis to identify the minimum number of traps needed – whether it be 100, or 150, or more -- to ensure that the fishing is financially worthwhile for those partaking in it, even if revenues are more modest.

It must be recognized that Ugpi'Ganjig's current commercial harvesters have invested a lot over a long period to build up Ugpi'Ganjig's fisheries even when revenues were modest, and the fishery wasn't a viable single-source income. They have employed many crew members and carried operating costs for fuel, bait, vessel maintenance, gear, and the wharf. The Community should therefore treat them fairly in transitioning

to a different allocations model. Any changes that are made to how lobster tags are allocated must treat current harvester fairly and with respect.

It is therefore proposed that the current lobster harvesters continue to be allocated their 300 tags each for as long as they are actively fishing them. However, when each harvester retires the Community will take control of their tags and decide their future allocation. The retiring harvesters should also receive fair compensation for their vessel, gear, and other equipment via a price that is decided through an independent expert's assessment of their value.

In addition to when current harvesters retire, opportunities for Community members to enter the lobster fishery and be allocated tags for the first time may will also arise if the Community acquires new licences through agreements with DFO or direct purchases from non-Indigenous fishing enterprise owners.

In either case, the Chief and Council and the Fisheries Director will decide the future allocation of the available tags. There are two main options to be considered in these situations:

- Allocate all 300 tags from a newly acquired licence or a retiree to one new commercial harvester from the Community to be fished under the same terms and obligations as current harvesters.
- Divide the 300 tags into smaller allocations to support moderate livelihood fishing by more Community members. For example, three individuals might be allocated 100 tags each.

No matter which option is followed, there will need to be clear criteria for choosing who is to receive tags, and the criteria and

the decision-making will need to be fully transparent to the Community. The criteria should include:

- Fishing experience.
- Completion of training courses.
- A record of responsible and safe fishing activities.
- Good standing in the Community.

Decision-making by the Chief and Council and the Fisheries Director on both the criteria and the allocations of traps will be reviewed by the Oversight Committee, and the Committee will report their findings to the Community.

### 3.32 Community benefits from the snow crab fishery

Snow crab is a core part of Ugpi’Ganjig commercial fishery, with fishing taking place in the spring of each year under a strict DFO quota system. The crab is fished by a single mid-shore boat (the *East Wind*) with one crew. Training is now underway for the vessel to be captained and crewed by Community members.

There is, at present, no direct benefit to individual Community members from this important revenue generating fishery. Profits are currently invested by the Chief and Council to fund the operations of the Fisheries Department and important Community programs.

### 3.33 Community Fund

To address the issue of sharing financial benefits from the Ugpi’Ganjig fishery with all Community members, it is proposed that 10% of total gross (before expenses) revenues from all viable and profitable commercial fishing activities be put aside in a Community Fund to be distributed at the end of each year to every Community member who registers for this

revenue. To receive the benefits each year Community members will need to enroll annually in the Fund before a fixed deadline.

If the Community votes to approve this approach to sharing revenues each year from both the lobster fishery and snow crab commercial fisheries the monies will be paid out after the commercial fishing season is finished. Community members should have the option to receive either a cash payment or a share of the actual catch with equivalent value.

Allocating 10% of the total annual revenue of Ugpi’Ganjig’s commercial fisheries would give each member of the Community a direct benefit from their fishery to encourage a sense of ownership, affirming that the fishery belongs to the whole Community even though most members do not engage in fishing activities themselves.

As part of work on the Ugpi’Ganjig Fisheries Development and Management Plan the impacts of allocating around 10% of the annual fisheries revenues was analyzed. The amount of revenue available to each Community member in a given year will depend on several factors, including the size of the catch, the price, the number of people receiving the benefit, and the growth of resource base over time.

In 2025, if 10% of the gross revenue from the snow crab fishery is put into the Community Fund to be shared with Community members, this would add more than \$275,000 to the Fund as the following table shows.

<b>Snow Crab</b>				
<b>Total lbs. (2025)</b>	<b>Price per lb.</b>	<b>Gross Income</b>	<b>Community Portion</b>	<b>Direct Community Benefit</b>
379,381	\$7.25	\$ 2,750,513	10%	\$ 275,051

Special discussions were held with Ugpi'Ganjig commercial lobster harvesters to develop a plan for generating the 10% share for the Community.

For the 2025 season only, commercial lobster harvesters have agreed to voluntarily fish ten additional 10 traps for the Community, with share of the catch made available to Community members from a central location. The lobster will be given whole or after having been prepared by a member of Ugpi'Ganjig First Nation. The mechanism for this will be further elaborated upon during the commercial season once the fishing plan has been adopted.

For 2026, two commercial boats will be dedicated to harvesting on the Community's behalf and 600 of the 700 fall (food) fishery tags will be re-allocated to create two new Community commercial food fishing licences. This will create up to eight new jobs for Community members and provide the Community an additional revenue stream.

The objective of two vessels fishing for the Community is to generate revenue after deducing operating costs that would be equivalent to 10% of the overall value of the total commercial lobster fishery. If Ugpi'Ganjig's commercial lobster fishery has a total landed value of two million dollars, the goal would be for the two vessels fishing for the Community to generate a net revenue of \$200,000 to go into the Community Fund. If this is not possible because of the operating costs, a third vessel fishing for the Community could be added to reach the 10% net revenue target. This added vessel could come from the purchase of a non-Indigenous vessel and licence that is fishing within existing boundaries.

These two or three Community vessels will provide fishing jobs for two or three captains and crews, and opportunities for

them to acquire skills and experience to become regular commercial harvesters. The Chief and Council give these harvesters consideration for commercial licences that become available from new purchases or retirements. As discussed above, they would need to meet criteria for entry to the commercial fishery, including training, fishing experience and evidence of responsible practices.

With the above example the Community Fund would receive \$200,000 from the lobster fishery and \$275,051 from the snow crab fishery for a total of \$475,051. The potential benefits per Community member is described in the table below, recognizing that the benefit will fluctuate based on catch, prices, and the number of people who enroll in the Fund.

<b>Potential annual benefit per Community member</b>				
Community Members Enrolled	800	700	600	500
Snow Crab Fishery	\$ 344	\$ 393	\$ 458	\$ 550
Lobster Fishery	\$ 263	\$ 300	\$ 350	\$ 420
<b>Benefit Per Community Member</b>	<b>\$ 606</b>	<b>\$ 693</b>	<b>\$ 808</b>	<b>\$ 970</b>

Based on this analysis and 2025 prices, the annual financial contribution for each Community member in 2026 could be from \$600 to \$970 depending on how many members register to participate in the Fund.

Because the 2025 lobster season is already underway and it is too late to set up the two or three boats to fish for the Community, members will only receive payments this year from the snow crab fishery. This will vary from \$300 to \$600 per member depending on the number of enrollees.

It is further proposed that Community members under the age of 18 have their annual payments held in an interest-bearing account to become available to them when they turn 18.



### 3.4 The Food Fishery

As mentioned above, it is a foundational and fundamental right for every Aboriginal person living in Canada to harvest for food, social and ceremonial purposes. The Ugpi'Ganjig's Fisheries Development and Management Plan will not and cannot deny anyone that right. On the contrary, individuals will be encouraged to harvest lobster or other species for their families as has been the way of life for centuries.

If an individual or family wishes to participate in the fall food fishery, the individual will be issued one trap tag, or the family will be issued one tag for each immediate family member. They will fish the traps themselves and not have commercial harvesters' fish on their behalf. No large commercial fishing vessel should be used for an individual or immediate family food fishery.

There will also be specific fishing activities in the fall for social and ceremonial purposes. These fishing activities will be limited to one or a few days based only on the specific need.

## 3.5 Fishing Plans

### 3.51 Lobster

For 2025 the lobster harvesting plan will continue unchanged except for possible amendments based on improved conservation measures. There will be a need to carefully monitor the health of the lobster through the two-eyed seeing fundamental principle.

There are opportunities to collaborate with other First Nations or the Maritime Fishermen's Union to provide mentoring services for the harvesters fishing for the Community in 2026. This will be consistent with the core principle of peace, friendship, and reconciliation.

There will also be a five-year plan for investments in the further development of the lobster fishery, including:

- The installation of artificial reefs
- The restoration of the lobster seeding program
- With guidance from existing harvesters, implementation of additional conservation measures to help the resource grow.

New measures to improve the overall management of the Ugpi'Ganjig lobster fishery will be undertaken, including:

- Employing divers to do annual surveys of the fishing grounds and to monitor the results of the enhancement program
- Intensive monitoring to determine the total size of the catch each year
- Evaluation of the seeding and artificial reef programs to inform future planning and investments.

### 3.52 Snow crab

The snow crab fishing plan also will remain as it is today with the understanding that 10% of revenues will be shared with Community members.

### 3.53 Salmon

The salmon fishing plan needs to be improved with stronger conservation measures. At present, the salmon fishery is set by date. Because the salmon population is at high risk it is recommended that measures be adopted to ensure that only the allotment of salmon for the community be allowed to be captured.

It is also recommended that the Community undertake further collaboration with DFO to further protect and enhance the salmon fishery through the recently announced DFO conservation and enhancement program. Ugpi'Ganjig has the opportunity to take part in enhancement programs that clearly benefit the salmon and the Community. It is also recommended that further exchanges and collaborative approaches be strengthened with the other First Nations harvesting the same the salmon of the Restigouche. Exchanges with other stakeholders should also be strengthened. Bringing back this at-risk species is of paramount importance for all First Nations.

### 3.54 Clam harvesting

Ugpi'Ganjig will continue efforts to increase clam harvesting through the habitat restoration program and other means to make this harvesting more worthwhile for the Community.

### 3.55 Striped bass

In 2025 Ugpi’Ganjig will enter into a collaborative project with Papineau First Nation to develop a striped bass fishery and to then establish its own fishing plan in 2026.

### 3.56 Seals

A seal fishery will begin in the fall of 2025. A plan will be in place by September 1, 2025.

### 3.57 Rock crab

The rock crab fishery plan will continue as-is for 2025 but must be reviewed ahead of the 2026 season.

### 3.58 Tuna

The tuna fishery plan will continue as-is in 2025 but needs to be re-visited for 2026. The number of tags allocated to this fishery should be increased due to the increase of tuna population.

### 3.59 Oyster

An oyster harvesting and farming plan should be further developed and implemented. This review shall be completed by the end of 2026.

### 3.60 Seaweed

A seaweed program, with the goal of re-introducing eels to create an eel fishery, will be developed in 2025 to begin in 2026.

### 3.61 Redfish

Ugpi’Ganjig will prepare a harvesting plan by September 2025 for the 2026 season. This will include cost analysis and an upgrade plan for its mid-shore fishing vessel (*East Wind*),

possible collaborative arrangements with fish other First Nations quotas, and identification of a buyer for the product.

### 3.62 Others

Ugpi'Ganjig will undertake research and feasibility studies to grow seaweeds like eel grass and other seaweed varieties that could have a commercial value.

## 3.7 Habitat restoration

Habitat restoration programs will be further developed in 2025 for Ugpi'Ganjig's clam fishery with the understanding that those responsible for the destruction of the habitat will contribute to the program.

An overall habitat protection and restoration plan will also be elaborated in 2025 to commence in 2026 with funding coming from those responsible for its deterioration.

Furthermore, the pollution in rivers and the Bay caused by pulp mills, mining, deforestation, and other detrimental activities will be assessed and compensation and restoration programs will be pursued over the next two years with the objective of requiring those who caused the damage to pay for the programs.

### 3.8 Other considerations

During the consultations it was proposed that the Community's other commercial activities should also allocate a percentage of their revenue (e.g., 10%) directly to Community members. This would include Ugpi'Ganjig's forestry efforts and also other commercial industries that could place on Ugpi'Ganjig's traditional territory or impact it. This might include things like mining and energy projects and any other commercial activity. The Community should be consulted about commercial activities that impact its traditional territory and should see benefits from projects that are implemented.

## 4.0 Implementation Steps

There are several things which will need to be implemented after the community vote on the fisheries management and development plan. These are outlined in the table below.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Review Plan + immediate action items</b>	Chief + Council	Before May 31, 2025	One time
<b>Implementation of self-governance</b>	Chief + Council	September 2025	One time implementation, evaluated on an ongoing basis
<b>Develop communal fishery and proprietorship of harvesting activities plan (e.g., for retiring commercial lobster fishermen)</b>	Chief + Council	September 2025	One time
<b>Develop a plan to address moderate livelihood concerns</b>	Chief + Council	December 2025	One time
<b>Plan for the application of Mi'kmaq law for those who do not respect the Community's plan(s)</b>	Chief + Council	December 2025	One time



<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Development of harvesting plan for each species</b>	Fisheries Director + Harvesters + Rangers	4 months before the start of each fishing season	Annually
<b>Approval of harvesting plans</b>	Chief + Council	3 months before the start of each season	Annually
<b>Plan to oversee implementation of harvesting plans</b>	Chief + Council	2 months before the start of each commercial season	Annually
<b>Approving criteria for choosing future participants in the fishery</b>	Chief + Council	October 2025	One time
<b>Approve compensation program for oversight committee</b>	Chief + Council	September 2025	One time, reviewed annually
<b>Confirmation of Councilor responsible for habitat protection and restoration</b>	Chief + Council	September 2025	One time
<b>Member selection</b> (one elder, woman, harvester, youth, and counselor needs to be appointed)	Oversight Committee – selected by each group (elders, women, harvesters, youth, and council)	June 30 2025	One time, departing members will be replaced individually

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Outlining roles and responsibilities including identification of specific activities to monitor</b>	Oversight Committee	June 30 2025	One time
<b>Decide on the number of meetings to be held each year and book meeting dates</b>	Oversight Committee	June 30 2025	One time, updated annually or as needed
<b>Prepare report(s) for publication to the whole community</b>	Oversight Committee	December 2025	Annually
<b>Review of Fisheries Director's tasks (and for other groups)</b>	Fisheries Director	September 2025	Ongoing
<b>Implement the plan</b>	Fisheries Director	Annually	Ongoing
<b>Review of support staff required</b>	Fisheries Director	June 30, 2025	Annually
<b>Review of role and tasks for rangers</b>	Rangers + Fisheries Director	September 2025	Annually
<b>Identification of training requirements for rangers</b>	Fisheries Director +Rangers	September 2025	Annually

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Identification of required tools, equipment, and vessel</b>	Fisheries Director +Rangers	September 2025	Annually
<b>Develop a working relationship with DFO and understand where and how DFO can support Ugpi’Ganjig’s fisheries</b>	Fisheries Director + Rangers	September 2025	Ongoing
<b>Detailing monitoring, compliance, and reporting program</b>	Fisheries Director + Rangers	October 2025	One time, then ongoing

**4.1 Resource Protection for Future Generations**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Establish program for resource evaluation based on traditional knowledge and science</b>	Chief + Council and Fisheries Director	November 2025	One time
<b>Cooperation with other First Nations, Industry organizations, and scientific community</b>	Fisheries Director + Rangers + Harvesters	October 2025	Ongoing

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Annual reporting on state of each species</b>	Fisheries Director	November 2025	Annual

#### 4.2 Habitat protection and restoration

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Identification of habitat linked to marine resources</b>	Fisheries Director + Councilor responsible for habitat protection	December 2025	One time
<b>Plan(s) to protect existing habitats</b>	Fisheries Director + Councilor responsible for habitat protection	December 2025	Built in 2025, updated annually
<b>Plan to restore damaged habitats</b>	Fisheries Director + Councilor responsible for habitat protection	December 2025	Built in 2025, updated as needed

### **Community Approval Vote: Ugpi’Ganjig’s New Fisheries Management and Development Plan**

## 5. Ballot Measures

**Item 1:** do you agree that the core principles outlined in this plan like Self-governance, Protection of Mother Earth, Mi'kmaq ways of interacting with the nature (Netukulimk), Multi-Generational Thinking, Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge should be the foundation of Ugpi'Ganjig's fishing efforts?

- Yes
- No

**Item 2:** Do you agree to convert the food/fall fishery into a commercial food fishery that will take place in the spring, with the understanding that those who wish to fish for food for themselves or their immediate families can still do so in the fall, with one tag allocated per member of Ugpi'Ganjig First Nation living in the household?

- Yes
- No

**Item 3:** Do you agree that all viable commercial fisheries such as lobster and snow crab should allocate 10% of revenue generated annually directly to members of Ugpi'Ganjig First Nation?

- Yes
- No

**Item 4:** Do you agree that two lobster licenses should be added to the commercial lobster fishery to fish for the community beginning in 2026?

- Yes
- No

**Item 5:** Do you agree that Ugpi’Ganjig’s fishery should be monitored by an independent oversight committee comprised of: an elder, a woman, a youth, a fisherman, and a councilor?

- Yes
- No

**Item 6:** Do you agree rangers in the community fisheries are currently unable to ensure fishing plans are followed, and that steps-such as providing better equipment, more training, and increasing accountability-are needed to strengthen their role?

- Yes
- No

**Item 7:** Do you agree that the salmon fishery plan needs to be overhauled to ensure additional protection of this endangered species?

- Yes
- No

**Item 8:** Do you agree with the overall fisheries management plan, even if one or more of items 1-7 above are not implemented?

- Yes
- No