

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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High water levels, COVID-19 pandemic, slow Epoufette Harbor completion

SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich. —The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians' Epoufette Harbor Development Project has been delayed due to high water levels on Lake Michigan and the COVID-19 pandemic response by the tribes and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Sault Tribe is developing a tribal fishing access and mooring facility on the north shore of Lake Michigan, near Epoufette, Mich. The Epoufette Harbor project will expand and improve a long-existing commercial fishing access and dock facility that was in disrepair and unusable for commercial fishing vessels. The project will provide mooring for large commercial boats; launch capabilities for commercial, enforcement, biological and recreational vessels; and parking. The project will also provide new public access to the harbor since the existing road is on private property.

Lake Michigan's high water levels have affected both the harbor and road projects. And, COVID-19 Pandemic responses by the tribe and USACE have caused short staffing on the projects.

“While the intent is for the road, parking area and boat launch to be available for use by the general public, it may be a while before all construction is completed and the site is officially open for use,” Sault Tribe Executive Director Christine McPherson said.

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