

Mark Duffy

This is the first time for me up here. I've never given a speech before. Last night, I struggled at what am I going to say.

So to start to you off, *Boozhoo*, I'm Mark Duffy, a Red Cliff member of the Lake Superior Chippewa, and the son of Joe Duffy who is a long term commercial fisherman, a hunter, and a gatherer of our natural resources. Some things I'm going to tell you about are the stories that were shared at the kitchen table or at other gatherings by tribal members such as night fishing.

It was an activity that was done before the rights were there. That they go out at dark, set their nets and go out before daylight, to pull those nets in, so that they could bring that fish home to eat. They tried not to be seen or caught by the wardens. There are also stories of "Oh lets run by and see if the wardens home. If he's home, it's safe to go hunting tonight." If they were caught out there hunting, they would lose their gear, receive fines, and potentially go to jail. But they took this chance to feed their families and fulfill a part of tradition of using the natural resource as part of their life.

One of the more humorous stories was when a small group of hunters were traveling down an old dirt road and they crested a hill. In the road in front of them was a vehicle and the driver goes, "...oh blankety, blankety, blank...we're caught! Run!" Everybody jumps out of the vehicle and runs to the woods. Shortly thereafter, they said, "Nobody's chasing us. We better sneak up and see what's going on." So they sneaked back out to the vehicles and they look over and it's just another group of hunters from Red Cliff. We continue on from there after a good chuckle.

Before the *Voigt* or *Gurnoe* decisions came about, if a tribal member went off-reservation to harvest, the State of Wisconsin looked at that member, and they proclaimed that person to be a poacher. But on the reservation, back home, we construed those people to be our providers or harvesters. They took the chance to get out there and harvest the natural resources to bring home to their families.

Because of various case decisions and the dedication of many people who believe in and fought for treaty rights, today tribal members are able to hunt, fish and gather natural resources in the light of day or dark with the protection of the law on their side. This is a really big thing.

Today, the tribes have their own experts, their own hatcheries, their own regulations, their own law enforcement, and their own court systems to collectively regulate, monitor, and protect our natural resources for the generations to come. Because of these rights, tribal members are able to bring home natural foods and make a meager income from such things as maple syrup, wild rice, fish, crafts, boughs and other natural products out there. We could go on a long time about what this means today. Children today have not lived like those of generations past, but these stories need to be told. These stories need to be put down in writing so the next generation knows what happened previously.

Of course, I'm not a long speaker, so I'm going to close with a little saying here. We've come a long way, but we have a long way to go in the protection and preservation of our treaty rights and in the management of our natural resources. Thank you.