

# Region 5 Brownfields Success – Mille Lacs Tribe of Ojibwe, Onamia, MN

## Former Wastewater Treatment Lagoons Converted into Fish Hatchery

### **Opportunity:**

The Mille Lacs Tribe was seeking a reuse opportunity for a 45 acre former wastewater treatment plant with six waste lagoons, which had been sitting idle since 2004. Several ideas were proposed, but a Walleye fish hatchery had the greatest merit in bringing economic opportunities to the region's lakes, which are a favorite of sport fishermen.



**Targeted Investment:** EPA and the Mille Lacs Brownfield 128(a) coordinator worked together to request EPA Land Revitalization Technical Assistance (TA) funds. This TA was utilized to determine the feasibility and cost of converting the six lagoons into a fish hatchery. EPA's contractors, (SRA/HDR) developed conceptual plans and costs for this conversion, providing a practical how-to guide to Mille Lacs.

**Results:** With only with \$10,000 budget, along with technical assistance and donated tanks from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mille Lacs scoured the area hatcheries to acquire surplus equipment to create a pilot-scale hatchery, which produced 12,000 Walleye fingerlings during the summer of 2016. For 2017, this number grew to 3.5 Million. These fingerlings have been released into area lakes, providing future source of food and economic vitality for the tribe and the Region.

