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Burnt Church timeline

Chronology of conflict between the federal Fisheries Department and natives from the Burnt Church reserve in New Brunswick following the landmark 1999 court ruling.

1999

September: Supreme Court of Canada rules Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy bands have the right to earn a "moderate livelihood" from year-round fishing, hunting and gathering.

October: Roughly 3,000 native lobster traps destroyed in New Brunswick's Miramichi Bay after 150 non-native fishermen take to water.

2000

April: Spring lobster fishery opens on Miramichi Bay without an agreement between Burnt Church band and Ottawa.

Aug. 9: Residents of reserve vote to manage their own lobster fishery.

Aug. 11: Federal fishery officers begin pulling traps out.

Aug. 22: Fishery officer injured by thrown rock during confrontation with Mi'kmaq fishermen.

Aug. 29: Fishery officers launch raid on native lobster traps, two native boats swamped and sunk.

Sept. 12: Sixteen natives, including Burnt Church band chief, arrested and four native boats seized.

Sept. 21: Fisheries Minister Herb Dhaliwal declares lobster fishery on Miramichi closed and gives natives 24-hour deadline to remove traps.

Sept. 23: Three non-natives arrested and firearms seized after shots fired on water. No one hurt.
Officers remove about 800 traps.

Sept. 26: Fishery officials seize traps as they're pursued by Mi'kmaq boats.

Oct. 3: Natives voluntarily haul few remaining traps and declare their fall fishery over.

2001

May 4: Rayburn Joseph Dedam, a native man arrested during the previous year's violence, pleads guilty to an assault charge stemming from confrontation between natives and fishery officers. He was fined \$170.

May 29: Two native men from Burnt Church - Clifford Larry and Jason Barnaby - fined \$1,000 each for obstructing fishery officers in June 2000.

August: Federal Fisheries Department announces limited, fall food fishery for natives in waters off Burnt Church reserve.

September: At least 30 gunshots fired during weekend duel when non-native fishermen in about 50 boats and native fishermen in 10 boats chase and dodge each other near the reserve. No one hurt.

Oct. 10: Jury acquits Leigh Morrison, a non-native fisherman, of three charges of assault with a weapon against a group of native fishermen in October 1999.

Oct. 20: Food fishery licence for natives, which resulted in less violence overall in 2001, expires.

2002

February: John David Dedam, a native fisherman, sentenced to three years in prison for aggravated assault for attacking a fishery officer on Miramichi Bay in August 2000.

April: Fisheries Department warns that Miramichi Bay cannot sustain lobster fishery proposed by Burnt Church First Nation.

June: Lawyers agree to combine three sets of charges dealing with lobster and treaty rights on Miramichi Bay into single action. The agreement means 10 Mi'kmaq from Burnt Church will face trial together Sept. 3 for various alleged breaches of Fisheries Act in September 2000.

Aug. 1: An agreement-in-principal, worth about \$20 million over two years, reached between Ottawa and Burnt Church regarding the native lobster fishery