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Media Release

Media Relations (807) 343-8177

Lakehead researcher studying the impact of climate change, invasive spiny water flea on Quetico Park fishes

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A Lakehead University researcher has secured a \$75,000 Quetico Foundation grant over the next three years to evaluate how invasive spiny water flea and climate change are affecting the early growth rates and mercury loads of fish at Quetico Park.

Dr. Michael Rennie, an Associate Professor in Biology, Canada Research Chair in Freshwater Ecology and Fisheries, and Research Fellow at the Experimental Lakes Area, is looking specifically at Lake Herring and Walleye to help inform adaptive management plans for Quetico Park.

“Recreational fisheries are a keystone to local economies, worth \$1.3 billion in Ontario alone per year,” Dr. Rennie said.

“This is especially true in remote park regions like Quetico Provincial Park, a mecca for backcountry canoeists and fishermen. However, invasive species like the spiny water flea and climate change threaten these pristine systems, and may require a change in management strategies given these ongoing environmental changes,” he said.

“We are extremely pleased to have received this funding from the Foundation for our first Lakehead University/Quetico Foundation Research Program,” said Dr. Andrew P. Dean, Lakehead’s Vice-President, Research and Innovation.

“This project will yield important results with regards to the ecology at Quetico Park and impacts of climate change. The park is one of those pristine treasures in our own backyard. Understanding and managing changes to the wildlife and fish in the park is essential to sustainability and resilience within a changing environment,” Dr. Dean added.

“The Quetico Foundation is thrilled to be working with Lakehead, and in particular, with Dr. Rennie who has an outstanding background in aquatic ecosystems”, said Arthur Saunders, Chair of the Foundation’s Science Committee. “The Quetico Foundation is dedicated to the protection of wilderness and we anticipate that Dr. Rennie’s research

will add to our understanding of how Quetico Park's environment is reacting to the forces of change," Saunders added.

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Media: For more information or interviews, please contact Brandon Walker, Media, Communications and Marketing Associate, at (807) 343-8177 or mediarelations@lakeheadu.ca.

Lakehead University is a fully comprehensive university with approximately 9,700 full-time equivalent students and over 2,000 faculty and staff at two campuses in Orillia and Thunder Bay, Ontario. Lakehead has 10 faculties, including Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Graduate Studies, Health & Behavioural Sciences, Law, Natural Resources Management, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Science & Environmental Studies, and Social Sciences & Humanities. In 2019, *Maclean's 2020 University Rankings*, once again, included Lakehead University among Canada's Top 10 primarily undergraduate universities, while *Research Infosource* named Lakehead 'Research University of the Year' in its category for the fifth consecutive year. Visit www.lakeheadu.ca.