



INDIAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 02202024_04

Rights of Manoomin/Psin

A resolution recognizing Wild Rice (Manoomin in Anishinabe and Psin in Dakota and herein referred as Manoomin/Psin) as sacred and central to the culture and health of Indigenous Peoples in Minnesota and critical to the health and identity of all Minnesota citizens and ecosystems; and establishing a commitment to passing Rights of Manoomin/Psin legislation to protect wild rice and the freshwater resources upon which it depends.

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council Membership consists of representatives of the federally-recognized Indian Tribes located within the State of Minnesota, members of the legislature, commissioners from the state department, and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council is a liaison between the state and local units of government in the delivery of services to the American Indians in the State of Minnesota, and

WHEREAS, American Indian/Alaska Native populations are often identified by the various federal and state agencies as a minority and smallest ethnic group in the United States, and

WHEREAS, American Indian/Alaska Native people are citizens of, or descendants of citizens of sovereign nations, and possess a unique political status that is not racial or ethnic in nature; and

WHEREAS, the White Earth Nation has adopted the White Earth Reservation Rights of Manoomin (Resolution Number 001-19-009) in December of 2018, for the protection of Manoomin/Psin: by this legislation at Section 1(a), “Manoomin, or wild rice, within the White Earth Reservation possesses inherent rights to exist, flourish, regenerate, and evolve, as well as inherent rights to restoration, recovery, and preservation. These rights include, but are not limited to, the right to pure water and freshwater habitat; the right to a healthy climate system and a natural environment free from human-caused global warming impacts and emissions; the right to be free from patenting; as well as rights to be free from infection, infestation, or drift by any means from genetically engineered organisms, trans-genetic risk seed, or other seeds that have been developed using methods other than traditional plant breeding.” and

WHEREAS, Manoomin/Psin is considered by the Anishinaabeg and Dakota peoples to be a gift from the Creator, and is central to their cultures; and

WHEREAS, for the Anishinaabeg in particular, Manoomin is the reason for their presence in the area. Erma Vizenor, former Chairwoman of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, described the migration story of the Anishinaabe in Natural Wild Rice in Minnesota: A Wild Rice Study Document Submitted to the Minnesota Legislature by the MNDNR (Feb. 15, 2008), <https://perma.cc/B9ZW-XHYG>, “According to our sacred migration story, in the long ago a prophet at the third of seven fires beheld a vision from the Creator calling the Anishinaabe to move west (to a land previously occupied long ago) until they found the place ‘where food grows on the water.’ The Anishinaabeg of the upper Mississippi and western Great Lakes have for generations understood their connection to anishinaabe akiing (the land of the people) in terms of the presence of this plant as a gift from the Creator.”; and

WHEREAS, Manoomin/Psin has been a staple in the diets and economies of native people for generations, is a central element of the culture, heritage, and history of the Anishinaabeg and Dakota people, and is an integral part of the ecosystems and natural communities of the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples in Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Governor established the Governor's Task Force on Wild Rice, Executive Order 18-08 on May 28, 2018, and Executive Order 18-09 amending Executive Order 18-08 recognizing that:

- Wild rice is the Official State Grain of Minnesota;
- Wild rice is culturally important and spiritually sacred to Minnesota's Tribal Nations;
- the harvest and cultivation of wild rice is economically important to the State of Minnesota; the availability of wild rice is important to sustaining waterfowl and wildlife;
- The health of wild rice is dependent on water quality and other habitat conditions;
- The scientific understanding of the water quality and habitat conditions necessary for restoration and protection of naturally occurring wild rice has advanced through legislatively-funded research;
- The State of Minnesota has goals to restore degraded wild rice habitat and to protect naturally occurring wild rice stands;
- The restoration and protection of wild rice habitat requires collaboration among state agencies, Tribal Nations, wild rice harvesters, industry, conservation advocacy groups, and scientists; and

WHEREAS, the preliminary recommendations made by the Governor’s Task Force on Wild Rice agreed on the importance of protecting wild rice and clean water, ensuring the viability of all Minnesota communities, respecting Tribal sovereignty, the need to address biological, chemical, and hydrological threats to wild rice and sharing the burdens and benefits of any solutions the state develops; and

WHEREAS, the six tribes of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribes (MCT) declined to participate in the Governor’s Task Force on Wild Rice and established the Minnesota Tribal Wild Rice Task

Force (TWRTF). Members of TWRTF included representatives of all eleven federally recognized tribes in Minnesota. Their report focuses on the current wild rice standard of 10 mg/L sulfate and makes the following recommendations:

- Widen the beneficial use of wild rice to include cultural and ecological values;
- Include all waters identified by the Tribes, MNDNR, and MPCA as wild rice waters where the standard would apply;
- Adopt a more comprehensive wild rice monitoring, assessment, and mapping strategy;
- Adopt process for adding wild rice waters to list;
- Communicate directly with each affected Tribal Government to determine their decision on listing wild rice waters within reservation boundaries;
- Implement and enforce wild rice water quality standard;
- Examine and invest in sulfate reduction research and treatment technologies;
- Establish long-term funding;
- Seasonal or “flushing” discharges of sulfate should not occur;
- Recognize the value of wild rice and a healthy environment;
- Address impaired waters of Minnesota;
- Recognize and support tribal sovereignty, culture, and treaty rights; and

WHEREAS, the Rights of Nature Movement broadly asserts that nature is a legally recognizable entity with inalienable rights; and

WHEREAS, Rights of Nature is a national movement with over a dozen county and municipality laws enacting rights of nature in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Mexico, Oregon, Colorado, New Hampshire, Florida; and

WHEREAS, Rights of Nature is uniquely important in numerous Tribal Nations in the US from constitutional reform efforts in the Ho-Chunk Nation, use of traditional and customary law in the Navajo Nation and the Ponca Nation in Oklahoma, recognized rights in rivers and ecosystems in Yurok Nation, Menominee Indian Tribe in Wisconsin, the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho, and recognition of the Rights of Manoomin in White Earth, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the 1855 Treaty Council; and

WHEREAS, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council affirmatively supports that it recognizes Manoomin/Psin as sacred and central to the culture and health of Indigenous Peoples in Minnesota and critical to the health and identity of all Minnesota citizens and ecosystems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Minnesota Indian Affairs Council establishes a commitment to passing Rights of Manoomin/Psin legislation within the next two years from the date of signature by the governor, to protect wild rice and the freshwater resources upon which it depends.

CERTIFICATION: We do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly presented and acted upon by a vote of 6 For, 0 Against, 1 Silent at Regular Meeting of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, a quorum present, held on February 20, 2024, at Tower, Minnesota.

Robert. L Larsen, Chairman
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

Robert Deschampe, Vice Chairman
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council