

An ask for wild rice protections

By Natalie Rademacher

I am reaching out in support of SF 1247 and the additional protections it would provide to wild rice or manoomin. Wild rice is the state grain of Minnesota. It was here even before the Anishinaabe people migrated to this land from the east. My ancestors came here because of wild rice. According to oral stories, an elder received a message in a dream that our people must find the place where food grows on the water.

Under the [1854 Treaty of La Pointe](#), the Anishinaabe people retained the right to harvest wild rice after they signed away this land to the U.S. government. To honor the rights retained in the treaty, we need to protect wild rice habitats from pollution, development, and overharvesting. We've been stewards of wild rice for generations, and I ask that you pass this bill, so we can continue to steward this vital resource and gift.

I'm a descendant of the Grand Portage Band of Anishinaabe. My grandma, ninookomis, takes me wild ricing and out to the sugar bush to tap trees for maple syrup. Our family has gathered food in this way for generations, and I'm honored to be able to continue these traditions. Wild rice is a vital food source for so many in Grand Portage, a community with little access to affordable nutritious foods and a poverty rate of 17.6%, [according to ACS 2023 data](#). Harvesting wild rice helps us connect with this land in a way that is nourishing and healing. It provides a healthy food source that otherwise wouldn't be available. I humbly ask today that you please support SF 1247. It is our duty to uphold the obligations established in the 1854 Treaty, so that wild rice may be here for generations to come.