

## **Brief Summary Distinguishing from Personhood**

The Rights of Nature has become widely reported and somewhat popularized. It is a diverse range of jurisprudential (legal philosophy) approaches. One of those approaches is legal personhood, where for example a river is recognized as a legal person with the rights associated with personhood similar to that of a corporation. For various reasons there is considerable push back against this both conceptually and legally.

There are other avenues to approach what is loosely termed Rights of Nature. One of these is rather than attributing legal personhood, it is recognizing the relationship of humans with what is called nature by some and protecting those relationships so they may continue.

In a Minnesota context, there are various Indian Nations who maintain hunting, fishing and gathering rights that are legally recognized. There are also a large number of Minnesotans generally who enjoy hunting and fishing. These are all important. To ensure these rights and recreational activities can continue it is important to maintain ecosystems in which this happens. One of the key ecosystems is centered around wild rice.

What is being sought in this legislative initiative is NOT legal personhood. Recognizing that wild rice is an integral part of the ecosystem ensures that not only itself is able to be harvested, but also preserves fish habitats and terrestrial animal habitat. It is a responsibility, of all in Minnesota to ensure that wild rice is protected from diminishment so as to preserve the human relationships connected to it. Recognizing the inherent (which in this case means naturally occurring) right to flourish, exist and thrive accomplishes this. It does not create personhood, and it does not create any “right” of wild rice to sue or be sued. This initiative is not related to the rights of Manoomin initiative passed by White Earth Tribe a few years ago.