Manoomin: Native Wild Rice in Michigan

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Manoomin – the good seed
Anishinaabek Migration Story

The Migration of the Anishinaabe

1. Turtle-shaped Island
2. Niagara Falls
3. Detroit River
4. Manitoulin Island
5. Sault Ste. Marie
6. Duluth
7. Madeline Island

After The Mishomis Book (Benton-Banai 1988:99)
Species in Michigan

- Northern Wild Rice (*Zizania palustris*)
- Southern Wild Rice (*Zizania aquatica*)
Zizania palustris

- Muck soils
- Flowing water
- Depth 0.5 – 3 feet
- Stable water levels
Zizania aquatica

- Slow current, muck or silt bottom
- Shallow water two feet deep
- Most successful when no competition from other plants
Zizania aquatica aquatica

Legend
- Historical occurrences
- Extant occurrences
- Michigan County Boundaries

Data from MNFI Biotics Database and NHBPI Environmental Dept.
General life cycle

Seed

Flowers

Emerges

Submerged

Floating Leaf Stage
Floating leaf stage

Photo by 1854 Treaty Authority
Emergent

Photo by Barb Barton
Flowering August

Photo by Dennis Albert
Harvest time
Late August - early September

Photo by Barb Barton
Ecological Values

- Cover and brood rearing habitat for ducks
- Food source
- Nursery areas for young fish and amphibians
- Important migratory area
- Natural communities have 35+ T&E species (MNFI)
Cultural Values

Photos by Barb Barton
Wild Rice Camps

Photo by Barb Barton

Photo by Barb Barton
Sacred Character of Manoomin

- Prayer ceremonies
- Harvesting
- Prayers when planting
- Served during special feasts & funerals
- Death rituals

Photos by Barb Barton
Social Values

- Rice Camps – create a sense of community
- Manoomin – Ojibwe tradition
- Economic
Threats to Manoomin

- Changes to hydrology
- Pollution, herbicides, heavy boat traffic
- Mute swans, carp, Asian milfoil, Typha
- Fungus, pests

Photo by GLIFWC
Genetic Engineering Threat

- GMOs marketed as authentic “wild rice.”
- Cross pollination
- May undermine the survivability of true wild rice
Conservation and Research Needs

Photo by GLIFWC
Historical Plantings

1918 Rice Planting Program
- 27 individuals and organizations
- 4200 lbs of wild rice
- Only 2 of 27 sites successful

Miscellaneous Plantings
- 50 projects plus 26 in Hiawatha National Forest
- 29,875 lbs seed
- 74% failed

From Michigan Conservation Magazine, 1943
Michigan Conservation Magazine
1943

“The need for wild rice is questionable in Michigan... The establishment of rice beds in many places conflicts with other recreational interests... at Lake St. Helen a court injunction was issued to stop the planting of rice because additional beds were a hindrance to other recreational interests...”
2010 Michigan Strategic Framework GLRI

“...Project will award up to approximately $3 million for up to 25 grants to protect and restore culturally significant native species such as wild rice and their habitats...”

Photo by Barb Barton
Conservation

• Education
• Restoration
• Protection
• Wild Rice Mgmt. Plan

Photo by Barb Barton

Photo by GLIFWC
Education - Traditional Wild Rice Camps

Lac Vieux Desert
2007-2012

Tubbs Lake
2009-2010

Photo by Barb Barton
Restoration – Lac Vieux Desert

Rice Bay 2003

Rice Bay 2010

Photos by GLIFWC
Participate in Conservation and Restoration

- Incorporate wild rice plantings in wetland restoration when appropriate
- Educate
- Attend Rice Camp
- Join the Native Wild Rice Coalition

Photo by Barb Barton
Research Needs

• Status of wild rice beds and threats assessment
• Species distribution
• Effects of climate change
• Best restoration methods
The Gifts of Manoomin

- Ecological
- Food
- Cultural
- Spiritual
- Connection to Place
Manoomin Talking Circle

Pipe and Water Ceremonies start at 5:15
Centennial Room

5:45 Talking Circle
Riverside Room, Garden Level
Miigwetch - Thank You!

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Native Wild Rice Coalition - nativewildricecoalition.com