Manoomin (Ojibwe) or Psiŋ (Dakota) (wild rice, *Zizania palustris*) holds great cultural, ecological, and economic importance. It is Minnesota’s state grain and to the Ojibwe Tribes across the Great Lakes it is a sacred food, medicine, and gift from the Creator. Despite its importance, the species’ range has declined dramatically because of human activities including elevated sulfate levels in waters, changes to natural waterways, and land use change. Indigenous people have been harvesting manoomin in this area for millennia. Hand-harvesting natural wild rice has also become an important tradition to non-Indigenous residents, who are required to purchase a state permit. However, harvesting by non-Indigenous Minnesotans has declined dramatically since 1968. In 2018, the University of Minnesota partnered with several tribes across present-day Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan to design a survey* of Minnesota state-permitted harvesters in order to better understand their values, beliefs, and behaviors associated with wild rice harvesting, processing, and protection. Surveys were mailed to 1,339 state permit holders. 672 people responded for a 53% response rate. Insights gained will inform future manoomin stewardship.

**Profile of survey respondents**

- 76% male
- 23% female
- 1% other/prefer not to respond

The average 2018 harvester is 50 years old, has riced for 14 years, and harvested 139 lbs in 2018

What do state-permitted harvesters do with their wild rice?

- 64% keep for personal use
- 28% give away or share with others
- 8% sell/intend to sell

**What do harvesters value and believe about wild rice?**

- 98% agree** it is a healthful food source
- 99% agree it tastes good
- 94% agree that eating wild rice that they have harvested is special to them
- 97% enjoy harvesting wild rice
- 94% agree it is important to a healthy ecosystem
- 89% agree that being able to harvest wild rice means a lot to them
- 80% agree that wild rice and wild rice waters need better protection

"Minnesota wild rice, harvested and processed right, is the best tasting form of rice in the world. It must be protected!"

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*percentage of respondents who somewhat to strongly agreed

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Which management strategies do state-permitted harvesters support?

- **87%** support enforcing water quality regulations to protect wild rice
- **85%** support expanding wild rice restoration programs (e.g., reseeding, managing water levels)
- **80%** support using Minnesota State Harvesting Permit fees for wild rice stewardship activities only
- **80%** support increasing monitoring of wild rice plants and waters
- **79%** support increasing water quality regulations to protect wild rice
- **76%** support expanding education and outreach programs to raise awareness about the ecological, nutritional, and cultural values of wild rice
- **75%** support coordinating wild rice habitat conservation efforts between tribal, state, and local entities
- **74%** support expanding public and private partnerships to protect wild rice
- **73%** support conducting more research on wild rice

"Wild rice, because of its nutritional value and important component of the natural order of things, is probably one of the most important plants to all Minnesotans. From human consumption to the waterfowl and shorebirds that eat the kernels to the variety of insects, which feed red-winged blackbirds and others, it needs all the protection and research that we can afford, because once it's gone, it's hard to replace."

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*This survey questionnaire or any data analyzed or reported as part of the survey project do not constitute a claim concerning the location, boundaries, scope or use of wild rice waters as either designated or existing uses. The wild rice waters identified in this survey effort do not constitute a wild rice waters determination list and shall not be used as such in any Tribal, State or Federal legal proceedings.*