

St. Louis River Area of Concern

*Projects in partnership to restore the river
and revitalize the community*

Restoring Wild Rice

The St. Louis River Wild Rice Restoration Project aims to restore healthy, harvestable wild rice stands and improve habitat for fish, wildlife, and other species in the estuary. Successful wild rice restoration also supports the removal of BUI 9: Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat.

Background

Wild rice, or Manoomin in Ojibwe, plays a vital role in the culture, livelihood, and identity of the Ojibwe people. Manoomin harvest is part of a long-standing tradition in Ojibwe communities and the St. Louis River Estuary is culturally important because of the historic presence of vast wild rice resources that provided food, community connection, and opportunities for the intergenerational transfer of traditional ecological and cultural knowledge. Historically, the estuary sustained an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 acres of wild rice - one of the richest concentrations in the region. However, industrial development, pollution, logging, and other activities over the past 125 years reduced the extent of Manoomin to a few remnant stands. The Wild Rice Restoration Implementation Plan for the St. Louis River Estuary was completed in 2014 in cooperation with partners. The plan identified sites in the river that offer the best opportunities for successful restoration. The goal is to restore at least 275 acres over the next 10 years to provide habitat and opportunities for wild rice harvest. This target represents the first step in a longer term goal of restoring wild rice to a greater abundance and distribution throughout the estuary.

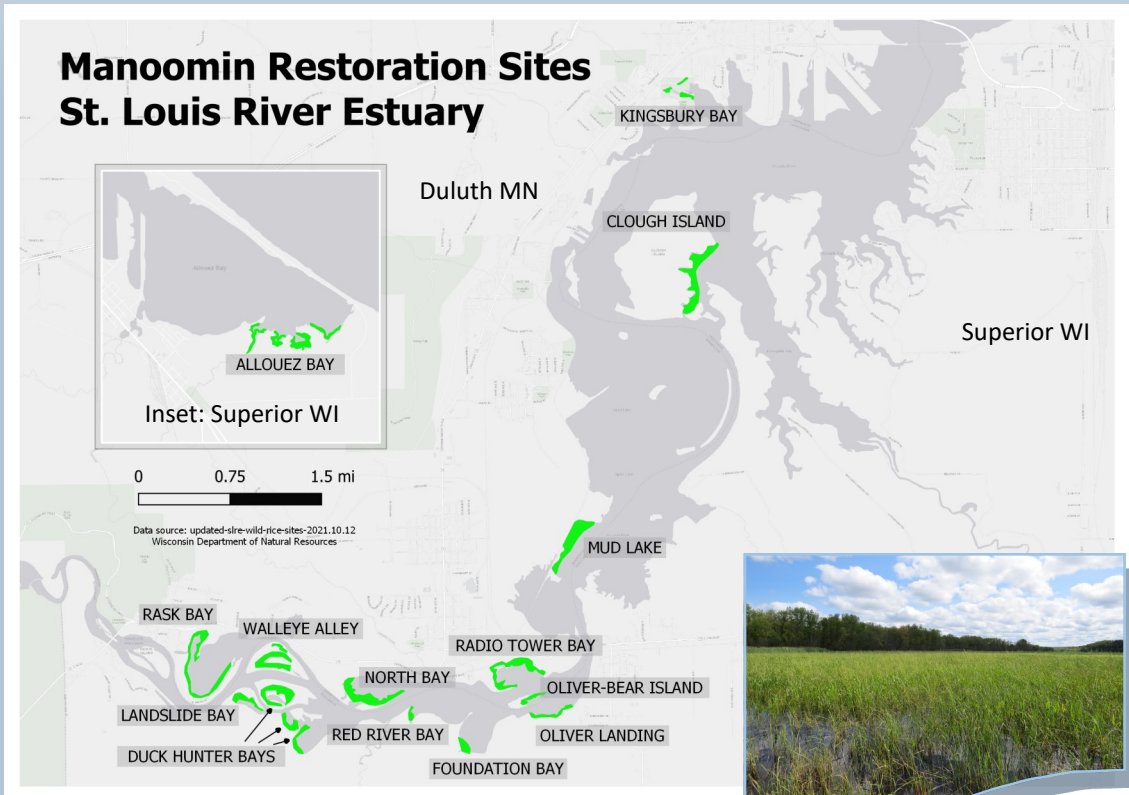
The map shows areas where restoration is underway. Rice prefers wetland areas less than 4 feet deep. Restoration efforts include seeding, managing competing plants, goose herbivory management and monitoring. Seeding is done in September and will be repeated at these sites annually for multiple years, which gives the rice a better chance to become established.



Natural resource managers from the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa seed Manoomin in the St. Louis River Estuary.

Photo: Derek Montgomery, MN Public Radio

Manoomin Restoration Sites St. Louis River Estuary



Status

Wild rice is an annual plant that grows from seed each year. Large scale seeding started in 2014. Success of seeding is determined by observing wild rice growth in the next season and future years. The restoration partnership has a goal of seeding over 200 acres every year. This fluctuates based on the rice crop and seed sources. Annual monitoring provides information on success of the restoration efforts and informs future management actions.

Importance and Harvest

Manoomin holds more nutrition than white rice, oats, barley, wheat or rye. It is low in fat and high in protein. Harvest is only allowed by traditional methods using a canoe and wooden ricing sticks. Rice abundance can vary widely year to year, but a day spent ricing can yield more than 200 pounds of seed! On publicly accessible waterways, ricing can be practiced by anyone who purchases a DNR harvest license.

Partners

The Manoomin Restoration Partnership includes many entities:

- 1854 Treaty Authority
- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission
- Douglas County, Wisconsin
- Ducks Unlimited
- Lake Superior Research Institute
- Minnesota Land Trust
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Floating leaf stage (mid-June)



Flowering stage (late July)



Seed kernels form (August-September)



Seed kernels after harvest



Manoomin has multiple stages throughout the growing season. The rice seed germinates under the ice and the plant emerges in June. Wild rice seeds fall off into the water when they ripen in late August and replenish the rice bed for the next season.



To Learn More

Visit <http://dnr.wi.gov>, search “St. Louis River AOC”

Or contact:

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