

## Wild Rice in Minnesota

As told by Art Owen

Prairie Island Dakota Community, Minnesota

Story Narrative:

"So, we started a few years back, you know, planting. There are a number of people who are going to harvest. So they are getting all excited about that. Wild Rice right here in our backdoor. That is pretty good. To work in the river back then that is the way you survived. That's why *siŋkphétata* (it means muskrat) is so important too. To eat off, everything we had came off the river. The otter, fish, turtle. Our ceremonies like tonight, we will have will probably get done about 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning but we will take water that is left over from the people who have prayed for it and we will put it down here in Sturgeon Lake and it will go through that facility down here in the cooling system.

You can't stop it but you can pray that it keeps our people safe and the wellness of their surrounding area stay safe. The most precious thing on earth and that is water. We need it, you need it to survive. Anything in the future. Not just saying thank you all the time for it but to constantly how are you going to keep it clean? What laws are you going to change to keep it clean? And what are you going to do with your programs to make sure that water quality is where it is at for your people. Men make things hard. They make it difficult. When it is very simple. The earth was meant to be simple. It wasn't meant to have what it has today."

Note:

This story was collected as part of a collaborative effort to record the state of American lakes, rivers, and waterways as well an attempt to uncover what water means to Americans. Listen to other stories recorded by the [Minnesota Humanities Center](#) for their We Are Water MN initiative, an outgrowth of our national traveling exhibition "Water/Ways."

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