MINNESOTA'S PRIME WILD RICE LAKES THREATENED

MANOOMIN –CENTER OF "WEB OF LIFE"

- Anishinaabe seasonally harvest tens of thousands of acres of wild rice in Northeastern Minnesota's undisturbed watersheds. Manoomin is sacred to their way of life.
- Aitkin County lakes are considered prime wild rice lakes including Big Sandy Lake, Lake Minnewawa, Big Round Lake and Horseshoe.
- Pristine water quality must be maintained for wild rice to germinate, grow, and survive.
  - Sulfates bound in glacial/bedrock geology are released when the water is disturbed due to mining, endangering wild rice fields.
  - Many lakes and streams around the Great Lakes have already lost their wild rice.
  - Wild rice is hard to restore once it is gone.
- Losing rice beds impacts wildlife who eat wild rice.
  - Hundreds of thousands of ducks and birds visit Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge every year.
  - This shallow lake is a vital flyway for birds.
  - One of Minnesota's most important wild rice lakes as it attracts the most waterfowl.

TALON MINE THREATENS TRIBAL RESOURCES

- The proposed Tamarack Talon Metals mine could impact 1855 Treaty resources.
- These include prime wild rice lakes, wetlands, and fisheries used by the Mille Lacs Ojibwe, the Sandy Lake Ojibwe, and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

MINNESOTA'S WILD RICE SULFATE STANDARD

- Minnesota's wild rice sulfate standard limits sulfate to 10 parts per million (ppm or mgL) in wild rice waters.
- Under the Clean Water Act of 1973 the Wild Rice Sulfate Standard has been adopted by the MPCA and the EPA.
- The Fond Du Lac Band and the Grand Portage Band also limit sulfate to 10 parts per million to protect wild rice waters.

Research done by Dr. John Moyle in the 1940s through the 1970s indicates that increased sulfates in the surface waters impairs and eventually kills wild rice.

SULFATE POLLUTION IMPACTS

- Sulfate pollution increases the release of inorganic mercury from sediments called Methylmercury.
- Methylmercury accumulates in the food chain and contaminates fish. When people eat mercury-tainted fish it affects the developing brains of fetuses, babies, and children resulting in lowered IQ.
- Adding sulfate to a wetland also increases algae blooms in once clear Minnesota

Nickel Sulfate mining produces acid mine waste which releases heavy metals into the environment, many of which are known neurotoxins and a risk to human health. Toxic exposure to heavy metals are a significant factor in a list of neurodevelopmental disorders affecting the brain and central nervous system such as autism, learning disorders, language disorders, and intellectual disabilities.

Sources Consulted

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