

Kawe Gidaa-Naanaagadawendaamin Manoomin
Summary of 3rd Conference, May 16 & 17, 2019
Grand Casino Mille Lacs

Conference Summary

On May 16, 2019, the 3rd Tribally Directed Collaborative Research Conference organized by *Kawe Gidaa-Naanaagadawendaamin Manoomin* brought together 31 participants, 21 of which represented Tribal Bands and organizations, at the Grand Casino Mille Lacs to discuss research centered around manoomin/psiq (natural wild rice). Attendees included Tribal resource managers, Tribal leaders, elders, and rice chiefs from Bands spanning Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan: Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin, 1854 Treaty Authority, and Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center. University of Minnesota-Twin Cities research team members at the conference included faculty, researchers, and students. The main conference day (May 16) was followed by a second day (May 17) dedicated to more in-depth discussions with a smaller group about specific research plans for the up-coming 2019 field season.

Conference Welcome

We were deeply honored to have to have youth drummers from Lac du Flambeau begin the conference, followed by a welcoming prayer from Roger LaBine of Lac Vieux Desert. Karen Diver, Faculty Fellow for Inclusive Excellence with a specialization in Native Studies at the College of St. Scholastica and the former Chairwoman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, followed with a welcome and a reminder of the origins of our collaboration.

Project Update & Conference Goals

The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UMN) project team described the goals of the project: (1) to support Tribes in their work to protect the vital cultural and natural resource of manoomin/psiq through collaborative research on its ecology, cultural significance, and policies and (2) to develop a set of research principles and guidelines to ensure ethical conduct by university researchers working with Tribes and Tribal interests - for this specific project and well beyond.

UMN also reflected on positive changes that are happening within the University. Dr. Mike Dockry, a UMN project team member, was recently hired for a Tribal natural resources faculty position within the Department of Forest Resources at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. We are excited for Mike not only because he is a member of our team, but because he brings direct experience collaborating with Tribes in this region to his position at the University. In addition, the UMN research team put together a white paper outlining our accomplishments in this collaboration as well as short, medium, and long-term goals, future vision, and funding requests. We have been in ongoing conversations with the UMN's Office of the Vice President for Research about how to develop institutional support for this project and other University-Tribal collaborations.

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Sessions at the conference were centered around three goals: (1) Sharing what the team is learning through data presentations, (2) Discussing how to respectfully use Traditional Ecological Knowledge in our work, and (3) Looking forward at the coming field season and longer term goals.

Participant Introductions

Conference participants and the UMN project team had the opportunity to get to know one another through introductions, providing our names, affiliations, and relationships to or interests in this project.

Elders Manoomin Panel

We were greatly honored to have four Tribal elders talk about traditional ecological knowledge and the challenges of sharing that knowledge with outsiders: Eric Chapman (Lac du Flambeau), Rich Robinson (Leech Lake), John Johnson, Sr. (Lac du Flambeau), and Roger La Bine (Lac Vieux Desert). Moderated by Karen Diver (Fond du Lac), the discussion included each individual's lived experience and relationship with Manoomin and traditional ecological knowledge and provided guidance to others about how to approach Manoomin, Nibi, and TEK with respect, an intent to listen, and an open heart.

TEK Practices and Standards for Respectful Research

Conference participants broke into small groups to talk about what specific guidance they would offer researchers about how to be respectful to Manoomin and Anishinaabe people and lifeways while conducting fieldwork. Transcribed notes from each small group will be shared with all conference participants.

Data Analysis Discussion - Biophysical & Social Dimensions

Tribal partners introduced the manoomin/psiq lakes and streams of-interest and of-concern where collaborative fieldwork was carried out in 2018. These include both on-reservation and ceded territory sites, and lakes/streams with relatively abundant wild rice and heavily impaired sites with very sparse stands. Native and non-Native University of Minnesota-Twin Cities undergraduate and graduate students worked together at these sites and presented the preliminary hydrological and geochemical data, as well as up-coming research plans. Thus far, the research has focused on monitoring surface- and ground-water levels, and on analyzing lake/stream sediments and porewaters for their nutrient and sulfate/sulfide levels. Tribal partners also reflected on the collaboration thus far and shared their own personal understanding of the sites, offering further insight and questions to be considered by the UMN project team during the 2019 summer field season. Next steps for biophysical research were also discussed, noting that the researchers intend to incorporate a broader whole-ecosystem

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approach to fieldwork and analysis, with help from Dr. Mike Dockry in his new university position. The UMN research team also reiterated that we are open to partnering with other Tribes beyond current partner if it could be beneficial for them. Furthermore, the UMN project team would like to coordinate the biophysical fieldwork with potential workshops where Tribal partners can learn about the data collection techniques that University researchers use, and UMN researchers can learn from Tribal perspectives and approaches. The hope is that these collaborative workshops will expand the capacity of this project.

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities social science researchers discussed their survey and study of Minnesota State Licensed wild rice harvesters. The goals of the study are to assess values, beliefs and practices associated with wild rice and harvesting and to help examine current harvesting practices in Minnesota, similar to on-going efforts in Wisconsin. The survey is being administered in the form of a mail questionnaire with three waves and has been mailed to all state-permitted wild rice harvesters. The first wave of surveys has been sent with a 32% response rate. There have been many comments on the survey and friendly phone calls from harvesters sharing their experiences with harvesting and the importance of wild rice. Preliminary findings from the survey were shared. The research team is interested in coordinating with Tribal partners to determine how to distribute the survey instrument to Tribal communities, while respecting concerns about Tribal data collection. In addition, the researchers also described their on-going assessment of the state of Minnesota's consultation process with Tribes. The consultation study has focused thus far on conducting interviews with Tribal and state representatives who participated in Minnesota's sulfate standard rulemaking, but the researchers intend to expand this project to look at state-Tribal consultation more broadly. The goal of this study is to develop best practice standards for Tribal consultation with state agencies.

Looking Forward in the Project: Long-Term Vision & Next Steps

The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities project team shared their long-term vision for the project, which entails continuing the collaborative effort that has been initiated to understand and support healthy Manoomin ecosystems, and to maintain the partnerships that we have established. As noted before, a plan has been submitted to the UMN's Vice President of Research, in the form of a white paper, outlining future funding needs. The UMN project team hopes that the University will provide institutional support that can help ensure the sustainability of collaborative research with Tribes, with the *Kawe Gidaa-Naanaagadawendaamin Manoomin* project serving as the fundamental stepping stone to that process. Conference attendees also shared ideas on how to fund the vision, establish long-term collaborative efforts with Tribes, and to expand collaborative efforts with other Tribes within and outside of the region -- because Manoomin knows no boundaries.

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Day 1 Closing

The first day of the conference ended with another exceptional performance from the Lac du Flambeau youth drummers.

Day 2: Post-Conference Activities

The second day of the conference allowed time to go further in depth into future data collection and project work, including specific research plans for the summer 2019 field season. Conference attendees and the UMN project team held a discussion about biophysical research that included: plans for extending collaborative efforts, the possibility of knowledge-exchange workshops to share data collection techniques and cultural practices, gaps in the 2018 fieldwork, when/where to conduct upcoming fieldwork, and Tribal partners' concerns or questions about data collection. The UMN social dimensions researchers also discussed the state harvester survey, and the group brainstormed methods that Tribes could use to implement the survey instrument with Tribal harvesters.

Next Steps

Over the coming months, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities research team will work with Tribal partners to continue to analyze data from the 2018 field season, to collect data in the 2019 field season, and jointly interpret the findings and decide together how results should be disseminated. The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities team will also continue visits to Bands and Tribal organizations to maintain and grow our partnerships. In the fall, we will hold our fourth collaboration conference, which will be a joint effort with the Nibi miinawaa Manoomin Symposium. In addition, the second and third wave of the State-Harvester survey will be mailed out and data will be analyzed. In the meantime, we will continue to hold monthly web-conferences, and we encourage any Tribal representatives to attend. Please contact manoominpsin-gc@umn.edu if you would like to be added to the email list.

Continuing and Strengthening the Partnership

The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities research team invites Tribal representatives to contact them with any additional thoughts or feedback, including interest in the research team visiting their Band or Tribal organization to further discuss concerns about manoomin/psiq or generally how University researchers carry out work in Indian Country. Tribal members and representatives who were unable to attend the conference but would like to participate in the collaborative research should let the research team know. The University research team can be contacted via email at: manoominpsin-gc@umn.edu, or by phone: 612-624-9243 (Crystal Ng). More information about the project can be found at: <http://manoominpsin-gc.dash.umn.edu/>.

Miigwech / Pidamaya

The University research team very sincerely thanks all participants for their contributions to the conversation on collaboratively protecting manoomin/psiq. The team also appreciates having all Tribal partners continue to hold the university researchers accountable.