



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Midwest Regional Office

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In Reply Refer To:  
**Wildlife & Parks**

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## Federal Funding Public Notice

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This notice contains request for funding proposals for a new Midwest Tribal Wild Rice Coordination and Planning funding opportunity for FY 2021.

### MIDWEST TRIBAL WILD RICE COORDINATION AND PLANNING

#### BACKGROUND

Manoomin or Psin (wild rice) is a tremendously important resource for Midwest Tribes and is both culturally and ecologically significant. Harvest of wild rice by Tribal members remains one of the most important annual events on many Native American reservations, ceded territories and traditional homelands, and many Tribes exercise reserved harvest treaty rights recognized by federal courts. Wild rice is also an important food source for resident and migratory waterfowl, while providing forage and cover for many other wildlife species native to the Midwest and Great Lakes regions.

Wild rice is an aquatic grain native to the United States that grows in wetlands, rivers, lakes, streams, and ponds. It prefers shallow water with a mucky or muddy bottom and a slight current. While wild rice was once widely distributed across much of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains, it is now more limited in its range. Today, natural wild rice only grows abundantly in northcentral and northeastern Minnesota, in areas of northern Wisconsin, and in small remnant stands in Michigan. This dramatic decrease in habitat range is believed to be due to transformations of the landscape and alterations of natural hydrology, increasing competition with invasive species, and chemical contamination of waters; all of which are being exacerbated by the changes in climate conditions.

In April 2021, a Midwest Tribal Wild Rice Collaborative was formed to enhance networking and coordination for wild rice protection and restoration efforts across Tribal lands and territories in the Midwest. The collaborative is primarily comprised of Tribal natural resource professionals who are leading wild rice protection and restoration efforts for more than twenty Tribes; along with three to four Federal partners (e.g., Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration) to support this Tribally led collaborative. The collaborative was established through bi-weekly conference calls over the course of three months and will continue to network through 3-4 Tribally hosted virtual or in-person meetings per year on a rotating

volunteer basis. If capacity for regional Tribal wild rice coordination increases in the future including through this funding opportunity, meetings may increase to monthly or bi-monthly.

The Midwest Regional Tribal Wild Rice Collaborative seeks to (1) increase networking and sharing of information across Tribes including successes and lessons learned and (2) enhance coordination for collective Tribally led priority setting for current and future wild rice needs across the region. While many wild rice coordination efforts already exist at different spatial and watershed scales across the region including in the form of university-Tribal, State-Tribal, and Federal-Tribal partnerships, the Midwest Tribal Wild Rice Collaborative identified a need and value in forming a larger overarching Tribally-led and region-wide collaborative network to enhance and inform existing partnerships and begin to develop Tribally-led priorities including biological, ecological and cultural targets for wild rice protection and restoration across the Great Lakes and Midwest region.

The Midwest Tribal Wild Rice Collaborative will build upon already established partnerships and efforts and is not expected to create all efforts anew. One of the efforts that will be built upon and supported is the Ambient Water Quality Monitoring System (AWQMS). This web-based information system provides a single system to manage water quality and wild rice information across the Region that all members can access. By having a single system, it will ensure consistent data collection methods, provide data management tool, and ensure consistent recording methods while allowing Regional assessments for Tribes and partners.

A new effort that will be initiated by the Midwest Tribal Wild Rice Collaborative will be the development of native species outcomes for wild rice under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Under the GLRI Action Plan III, wild rice is listed as a target species for the completion of actions that will significantly protect or promote recovery of the species. Native species outcomes have been developed for some of the other target species by various GLRI Focus Area 4 sub-groups, however, to date no outcomes have been identified for wild rice. As Tribes are leaders for the protection and restoration of wild rice in the Midwest region and Great Lakes Basin, and due to the cultural importance of wild rice, Tribes would be well positioned to lead the development of outcomes for wild rice. Outcome development would include both the Great Lakes Basin and Midwest Region.

#### MIDWEST TRIBAL WILD RICE PLANNING LEADERSHIP

To establish momentum for the Midwest Tribal Wild Rice Collaborative while also leading the planning and development of wild rice targets, significant time commitment will be needed to ensure success. Tribal capacity is currently limited such that there does not exist a Tribal member that could fill the needs of the group. A Tribal coordinator or liaison was identified as a need by the Collaborative to alleviate the initial burden on Tribes to ensure continued momentum and to begin development of Tribally led priorities and targets. In past intertribal meetings, standardizing wild rice restoration was also identified as a need.

The project will include organizing and leading regular (monthly, bimonthly or quarterly) Midwest Tribal Wild Rice Collaborative and other wild rice meetings, as they are identified, while also supporting the main goals of the Collaborative (see below). In addition, the coordinator will assist the Collaborative in developing and publishing a regional Tribal wild rice plan to guide Tribal, State, and Federal natural resource managers in the Midwest and Great Lakes regions. As a document led by and written with input from various Tribes, the regional wild rice plan will hopefully serve as a major resource of best management practices and guide

to bolster wild rice protection and restoration across the region. The wild rice plan will include developing native species outcomes that will be used to initiate identification of outcomes specific to GLRI.

## MAIN GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

The main goals and deliverables:

- The coordinator will schedule and lead regular working group calls (biweekly/monthly/quarterly). This will include developing an agenda, taking notes, and providing a summary of the meeting to the working group following meetings.
- In addition to regular calls, the coordinator will lead the organization of an annual in-person meeting. The coordinator will be responsible for ensuring the set up and implementation of the meeting (set up meeting location, set up call-in participation, etc), development of agenda, ensuring notes are taken, and distribution of notes following the meeting.
- A Regional Wild Rice Management Plan will be published by the group. The coordinator will facilitate the development, writing, and finalization of the plan.
  - The plan will include development of native species outcomes for wild rice in the Midwest and Great Lakes Regions. These outcomes will also be used to initiate identification of outcomes for the current and/or future GLRI Action Plans.
- Increase participation in the use of AWQMS for wild rice data management. Identify areas of need and facilitate trainings for interested Tribal partners.

## ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to federally recognized tribal governments and Native American organizations authorized by tribal governments. In general, eligible applicants for funding are located within the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Midwest Region. Tribes located outside the Region are eligible to apply if the proposed project will provide a demonstrable benefit to the wild rice in the Midwest and Great Lakes Regions.

Successful applicants will:

- Be familiar with the cultural and ecological importance of wild rice.
- Have experience working with Tribal nations, and awareness of cultural sensitivities.
- Know about wild rice research techniques and current technologies used for research, as well as issues affecting wild rice in the Great Lakes region.
- Have experience planning, organizing, and facilitating meetings.

## HOW TO APPLY

Please include a copy of a letter signed by the Tribal Leader or appropriate tribal administrative official and submit your funding proposal electronically to [mwrwp@bia.gov](mailto:mwrwp@bia.gov) by **Wednesday, September 29, 2021**. Please contact Albany Jacobson Eckert, Great Lakes Restoration Biologist, at (612) 368-5859 or [albany.jacobsoneckert@bia.gov](mailto:albany.jacobsoneckert@bia.gov) if you have any questions.