

Introduction to Wild Rice (Manoomin)



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In honor of Neganash, Uncle Archie McGeshick



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Zizania palustris – Northern Lake Rice

- Muck soils
- Flowing water
- Depth .5 – 3 ft
- Stable water levels



Photos by Louis M. Landry



Tawas Lake

Photo by Barb Barton

Zizania aquatica – River Rice, Indian Rice

- State Threatened Species
- Waters with slow current, muck or silt bottom
- Prefers shallow water no more than about two feet deep
- Most successful when no competition from other plants



markscarlson.com



Photo by Barb Barton

Nomenclature – Michigan Flora

Old	New
<i>Zizania aquatica</i> subsp. <i>aquatica</i>	<i>Zizania aquatica</i>
<i>Zizania aquatica</i> subsp. <i>angustifolia</i>	<i>Zizania palustris</i> subsp. <i>palustris</i>
<i>Zizania aquatica</i> subsp. <i>interior</i>	<i>Zizania palustris</i> subsp. <i>interior</i>

Terrell, E. E., P. M. Peterson, J. L. Reveal, & M. R. Duvall. 1997. Taxonomy of North American species of *Zizania* (Poaceae). Sida 17: 533–549.

Seasons of Wild Rice





Extant



Historical

Number of Sites

Total	351
Historical	212
Extant	139
Persisted	14



Lost - Muskegon Lake, Pirnie (1935)

Historical Seeding

- 68 sites seeded by non-tribals



SOWING WILD RICE.

Seeding Requirements

- Local support
- Some flow
- Local seed source best
- Plant within a week after harvest
- Clarity of water – low turbidity
- No wake, boat traffic issues
- Restrict carp, other browsers
- Non-acidic
- Muck soils
- Stable water levels
- Lack of invasives/competitors
- Traditional ceremonies



Photo by Barb Barton

History of Seeding in Indian Country



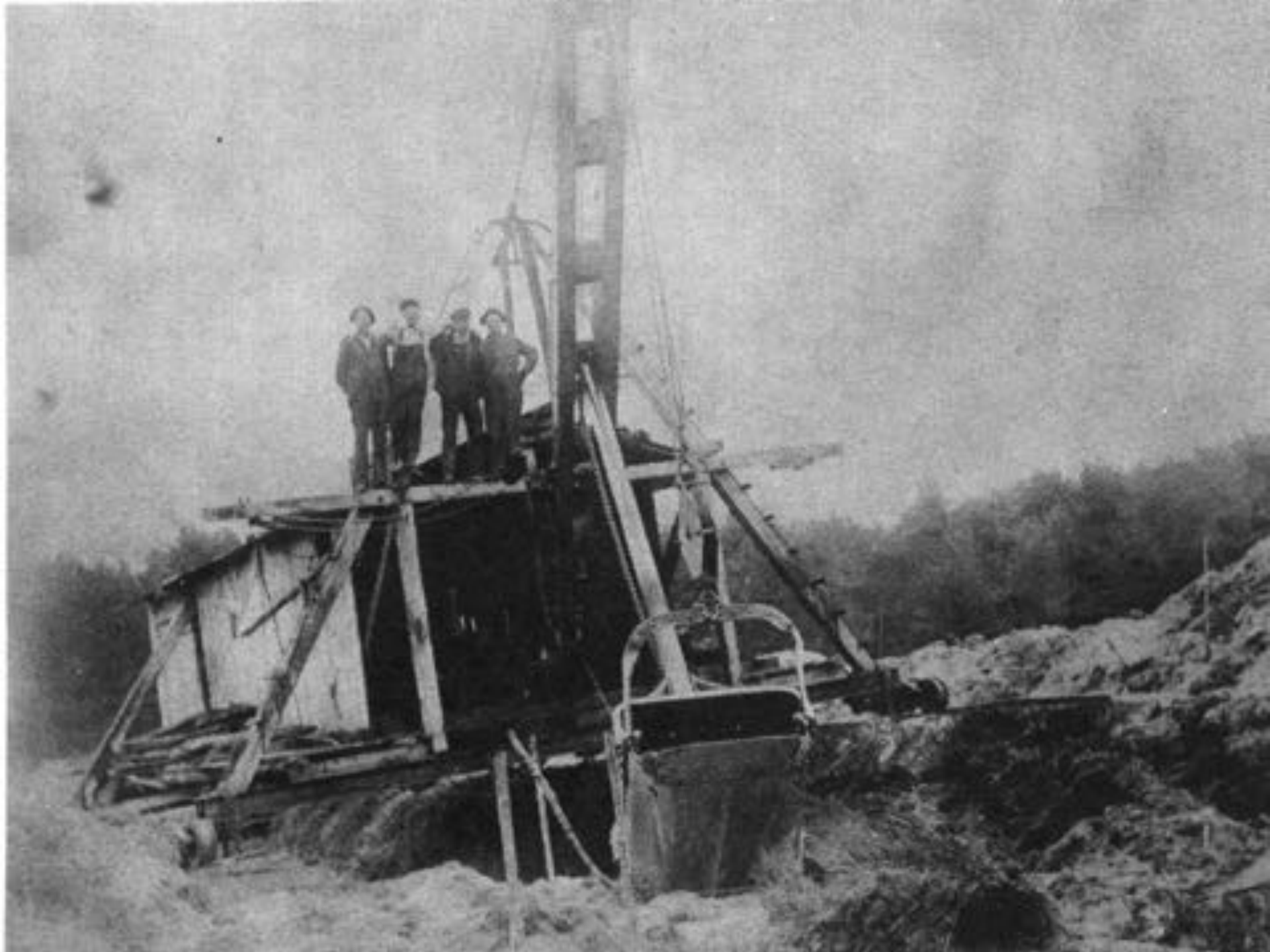
Harvesting manoomin (wild rice). Manoomin continues to be an important food for Ojibwe people today and is harvested both on and off-reservation. (Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society)

Seeding by the Colonizers – Why?

- Noticed serious decline of ducks and hunting opportunities











Late 1800s

...seeding increased by colonizers as landscape was altered, reaching a crescendo in 1930s.

MUSKEGON NEWS CHRONICLE, FRIDAY, NOV. 25, 1910.

ged a moose in their hunt. Mr. Shad-deau brought down the trophy of the chase and the big animal tipped the scales at 800 pounds and had a magnificent head and antlers.

KALAMAZOO—It is planned by the officials of the Chicago, Kalamazoo and Saginaw railroad to send out several men along the line of their road in the near future to plant quantities of wild rice in the various lakes, hoping to secure a permanent growth of the grain which is the principal food of the wild ducks. As soon as the weather conditions are favorable the planting will begin.

SAGINAW—Secretary F. F. Kleinfield of the board of trade has received formal notice of the fact that the Michigan Bookkeepers' association

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DAILY CHRONICLE.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1898.

Hunters and sportsmen are now sowing wild rice in all lakes and rivers for wild game but this is detrimental to our grain crops; how are we to protect ourselves?"

The objection was that the wild rice attracted black birds which destroyed the farmer's grains. No blight or anything similar, it was said, is half as destructive as a flock of blackbirds.

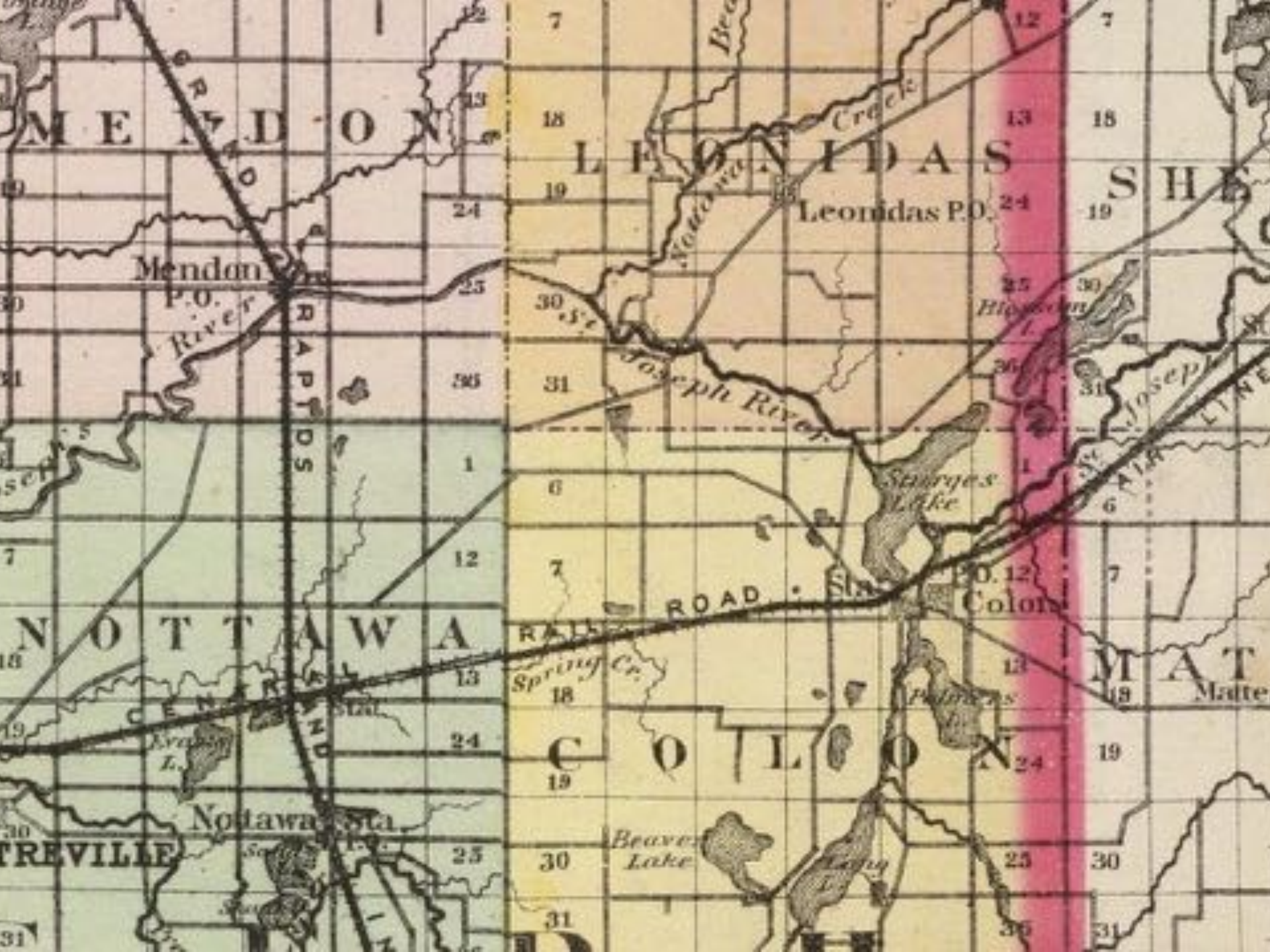
THE TRI-COUNTY CHRONICLE.

CASS CITY, MICH., FRIDAY, OCT. 16, 1903.



The Department of Agriculture is investigating the usefulness of wild rice as a food, notwithstanding the fact that threats of lynching, white capping, etc., have been made against any one who would introduce any more new breakfast foods. Wild rice has an extended habitat and it is stated was probably the chief starchy food of about 30,000 of the American aborigines.





1880s – St. Joseph River Mendon/Colon

Mendon's Erstwhile Beautiful Stream

MENDON—Several years ago Mendon had a beautiful river flowing through the village. Some fool hunter sowed wild rice in the stream, thinking to attract ducks to the vicinity and make good shooting, and now, as a result, there is nothing but a marsh where the river was for several miles above and below the village. One man has benefited by the change, however, and that is a dairyman whose farm borders on what was the river. His pasture was very poor this summer, so he turned his cows into the St. Joe, which is so shallow that they waded in and devoured acres of the wild rice and at the same time defeated the flies in their attempt to pester them. The flow of milk increased at once, and the quality was sweet, though no one has accused him of watering his milk.

Early 1900s

“All available Michigan waters should be stocked with wild rice, wild celery, and other duck and fowl food...”

State Game, Fish, and Forest Fire Department 1918

State Efforts

- 1916-1919 67 new dedications of private lands as game refuges, wild rice freely given to attendees
- 1917-1918 Game, Fish and Forest Fire Department seeded 48 separate water bodies, most were considered failures...

1919



SOWING WILD RICE.

Here the grain is being broadcast. A surer method is to pack the rice in its own soil in cheesecloth sacks, weighted with gravel, and sink it at suitable depths.

Miller's Conclusions

- Believed all efforts were unsuccessful
- Recommended wild rice seeding be discontinued
- Sebewaing, Wildfowl Bay, Lake St. Clair lacked wild rice but not ducks (in 1943)
- Noticed that water levels affected size and density of beds

Why did they fail?

- Suitable habitat?
- Stable water levels?
- Proper care of seed prior to planting?
- Carp or other herbivores present?
- Sufficient amount of seed planted?
- Seeds not suited to microclimate?
- Did they consult with Anishinaabek ricers?
- What about absence of rice at Sebewaing, Wildfowl Bay, Lake St. Clair?

Seney National Wildlife Refuge

- Seeded between 1938-1968
- 33,437 pounds of wild rice planted



Summary

- Seeding historically part of ricing culture in Anishinaabek communities
- Some lost knowledge due to forced relocation, boarding schools
- Habitat destruction/overharvesting/loss of ducks prompted seeding by colonizers 1800s to early 1900s
- State and National Forest efforts early 1900s-1960s
- Very little success in non-tribal seeding projects
- Failure due to many factors


Today....



Photo by Keith Stiles



Photo by GLIFWC



Thank You – Miigwetch!

*“Manoomin:
The Story of Wild Rice in Michigan”
Coming soon from MSU Press*