

## johnna Hyde

For more than 40 years my family and I have depended on wild rice that we harvest for a substantial component of our diet. It is nutritious, inexpensive, and harvesting also provides us with several lovely days of recreation in the fall. Although we are not native, the sense of providing for ourselves with a sustainable gathering activity complements our hunting, fishing, and gardening. Like blueberry picking, this is a practice we have passed down to our children, and for those who no longer are able to spend time ricing, we provide them with rice as a valuable gift.

That is the reason for one family's personal desire to have the state of Minnesota ensure the health of rice crops for many generations to come, but there are much larger concerns at stake. First, like slaughtering the bison herds and spreading smallpox with contaminated blankets, allowing the wild rice crops to deteriorate would be a cruel and preventable disaster for native people who depend on rice for food and income. Sure, we can eventually compensate them with money they can use to buy potato chips, but where is the pride, sustainability, tradition and ritual in that?! Second, with climate change there is so much at risk in our native botanical heritage. Let's preserve what we can. Also, water is precious. Wild rice isn't the only thing that may be damaged by failure to uphold water quality. For Minnesota, water is an iconic resource and source of identity - Land of 10,000 Lakes and even our state name, Minnesota, refers to the abundance and purity of our water.

Enforcement is needed, unfortunately, to keep those whose short-term economic benefits favor contamination from destroying our legacy. Please ensure our future generations are able to enjoy Minnesota's water for wild rice harvest and thousands of other positive experiences. Just having clean water in abundance is becoming more and more rare, so don't allow what we have to deteriorate, and provide for waters already degraded to return to a healthy natural state. Please enforce our clean water laws, especially the sulfate standards.