

Cathy Dolan

Please hold US Steel accountable to Minnesota sulfate limits!

Wild rice is central to the cultural traditions of our Indigenous Nations here in Minnesota for this reason we ask you to uphold the sulfate standard and reject any variances now and on into the future. At this moment in time there are so many threats to wild rice, from climate change, invasive species, reckless boating, and pollution. All of these threats when combined threaten the very existence of this sacred plant. Wild rice is sacred to the Anishinaabe people. Yet historical data shows that wild rice is decreasing in abundance across the region (Governors task force on wild rice). According to one study, wild rice available for tribal harvest off-reservation has declined regionally by ~5-7% annually declines that are likely to continue due to anthropogenic climate change, specifically increased early-summer precipitation and warmer winters. This decline has infringed on Indigenous lifeways by reducing off-reservation tribal harvest, a right guaranteed by treaties with the U.S. government. (Climate Change and Wild Rice:) We ask that the MPCA protect wild rice and Minnesota's water from sulfate pollution by upholding the sulfate standard and rejecting variances for mining companies who have raked in massive profits by creating pollution. US Steel can afford to clean up the mess they have made and in doing so they will have jobs for this community now and on into the future. Setting this precedent now ensures businesses that operate in Minnesota do so responsibly. Wild rice and clean water are central to treaty rights, the health of our ecosystems, and the culture of all Minnesotans. We stand together for the water and manoomin/psik and we ask that MPCA do the same.