Michigan 1836 Treaty tribes prepare to defend reserved rights

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen
Staff Writer

Brimley, Mich.—Five Michigan tribes with off-reservation hunting and fishing rights reserved in the 1836 Treaty are preparing to meet a major legal challenge from state officials. Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox on September 17 asked a federal judge to declare that 1836 inland treaty rights have generally expired, based on treaty language that says tribes can hunt and fish on ceded land “until needed for settlement.”

Bay Mills Indian Community Attorney Kathryn Tierney said that the treaty tribes from the eastern Upper Peninsula and northern lower Michigan welcome the opportunity to finally resolve the status of inland harvest rights.

“It’s the tribes’ intent to have this matter resolved,” Tierney said. “I think it’s better for everyone to have the federal court decide this as a declaratory matter, rather than subjecting individual tribal members to prosecutions in state courts for following their tribe’s regulations.”

The tribes—which include Bay Mills, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe, Grand Traverse Band, Little River Band and the Little Traverse Bay Bands—harvest reserved resources under regulated inland hunting and fishing seasons within the 1836 ceded territory. Some treaty seasons and bag limits mirror those established by the state, while others offer tribal members more latitude. All regulations are designed to conserve natural resources.

While the state has negotiated with the five Ojibwe and Ottawa tribes on Great Lakes fishing agreements over the past two decades, it is now betting that inland tribal rights might be abrogated through litigation. In the most recent pact, the 2000 Consent Decree, tribal and state officials established a framework for the management and regulation of the 1836 fishery. Treaty fishing rights on portions of Lakes Superior, Michigan and Huron had been previously affirmed in a series of court decisions in 1970s, but state officials still resisted tribal involvement in the fishery until 1985. (See 1836 Treaty tribes, page 15)

The best buy of the year!

Tribes buy Nicolet Mineral Company and mine site land

By Sue Erickson
Staff Writer

Odanah, Wis.—Feelings of elation mixed with disbelief rippled through the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission’s(GLIFWC) offices when the news hit that the Sokaogon/Mole Lake Band of Chipewa and the Forest County Potawatomi Community purchased Nicolet Minerals Company (NMC) and the site for the proposed Crandon mine on October 28. The battle over the proposed Crandon mine was suddenly over!

The purchase ended years of controversy over the proposed mining project by GLIFWC and its member tribes who feared for the water and the wild rice beds should the mine go forward. Controversy over the proposed mine began in 1969 when Exxon began mineral exploration south of Crandon. Exxon filed for a mining permit in 1980 and withdrew the application in 1986. The tribes were relieved at the time, but knew the spectre presented by the proposed mine could easily reappear. And this it did when a new application for a mining permit was filed in 1994 and substantially revised in 1998.

GLIFWC Policy Analyst Ann McCammon-Soltis and John Coleman, environmental modeler, worked extensively with the permitting process over the past ten years. Esteban Chiriboga, GLIFWC GIS mining assistant, has contributed to the effort over the last five years as well. The permit requires an Environmental Impact Statement and permit from both the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). They were all smiles when the news hit. “It’s been a long hard battle for the tribes,” McCammon-Soltis says. “We’re so thrilled it turned out like this.”

“Aftr years of reviewing the mine proposal, I’m looking forward to helping heal the scars of mineral exploration,” Coleman says. “We know more about the hydrology and biology of that watershed than just about anywhere in the ceded territories. It’s a great tribal resource both culturally and scientifically.”

“After all the years of working on this project, I cannot imagine a happier outcome,” says Chiriboga, adding that the sale is truly an “historic occasion.”

Tina VanZile, Mole Lake vice chairman, announced that the tribe would withdraw the applications to mine the site because “NMC’s mining proposal is environmentally unsafe and technologically unsound.”

Mole Lake’s attorney and NMC’s new project manager Glenn Reynolds concurred with the tribe in NMC’s letters to the WDNR and the Corps withdrawing the company’s applications for mining permits. In his letter to the WDNR, he states, “Given the number of sulfide mines that have caused catastrophic water pollution in North America and the lack of reliable data to suggest that modern sulfide mining technology has improved sufficiently to justify taking the risks that this project poses, it is doubtful that NMC could, in good faith, meet its burden of proof.” (See Tribes buy NMC page 19)
Michigan Ojibwe and Lake Superior
Northern Michigan University hosts treaty fishing presentation

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen
Staff Writer

Marquette, Mich.—The City of Marquette is at a crossroads. Two treaty areas intersect at Upper Michigan’s largest city and a growing public awareness of Ojibwe treaty rights has people fishing for more information.

An invitation from Northern Michigan University’s Native American Student Association brought staff from the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) to detail tribal fishing and resource management on Lake Superior.

More than 180 students, fishers and local residents packed into a campus lecture room October 14 for the presentation.

“It’s in their best interests to protect those resources,” said St. Arnold.

Many people don’t realize that the tribes are very active co-managers of natural resources,” St. Arnold said. “They have a firm stance on working with native species,” Mensch said.

While at least one sport fishing group is pressing state officials for more salmon production, Mensch said such releases might do little more than feed the growing lake trout population.

For sport fishermen who favor catching exotic salmon, however, tribal conservation efforts appeared unsatisfactory.

“The tribe has always had a firm stance on working with native species,” Mensch said. “People would pay big money for the exotic salmon, however, tribal conservation efforts appeared unsatisfactory.”

“As an Ojibwe clan animal, waabizheshi is important both historically and culturally to the tribes. It is also listed as endangered by the tribes and the state of Wisconsin, and is considered a forest sensitive species by the USFS.”

In fact, waabizheshi, like the larger fisher, was extirpated in Wisconsin in 1997.

On the cover
Jaelisa Northrup, Fond du Lac, managed to bring in a small harvest of wild rice from Perch Lake after her first time out fishing this fall. She used rice knockers specially made by her dad, Jim Northrup III, who also demonstrated knocking rice for her and poled the canoe through the rice-thick lake. (Photo by Sue Erickson)

Secretary Hassett gets the low-down on ojibwe research

By Sue Erickson
Staff Writer

Mellen, Wis.—When visiting the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission’s (GLIFWC) office this fall, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Secretary Scott Hassett got the attention of Jonathan Gilbert, GLIFWC Wildlife Section leader, when he mentioned an interest in pine marten.

As a veteran of pine marten research, Gilbert explained aspects of GLIFWC’s Waabizheshi (pine marten) Project and invited the Secretary to join the research team sometime when they check pine marten traps. It wasn’t too long, and the Secretary got a call. Secretary Hassett was coming up.

So at 8:30 a.m. on October 17th a group of six staff from the WDNR, the USDA Forest Service and GLIFWC rendezvoused at the WDNR building in Mellen, Wisconsin and then headed-off down County Road GG, enjoying an overcast, moderately cool day for checking pine marten traps in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNRF).

“I really like to get out,” Hassett said, obviously up for a day in the woods far from his Madison office. This wasn’t his first trek observing field research, however. He had been out doing rattlesnake trapping in Baraboo recently, visited bear dens, checked wolf trap lines, and looks forward to going out muskie shocking during muskie population assessments.

Hassett values these opportunities both professionally and personally.

“People would pay big money for the opportunity to go out in the field with all these experts,” he said as the group made its way down from an observation tour overlooking the hillsides, forested with northern hardwood, preferred habitat for waabizheshi.

As an Ojibwe clan animal, waabizheshi is important both historically and culturally to the tribes. It is also listed as endangered by the tribes and the state of Wisconsin, and is considered a forest sensitive species by the USFS.

In fact, waabizheshi, like the larger fisher, was extirpated in Wisconsin in 1997.

MICHIGAN TREATY RIGHTS • WINTER 2003-2004
Dick Gurnoe: GLIFWC’s founding father leaves a legacy of strength & determination

By Sue Erickson
Staff Writer

Red Cliff, Wis.—Richard Leo (Dick) Gurnoe, 74, passed into the spirit world on Thursday, October 23, 2003 at his home in Red Cliff (88400 Hwy. 13). He was born in Milwaukee, the son of John and Ida Fizzle and at the age of six months, he came to the Red Cliff reservation. Dick was raised by his grand- parents, John and Susana Gurnoe. He graduated from Bayfield High School in 1943, and joined the U.S. Army Air Force. He sailed on the ore boats for about 15 years and then returned to Red Cliff to fish. In the mid 1970s, he purchased his own commercial fishing boat, “The Mariamme,” and began the Gurnoe Fisheries. He continued this endeavor until 1999 when he retired due to health problems.

Dick was active in tribal administration and served approximately 30 years on the Tribal Council which included eleven years as Chairman, and eleven years as Vice-Chairman. Dick was also a hunter. It was in the 1980s that GLIFWC Commissioner, he was especially watchful for the well-being of his loves—Lake Superior and the lake’s fishery—using every opportunity to push for lake trout restoration and sea lamprey control. In fact, he was especially critical about budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program. If dollars needed to be saved, budget cuts to GLIFWC’s lamprey control program.

As a commissioner and committee representative, Gurnoe put on many courses, smoking his pipe.

Mikwendagooziwag: They are remembered

3rd annual ceremony honors victims of the 1850 Sandy Lake tragedy

By Sue Erickson, Staff Writer

Sandy Lake, Minn.— The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) sponsored the third annual Sandy Lake Ceremony at Sandy Lake, Minnesota on September 18, holding true to the promise that the Ojibwe ancestors who perished as part of the 1850 Sandy Lake tragedy be remembered.

Prior to ceremonies adjacent to the monument, sev- eral GLIFWC staff set out in canoes and a kayak to cross Sandy Lake, keeping to the traditional path used for the lake as part of the annual event. The canoe trek recognizes the long journey by canoes and portland over the Ojibwe made in late October 1850. This year’s ceremony included three GLIFWC staff—Jim Schledher, Neil Kmieciec and Jim Zorn—set out in blazing winds to make the voyage. Mother Nature demonstrated how difficult conditions could actually have been for those ancestors, as the winds pumped up high waves, making progress against the wind slow, arduous and tricky.

The boats battled their way across to a leeward shore where conditions gave them some reprieve. Those waiting for their arrival at the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) site on Sandy Lake began to worry after several hours had passed, however, the three finally came into shore, tired but safe.

With the assistance of Tobasonakwet Kinew, spiritual leader from Ojibways of Onigaming, Ontario and the Mole Lake Drum, ceremonies and drum songs honored all the Ojibwe ancestors involved in the Sandy Lake tragedy, especially the 150 who perished at Sandy Lake or on their mid- winter journey home. Recognition was also given to those who persevered and returned home, refusing to cooperate with a scheme to remove Ojibwe people from Wisconsin and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula to the Minnesota Terri- tory.

Following the ceremony, GLIFWC hosted a feast for all who attended and honored those who contributed much time, thought and effort towards the planning and construction of the Mikwendagooziwag Memorial Monu- ment which now stands on a hill overlooking the ACOE Sandy Lake Recreation Area. The meal served in the Corps’ garage included wild rice dishes, venison, berries and vegetables.

Those honored were: Gigi Cloud, Bad River; Leo LaFemire, Red Cliff; Fred Ackley and Fran Van Zile, Mole Lake; Jeff Steere, Terry Ladd and Jim Henderson, all members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Bruce Goman, Mille Lacs community development project manager; Leonard Sam, Mille Lacs; Henry Buffalo, Red Cliff; Ken Fairbanks, Sandy Lake; Tobasonakwet Kinew, Ojibways of Onigaming; Lorraine Norgard, Cloquet; Jim Zorn, GLIFWC and Charlie Rasmussen, GLIFWC. Each received a framed copy of the Mikwendagooziwag poster and a chi wigwag for their work.

For further information on the Sandy Lake tragedy or the Mikwendagooziwag Memorial, contact GLIFWC at (715) 682-6619 or e-mail pio@glifwc.org. Brochures detailing the events that occurred at Sandy Lake in 1850-51 and a limited number of posters are still available.
By Karen Danielsen, GLIFWC Forest Ecologist

Tribal members harvest the outer bark of paper birch to make many different items ranging from picture frames to lodges. The harvest, when executed correctly, does not kill the tree.

Certain bark characteristics are required for the various items made with bark. Simple examples include thick bark for canoes and smooth bark for baskets. Of course, the determination of bark suitability for any specific item always entails the assessment of a variety of characteristics, not just one.

Over the years, it has become more difficult for tribal members to find the exact type of bark to meet their individual needs. Sometimes, it takes tribal members days, or even months, of walking through the woods examining birch trees before finding the right tree. The variety of bark seems to be declining considerably.

Consequently, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) member tribes requested that the Technical Working Group (TWG), as established by the Tribal/USDA Forest Service Memorandum of Understanding (see article on MOU annual meeting, page 5), evaluate and research this urgent concern.

As a first step, the TWG analyzed data on changes in birch tree numbers over the last half century. The data, managed by the North Central Research Station of the Forest Service called Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA). This program entails long-term monitoring of forest plots on lands of all ownership. The variables monitored relate to tree health and changes in associated habitats (e.g., plants, soil and air quality).

The TWG analyzed population trends of paper birch within the ceded territories of the Bad River Ojibwe and Fond du Lac bands of the Ojibwe. The analysis showed, in summary, that birch numbers have declined in all three states since the early 1980’s. Apparently, existing birch trees continue growing older and larger, but are not being replaced by younger trees. These results did not necessarily surprise the TWG, as they corroborated with analyses conducted for previous studies.

However, the analysis manifested a noticeable lack of data regarding specific bark characteristics. It became apparent that the FIA monitoring program should be modified to include data for additional bark characteristics.

To remedy this omission, the North Central Research Station provided GLIFWC with funds to develop a protocol, to monitor birch bark characteristics. This monitoring would then be implemented in conjunction with the existing FIA program.

GLIFWC staff consulted with knowledgeable tribal elders and experienced tribal harvesters from Fond du Lac, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Mille Lacs, and Red Cliff to ascertain the important bark characteristics assessed when being harvested. Characteristics identified included texture, thickness, evidence of scars or blemishes, and the magnitude of existing “Thunderbirds.” The thunderbirds refer to the black marks, technically known as lenticels, that exist on the bark at various sizes, shapes, and quantities.

Other characteristics identified included the form of the tree trunk and the existence of branching. GLIFWC staff also consulted with tribal harvesters on characteristics that could be used to distinguish bark (tribal or non-tribal) and determine the number of years since harvest.

GLIFWC staff photographed the different forms of all these identified characteristics and based the protocol on these various forms. For example, bark texture ranges from smooth to rough, and trunk curvature ranges from minimal to extreme. Since the determination of bark thickness entails cutting into trees, it seemed prudent to omit this characteristic from the protocol in order to prevent unnecessary damage.

Once GLIFWC staff developed a draft of the protocol and verified its accuracy and usefulness with tribal harvesters, North Central Research Station staff helped format it to fit the existing FIA monitoring protocols. During summer 2003, North Central Research Station staff revised the FIA National Core Field Guide to incorporate the protocol for monitoring birch bark. Forest Service employees began implementing this protocol during fall 2003.

Data gathered through this monitoring will provide information on the distribution of various types of birch bark and reveal if any changes occur through time. In addition, when this data is analyzed with other data gathered through the FIA program, meaningful information can be obtained relating specific bark characteristics with additional variables recorded for associated habitats. For example, researchers might choose to analyze the soil types that support birch trees of differing bark types.

In conclusion, the information resulting from this monitoring protocol will be useful to both the tribes and Forest Service researchers. The development of this monitoring protocol demonstrates the importance of recognizing the validity of tribal knowledge as different than, yet equal in quality to, western science.

Migrated to the following tribal members for sharing their extensive knowledge and offering their assistance to this project: Mark Bisonette, Russell Boyd, Marvin Defoe Jr., Bob Sanders, Jeff Savage, Leon Vallerie, Wayne Vallerie, and Donald White.

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen Staff Writer

Odanah, Wis.—Preserve more mature trees, the grandmothers and grandfathers of the forest. A group of Bad River elders relayed that message to U.S. Forest Service representatives during a talking circle at the tribe’s convention center on September 30.

The gathering served as a forum for tribal elders to share their impressions of regional forest management over the last half century. Representatives from five national forests posed questions and listened to the elders’ stories—ranging from casual reflection and analysis to solemn observation.

“I see a slaughter of everything growing in the forest. We’ve ended up with an overpopulation of these fast growing trees. It’s a great disrespect,” said elder Sylvia Cloud.

Cloud related her frustration over clear-cutting, a logging practice that removes all trees from the land and creates large areas of clear-cut forest, primarily aspen. Once a widespread timber harvest method in the upper Great Lakes region, some clear-cutting still occurs on national forests, Ojibwe reservations and surrounding woodlands.

Cloud said large pine and sugar maple trees are vital to forest communities. “Did you ever see babies survive without grandmothers and grandfathers? What’s it to happen when you take away all of the [mature trees]?”

Since the cutover of ceded territory lands from the mid 1800’s to around 1910, young hardwood tree species have dominated the landscape.

Routine timber sales throughout the Twentieth Century created forests that never reached maturity. Only a small amount of old growth has survived, tucked away in scattered stands and in protected forests like federal wilderness areas.

“I see a lot of good things in areas that have been protected,” Cloud said. “Why can’t this be applied to all forests?”

Elders Bob Powless and Ethel Plucinski shared stories from the local oral tradition and related their own experience on forestry issues.

“To me, it all goes back to money and who has the influence,” Plucinski said of forest management decisions.

Powless added that those decisions often led to harmful logging practices in the Bad River region with timber theft and cutting along delicate rivers all too common.

Working with tribes

Jim St. Arnold, GLIFWC treaty educator and a one-time Keweenaw Bay tribal chairman, wrapped up the session with a challenge to both government representatives and their tribal counterparts to transcend the old barriers that have plagued Indian-white relations.

An honest and open dialogue is the key, St. Arnold said. “This is more than you being a federal employee, but rather a human being. Your word is your bond. Say what you mean. If you can’t do something, say so.” St. Arnold stressed that disagreements and arguments should not be taken personally. For tribal members, “You are not only a person, but a person until they lie to you,” he said.

“We have a hundred year history of dealing with federal employees and a lot of it is not good. People remember the control wielded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs over every aspect of Indians’ lives until forty years ago. That’s something we work to get beyond.”

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen

Ottawa National Forest Supervisor Bob Lueckel hands out gifts to Bad River tribal elders following a talking circle in Odanah on September 30. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)
New technology in a traditional iskigamizigan (sugarbush)

By Karen Danielsen, GLIFWC Forest Ecologist

Jim Merhar still gathers maple sap at the iskigamizigan (sugarbush) of his childhood. As an Anishinaabe originally from the Sandy Lake area in Minnesota, he now lives in nearby Bovey and chairs the Iron Range Council of the White Earth Band of Chippewa.

His memories of his childhood include carting old lard pails filled with maple sap to the family farmhouse to be boiled down in a galvanized wash tub. At that time, his family’s iskigamizigan consisted of about fifty taps with coffee cans fastened underneath each to catch the running sap.

Nowadays, his iskigamizigan has grown significantly and consists of more than fourteen-thousand taps within a sixty-acre maple stand. He uses tubes and a vacuum pump to deliver the sap first to a five-hundred gallon storage tank, then to the processing shed.

Approximately one hundred feet of blue tubing twists through the sixty-acre maple stand of Jim Merhar. (Photos by Karen Danielsen)

Gravity carries the sap through the tubes to the storage tank. From the storage tank, a vacuum pump feeds the sap into a large evaporating trough housed in a covered processing shed.

He began using these newer techniques in 1995, growing slowly through trial and error. He often minimizes his financial investment into the operation by making his own equipment, utilizing whatever materials he has available. He likes using 5/16” taps, rather than the traditional 7/16” taps, because they cause less damage to the trees and do not really lessen the amount of sap gathered. He claims that it takes only one year for a tree to heal from a 5/16” tap versus the three years it takes from a 7/16” tap.

He uses about one hundred feet of tubing, blue in color to repel ultraviolet light, and positions it off the ground using cables tied to tree trunks. He minimizes the use of black tubing since it tends to absorb excessive heat from the sun. The resulting image creates a design of snarled radiant blue winding between the subdued greens and browns of early spring.

Once sugaring season begins, he has to inspect all the tubes, which takes about an hour, at least two times each day. He walks slowly looking for air bubbles that could indicate leaks. Squirrels can be particularly pesky chowing on the tubes.

Gravity carries the sap through the tubes to the storage tank. From the storage tank, a vacuum pump feeds the sap into a large evaporating trough housed in a covered processing shed. Boiling the sap to make syrup and sugar requires many cords of firewood, all of which he cuts prior to the sugaring season.

Boiling the sap continues during the nighttime hours. Sometimes he has the company of friends or family. Sometimes he works alone.

Either way, he enjoys spending this time at his sugarbush.

He has never considered using the less labor-intensive reverse-osmosis technique, as practiced by some larger producers, to reduce sap to syrup. He says that this technique removes not only the water from sap, but also most of the minerals and flavor. A mere taste test of certain brands of store-bought maple syrup can prove it.

Though Jim has a relatively large operation, he remains cautious about how much sap he gathers. He is not greedy. Protecting the sugarbush for future generations always stays his top priority.

Tribal and Forest Service reps see progress on MOU implementation

Tribes continue to push for logs and dollars

By Sue Erickson

Red Cliff, Wis.—Representatives of signatory tribes and the US Forest Service (USFS) met in Red Cliff on October 1 for their annual meeting to review progress on the implementation of the 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ten Ojibwe tribes and the USFS. While reports from USFS and tribal staff demonstrated successes in cooperative research projects, monitoring and in providing expanded opportunities for tribal members to access national forest resources, they hit a logjam on the subjects of timber and dollars.

At issue for several years has been a provision for tribal access to 40,000 board feet of timber annually from each national forest in the ceded territories as well as long-term research possibilities and will report back to the tribes through the Voigt Intertribal Task Force.

Despite the logjam over dollars and board feet of timber, reports provided at the annual meeting revealed numerous successes in the implementation of the MOU relating to birch bark, sugarbush, camping opportunities as well as long-term research projects.

Sugurbush

One highlight of the MOU involves the identification of over forty sugarbush sites in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF), the Hiawatha National Forest and the Ottawa National Forest (ONF). Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) and USFS staff were aided by tribal members in identifying potential permanent sugarbush sites through a grant from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA).

The ANA facilitated participation by tribal elders and other knowledgeable tribal members in locating sites suitable for permanent sugarbush operations. To date four sites have been permitted, one in the Hiawatha National Forest and three in the CNNF. Tribal members interested in setting up a tribal sugarbush site should contact Karen Danielsen, GLIFWC forest ecologist, for assistance.

Birch bark

Birch bark harvesting again declining availability of paper birch trees, especially with characteristics suitable for traditional birch bark items, led GLIFWC and the USFS to obtain a grant through the USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program to see MOU implementation (MOU, page 19).
**Need brains?**

**Local tanner uses CWD tested deer brains**

By Sue Erickson, Staff Writer

Odanah, Wis.—Brain-tanning deer hides, a traditional Ojibwe technique, produces a very soft, pliable buckskin, a process time-consuming and requires soaking rawhide in a solution of deer brains.

In 2003 off-reservation treaty deer harvest

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Staff Writer

In 2004 brains from CWD negative deer will be available free of charge to tribal members for use in brain tanning hides. Please contact Jonathan Gilbert, GLIFWC Wildlife Section, Rhinelander.

In 2003 off-reservation treaty deer harvest by tribal registration station

(Continued from page 2)

**Gray wolves moving south?**

**Probably not, USFWS says**

In 2001, a Missouri man fired at a gray wolf that had journeyed south from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The body of a gray wolf, tagged as a pup in 2000 in Michigan, was discovered in a soybean field in east central Indiana in June 2003. A gray wolf that apparently wandered hundreds of miles from its original home pack somewhere to the north was found dead in central Illinois in 2002. Are wolves making a comeback in the Midwest?

Gray wolves are indeed recovering in the western Great Lakes, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) biologist Ron Refsnider. But he says gray wolves are not likely to establish populations south of Wisconsin and Michigan.

“What we are probably seeing in Indiana, Illinois and Missouri are young wolves from existing packs in the north,” Refsnider explained.

“Occasionally, these wolves travel hundreds of miles but do not survive to establish packs.”

Refrsnider, who works in Minneapolis as one of the Service’s endan-

Sis Wiggins, until the news of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Wisconsin’s deer and other diseases, such as Mad Cow disease and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans, had Wiggins worried.

However, she was saved some anxiety when she obtained 25 clean deer brains from the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) out of deer that had tested negative for CWD. They were available free of charge, and she could stash them in her freezer until ready for use.

In fact, none of the 330 heads from the ceded territories came back positive from the USDA Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa where GLIFWC sent them for testing.

“This GLIFWC will once again be collecting deer heads from off-reservation tribal hunters to be tested and will once again make them available at no charge to tribal members, such as Sis, who may want them for brain-tanning hides. Jonathan Gilbert, GLIFWC Wildlife Section leader, says it would be nice to hear from interested people ahead of time, so they can estimate the number of brains to keep. Sis’s tanning operations have slowed a little this year once she assumed the full-time care of her grandson, but she’s still at it when time allows. A beautiful white hide is currently stretched in the living room where she periodically works on it to soften the texture, and a nice chunk of raw hide awaits immersion in the brain solution. She’ll hang two to six hides a year.

Her brother, Mike, keeps her supplied with hides, which he brings in cut right and clean of meat and fat. A large hide usually requires three brains in the solution and smaller hides use two.

Ironically, Sis only has scraps of hides around her place for personal use.

2003 off-reservation treaty deer harvest by tribal registration station

(Continued from page 2)

However, unlike the fisher, the pine marten populations are not flour-

ishing or expanding their range, according to Gilbert, consequently the three-year Waabizheshi Project was launched to determine factors that inhibit the animal’s success.

The first year’s study focused on quantifying the amount of energy used by the martens. The results were surprising, Gilbert says, because it showed the martens used less energy in the winter than the fall because they changed their behavior and became less active in winter.

The second year of research focused on martens predation. Prior to 2001 only two of the fifteen radio-collared pine martens died, but subsequent to 2001 six of nineteen collared martens were mortalities. The primary martens predators are fisher and forest raptors, such as hawks and owls, Gilbert reports.

Researchers used “robo” martens with infrared cameras trained on them, hoping to attract marten predators, but this aspect of the research did not work. They also employed extensive snow tracking of marten predators surveying 42 stations three times during the winter. They found that terrestrial martens predators were most common in aspen-birch saw logs and upland hardwood pole stands, habitat used by pine marten.

The third and final year of the project was recently launched and will collect detailed data on the movement patterns that martens follow in a study area in order to improve the realism of the robo martens when simulating marten movement in different habitat types.

Marten movement is tracked through telemetry and through back tracking using GPS.

While checking the series of 40 marten traps, the team also hiked up to the fire tower to check the data-logger, a device that records marten activity around the clock. They also set up one new trap in order to show Secreta Hassett the technique and located a pine marten using radio telemetry.

It was well into the afternoon by the time the team checked the fourth trap. That one was empty, like the 39 before it. They found no marten that day, a concern for Gilbert, who says they have only trapped one marten this season. Are the marten getting “trap wise” or aren’t they around anymore?

Secreta Hassett and Gilbert were joined by Dave Eckland, USFS CENF forest biologist, Park Falls; John Olson, WDNR furbearer ecologist, Park Falls; Cheri Ford, USFS tribal liaison and John Wright USFS North Central Research Station, Rhinelander.

Katherine (Sis) Wiggins, Bad River, displays a rawhide against a stretched, brain-tanned hide she is preparing. Worried about handling deer brains after the CWD outbreak in Wisconsin, Wiggins was grateful to receive CWD tested brains from GLIFWC. (Photo by Sue Erickson)
Bear hunting in Echo Valley

State, treaty houndsmen carry on a tradition

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen  Staff Writer

Bayfield, Wis.—For much of September the Echo Valley bunch makes daily jaunts to deep-woods locations like Chicken Bone, Gravel Pit, and Pink Trailer to check for evidence that a black bear has visited. It’s hunting season and these are secluded bait stations that provide a launching pad for hounds trained to pursue and ideally “tree” bears.

Sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn’t. The only sure thing about bear hunting is that it isn’t easy. Red Cliff’s Jim DeFoe is one of a handful of tribal members to pick up hound hunting in the last twenty years. Along with son Chad, DeFoe hunts the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest in northern Bayfield County with a fluid cast of around thirty men and women known as the Echo Valley Bear Hunters.

By the time I showed up in late September, most of the state-licensed houndsmen with Class A “kill” permits had harvested bears, and Chad had just recently tagged a three-legged, 170-pound male. A neighboring hunting group had taken a massive 637-pound boar a week earlier. That’s about as big as they get, DeFoe says, and they average less than 200 pounds field-dressed.

While DeFoe has owned as many as 18 hounds, he downsized his pack to only three this season, easing the strain on his pocketbook and a chronic back injury. Dogs require daily care through the hunting season before we can catch up. Bears prepare to den for the winter; scratched-up hounds visit veterinarians. DeFoe’s daughter Janelle, who hunts bear near Curnocups, comes up empty this year. Chad tells two animals, however, so there’s plenty of meat to go around.

About the time it seemed like the bear would simply melt back into the vast, rugged terrain, word comes through that a handful of hunters were closing in. The bear was bayed up, holding its ground some distance off a gravel road. Following the sound of the dogs, an Echo Valley hunter slips into the woods.

“Not every dog is cut out for hunting; they all have different personalites,” DeFoe says, “Finding a good rig dog can be tough.”

Same goes for finding a crafty bear. DeFoe stops near an abandoned farmstead and listens for Jack. His bark grows clearer as the chase approaches and DeFoe turns loose his mostly-white Walker named Taz.

The bear manages to elude the dogs for much of day and never descends a tree as most ultimately do. Bears usually tree within a short time, 45 minutes to two hours after the dogs pick up the scent. DeFoe says. This one is different.

The hunt is over. Bears prepare to den for the winter; scratched-up hounds visit veterinarians. DeFoe’s daughter Janelle, who hunts bear near Curnocups, comes up empty this year. Chad tells two animals, however, so there’s plenty of meat to go around.

During the hunt and in the off-season, the hunters hold feasts, preparing bear meat in stews, on the grill and in the oven. Stories are told; dogs are traded or sold and equipment is tested. It’s a tradition that receives little outside attention, yet runs deep all the same. Tracking black bears with hounds is a distinctive hunting method, and in Echo Valley, an uncommon, perhaps refreshing, middle ground for treaty and state hunters.

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2003 Wisconsin treaty bear harvest

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Makwa (bear). (Reprinted from clipart.com)
GLIFWC receives new ANA grant to address aquatic nuisance species

By Miles Falck
GLIFWC Wildlife Biologist

Odanah, Wis.—Aquatic nuisance species (ANS) include plants, fish, invertebrates, and non-native organisms that have substantial negative impacts to native aquatic ecosystems. Corroborated by the Ojibwe of Wisconsin, these water organisms capture their prey, purple loosestrife, zebra mussels, and rusty crayfish. These organisms are often spread inadvertently via boats and trailers, ballast water in ocean-going ships, and contaminated bait.

Infested waters can have serious consequences for the exercise of treaty rights. Walleye, lake trout and wild rice are just a few of the species that are directly affected by one or more aquatic nuisance species.

The Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) recently received a grant for $133,000 from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) to address the ecological threat posed by aquatic nuisance species. The grant has three main objectives. The first is to develop a Tribal Inland & Interstate Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan for Lake Superior and the inland 1837 and 1842 ceded territories. The plan will seek to enhance tribal participation in ANS management activities and prioritize actions based upon the potential impacts to treaty resources.

A second objective is to develop and implement an aggressive educational outreach campaign that targets tribal members and GLIFWC wardens. Educational outreach efforts will focus on reducing further introductions of ANS species into uninfested waters.

The third objective of the grant is to review existing environmental regulations that address aquatic nuisance species to identify opportunities where modifications of tribal codes may be used to effectively reduce the spread of ANS. Currently, only the model code for Minnesota’s portion of the 1837 ceded territory addresses aquatic nuisance species.

A major component of the project will be to inventory aquatic ecosystems within the ceded territory for aquatic nuisance species, with an emphasis on waters heavily used by tribal members. The results of the inventory will be used to develop maps of infested waters and identify access points where warning signs are needed to help prevent further introductions. Inventories will be conducted by staff from the wildlife, inland fisheries, and Great Lakes sections at GLIFWC.

For more information on exotics, go to GLIFWC’s Exotic Plants Information Center at www.glifwc.org/epicenter/.

GLIFWC surveys lakes for aquatic nuisance species

By Nick Milroy
GLIFWC Inland Fisheries Biologist

Odanah, Wis.—During August 2003 GLIFWC Fisheries Biologists Nick Milroy and Phil Doepke along with Invasive Plant Specialist Steve Garske searched 14 lakes in the St. Croix River basin for evidence of exotic species. Funding for this work was provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force.

Aquatic nuisance species that are exotics can have a negative impact on native species and disrupt ecosystems. Once an exotic is introduced and establishes a reproducing population, it is almost always impossible to eradicate. So efforts often shift to education aimed at preventing the further spread of the exotic, to management through some type of control (i.e. chemical or biological), and to surveillance surveys to determine if the range has expanded.

GLIFWC’s surveys were for surveillance to determine if zebra mussels had moved outside the St. Croix River and into inland lakes. All of the 14 lakes surveyed drain into the St. Croix River, have a public boat launch, and have a walleye population that has been harvested during spring by Ojibwe tribal members.

The field surveys consisted of visually observing for exotic plant and animal species around the shorelines with special attention placed on areas adjacent to public boat landings. Also, scuba gear was used to look for plant and animal species underwater.

Several exotic species were observed throughout the survey. Rusty crayfish, a large and aggressive exotic crayfish species, was observed in half of the lakes surveyed. This crayfish is a popular fishing bait that has been introduced into many lakes.

Also found were two snail species tentatively identified as exotic mystery snails. Three exotic plant species were noted in several of the lakes. Purple loosestrife was found in four of the lakes, Eurasian water milfoil in two lakes, and curly-leaf pondweed in one lake. Zebra mussels were not observed in any of the surveyed lakes.

The zebra mussel has the potential to displace native mussel species, some of which today are found only in the St. Croix River. These native mussels play an important role in the ecosystem. However, zebra mussels can out compete and suffocate native mussels. Habitat degradation and pollution have already eroded the distribution and abundance of several native mussels. The spread of zebra mussels will only further imperil native mussels.

Through the use of surveys and public education, GLIFWC is working to prevent the further spread of zebra mussels and other exotic species.
Kenneckent evaluating potential nickel mine near Marquette

Exploration underway at additional Upper Michigan sites

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen Staff Writer

Marquette, Mich.—After nearly a decade of drilling test holes in Upper Michigan, the Kenneckent Exploration Company is formulating plans for a possible nickel mine on the Yellow Dog Plains. The site under consideration is situated on two sensitive Lake Superior tributaries—the Salmon Trout and Yellow Dog Rivers—raising concern among local residents and the nearby Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC).

“Our staff is monitoring the project and has met with Kenneckent representatives,” said Mike Donofrio, KBIC Biological Services director. “Kenneckent has done exploratory drilling at many sites on our reservation and purchased mineral rights for over 400,000 acres in Baraga and Marquette Counties.”

Kennecott began exploring the Upper Peninsula for a viable mineral lode in 1994, discovering nickel and copper at the Yellow Dog site the following year. The company’s first public announcement of its findings came in August 2003.

Among a host of environmental concerns is the ongoing rehabilitation of lands that would be disturbed. A remnant population of coho salmon—the last native strain on the south shore of Lake Superior—relied on the clear waters of the Salmon Trout River and its tributaries for spawning and nursery habitat.

Exploratory core drilling to define the size and grade of the ore deposit wrapped up in mid-October. Following an analysis of the ore samples this winter, Kenneckent officials are expected to announce whether to pursue mine development in late spring.

Lynn Boyd, Michigan Department of Natural Resources forest and minerals manager said that a potential development of the Eagle Prospect might position the islands closed to hunting and tribal members should consult their reservation conservation departments or a GLIFWC warden for details. Voigt added. "Our staff is monitoring the project and has met with Kenneckent representatives," said Mike Donofrio, KBIC Biological Services director.

John Cole, environmental biology supervisor at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, is exploring activity at Wolf Mountain near Waskish where Prime Meridian has leased a 120-acre block of state land. Colemen said that in contrast to the Grass River County mining leases, the Wolf Mountain site is well defined and may yield quicker results from exploratory drilling. Mining leases in Iron County are on 74 parcels of land.

Near the Menominee River just beyond the 1842 ceded territory border, Mineral Processing Corporation is formulating a plan to remove zinc, copper, gold and silver concentrations discovered in October 1979. Following the Back Forty Venture, the mining initiative has caused unease among a handful of organizations and local citizens in nearby Stephenson.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality serves as the primary regulatory agency for mining operations in the Upper Peninsula.

Ceded territory news briefs

FDL applies for Treatment as State status under Clean Air Act

Fond du Lac reservation, Minn.—The Fond du Lac (FDL) Band has applied for Treatment as State (TAS) status under the Clean Air Act in order to expand its ability to protect its reservation community. If successful, the FDL Band will be the second tribe to receive a review of applications from potential polluters within 50 miles of the reservation. Any issues that FDL might have with permit would carry the same weight as those of the state. The program monitors the concentration of air pollutants on the reservation with six outdoor monitors. The monitors measure nitrogen oxides and ozone.

If FDL’s application for TAS status is approved, they will join only a few tribes nationally who have been granted TAS under the Clean Air Act.

Guenther to head new Minnesota DNR Fish and Wildlife Division

St. Paul, Minn.—The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) recently announced the appointment of John Guenther to head a combined MDNR Fish and Wildlife Division. Guenther, a 28-year MDNR employee, served as the MDNR’s Regional Director for Northeastern Minnesota for the last ten-years. Former Fisheries Director Ron Payer and Wildlife Director Tim Bremicker will now be sections within the new division.

The new division will add to a data base on the condition of Lake Superior fish. The second grant from EPA’s Waste, Pesticides and Toxics Division looked at 57 samples of fish samples already archived. This testing will focus on dioxin levels in Lake Superior fish, including lake trout, whitefish, siscowet, herring and coho salmon. The information obtained from the testing will add to a data base on the condition of Lake Superior fish.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality serves as the primary regulatory agency for mining operations in the Upper Peninsula.

Mille Lacs County continues to oppose treatment facility and files appeal over boundary dispute

Mille Lacs reservation, Minn.—Despite a judge’s ruling against them and positive statements from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Mille Lacs County officials continue the legal battle against the Mille Lacs Band. The county’s repeated and failed efforts have already cost area residents more than $1 million dollars, according to a report in Mille Lacs’ publication, The Woodland Voice.

In 1999 the band teamed with the city of Garrison to develop a new wastewater treatment plant that would serve 10,000 residents along Mille Lacs Lake’s western shore. The current aging and inadequate septic systems and a shortage of waste-treatment facilities and files appeal over boundary dispute.

Mille Lacs County opposition to new Superfund site contingency

Mille Lacs reservation, Minn.—Despite a judge’s ruling against them and positive statements from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Mille Lacs County officials continue the legal battle against the Mille Lacs Band. The county’s repeated and failed efforts have already cost area residents more than $1 million dollars, according to a report in Mille Lacs’ publication, The Woodland Voice.

In 1999 the band teamed with the city of Garrison to develop a new wastewater treatment plant that would serve 10,000 residents along Mille Lacs Lake’s western shore. The current aging and inadequate septic systems and a shortage of wastewater treatment options threaten the water quality of the lake that the band, along with Minnesota plans received cause from environmental organizations and the EPA issued the necessary discharge permit to allow the treatment plant to operate, the county continues to oppose the plant. They base their opposition on a fear that the band will be able to subject to tribal jurisdiction and the Mille Lacs Band will operate the facility. Mille Lacs County has also sued to have the Mille Lacs Band’s reservation legally disestablished, claiming that the band was not entitled to be subject to federal jurisdiction.

The Wolf Mountain site is well defined and may yield quicker results from exploratory drilling. Mining leases in Iron County are on 74 parcels of land.

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Apostle Islands hunting and trapping rules established

Treaty hunting and trapping regulations are in place for the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore biologists. The island is the 31 and includes an antlerless quota of 15 deer. The harvest of otter, bobcat and fisher is prohibited during small game trapping and hunting season. Specific regulations include controlling the names of the reservation conservation departments or a GLIFWC warden for details. Voigt Intertribal Task Force representatives and staff from GLIFWC and AINL developed the harvest guidelines and continued to work on rules for wild plant gathering.

FDL tests Lake Superior fish for contaminants

Odanah, Wis.—GLIFWC currently has two grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to perform contaminant level testing on samples taken from Lake Superior fish. An Environmental Justice grant provides for the testing of 64 samples of lake trout collected this fall for levels of mercury, PCBs, chlordane, and organo-chlorine pesticides. The information obtained from the testing will add to a data base on the condition of Lake Superior fish.

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Fall walleye surveys conducted on 180 ceded territory lakes

By Joe Dan Rose, GLIFWC Inland Fisheries Biologist

Odanah, Wis.—During fall 2003, electrofishing surveys were conducted in 180 ceded-territory waters including 155 lakes in Wisconsin, 23 lakes in Michigan, and 2 lakes in Minnesota. These walleye recruitment surveys are conducted each fall to determine if, or to what extent, juvenile walleye have entered (or recruited) into the populations. The Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) conducts these surveys on behalf of its member tribes to evaluate the strength or weakness of the two most recent (young-of-the-year and age 1) year classes of walleye.

Lakes selected for surveys are primarily those where a shared state/tribal fishery has developed or those with a naturally reproducing population of walleye. Results from these surveys are also used to determine walleye recruitment codes for individual lakes and to monitor long-term trends in year class strength from both lake-specific and regional perspectives.

Ten electrofishing assessment crews were used, including four from GLIFWC, two from US Fish & Wildlife Service, and crews from the Bad River, Fond du Lac, Mole Lake, and St. Croix tribes. Electrofishing boats sampled lakes four nights per week throughout September and October 2003. For scheduling purposes, it was assumed that each boat could sample five to seven miles of shoreline per night.

Electrofishing surveys began at dusk and continued until the entire shoreline of the lake or a set of predetermined index stations was sampled. The number of boats assigned to each individual lake was based upon shoreline length, and whether the entire shoreline or index station segments would be surveyed.

All fish collected were identified as to species, and their total length in inches was measured. Scale samples were collected from five walleye per half-inch group to determine the age composition of the sample. All fish were live-released back into the lake after data were collected and recorded.

Ten ceded-territory lakes in Wisconsin were jointly surveyed by GLIFWC and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources assessment crews. These lakes included: Middle Eau Claire (Bayfield Co.), Upper and Lower Post (Langlee Co.), Pelican (Oneida Co.), Balsam (Polk Co.), Chetek, Nelson and Sand (Crawford Co.), Crab, Lac Vieux Desert and Trout (Vilas Co.).

An electrofishing survey was also conducted at Mille Lacs Lake, Minnesota. Like past years, three electrofishing boats were scheduled to survey the entire 78 mile shoreline of Mille Lacs Lake in four nights. This fall, these electrofishing crews were able to sample approximately 70 miles of shoreline despite less than ideal wind and weather conditions throughout most of the survey period.

A mark and recapture juvenile walleye population estimate was conducted on Siskiwiit (Bayfield Co.). Sampling procedures similar to those used for the fall recruitment surveys were followed, except that all walleye less than 13 inches in length received a mark before they were live-released.

After allowing time for the marked fish to mix with unmarked fish, the recapture phase of the survey was conducted. The proportion of marked to unmarked fish collected during the recapture phase of the survey is used to calculate an estimate of abundance.

Results from the fall walleye recruitment surveys are expressed as the number of age 0 (young-of-the-year) and age 1 walleye collected per mile of shoreline sampled. For fall electrofishing surveys conducted on Wisconsin ceded-territory lakes with naturally reproducing walleye populations between 1984 and 2002, the average number of age 0 and age 1 walleye collected per mile of shoreline surveyed is 34.5 and 10.7, respectively.

Results from the 180 walleye recruitment surveys conducted by GLIFWC during fall 2003 are currently being compiled. Thus, it is not yet known whether lake-specific or regional walleye year class strength for 2003 will be above or below these long-term averages.

All GLIFWC, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and tribal assessment crews are collectively thanked for operating and maintaining electrofishing boats and equipment, sampling fish, and collecting data under a wide range of conditions throughout the fall survey season.

Fish population studies continue with grant award

Modeling focus on Lake Superior, Mille Lacs

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen, Staff Writer

Odanah, Wis.—Following a recent grant award from the Administration for Native Americans, GLIFWC fisheries biologists are launching the second phase of a project to model fish populations in Lake Superior and Lake Mille Lacs. With grant monies totaling more than $236,000, GLIFWC biologists are continuing to cultivate cutting edge techniques to estimate the size and age structure of fish populations.

“The funding provides crucial support in building upon the walleye and lake trout models we developed this past year,” said Neil Kmeček, GLIFWC Biological Services director. “Having staff trained and experienced in modeling fish populations improves our ability to participate along with other agency scientists in setting harvest quotas.”

Inland Fisheries Biologists Joe Dan Rose and Nick Milroy spearhead the Lake Superior walleye assessment. They were funded to establish models that assist the tribes and state in improving northern pike management.

Skilled in using a number of fisheries models, GLIFWC Data Analyst Rick Madison assists the fisheries biologists in describing fish populations.

“At this point, our knowledge of the northern pike population in Lake Mille Lacs is rather limited,” Madsen said. “Our modeling will help us synthesize the available information to give us a better picture of what’s out there. It should also help us find out what kinds of information we can collect to improve our estimates in the future.”

On Lake Superior, Biologist Bill Mattes is focusing on a management unit lying north of the Keweenaw Peninsula called MI-3, covering an area between Copper Harbor and Misery Bay.

Modeling is a way of using mathematical equations to estimate the size and age structure of fish populations. Routine fisheries surveys that include electrofishing, gillnetting and trawling are generally factored with harvest data from state and tribal fisherman to develop models.

The models we use to describe and forecast fish populations can range from the fairly simple to some that are quite complex. We’re fortunate to have this grant so we can get additional training, consult with several fisheries experts and devote more of our time to these tasks,” Madsen said.

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**Restoring a wild resource**

By GLIFWC Staff

It is a breezy but sunny, early September afternoon. Deep in the Chequamegon National Forest someone has just slipped a canoe off of a truck and loaded it unceremoniously onto the edge of a small lake. Please to have the place to himself, he hoists a few heavy grain sacks into the center of the canoe, grabs a paddle and sets off for the far shore, seeking the mucky shallow shelf near the outlet. Here, under the watch of an immure bold eagle, he maneuvers the canoe into a position where the wind will blow him across the shallows, cuts open the bags, and begins launching handfuls of dark seed high into the wind. Once airborne the jumbled seed falls into rank, aligning vertically before plummeting to the surface and diving to the sediments below. In a little more than an hour he is all done and paddling back, thinking about when he would return. This solitary exercise was not the illegal baiting of some wanna-be duck poacher, but a small part of a highly cooperative, inter-agency effort to restore some of the historic abundance of wild rice in Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota.

This need for this effort is clear, according to Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) Biologist Peter David. “Manoomin, or wild rice, was once far more common within its range than it is today. Although it is hard to put an exact figure on what has been lost, historic accounts and even geographic place names indicate that the loss has been substantial. The great ecological value of this resource, and its cultural significance to both Indians and non-Indians alike merits its restoration. The re-affirmation of Ojibwe off-reservation treaty rights has really helped spur that restoration.”

The strong cultural significance of wild rice for the Ojibwe made it natural for its restoration to be a high priority. However, since the tribes do not own off-reservation lands they could manage, they reached out to other agencies that did.

“Tribes often didn’t have the land management interests in this effort,” David continued. “The work was being done in a few areas, but there wasn’t enough of it to be do more.” However, GLIFWC’s initial efforts to promote rice restoration were limited by a lack of funding. That hurdle was greatly overcome when the Bureau of Indian Affairs was able to secure funding for the Circle of Flight program, which promotes tribal wetland restoration work in the midwest. The Circle of Flight funding was the trigger that really made this possible,” noted David. “Rice restoration isn’t really very expensive—that’s one reason this effort is attractive to biologists— but it does take some support, and the Circle of Flight program was able to provide it. With it, we were able to approach potential cooperators talking about cost sharing, and were able to provide seed to their doorstep. People responded; this past fall, for example, we handled about four tons of seed in this effort, which is fairly typical of what we have handled annually for the last decade or so.”

In recent years, GLIFWC has concentrated its efforts during the month-long harvest season on the front end of this effort, procuring rice seed from individual pickers and getting it into the hands of cooperators, who share the cost of the seed and do much of the actual planting. The cooperation begins with the harvesters. “We have ricers who go out of their way to sell to this program, because they are glad to know the seed is going back to benefit the resource,” said David. And it often ends with other cooperation: “The giving tree.”

**Wiiigwaasi Mitig: The Giving Tree**

**Important to northern cultures around the globe**

**By Sue Erickson, Staff Writer**

Cloquet, Minn.—If you look around the earth, south of the northern tundra, there’s a region that circles the world where wiiigwaasi mitig (bark trees) grow. Within that region around the world people have made remarkable use of the gifts from the wiiigwaasi mitig—that those people include Ojibwe and other northern Indian people in the United States and Canada as well as northern dwellers in Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia—all have benefited from what Filmmaker Lorraine Norrgard calls “the giving tree.”

Norrgard’s fascination with the wiiigwaasi mitig sparked around 1986 when she was filming the late Jerry Maulson from Lac du Flambeau crafting a wiiigwaasi makak (bark basket) for the film Enduring Ways of the Lac du Flambeau People. Since then her interest in and relationship with wiiigwaasi have grown to include an expanding circle of friends skilled in the use of wiiigwaasi.

She also filmed Red Cliff’s Diane Defoe making baskets for the recent video series Wausa Inaadibidaa: We Look in All Directions and empathized with Defoe’s respect and love for the environment, the trees, and the land. “She would offer tobacco before she entered the circle and would relate to the tree as another being. It was like she was handling its skin,” Norrgard says. “That’s a powerful connection to the earth and one that Norrgard admires and shares.”

This summer her bark circle became even larger as she departed for a trip to visit Sweden and Russia with a grant from the Jerome Foundation to research their use of wiiigwaasi. Her intent was to explore the indigenous use of bark in these places as well as some of the indigenous beliefs and stories about it. “In history, bark has been a major provider for people, used for medicines, shelters, net floats, apparel, grave covers, boats, jewelry, baskets, and ornaments. It’s a real giving tree,” Norrgard says.

She arrived in Duluth’s sister city Petrozavodsk in the Russian Province of Karelia, Russia in June, just in time for Petrozavodsk’s 300th anniversary. June is also the month when the birch peels in Russia, as it does in the United States.

She was accompanied by Russian-born Irina Haller, now a resident of Duluth, Minnesota, who makes very tiny one-inch birch bark shoes given for good luck or as a protection gift. “I love Norrgard’s pickup,” Norrgard says. Haller served as a translator for Norrgard while in Russia. Both women were also sponsored by the Duluth Sister City Program.

While in Petrozavodsk, Norrgard interviewed four masters weaving birch bark. In Russia they give awards and medals to master craftsmen. Among them was Galina Dakina, who weaves baskets of many designs and even produces incredible three-dimensional sculptures Norrgard brought home one three-dimensional character called the “woodsman.” He is like a forest spirit, she says. He holds a basket and season berries are placed in the basket as an offering.

Birch bark craft work in Russia today is both a tradition and a necessity. It operates like a cottage industry, providing a much needed income to the craftsmen, Norrgard comments. She found the Russian economy to be very poor and unemployment common. For instance, Lyudmila Savina, a birch bark master who also holds a doctorate in mathematics, and her husband, who has a doctorate in forest science, live in a one-room apartment with their two daughters.

Savina’s weaving is extraordinary in design and geometry, Norrgard says. She uses a three step process of drafting on graph paper, making a model from paper, and finally producing the birch bark basket.

Some of the techniques for decorating bark items were quite unlike those Norrgard had seen previously. In Russia she found numerous examples of embroidered bark bark. A design is carved into the bark and then pressed into the basket. Originally, they used reindeer antlers to make the stamp. (See Wiiigwaasi Mitig, page 19)
Only ten months ‘til ricing season—the best season of all!

Sawyer, Minn.—“Ricing is never more than eleven months away,” “Fonjalacker” Jim Northrup quips with a grin as he patiently sorts through a plate of green manoomin (wild rice), picking out the remaining husks. For him the harvest and processing of manoomin is a season rich with unique sights, sounds and aromas. He revels in the sound of water, the touch of wind, the steady swish-swish-swish-swish of rice knockers and later of parching paddles turning rice in a huge metal kettle that emits the nutty fragrance of roasting rice. It’s a beautiful season—Jim’s favorite season involving the “most work and the most family.”

Northrup, a noted Ojibwe poet, author and skilled birch bark craftsman, has participated in the annual harvest of rice since childhood in Sawyer, Minnesota. Still living in the same neighborhood of the Fond du Lac reservation, he and his wife, Pat, remain true to the traditional methods of hand harvesting and hand processing manoomin.

“It’s important to keep this method alive,” Jim says. “It worked for Grandpa, and the world will probably run out of gas eventually.” Both he and Pat have taken the time and care to pass their knowledge on to family—children, grandchildren and godchildren—and to anyone who is interested, for that matter. “My wife Pat and I taught our godson Zach to make rice. Zach taught ten others. It’s important to pass on the knowledge. Someone took the time to teach me,” Northrup comments.

The rice harvest begins with feasting the rice for the Northrup family. “We always put out a dish to thank for the gift of wild rice,” he says. When it’s time to slip the canoe in the water, asemaa is put down, also thanking for the rice and another opportunity. Then Jim checks that everything is ready for a day in the rice field—poles, paddles, rice knockers, lunch, water, bread and gum. The gum and bread are to remove waazawashk, he explains, which are barbs on the rice plant that can be irritating if stuck in your skin or eye.

“If I see an eagle flying around while I’m out ricing, I know he will tell the Creator that we are still using that gift, so we will get it again next year,” Jim comments. “Wild rice is a gift from the Creator. There is no good year or bad year. It’s a gift.”

For many years there were only a few people ricing on the lakes, but in recent years more people are participating in the harvest. The Fond du Lac Tribe buys a good quantity of rice from the ricers, Jim says, using one-third of it for seeding purposes and the rest for gifts. Jim and Pat keep their rice for personal use and for special occasions such as feasts and funerals.

Jim makes his own rice knockers and ricing poles. He uses tamarack for the lengthy pole used to push the canoe through the rice beds. The spiral grain of the tamarack gives it strength, and he fashions the pole’s fork from diamond willow because it doesn’t split. White cedar is used for the knockers, so they will be lightweight. Poles last about ten years, he says, and so will knockers if they are not banged against the side of the canoe too often.

Once the rice is brought in, the preparation must begin. The rice is dried in the sun to prevent spoilage. When ready to begin, a fire is started in the fire pit behind the Northrup’s home. Jim hauls out a huge black metal kettle that rests at a slant.

Preparing to parch, Jim Northrup pours wild rice into a gigantic kettle set over a fire pit.

Once the rice has been danced and the husks opened, it must be fanned using a winnowing basket. The rice is gently tossed into the air, and the breeze removes the dried husks.

The final step is patiently removing the remaining husks by hand.
Processing manoomin
Grandpa’s way

(Continued from page 12)

over the fire, propped between the edge of the fire pit and a metal rod above. A
quantity of rice is poured into the kettle to be parched over the fire. Using a parching
paddle, Jim keeps the rice moving in the pot, careful not to let it scorch or burn. He
can feel the rice changing. At first it’s clumpy, he says, and then it begins to move
like water. He stops to check it occasionally, feeling the kernels to see if they are
dry and crack easily. The nutty fragrance from the roasting rice fills the crisp fall
air.

For the next step, Pat takes over. She will dance the rice. Donning a pair of
rubber boots reserved for this, she steps into a small pit lined with a piece of canvas
from an old tipi into which the parched rice has been placed. She formerly used
moccasins, but finds the rubber boots work better. Resting her arms on a specially
devoted rack in front of her, she begins to dance the rice. Keeping her feet together,
she moves them gently from side to side, twisting rather than stomping. The motion
cracks the brittle husks away from the kernels.

Pat stops to kick the rice up and resumes the dance. She adjusts the pressure
on the rice by resting more of her weight on the rack towards the end of the process.
Occa-
sionally, she checks the rice. If its fluffy, the kernel is out, she says. After about 20 minutes
of dancing, the rice is ready to be fanned, so it is removed from the dancing pit and a quan-
tity of it placed in one of Jim’s birch bark winnowing baskets.

A nice breeze is helpful to blow the dried, cracked husks away as the kernel is
gently shaken, bouncing the rice into the air. If the wind is not cooperative on a particular
day, Jim resorts to technology and plugs in a fan he has sitting outside to deal with that
problem.

That brings us back to where we began with Jim sitting at his kitchen table carefully
picking out the hulls that did not blow away during the fanning. “Manoomin means good
seed.” Jim says, admiring his finished product, happy to know that next rice season is
only eleven months away and that his grand-

dughter, Jaelisa, was going out ricing for the first time on that September day.

(Author’s note: While sitting at the

table, Jim almost shared a story with me, but remembered in time there was no snow on the

ground and the frogs and the toads might hear us. Maybe he will share the story when the

frogs and toads are sleeping underground.

Jim can be contacted at northrup@cp.duluth

mn.us.)

Wild Rice and grape salad

3 cups cooked rice
1 cup seedless green grapes, halved
1 small can water chestnuts, sliced
1/2 cup celery chopped medium-fine
1 small can water chestnuts, sliced
1/2 cup slivered or sliced almonds
1 cup seedless green grapes, halved
3 cups cooked rice

Wild rice turkey casserole
Pour 1 c. boiling water over 3 c. of bread crumbs, 3 tbsps. butter and 2 eggs. Beat smooth. Then add 1 1/2 c. cooked wild rice, 3 c. cooked turkey, 1 c. diced

celery, 1/4 c. minced onion, 1 small can mushrooms, 1 small can water chestnuts, drained and cut up, 1 can cream of chicken soup, 3 tbsps. soy sauce, 1/4 tsp. poultry
seasoning, salt and pepper to taste, more water or broth if needed. Put in casserole, top with buttered bread crumbs, Bake 1 hr. at 350 degrees. Serves 10.

Gagoonz—Little Porcupines

1 lb. ground venison
1/3 cup uncooked wild rice
1 small onion minced very fine
1 seeded green pepper minced very fine
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 can tomatoes
1 can tomato soup
Combine meat, uncooked rice, onion, green pepper, salt & pepper, mix thor-
oughly. Shape into 1” firm meat balls. Bring soup and tomatoes in their liquid to
a boil in a frypan with tight cover, put in meat balls, reduce to very low simmer.
Simmer, covering tightly, until done with rice popping out of balls like porky
quilts—about 40-45 minutes.

—Olga Masica, Minneapolis

(Rice reprinted from kstrom.net/isk/food/r-wild.html.)

Restoring a wild resource

(Continued from page 11)

cooperators, who suggest sites and provide the time and money needed to make it work.

The cooperators list is a long one, including state Departments of Natural
Resources, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, county
governments, tribal nations, private organizations such as Ducks Unlimited and the
Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, local lake associations, and even interested
individuals. And while this effort is limited to public waters, GLIFWC can offer
guidance to individuals interested in restoring rice on private lands.

While it may be hard to pinpoint how much of the historic abundance of
manoomin has been lost, it is easier to see what has been restored.” I think this effort
is having a measurable impact on the landscape,” said David. “Harvest surveys in
Wisconsin suggest 15-25% of the human harvest now typically comes from stands
that didn’t exist 20 years ago, like those on the Phantom Flowage in Burnett
County, the Gile Flowsage in Iron County, the Spring Creek Wildlife Area in Price
County or the Hiles Millpond in Forest County—just to name a few. And while this effort is limited to public waters, GLIFWC can offer guidance to individuals interested in restoring rice on private lands.

The biggest winners from this undertaking are the ducks, geese, swans, rails, muskrats,
and other species that utilize the bounty this plant provides.”

For more information, contact Peter David at (715) 682-6619 ext. 123 or email
pdavid@glifwc.org.

When it’s all said and done—what a beautiful nutritious product you have.

(Photos by Sue Erickson)

Manoomin
By Jim Northrup, Fond du Lac Ojibwe

Tobacco swirled in the lake as we offered our thanks. The calm water welcomed us
rice heads nodded in agreement. Ringing again, miigwech Manido. The cedar caressed the heads
ripe rice came along to join us in many meals this winter.

The rice bearded up. We saw the wind move across the lake

an eagle, a couple of coots

the sun smiled everywhere.

Relatives came together
talk of other lakes, other seasons

fingers stripping rice while

laughing, gossiping, remembering.

Its easy to feel a part of

the generations that have

riced here before.

It felt good to get on the lake

it felt better getting off

carrying a canoe load of food

and centuries of memories.

Ricing again, mii gwech Manido.
By Sue Erickson  
Staff Writer

Fond du Lac, Minn.—“It was a good year,” says Carl Schwarzkopf, Natural Resources Program director for the Fond du Lac Band. “Our wild rice harvest has been successful.”

The dam on Rice Portage Lake will bring this 425-acre wild rice lake back to historic levels in several years. The water level on Rice Portage Lake will be raised incrementally as the cat-tail and pickerel weed removed and the rice habitat is restored. Deadfish Lake still faces flooding problems during severe storms, Schwarzkopf explains. So, the band purchased and built a 75-foot dam above it to hold back floodwaters. The water is released slowly once the impoundment fills.

Fdl is also installing digital water level gauges on the dams. The gauges provide continuous data on the lake's elevation and tail water elevation at each dam on a digital read-out. This data can be used by co-op farmers, such as Reggie Defoe, FDL NPR technician supervisor, in their HydroCad hydrology model to anticipate lake level changes and manage the four dams.

On another front, the tribe also faced lakes filled with cattail, pickerel weed and water lilies, all of which compete with wild rice. “It has been a goal for the FdL Band for many years. It has also been a goal for the Band, for many years.”

Perch Lake dam fell apart over the years, and a local landowner was unable to pay, so the Band purchased and built a dam on Perch Lake in 1939. Other methods were employed including sandbagging and removal of beaver dams. However, these efforts were not enough to effectively restore wild rice; the Band was then faced with sepa-rated problems stemming from the loss of the dams and extensive ditching around and through five of the FdL's wild rice lakes.

The Perch Lake dam fell apart over the years, and a local landowner dynamited the wooden dam built by the Bureau of Indian Affairs on Rice Por-tage Lake in 1958. The ditch banks were washed out, the lake became a slough, and a beaver to anchor dams in contrast to the original streams that meandered through the marshes.

The ditching was part of an effort in the early 1900s to drain the lakes, make the lakes more productive for farmland, according to Schwarzkopf.

The drainage drastically reduced the fish in the lakes, but never produced very viable farmlands, he says. When the depression hit, the farmers, who were expected to pay a “ditch” fee to Carlton County, were unable to pay, and consequently, the County along with the farmers went bankrupt.

The wild rice fields were also “bankrupted,” and the Band was left with half-drained lakes connected by a web of drainage ditches. Subsequently, in a 1936 drought, cattails became established in some of the lakes, presenting more of a nightmare for the restoration efforts undertaken today.

Fond du Lac’s Natural Resource Program staff had their work cut out for them, but were able to have viable wild rice fields for tribal members. They tackled the situation from several fronts.

For one, they replaced the old dam on Perch Lake. They also constructed water control structures on Perch Lake, Rice Portage Lake, the Upper Deadfish and Deadfish Lake in order to manipulate the water levels and encourage restoration of hundreds of acres of wild rice. The dams were all completed by 1999.

In areas where weeds have been removed and wild rice restored, healthy, robust wild rice plants have flourished, Schwarzkopf says. In some restored areas on Perch Lake, the wild rice is now so thick that it is difficult to get canoes through during harvest. The Northwestern Regional Project is testing the use of a “cookie cutter” to cut up the thick rice straw in areas in order to speed up decomposing. This year’s abundant rice yield is so thick that it is difficult to harvest.

Students from Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College have assisted Fdl, in studying the plant community and sediment, sampling both prior to weed removal and following wild rice establishment. They examine for nutrient levels and sediment characteristics. Studies are based on a wild rice lake sediment classification system developed by wild rice expert Dr. Peter Lee, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario, relating types of sediments and wild rice growth. It shows that removal of the aquatic weeds disturbs and mixes the bottom sediment and may aid the spread of invasive plant species. The project is funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources assisted with a grant to purchase the second aquatic weed harvester. The Natural Resources Conservation Service provided Educational Quality Incentive Program dollars to cost share on vegetation removal. The Circle of Flight program has been a major contributor, and the Fdl Band was the first tribal recipient of a large grant from the North American Wetland Conservation Act for all four dams.

Working with Schwarzkopf on executing the restoration work are his dedicated staff: Reginald Defoe, supervisory technician and four technicians: Terry Perrault, Charles Nahganub, Russ Northrup and Chuck Greensky.

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By Sue Erickson  
Staff Writer

Fond du Lac, Minn.—“It was a good year,” says Carl Schwarzkopf, Natural Resources Program director for the Fdl Band. To restore wild rice in a number of its on-reservation lakes, the Band faced lakes filled with cattail, pickerel weed and water lilies, all of which compete with wild rice. “It has been a goal for the Fdl Band for many years.”

Perch Lake dam fell apart over the years, and a local landowner was unable to pay, so the Band purchased and built a dam on Perch Lake in 1939. Other methods were employed including sandbagging and removal of beaver dams. However, these efforts were not enough to effectively restore wild rice; the Band was then faced with separated problems stemming from the loss of the dams and extensive ditching around and through five of the Fdl’s wild rice lakes.

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(Editors’ note: For more information on exotic plants, visit GLIFWC’s Exotic Plant Information Center at www.glifw.org/epicenter. This website includes educational materials, a slide library, etc.)
GLIFWC has established a community-based policing program to enforce tribal off-reservation conservation ordinances. GLIFWC conservation wardens have two primary responsibilities, more effectively detect fish and game violations.

Vacancy Announcement

(Continued from page 3)

Dick Garnue (Continued from page 3)
Wild Rice: Ojibwe Spirit Food
Wild rice traditions subject of new documentary

Marquette, Mich.—Ojibwe traditions of “wild ricing” in the Upper Peninsula are featured in a new ethnographic documentary by Northern Michigan University professor and filmmaker Michael Loukinen. Most of the video was recorded in the vicinity of the Lac Vieux Desert community in Watersmeet.

“Ojibwe youth are losing the wild rice traditions of their ancestors due to the deaths of knowledgeable elders and the harmful environmental pressures impacting their sacred lake, Lac Vieux Desert,” Loukinen said. “There has long been an identity between the lake and the tribe. This video will preserve the rice traditions for future generations and tell us a great deal about the history of the lake.”

The documentary covers the practices of planting, rice-boat building, harvesting, parching, dancing, winnowing, cooking, and finally eating wild rice at a feast. The opening scene features the late Spiritual Elder Archie McGeshick, Sr.

“While dying of cancer, Archie continued to plant and harvest,” Loukinen said. “He took me out to record these practices. The opening scene shows him ceremoniously offering Ojibwe-language prayers and tobacco to the Water, Shore and Great Spirits as he surveys the rice bed that he restored.”

The documentary incorporates live-action scenes with historical photographs, animation, music, and narration. Much of the latter was provided by Thomas Vennum, ethnologist emeritus of the Smithsonian Institution and author of the award-winning Wild Rice and the Ojibwe People.

The film not only shows the wild rice traditions, but the teaching of these traditions to Ojibwe children. “It was not only for a general audience, but it will be especially interesting to parents and children, teachers, folk arts educators, cultural anthropologists and Native American studies educators,” Loukinen added. “Project materials will be archived for future research opportunities.”

A brief science segment explores how humans and environmental forces affect the health and survival of wild rice. Peter David, a biologist with the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, explains in the film that rice beds are declining throughout the Lake Superior region. He attributes the trend to the adverse impacts of the thinning ozone layer, variations in rainfall and snow melting, motorboat traffic and especially dams.

Funding for the video projects has been provided by the following: Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs; the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; the Michigan State Department of Consumer and Industry Services; NMU faculty grants; the NMU Department of Sociology and Social work; and the NMU College of Professional Studies.

For more information, contact Loukinen at (906) 227-2041 or Loukinen@nmu.edu

Oo Oo Manidoo!
Asemua noongom tekonaag gave jiim naan nindinaajimod aw Anishinaabe, wiigwaasi noongom aw Anishinaabe, mi manidoo naag aw Anishinaabe.

Na gewin miindoo imaa eyaan genawand wehi o’ow niiba, na kinaamadak imaa agamiing.

Mii’ gwigjimaan naa damawishinaam.

Haw haw.
Shawenimishinaam, shawenimishinaam, shawenimishinaam, shawenimishinaam.

Haw! Na! Miigwech!
Na migwech gwiijin imaa eyaan genawand o’o kina bimaadiziwin.
Odaapanomishinaaw a’aw asemua noongom.

Mii’ gwigjimaan nindinaajimod aw Anishinaabe.

Na miigwech imaa manoominedamaw.
Na oon ndahadakisaag i-dash.

Oo, oon mi’i’w, wiig-pigjimaan naa noongom owe wiig-pigjimaan.

As Archie’s nephew and as a participant in his film, I’m very proud of what I have seen in the nearly completed film, including everything from the historical and traditional aspects to the documentation of the harvest season and the current fights the tribes are encountering to preserve and maintain their sacred gift from the Creator. I believe all who view this film will be moved and become involved in protecting this important part of the Anishinaabe heritage.”

—Roger LaBine

Oo Oo Manidoo!
Asemua noongom tekonaag gave jiim naan nindinaajimod aw Anishinaabe, wiigwaasi noongom aw Anishinaabe, mi manidoo naag aw Anishinaabe.

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Mii’ gwigjimaan naa damawishinaam.

Haw haw.
Shawenimishinaam, shawenimishinaam, shawenimishinaam, shawenimishinaam.

Haw! Na! Miigwech!
Na migwech gwiijin imaa eyaan genawand o’o kina bimaadiziwin.
Odaapanomishinaaw a’aw asemua noongom.

Mii’ gwigjimaan nindinaajimod aw Anishinaabe.

Na oon ndahadakisaag i-dash.

Oo, oon mi’i’w, wiig-pigjimaan naa noongom owe wiig-pigjimaan.

Oh Great Spirit
I am holding this tobacco to ask you for direction and permission as an Anishinaabe since I am about to plant some rice.

Now, speaking to the spirits, ones who are there, as we know, water spirits, including every living spirit along the shores.

And shore spirits, take this tobacco, help our people,
You too, Our Great Spirit, take this tobacco, help our people.

Then, the rice will be plentiful.

Rice shall grow to be plentiful for our Anishinaabe.

The Anishinaabe will then have joy while riceing.

Today, I am asking the spirits to help us grow rice.

And let it stick in mud at bottom of the waters
Let Anishinaabe pick plenty of rice.
Help us be a success.
Have pity on us.
Have pity on us.
Have pity on us.
Have pity on us.
Oh thank you Great Spirit
I also give thanks to all who have given us guidance.

Rice shall grow to be plentiful for our Anishinaabe.

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Help us be a success.
Have pity on us.
Have pity on us.
Have pity on us.
Have pity on us.
Oh thank you Great Spirit
I also give thanks to all who have given us guidance.

And, this is our way of life.

Now, please accept this tobacco I am offering you and all spirits who take care of us.

Thank you

Now, here is the rice I am planting today.
Let it grow for our people.

(Translated by Lisa Brunk (my maiden name is McGeshick), My spirit name is Nemikigokwe. My clan is the Gineu, or Golden Eagle. Currently, I live in Baraga, Michigan, but I’m from Lac Vieux Desers. My mother is Joann (McGeshick) Douyette. She is Ojibwa also.

First I must say that when I translated the prayer on the documentary, it wasn’t too long after my uncle’s passing into the spirit world. So, it was an honor to pass those words on for the upcoming generations. I also know that Anishinabemowin does not translate directly into the English language, so the spirit within the prayer transcends far beyond the written word.)
Trumpeter swan restoration progressing in western UP

L’Anse, Mich.—The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) in Michigan and USDA Ottawa National Forest (ONF) are pleased to report that trumpeter swans have successfully reared young or cygnets at a western Upper Peninsula (UP) wetland. “We believe this successful nesting marks the first time in over 100 years that trumpeter swans have produced young in this region,” says Robert Evans, ONF Wildlife Biologist. The KBIC and ONF cooperated with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Indian Affairs “Circle of Flight,” U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Kellogg Bird Sanctuary in releasing 35 swans from 1998 to 2000. These swans were released at several sites including: Sucker Lake, Presque Isle Flowage, Huron Bay and Prickett Dam in the western UP in sibling groups. In the fall of 1998, the swans migrated south and frequently found companions in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois. In Michigan, trumpeters are considered threatened species with a state inventory of under 300 swans in 2002. “We’ve received more public attention through our trumpeter swan release program than any other tribal natural resource program,” says Mike Donofrio, KBIC natural resources director. The KBIC receives most of the sighting information in the winter when the swans are congregated. Observations have come from as far away as Missouri and Arkansas.

The swans were released with green plastic neck collars, so they are very discernible. “We haven’t received word from all of the swans after they left the area, but have obtained news from over half of the original swans post-initial migration,” Donofrio said. The KBIC staff communicates with state, federal and non-governmental agencies through emails, and the general public also contacts them, says Donofrio. For example, in the winter of 2001 and 2002, they received several emails about tagged swans inhabiting Springfield Lake in Illinois. Most of the migratory swans are observed in Wisconsin, and Pat Manthey of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has been a great resource.

In Baraga County, the most visible swan this summer has been 83E. She was released at Mountain Lake, Marquette County, in June of 2002 and found her way to the “Head of the Bay” last fall. She reluctantly left the UP in January of 2003, only to be spotted sitting on Highway 70 near Tipter, Wis. She was transported to and rehabilitated at a wildlife sanctuary, Raptor Education Group, Antigo, Wis.

She was picked up and re-released on May 16. “We had intended on releasing her with a lone male, 36E, at Prickett Dam but he was found dead from predation causes just a few days prior by Tim Wilson of Baraga,” Donofrio says. She quickly paired up to the mouth of Kelsey Creek and remained there until early September when she found her way back to the Head of the Bay. We hope she’ll return with a mate in the spring and establish a new nest in Baraga County.

Unfortunately, some of the original swans have been lost over the years. To date, Donofrio is aware of six of the original 35 that have died. They have succumbed to lead poisoning, predation, and mortality from powerlines.

The successful pairings in 2001 were located near Miller Lake and Iris Creek in Gogebic County. Biologists believe that more nests will be established in the western UP in the coming years.

“The public is reminded that trumpeter swans are state protected species so feeding, harassing or tampering with nests and swans is prohibited,” says Joe Johnson of the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary. He also commented that the Seney National Wildlife Refuge has been an excellent swan producer for the last 10+ years.

There are three species of swans in North America, and three species can be found in the ceded territory. All three are large, all-white plumaged birds, and are very useful identification aids. The tundra swan weights 13-20 pounds and stands about 4 feet tall. The smaller tundra has a relatively smaller bill that may show a small amount of yellow near the eye. These characteristics can be difficult to distinguish from a distance, however, and various differences in vocalization, posture and behavior are very useful identification aids. The tundra swan weights 13-20 pounds and stands about 3 feet tall.

For example, it’s easy to remember that the trumpeter swan’s call is deep and trumpet like, while the tundra’s is much higher pitched, and the mute is pretty close (but not quite) mute. The Trumpeter Swan Society web page offers some great identification details.

It is also important to remember that the more common tundra swan does not nest in the ceded territory, so summer time observations in this area will be either trumpeters or mutes; larger flocks of birds seen during migration, however, are likely to be tundras.

Trumpeter swans were once fairly common throughout most of the northern United States and Canada. Market hunting and the millinery trade rapidly depleted nesting populations during the 19th century.

Trumpeters nested in Minnesota and Wisconsin until the 1880s. In Minnesota, the species occurred in the prairie and parkland areas of western, central, and northern portions of the state. In Wisconsin, trumpeters may have nested in all but the northeastern forested regions, most likely in large marshes or shallow lakes. Elsewhere in the Midwest, the trumpeters’ historic breeding range reached from western Nebraska to central Michigan. It extended as far north and east as James Bay in Canada.

Now which swan was it?

By Peter David, GLIFWC Wildlife Biologist

There are three species of swans in North America, and three species can be found in the ceded territory. Although all three are large, all-white plumaged birds, there are a number of physical and behavioral characteristics that can be used to distinguish between them.

The exotic mute swan is the most easily identified, distinguished by a bright orange bill and distinctive knob on the forehead. Discerning between the native trumpeters and tundras is a little more difficult, especially since our rare trumpeters may mix with the more common tundras as the latter migrate through the area.

Trumpeters are larger than tundra swans, have a straighter profile along the upper bill, and have a bill that is all black. Most trumpeters weigh 21-30 pounds, although males may exceed 35 pounds. Standing on the ground, an adult trumpeter swan stands about 3 feet tall.

The smaller tundra has a relatively smaller bill that may show a small amount of yellow near the eye. These characteristics can be difficult to distinguish from a distance, however, and various differences in vocalization, posture and behavior are very useful identification aids. The tundra swan weights 13-20 pounds and stands about 4 feet tall.

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(Includes information taken from the WDNR website.)
By Sue Erickson Staff Writer

Odanah, Wis.—2003 was a “bumper” year for some tribal hatcheries, while a couple experienced difficulties affecting production level. Problems are not unusual in the delicate business of hatching fish eggs and rear- ing them to fry and fingerlings.

Despite the ups and downs in fish numbers, tribal hatcheries stocked healthy numbers of walleye fry and a significant number of extended growth walleye fingerlings into ceded territory lakes this year as well as other species, such as coaster brook trout and muskel- lunge.

Bad River

The Bad River Hatchery hit a new record for walleye production and stock- ing this year. A total of 265,000 two- inch walleye fingerlings were stocked into the Bad River this summer and of the 15 million walleye fry produced, 14 million went into the Kakagon River and one million were stocked into the Bad River.

Last year, the hatchery produced eight million walleye fry and 40,000 walleye fingerlings, so numbers were definitely up.

St. Croix

The St. Croix Hatchery also hit record numbers with their walleye pro- duction in 2003. They produced 455,370 two-inch walleye fingerlings, which were stocked in off-reservation lakes used by the tribe during spring spear- ing.

Those lakes include Bear, Beaver Dam, and Sand Lakes in Barron County; Big McKenzie, Big Sand, Devils and North Sand Lakes in Burnett County; Big Round, Halfmoon and Pipe Lakes in Polk County, and Long Lake in Washburn County.

Lac Courte Oreilles

The Lac Courte Oreilles Hatchery put one million walleye fry into the Chippewa Flowage; 500,000 fry into Whitefish Lake; 200,000 fry into Big Lac Courte Oreilles Lake; 200,000 fry into Round Lake; and 100,000 fry into Sand Lake.

In addition, 168 eight to ten-inch muskellunge fingerlings and 350 four to six-inch walleye fingerlings were stocked into the Suppelle Flowage. Finally, 600 walleye fingerlings went into Spider Lake.

Lac du Flambeau

The Lac du Flambeau Tribal Hatchery stocked 6,000,000 walleye fry into 20 lakes or on adjacent to the reservation. In addition 139,248 wall- eye fingerlings went into ten of these lakes, including the Flambeau Flow- age, Little Trout, Fence, Big Crawling Stream, Upper Sugarbush, Mitchell Sugarbush, Pouspart, Gunlock, Poke- gama, and Sunfish Lakes.

The hatchery’s stocking figures were down somewhat this year. The very cold temperatures this spring in- terfered with efficient egg gathering.

Red Cliff

The Red Cliff Hatchery focused on coaster brook trout, stocking 2,003 eight to twelve-inch coasters into Lake Superior at the Red Cliff Marina site. An additional 177,500 coaster finger- lings went to other agencies. Various high schools received 4,000 coaster eggs and swim-ups for school research and 3,000 coaster eggs and swim-ups went to Purdue University for use in a genetic study. The hatchery has 4,000 remain- ing coasters yet to be stocked.

KBIC Hatchery completes another successful year

L’Anse, Mich.—The Keweenaw Bay Indian Commu- nity (KBIC) Fish Hatchery has completed another success- ful fish stocking program in 2003. This year, the hatchery was responsible, partially through agreements with the State of Michigan and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, for the plant- ing of 105,488 lake trout yearlings (6-9”), 86,446 brook trout (1.5 to 11”) and 64,282 walleye fingerlings (“2” this year).

These fish are stocked for management purposes in several western Upper Peninsula watersheds. This program could not be successful without cooperators, including the Ottawa National Forest staff and KBIC hatchery employees Evelyn Ravindran and John Hebert.

The lake trout were released at Keweenaw Bay and Huron Bay as part of an ongoing program started by the KBIC Hatchery in 1993 that has yielded 1,082,321 trout into these waters over the last 11 years.

In 1999, the hatchery initiated a program to restore coaster brook trout into two small watersheds on Keweenaw Bay, Little Silver and Kelsey creeks. The parents from these trout came from Isle Royale National Park and are currently held at the Iron River National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin. That program has resulted in 258,899 brook trout fry (1-2 inches) for these streams.

The KBIC Hatchery also stocked Jumbo River strain brook trout into several watersheds in 2003 including: Silver River, Slate River, Ravine River, Black Creek, and the Falls River. “We’ve received many compliments about the 7,700 extra brook trout stocked during this past summer,” says Gene Mensch, KBIC Fish and Wildlife Biologist. The Jumbo River strain program con- cluded in mid-September when 16,446 brook trout finger- lings were released by staff.

Finally, the hatchery cooperated with the State of Michigan in stocking 64,282 walleye into Vermillia, Bob, Parent, King, Pike, and Sandy Lakes to complement 31,426 planted in 2002. To date, the KBIC has been responsible for planting 1,082,321 lake trout, 475,952 brook trout and 95,708 walleye.

The hatchery is owned and operated by the KBIC. The facilities are located near Pequaming and were constructed in 1992.
A Russian birch bark basket with a seamless lining. The lining is made by pounding the log out from the bark, leaving just the unbroken bark. The basket is decorated through embossing. (Photo by Sue Erickson)

Norrgard also traveled further south in Sweden to Mora, where weaving birch is more popular, using strips of birch bark. Both in Sweden and Russia they sometimes cut the bark off the tree using a spiral cut that just peels off in a long strip that they roll into a ball of bark.

Cradleboards were constructed from birch as well as salt containers. They use strips of birch to weave baskets of all sizes, hats, back packs, purses and shoes, to mention a few items. In earlier times they wrapped stones in birch bark to make bird feeders and used bark for scrolls. Museums contain examples of these with writing in the old Nordic runes.

Norrgard says the region has been logged for so many centuries that few large trees remain. What they call a “quick basket” is sewn, using larger pieces similar to Ojibwe baskets, otherwise, they must use the strips taken from smaller birch trees.

During her travels Norrgard heard concerns from birch bark craftspeople about the decline of the birch tree due to poor logging practices and concerns about the impact of global warming on this invaluable species that holds links to the environment and culture, and they have their own land, which they call Samenattm, even though it is not recognized by the nation states.

The Saami use birch bark extensively; because they primarily use the roots of mountain birch trees, says Norrgard. The birch trees that far north are small, gnarled and twisted, so it is difficult to get a large piece of bark. They pull the roots out of peat bogs, a little here and little there, so they do not harm the tree. Then they peel off the outer coating. The bark can be anywhere from a half-inch thick to a hair thin.

The Saami split the thicker ones and use them for basket rims. The root is used to make mats, ropes and twine. They avoid using spruce roots because it’s hard on the hands and not as strong.

Tightly twined birch root baskets are used even for making cheese from reindeer milk. Norrgard says because the root does not flavor the cheese. It also makes a very decorative design in the cheese when removed from the basket mold.

Some of these cheese baskets have been passed down for generations. Larger birch twined baskets are used on canoe-shaped sleds as containers for gear.

The Saami also make use of the large burls on the birch trees. They make wooden bowls out of them, and they serve as the base for their hand drums. Today the Saami have a Sami odoudji, or a craft guild, to try to keep their traditions alive and teach traditional crafts to Saami people. In order to belong, people have to be able to prove their Saami origins.

Tribes buy NMC

(Continued from page 1) under the Wisconsin Mining Moratorium Law.

In his letter to the Corps, Reynolds states, “NMC has determined that the current proposal poses unacceptable risks to the fragile natural and cultural resources of the Upper Wolf Watershed as well as the irreplaceable trust resources of the Native American Tribes living in the project area.”

Both the Mole Lake Band and the Potawatomi have vehemently opposed the mining proposals at the site for years. Under those proposals, the mine would affect water and increase sedimentation in Swamp Creek, which flows into Rice Lake on the Mole Lake reservation just west of the proposed mine site. The Potawatomi reservation is also nearly to the northeast.

The tribes and GLIFWC have identified numerous problems with the proposed mine. They repeatedly pointed out that the mine and the tailings dump with its 16 million tons of waste would be a perpetual source of toxic waste and groundwater contamination. Transport of hazardous materials, such as cyanide, and the potential of spills also posed a concern about risks to surface and groundwater.

MOU implementation

(Continued from page 5) developing a monitoring protocol for birch bark characteristics. Again, the grant provided the opportunity for incorporate tribal elders and harvesters in identifying birch bark characteristics sought by tribal members. (see related story, page 4)

According to Danielsen, another potential cooperative project may allow USFS and GLIFWC staff to look at past and present distribution of aspen and paper birch and study the interaction of the two species.

Campground use

As of 2000 tribal members have been able to obtain tribal permits for the free use of campground sites in national forests under the MOU. The forests include the CNNF, Hiawatha National Forest, ONF and the Huron-Manistee National Forest. 2000 members indicated an increasing amount of interest in using national forest campsites, especially in the CNF where 57 permits were issued and in the ONF where 39 camping permits were issued this year.

Cooperative long-term studies

Several other cooperative long-term studies involve the pine marten research in the CNNF (see related story, page 2) and the understory logging study that GLIFWC initiated in 1995. In 2003 the USFS provided seasonal employees to assist with sampling at the test sites. This study seeks to identify the impact of logging practices on understory plant species, especially those of interest to tribal gatherers.

Impacts on surrounding resources, particularly wetlands, due to flooding and drying as the mine manipulates water levels has been another source of tribal concern as well as the dumping of tons of sediments into wetlands and streams.

In total, the tribes purchased nearly 6,000 acres of land, largely in Forest County with a small tract in Shawano and Oconto County. Significantly, the purchased acreage includes Spirit Hill, considered a Sacred Site by many Mole Lake Band members. Spirit Hill is the site of an historic battle between the Ojibwe and the Sioux over wild rice beds about 200 years ago, according to Ken Yan Zile, Mole Lake councilman.

The land and mining company were purchased from the Northwestern Wisconsin Resources Group, who had acquired NMC and the property from BHP Billiton, the world’s largest mining company, as recently as April 2003. The property will be divided between the two tribes, but the Mole Lake Band owns NMC.

However, the mining hiatus is likely to be brief for GLIFWC staff, as the Crandon controversy ends, increased mineral exploration in the Michigan’s Upper Peninsula has bears wrinkling in Indian Country.
Introduction

During 2000 and 2001, GLIFWC staff interviewed tribal elders regarding non-medicinal uses of plants. With approval from the elders, we are sharing this information as a regular feature in Mazina’igan in the form of a harvest calendar.

In this issue, the harvest calendar is devoted to those plants that may be gathered for non-medicinal uses during the upcoming zigwaan (spring) months of onaabani-giizis, hard crust on the snow moon (March); iskigamizige-giizis, maple sugar moon (April); and waabigwanii-giizis, flower moon (May).

Tree Sap
sugar, syrup, canday

inmaatin wiskikohaboo — sugar maple sap
zhishigii miwiwanzh waboo — black maple sap
adjagobimak waboo — box elder sap
wigwaas mitig waboo — paper (white) birch sap
winnizk waboo — yellow birch sap
wadoop mitig waboo — elder sap

Sap Processing Utensils
boughs used to stop sap boil over;
wood used for tree taps and sap stirring paddles

zhangig waaigwaniin — balsam fir boughs
zhizhik waaigwaniin — white cedar boughs
winnizk waaigwaniin — yellow birch sap
wadooshaaboojiibik ojiibikan — dandelion roots

Greens and Flowers
raw, sauteed, steamed, boiled, deep fried, soup

waagaagan — ferns (young shoots)
nessibag aniibishan — clover leaves
waabigoniin aniibiishan — cowslips leaves
nessibag aniibiishan — clover leaves
wadooshaaboojiibik aniibiishan — dandelion leaves
bagwaji zhigaagawinzhiig aniibiishan — wild leek leaves
waabigoniin aniibiishan — cowslips leaves
*watercress leaves
*pigweed leaves
*aoster leaves
anajimmin — wild peas

Fruits
raw, jams, jellies, pie fillings
ode-iminan — strawberries

Roots
roasted, sauteed, steamed, boiled

waabiziipin ojiibikan — arrowhead (moose ears) roots
oga’damun ojiibikan — yellow water lily roots
bagwaji zhigaagawinzhiig — wild leeks
bagwaji zhigaagawanzhiig — wild onions
aapikweshkway ojiibikan — cattail roots
anaakanashk ojiibikan — rush roots
wadooshaaboojiibikan ojiibiishan — dandelion roots
namepin ojiibikan — wild ginger roots

Tea

ode’iminan aniibiishan — strawberry leaves
zhangig waaigwaniin — balsam fir boughs
zhishigii miwiwanzh waboo — black maple sap
adjagobimak waboo — box elder sap
wigwaas mitig waboo — paper (white) birch sap
winnizk waboo — yellow birch sap
wadoop mitig waboo — elder sap

Insect Repellents

Giizhik aniibiishan — white cedar leaves
Miskwaabiimizh waaigwaniin — buffalo root

Disclaimers

While the list identifies those plants that can be harvested during the winter months, we strongly recommend that before you pick them, you meet with elders in your community to talk about proper ways of harvesting, times of harvesting and proper preparation of the plants before eating them. This is important because some plants need to be harvested in certain ways to ensure that they will continue to grow, while other plants need to be properly washed and prepared prior to eating or using them. In addition, those elders can also help you in different uses of these plants.

*We have been unable to find the names for these plants in Ojibwemowin.

Miigwech to those speakers in Mille Lacs, Minnesota and Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin for their help in providing us with the Ojibwe names for these plants.
Finding Namé! Can you find the naanan (five) namé (lake sturgeon) in the picture below?

©2003 Melissa Rasmussen
Biboong...


Gimikwendaan ina mewinzha nibi, gii-nibiikaa. Gii-piinad.

B. Noongom, gaawiin ganawenjigaadesinoo o’ow nibi.
C. Onzaam gimamoomin idash ginishwaanaajitoomin.
E. Gakina, gaawiin giminikwejisiin.
F. Awanjish apana gidaa-paamendaamin o’ow nibi.
G. Noongom, gaawiiin gii-piinad.

Translation below.

**Ojibwemowin (Ojibwe Language)**

**Preverbs**

They are sounds spoken before the action words (verbs) to add clarity. Hyphenated to the verb. Bi—in the direction of the speaker, this way. Mino—good, nice maji—bad gichi—great, big, very izhi—in a certain way, thusly daa—should, could, would, might, can endaso—so many, certain number wi—future tense, want to ga—future tense, definite gli—past tense, did

**Niizh—2**

Circle the 10 underlined Ojibwe words in the letter maze. (Translations below)

B. Noongom, gaawiin ganawenjigaadesinoo o’ow nibi.
C. Onzaam gimamoomin idash ginishwaanaajitoomin.
E. Gakina, gaawiin giminikwejisiin.
F. Awanjish apana gidaa-paamendaamin o’ow nibi.
G. Noongom, gaawiiin gii-piinad.

**Niiwin—4**

**Preverbs (Prenouns, too)**

Mino-bimaadiziwin.—*The Good Life.* Gichi-mookomaan.—*Big knife, One who carried a big knife (white person).* Aaniiin endaso-diba’iganek?—*How many units of measure? (What time is it?)* Maji-izhibewiiz.—*Behave badly.* Izhaa.—*He/she goes.* Bi-izhaa.—*He/she comes.* Ningiti-pi-izhaa.—*I did come here.* *Initial vowel change occurs after question words and other.

Goojitoon! Try it! Translation below.

1. Ni__-minikwen i’iw __-nibi.
2. ____ziibi gaawiin gaskadinjinoon biboong.
3. Aaniiin —aayaan noongom?
4. Wi-piindigeyan, gi__-naadinan iniw makizinan idash azhiganan.
5. Noongom __-giizhigad. __-giizhigad!

**Niiswi—3**

**IKIDOWIN ODAMINOWIN (word play)**

**Down:**
1. He/she answers
2. Here
3. Where?
5. My son
7. How/What way?

**Across:**
4. You remember it.
6. Always
8. He/she goes
9. Water

**Translations:**

**Niizh—2**

A. Long ago water, there was a lot of water. It was clean. B. Today, it is not taken care of this water. C. Too much we take it and we waste it. D. Sometimes when we draw water, it is dirty. We can not drink. E. All, everyone, human, you all, you all shall help. F. Diligently always we should take care of this water. G. Today it is snowing and it is a blizzard.

**Niiswi—3**

**Down:**
1. Nakwetam
2. Omaa
3. Aandi
5. Ningozis
7. Aaniiin

**Across:**
4. Gimikwendaan
6. Apame
8. Izhaa
9. Nibi

There are various Ojibwe dialects; check for correct usage in your area. Note that the English translation will lose its natural flow as in any world language translation. This may be reproduced for classroom use only. All other uses by author’s written permission. All inquiries can be made to MAZIN’IGAN, P.O. Box 9, Odanah, WI 54861.
Chippewa Flowage managers, property owners unite to preserve resources
Protection sought for tribal cultural areas

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen

New Post, Wis.—Tribal, federal and state representatives all agree—the Chippewa Flowage is better off wild. Natural resource officials, resort owners and a handful of Sawyer County residents reaffirmed support for protecting environmental and cultural resources on Wisconsin’s third largest lake during an August 15 meeting at Herman’s Landing resort.

Under a banquet pavilion staked on the edge of the Flowage, representatives from Lac Court Oreilles (LCO), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and U.S. Forest Service held their annual meeting under the award-winning Chippewa Flowage Joint Agency Management Plan. Rati- fied in 2000, the plan details management goals established by the three governments, which control approximately 90% of the Flowage.

While maintaining the natural character of the flowage and protecting key tribal resources tops the list of management objectives, meeting participants agreed that more vigilance was required to stop destructive land use practices.

Chippewa Flowage managers held their annual meeting at Herman’s Landing to discuss cultural and environmental protection policy for Wisconsin’s third largest lake. Pictured are resort pioneer Oscar Ireland, Department of Natural Resources Manager Neal Kephart, U.S. Forest Service Officer Barry Paulson, LCO Governing Board Member Mic Isham and Assistant Tammy DeNasha. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

The islands are getting trampled; people are cutting down trees and digging in what they think are graves for souvenirs,” said LCO Governing Board Member Mic Isham.

Following the construction of an earth-filled dam on the Chippewa River 80 years ago, floodwaters inundated small farms, wild rice stands and the LCO village of Paahquahwong, where generations of Ojibwe lived, died and were buried. Some graves within the Chippewa Flowage exist on high points of land-turned islands; others rest under 20 feet of water.

Ojibwe Spiritual Leader Jerry Smith related the sentiments of many Lac Court Oreilles people: “Even though it came from tragic means, it is still a beautiful place. What better way to honor our ancestors buried under the flowage than to keep it wild and natural.”

Smith, a tribal historic preservation officer, is working with more than a dozen local organizations to stop private land development on Big Timber and Moonshine Island, the southeast corner of the reservoir.

Rather than battle developers over zoning codes, the groups, including the Couderay Waters Regional Land Trust, are waging a fundraising campaign to purchase the island property outright. Acting as lead government agency in the effort, the DNR is preparing to facilitate the transfer of purchased land into the public domain. Land use covenants are planned to keep the islands open to the public, but prohibit development.

Housing a wealth of cultural artifacts from early Indian occupation to white settlement, the entire Chippewa Flowage is a candidate for additional protection beyond the tri-agency management plan.

Archaeologist Will Gilmore is assisting LCO in exploring preservation options that include placing the Flowage on the national register of historic places and possibly naming the immediate region as an historic district. In preparation for a possible historic designation, Gilmore and Jerry Smith are organizing an 120-mile map survey to document culturally sensitive sites. Gilmore estimated the survey project would take three to five years to complete.

The joint management plan received an American Indian tribal gov- ernance award from Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government in 2003. Twelve years in the making, Harvard cited the flowage plan as an outstanding example of tribal initiative and innovation.

The Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) pro- vided technical and policy expertise to LCO throughout the planning process with the cooperating agencies. In addition, GLIFWC has worked to increase public awareness about the human, cultural and social impacts the Flowage has had on the LCO community.

In 1998, GLIFWC Press published Where the River is Wide: Paahquahwong and the Chippewa Flowage, a book that details the development of the reservoir and tells the story of how the local Ojibwe people struggled against government and business interests bent on flooding their homeland.

Bad River completes major land, water acquisition
Regains 23,000 acres on-rez

By Charlie Otto Rasmussen

Odanah, Wis.—The ongoing restoration of tribal homelands on the Bad River reservation got a major boost September 30 with the addition of 23,688 forested acres, including 28 miles of stream frontage.

The Nature Conservancy brokered the deal, described as the largest private land conservation purchase in Wisconsin history.

“Staring at a dream of all Bad River people,” said Eugene Bigboy, tribal chairman. “I can recall my father and my uncles discussing how to reacquire these lands forty years ago at tribal council meetings.”

After negotiating the $4.5 million purchase of more than 21,000 acres from Plum Creek Timber Company, the Nature Conservancy transferred its acquisition rights to the Bad River Band. In a separate transaction, the tribe paid the Nature Conservancy for additional off-reservation woodlands formerly owned by another industrial forest company, Stora Enso North America. The tribe now possesses approximately 74% of its original 154,000-acre reservation.

Bigboy said the tribe has no plans to develop the land and it will incorporate the mix of woods, water and wetland into their Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP). Bad River also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Conservancy that, like the IRMP, outlines protection for water quality, riparian areas and forest resources.

The opportunity to protect the land was the real driving force in this acquisition,” said the Nature Conservancy’s Matt Dallman. Including the Stora Enso properties, the tribe added 28 miles of stream frontage, including portions of the Bad, White and Potato rivers. The Bad River system empties into a series of wetlands and sloughs that clean the water before it enters Chequamegon Bay.

The tribe paid nearly $5 million, or around $210 per acre, for the land originally reserved through the 1854 Treaty. A late Nineteenth Century federal pro- gram called allotment converted tribal holdings into private property at Bad River and other Indian reservations, creating a “checkerboard” pattern of land ownership.

Through gaming revenues and assistance from organizations like the Nature Conservancy, many tribes across the United States are slowly piecing back together former land base.

While the tribe has made great gains in restoring title to reservation lands, Bigboy stressed the importance of continued property reacquisitions. One key parcel lies in the center of the reservation adjacent to the Bad River Falls where lake sturgeon migrate annually from Lake Superior to spawn.

Xcel Energy owns the 438-acre property and Bigboy said he’s hopeful that a purchase agreement can be negotiated in the future.

“The islands are getting trampled; people are cutting down trees and digging in what they think are graves for souvenirs,” said LCO Governing Board Member Mic Isham. “This has been a dream of all Bad River people. I can recall my father and my uncles discussing how to reacquire these lands forty years ago at tribal council meetings.”

— Eugene Bigboy, Bad River Tribal Chairman

The Bad River Tribe recently purchased 23,688 forested acres, including 28 miles of stream frontage. (Photo by Dale Thomas)
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