

Community Assistantship Program

**Where the Food Grows on Water: Continuance of
Scientific Racism and Colonialism**

Where the Food Grows on Water: Continuance of Scientific Racism and Colonialism

Prepared in partnership with
White Earth Reservation Tribal Archives

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August, 2002

CAP Report 048

May 2006

CAP is a cross-college, cross-campus University of Minnesota initiative coordinated by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

Funds for this project were generously provided by CURA.

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Findings Summary:

The purpose of this project was to determine the impacts of historic anthropological and current agricultural research done at the University of Minnesota on the Anishinaabe. The University of Minnesota has been inextricably involved with the land thefts that occurred at White Earth near the turn of the nineteenth century and the collapse of the wild rice industry on all of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe reservations in the late twentieth century. The involvement these racist, colonialist projects demonstrate the ways in which prejudice has and continues to pervade the University. Western Science has been implicitly involved in both of these issues. The agenda of Western science is in no way neutral or universal but instead is grounded in a specific cultural tradition. The cases of land theft and wild rice showcase the inherent bias in Western science and allow an opportunity to evaluate the underlying agenda that Western science has and continues to support. Concerns of Anishinaabeg regarding the effects of the hybridization and genetic research on manoomin (wild rice) being conducted by researchers at the University of Minnesota have grown rapidly in the past several years. This work details those apprehensions and explores their basis. It also investigates the ways in which the research on manoomin is a continuation of colonialism as well as demonstrative of a larger pattern of scientific racism at the University of the University of Minnesota.

Where the Food Grows on Water: Continuance of Scientific Racism and Colonialism

Preface:

I would like to begin by thanking those who have provided guidance, support and inspiration for this project: Hanah Gurno, Winona LaDuke, Joe LaGarde, Naomi Scheman, and Paul Schultz.

Introduction:

Concerns of Anishinaabeg in Minnesota and the surrounding regions regarding the effects of the hybridization and genetic research on manoomin or wild rice being conducted by researchers at the University of Minnesota have grown rapidly in the past several years. This work details those apprehensions and explores their basis. It also investigates the ways in which the research on manoomin is a continuation of colonialism, as well as demonstrative of a larger pattern of scientific racism present at the University of Minnesota.

Historical Background/Traditions

When the Anishinaabeg were living somewhere near the Great Salt Water of the East seven prophets came to the people and instructed them if they did not move they would be destroyed; thus the great migration of the Anishinaabeg began. The journey proved to be long and taxing on the people. After seven major stopping places the people reached their destination—“*the place where the*

food grows on water.” Manoomin or wild rice is the food that grows on water and is a unique gift from the Creator.¹ *“Wild rice is consequently a very special gift, with medicinal as well as nutritional values—a belief reflected in the Ojibway use of wild rice as a food to promote recovery from sickness as well as for ceremonial feasts.”*² It would be difficult to over-emphasize the significance of manoomin for the Anishinaabeg. White Earth Anishinaabe and Tribal Historian Andrew Favorite has told of the value manoomin holds: *“Wild rice is part of our prophecy, our process of being human, our process of being Anishinaabe. It tells us, in those prophecies, that we’ll find the food growing out of the water when we reach our homeland. We are here because of the wild rice. We are living a prophecy fulfilled.”*³

Anishinaabeg comprehend manoomin as spiritual entity, which is used in ceremony as well as for food and trade. *“Any effort to over-harvest or commercialize wild rice has met with failure. Manoomin has always been generous to those who gather and use her in a respectful way.”*⁴ Commercial exploitation of manoomin by non-Indians is generally viewed by the Anishinaabe as a desecration. It is customarily considered acceptable for Anishinaabe and other Indigenous peoples to sell some extra manoomin after they have secured

¹ Benton-Banai, Edward The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway, (Indian Country Communications: Hayward, 1988), 94-102.

² Venum, Thomas, Jr. Wild Rice and the Ojibway People, (Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul, 1988), 62.

³ Favorite, Andrew quoted in Clancy, Frank “Wild Rice Case Study,” unpublished, 2002, 5.

⁴ Benton-Banai, 101-102.

an adequate supply for their families. Manoomin has been part of the traditional seasonal economy of the Anishinaabe since they were given the responsibility of caring for it by the Creator. Manoomin was often traded with the French and English and continues to be traded with Americans. Indeed, demonstrative of the value of manoomin it is notable the treaty signers took care to reserve lands with manoomin as well as the right to continue to harvest on those territories ceded. Despite declining prices, it continues to be a significant source of income for many. However, as I will discuss below, manoomin, one of the most important resources to the Anishinaabe is losing accessibility. Several factors including the desire of non-Indians to exploit and claim ownership to this resource is resulting in limited access and eradication of manoomin.⁵

Manoomin has a special significance in many traditional Anishinaabe stories, which are told both during ricing and the time when the ground is frozen. *“In these stories, wild rice is a crucial element in the realm of the supernaturals and in their interactions with animals and humans; these legends explain the origin of wild rice and recount its discovery by a culture hero.”*⁶ The following story tells how Wenabozhoo or Nanaboozhoo, the cultural hero of the Anishinaabe, was introduced to wild rice.

“. . . One evening Nanaboozhoo returned from hunting but he had no game. . . As he came towards his fire, there was duck sitting on the edge of his kettle of boiling water. After the duck flew away, Nanaboozhoo

⁵ Venum, 1
Smith, Charlene L. and Howard J. Vogel “The Wild Rice Mystique: Resource Management and American Indians’ Rights as a Problem of Law and Culture.” William and Mitchell Law Review Vol 10, 1984, 755.

⁶ Venum, 58.

looked into the kettle and found wild rice floating upon the water, but he did not know what it was. He ate his supper from the kettle, and it was the best soup he had ever tasted. Later, he followed in the direction the duck had taken, and came to a lake full of manoomin: wild rice. He saw all kinds of ducks and geese and mud hens, all the other water birds eating the grain. After that, when Nanaboozhoo did not kill a deer, he knew where to find food to eat. . .”⁷

Other stories tell how manoomin provides nutritional sustenance for the Anishinaabeg.

“Only the old ones speak of how the people suffered during the hungry-time. It occurred in the late winter or early spring. . .when snow covered the ground and the supply of stored food dwindled. This was a time of starving for many. It was a time when babies cried desperately for food. Mothers wept in despair, and fathers turned their backs to hide their tears. It was a time when grandmothers crooned for their grief, and grandfathers remembered all the years of hungry-times. But the old ones also say that Great Spirit saw how the people suffered and pitied them. So Great Spirit blessed the people with a gift of mahnomen (wild rice), the food that grows on water. Soon people found rice growing in many shallow lakes and rivers. Not only was rice provided, but with it came the knowledge to preserve this food through the entire circle of seasons. So the hungry time was eliminated. There are several versions of how this occurred but I like to think that the knowledge came through holy dreams that blessed the sleep of certain people.” (emphasis original)⁸

Although manoomin can be planted, the traditional belief of many Anishinaabe is that the spirits carry this task.⁹ It is commonly believed that if the Creator wants the manoomin to grow it will, and attempting to seed what has been given might result in the spirits’ destroying the plants as punishment. Other Indigenous nations have similar beliefs surrounding manoomin. A Menominee

⁷ LaDuke, Winona “The Wild Rice Moon” Whole Earth Winter (1999): 78.

⁸ Dunn Anne M. “The Gift of Mahnomen” in When Beaver was Very Great: Stories to Live By (Mount Horeb, Wisconsin: Midwest Traditions, Inc, 1995), 126.

⁹ Beliefs surrounding manoomin vary slightly among various communities and in some cases a limited amount of manoomin has been planted but nonetheless a stigma surrounding transforming manoomin into a Western style crop persists.

Chief, Nio'pet, told Dr. Albert Jenks that his people did not need to sow rice because it would follow them wherever they went. Indeed, he told of how Shawano Lake had never had manoomin until his people moved there and similarly when they were banned from Lake Winnebago the rice that had been plentiful there all but disappeared.¹⁰ Similarly, Bill Johnson related that the belief that had been passed down to him was that manoomin was created for the Anishinaabe people. The people had not planted manoomin because it was put in Nett Lake as well as other lakes and rivers when the land was formed for the Anishinaabe. He also stated that humans cannot plant manoomin. At times there is very little manoomin but when the spirits want it, it grows again.¹¹

There is growing concern that both research focused on domestication, hybridization, and genetics will adversely affect the natural stands of manoomin, and that these types of research are inappropriate, disrespectful, and demonstrative of continued colonization. The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe has made their position on genetic research regarding manoomin clear. In a letter to then University of Minnesota President Mark Yudoff, then Minnesota Chippewa Tribe President Norman Deschampe wrote: *"We object to anyone exploiting our treaty wild rice genus for pecuniary gain. The genetic variants of wild rice found naturally occurring on the waters in the territories ceded by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. . .are a unique treasure that has been carefully protected by the*

¹⁰ Venum, 65, 68-69
Smith and Vogel, 751.

¹¹ Venum, 65-66.

people of our tribe for centuries. Rights to the rice has been the subject of treaty, and is a resource that enjoys the federal trust protection. Our members harvest the rice not only for personal sustenance and religious ceremonies, but for commercial purposes as well." The letter continued: "*We are of the opinion that the wild rice rights assured by treaty accrue not only to individual grains of rice, but the essence of the resource.*" The right to the manoomin that grows on the waters of the Anishinaabe was specifically and carefully reserved in treaties, although most Anishinaabe consider it an inherent right.¹² In response to this letter President Yudof replied that researchers are working to "improve" various qualities of manoomin and those researchers assured him that "*there is virtually no risk to wild rice stock native to the reservations.*"¹³ Yudof also directed Dr. Larson, Associate Dean of Research at the College of Agriculture, Food and the Environmental Sciences (COAFES), to meet with Deschampe to "*reach a satisfactory resolution of the concerns you (Deschampe) raise.*"¹⁴ Only negligible meetings with no significant outcomes have taken place. Requests for information regarding the funding, involved faculty and staff, and patents held or pending addressed to Dr. Beverly Durgen, Associate Dean for Research and Outreach in COAFES, were acknowledged only after a rally to protect manoomin was held at the University of Minnesota in May of 2002.¹⁵ On June 11, Dean

¹² Deschampe, Norman W., letter to Mark Yudof, September 8, 1998.

¹³ Yudof, Mark, letter to Norman W. Deschampe, no date.

¹⁴ Yudof, Mark, letter to Norman W. Deschampe, no date.

¹⁵ White, Gerald, Leech Lake Commissioner, letter to Dr. Beverly Durgen, Associate Dean for Research, January, 30, 2002.

Charles Muscoplat, currently Dean of COAFES, send a letter to Joe LaGarde stating that the information requested would be “supplied by the University’s Records and Information Management Department per University of Minnesota procedures.”¹⁶ Although the information might be approaching, the wait continues.

University of Minnesota Research on Manoomin:

The University of Minnesota has put a great deal of time and resources toward the domestication of manoomin. There have been many projects designed to discover the best conditions and means to turn manoomin into a cultivated, Western style crop. Some of the projects have been: Nitrogen and Mineralization and Availability in Flooded Peats, Seed Tensile Strength and Variability in Wild Rice, and Cultivated Wild Rice Paddies and Their Relationship to Waterfowl in Northwestern Minnesota.¹⁷ Numerous other projects have been focused on disease resistance, insects, and paddy soil fertility.¹⁸ “Studies at the University of Minnesota have focused almost exclusively on the plant itself. They have provided a scientific rational for state regulation of the wild rice season and the development of paddy grown rice.”¹⁹

LaDuke, Winona, member of the White Earth Band of Chippewa, letter to Dr. Beverly Durgen, Associate Dean for Research, May 2002.

¹⁶ Muscoplat, Charles letter to Joe LaGarde, June 11, 2202.

¹⁷ Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Minnesota Wild Rice Research-1995 (St. Paul: University of Minnesota, 1995), x.

¹⁸ Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Progress Report of 1974 Wild Rice Research (St. Paul: University of Minnesota, 1975), x.

¹⁹ Smith and Vogel, 745.

A Study of Wild Rice in Minnesota provided a chronology of the efforts of the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota State Department of Conservation and other public agencies involved in manoomin research since 1939 to domesticate and create hybrid varieties of manoomin. The following chronology illustrates that while there was difficulty in getting initial support to explore the possibility of domesticating manoomin eventually financial support was secured.

“1939—The Wild Rice Law was established by the Minnesota Legislature with the purpose of providing organization and control of the wild rice harvest. The commissioner of Conservation was named responsible for developing and carrying out this program.

1940-1941—A survey of wild rice stands was made as a part of carrying out the responsibilities of the Wild Rice Law. During this period of time, 150 stands of wild rice were opened to harvest by the public.

1942—B. L. Johnson of the Department of Botany at the University of Minnesota prepared a report which envisioned a breeding program that would take 17 years to bring improvement in wild rice.

1944—Dr. John B. Moyle, Division of Game and Fish, Minnesota Department of Conservation, published in the Journal of Wildlife Management an article entitled, “Wild Rice in Minnesota”. This article brought fourth all of the biological information then known about the specie.

1951—The Minnesota Committee on Wild Rice was established, with Dr. Donald Lawrence of the Department of Botany at the University of Minnesota, as Chairman. The purpose was to set up a state wide organization to study wild rice. Nothing ever developed from this committee.

1954—Alfred Rogosin prepared a mimeographed report entitled “An Ecological History of Wild Rice.” This summarized biological information on wild rice.

1955—A technical committee on wild rice was organized and several meetings held. A research program was formulated but no source of funds were granted.

1956—A University application for research grant from Resources for the Future, Washington, D.C., received encouragement but no funds were granted.

1959—Assistance of Senator Humphrey was obtained to request funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for new crop development. There is some indication that this request failed because of opposition from those interested in domestic rice.

1960—Commissioner Selke proposed a wild rice research program to be funded by a special appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature. Funds were not available.

1963—Funds in the amount of \$16,000 were made available to the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The purpose was to make a survey of the current and potential wild rice production, processing and marketing on the White Earth, Nett Lake, and Red Lake Indian Reservations in Minnesota, and the Mole Lake and Bad River Indian Reservations in Wisconsin. Reports of these surveys are available in mimeograph form at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The studies were undertaken by Mr. Erwin Brooks, then a Graduate Research Assistant in the Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics, University of Minnesota.

1964—Prior to the 1965 Legislative Session, a request was made to the Agricultural Experiment Station to provide information to Representative Everett Battles of Warroad. He proposed to enter this as request before the Legislature so that funds could be appropriated for wild rice research at the University of Minnesota. A proposal was prepared after consultation with several department heads having interest in such a proposition. The proposal became the base of two bills, H.F. 424 and companion bill, S.F. 537. The bills proposed an appropriation of \$100,000 for the biennium ending June 30, 1967. Many discussions were held with individual legislators but no funding was made available. However, there was an addition to the General Agricultural Research Appropriation Law indicating that the University should undertake research on wild rice. At that time a decision was made to study germination problems with this specie.

1965—The Manomin Development Company was organized for the purpose of developing varieties of improved wild rice. They requested support from the Economic Development Administration and were granted \$185,000 for a two-year period in 1966.

1966—The Iron Range Resources Commission requested the University of Minnesota to make a proposal which they then submitted through the Economic Development Administration. No commitment was ever made. The decision to fund the Manomin Development Company and the receipt of the University of Minnesota proposal came at about the same time.

1967—The University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station made a major request to the 1967 Legislature after thorough internal discussion. The request was for \$104,000 for the first year of the biennium, and \$111,000 for the second year. The proposal made to the Legislature indicated that support of the program in a sense, would commit the Legislature to a total approximating \$200,000,000 over a ten year period. It was assumed that the first efforts would deal with breeding, especially the problem of shattering and physiology studies. Also attention would be placed on insect and disease resistance. A considerable amount of discussion was held with many groups in the Legislature with respect to the merits of this program as against other major requests. In addition,

there was registered resistance on the part of the Wild Rice Harvesters Association and certain elements in the Department of Welfare. There seemed to be some conflict as to the real purpose behind the proposal that could have meaningful impact on the economic growth of Minnesota, and especially that area where wild rice is well adapted.

1967—The Minnesota Resources Commission held a hearing in Grand Rapids, August 11, 1967. Considerable testimony was heard. The general consensus indicated little encouragement for the development of paddy rice enterprises.

1967—During 1967 a proposal was submitted to the Upper Great Lakes Commission for possible funding. Dean Sherwood O. Berg has made a request for USDA support to Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman.”²⁰

After years of research and experiments the University of Minnesota has largely achieved its goal of domesticating manoomin. They claim to have “created” several strains of manoomin. These are the strains by year and name given to the variety: 1968 Johnson, 1970 M1, 1972 M2, 1974 M3, 1978 Netum, 1983 Voyager, 1985 Meter, 1992 Franklin, 2000 Petrowske Purple. These varieties are selected for uniformity and non-shattering capacity, which aid in mechanical harvesting techniques, and male sterility, which prevents the crop from reseeding itself and thus simultaneously creates both higher yields and seed dependence.²¹ Questions as to uniqueness of these varieties have risen because the characteristics do exist in natural stands. Tribal biologists have begun the process of determining how prevalent these characteristics are in natural stands.²²

²⁰ Edman, 19-21, pages 21-24 detail other proposals that were not funded.

²¹ White Earth Land Recovery Project “Threats to Manoomin” brochure, spring 2002.

²² White Earth Land Recovery Project, Wild Rice Committee, Biology division meeting June 24, 2002, Fond du Lac Nation.

By 1980, Minnesota's cultivated manoomin crop reached 2.3 million processed pounds. Some Minnesota processors began a two thousand-acre development in California to escape the irregular returns from natural manoomin. California rice farmers quickly responded to the idea of cultivated manoomin, which generally brought twice the profit of the rice they had previously grown. With a few modifications to their already established paddies they were in business. California quickly began to out-produce Minnesota; by 1986 they raised twice as much manoomin as Minnesota. Thus, it seems that so far not only has California has been the major beneficiary in the research done on at the University of Minnesota on manoomin funded by Minnesota tax dollars but thousands of Minnesota Anishinaabeg have experienced economic losses as a result.²³

This cultivated manoomin has flooded the market and stabilized the usually variable supply of natural manoomin. In 1986, 10 to 11 million pounds of cultivated manoomin were produced. This abundance of manoomin caused the price of natural manoomin to drop dramatically, hurting many Anishinaabe families who depended on the seasonal income manoomin provided them.²⁴ Uncle Ben's, Green Giant, and General Foods have developed products that contain a mix of cultivated manoomin and other kinds of rice. These mixed products contain only 12 to 18 percent cultivated manoomin.²⁵

²³ Venum, 244.

²⁴ Venum, 241, 244-251.

²⁵ Venum, 240-241.

There is a prominent concern among the Anishinaabe that cultivated varieties of manoomin, developed at the University, will infect natural manoomin stands and damage them. Indeed, because of the proximity of the manoomin paddies, some suspect that biopollution has already occurred. University researchers argue that there is minimal risk for cultivated varieties of manoomin to invade natural stands for several reasons. They believe that because of the fragile nature of the wild rice pollen it does not have the ability to travel any “real distance.” In addition, cultivated manoomin is bred for paddy conditions and would consequently have a more difficult time surviving in natural environments. Yet, they admit that it is possible that the cultivated manoomin could contaminate natural stands.²⁶ The effects of genetic research and biopollution with corn have been quick and devastating. “It took only five years for the point of origin of the corn genome to be contaminated by genetic alteration.”²⁷ There is concern that manoomin could face a similar fate.

Implicit in making manoomin into a cultivated crop has been the creation of strains of manoomin suited for this venture. Toward this end, mapping the genome of manoomin became a goal for the researchers at the University of Minnesota. Some of the projects that have worked on this goal are: Wild Rice Breeding and Germplasm Improvement, and the Wild Rice Molecular Genetic Marker Progress Report. The genetic map has been completed and the impacts

²⁶ Clancy, 20.

²⁷ White Earth Land Recovery Project, Wild Rice Committee, Fond Du Lac, January, 24, 2002.

have already been felt. The result has been the patenting of manoomin, something unthinkable to many Anishinaabeg.²⁸

University researchers emphatically state that they are not introducing new genes but are simply breeding plants as they have done with other crops for many years. They desire to make manoomin more efficient, reliable, and disease resistant, which they argue is for the public good.²⁹ Indeed, because they are helping “advance” western style agriculture, they may argue that they are serving the public good and therefore fulfilling the mission of a land-grant institution.³⁰ The major problem with this rationale is, that if this research is for the “public good,” then clearly, the researchers do not consider Anishinaabe a part of the public, as they have been significant losers in this research agenda. This is one instance in which institutional racism plays a primary role. The ways in which the research agenda itself excludes alternate ways of understanding and systems of knowledge is implicitly racist. The only form of research considered legitimate is that which is western. The research done at the University of Minnesota has benefited non-Indian farmers and caused the price of natural manoomin, harvested primarily by Indians, to drop dramatically. In addition, many Anishinaabeg feel that manoomin cannot be “improved” because it is perfect in its natural state and that trying to do so involves arrogance, condescension, and disrespect.

²⁸ Minnesota Wild Rice Research - 1995, University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, miscellaneous publication 89-1996.
United States Patent, 5,955,648.

²⁹ Clancy, 16-17.

There is an inherent bias in Western science that assumes authoritative neutrality. The very manner in which Western scientists interact with their research subjects, be it with respect, marvel, cruelty, or degradation, depending on the subject (plant, animal, or human) is indicative of Western culture. The treatment culturally constructs the subject as an object of knowledge. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain Western science is an apolitical, unbiased, system of knowledge.³¹ Critics have charged that racist and Euro-centric concerns/agendas have, indeed, shaped both the questions that have been asked by Western science and the answers that have been provided.³² “Western sciences clearly have been and continue to be complicit with racist, colonial, and imperial projects.”³³ There are numerous examples of this phenomenon, but of special relevance here are the ways in which western science was used not only as means but as justification for the theft of land from the Anishinaabeg. Through the early twentieth century (and with some continuance today) Western science claimed that there were different levels of “civilization,” indeed, different levels that racial groups could achieve. Not surprisingly, Europeans were rated highest on these levels and American Indians were placed significantly lower. *“The people of the United States now had*

³⁰ Clancy, 18-19.

³¹ Stepan, Nancy Leys and Sander L. Gilman, “Appropriating the Idioms of Science: The Rejection of Scientific Racism” in Harding, Sandra ed. The “Racial” Economy of Science: Toward a Democratic Future, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 172.

³² Harding, Sandra ed. Introduction to The “Racial” Economy of Science: Toward a Democratic Future, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 17.

³³ Ibid, 3.

scientific reasons to account for Indian failures and to explain and justify American expansion."³⁴

Regardless of the intentions of those doing genetic research on manoomin, they cannot control all of the consequences. A cultivated manoomin company in California has already utilized research and breeding done at the University of Minnesota to take out a patent on a variety of manoomin.³⁵ Researchers who have worked to make manoomin a cultivated crop did not foresee the industry's moving to California, but that does not change the consequences. The demand for detachment and objectivity in Western science creates a separation of thinking and feelings in researchers. This in turn promotes a moral detachment, which is reinforced by the very structure and hierarchy of Western science. This creates an atmosphere in which scientists can work on all kinds of questionable, unscrupulous projects with indifference to the consequences that might result.³⁶ This approach is vastly different from the Anishinaabe approach, which involves a strong connection between thinking and feeling. Larry Jourdain, Anishinaabe living in Koochichiing, Ontario, advises: "*The longest journey you will ever make is from your head to your heart. Start making*

³⁴ Horsman, 152-160, 168.

³⁵ White Earth Land Recovery Project "Threats to Manoomin" brochure, spring 2002.
NorCal Wild Rice, United States patent: 5,955,648.

³⁶ Levins, Richard and Richard Lewontin, "Applied Biology in the Third World: The Struggle for Revolutionary Science in Harding, Sandra Ed. The "Racial" Economy of Science: Toward a Democratic Future, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 315.

it. When you make that connection, you will know what Anishinaabeg are talking about.”³⁷

Research and the Relationship between Anishinaabeg and the University of Minnesota:

The relationship between Indigenous people and various researchers has been quite tenuous. Vast amounts of research have been carried out on or about Indigenous people without regard for the outcome. Indeed, the work of many anthropologists has been criticized as useless and, in fact, harmful. The knowledge “gathered” by researchers is taken from Indigenous communities and published with the academic world but it is not always shared with the community the work came from. The researcher, as opposed to the community, then becomes the “expert” and the authority, which denies the knowledge and wisdom located within communities.³⁸

“More important for our purposes, while not forgetting the horrors of some scientific behavior, is the impact of scientific doctrine on the status of Indians in American society. Regardless of what Indians have said concerning their origins, their migrations, their experiences with birds, animals, lands, waters, mountains, and other peoples, the scientists have maintained a stranglehold on the definitions of what respectable and

³⁷ Tornes, Beth “Traditional diet and healing through shared visions: Elders conference held in Lac du Flambeau” Ojibwe Akiing 9-30-1997 V. 1; N. 9 p. 7.

³⁸ Deloria, Vine Jr. Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 78-100.

reliable human experiences are. The Indian explanation is always cast aside as a superstition, precluding Indians from having acceptable status as human beings, and reducing them in the eyes of educated people to a prehuman level of ignorance.”³⁹

There are growing concerns about the historic and current role and function of scholars/scientists in the creation and implementation of federal Indian policy and the relationship of American Indians to academia. Not coincidentally, the vast amounts of research have favored the United States and in turn caused spiritual, emotional, and economic damage to Indian people.

“Science has often been used as a justification to propose, project, and enact racist social policies.”⁴⁰

Exemplifying how western science can be used to promote racist agendas are the cases of land theft at the White Earth Reservation. Western science had a direct effect on the colonization and theft of hundreds of thousands of acres of land held by the Anishinaabeg. Anthropologists became embroiled in cases of land fraud on the White Earth Reservation. Soon after reservation lands were divided up into individual portions it became necessary to determine who was a “full-blood” and who was a “mixed-blood” because blood quantum and competency were directly connected in legislation passed by the United

³⁹ Deloria, Vine Jr. Red Earth White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997), 7.

⁴⁰ Dennis, Rutledge m. “Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race” in the Journal of Negro Education vol. 64, no. 3, 1995, 243.

States.”⁴¹ Full-bloods and minors were deemed legally incompetent and thus it was not permissible for them to sell their allotments; adult mixed-bloods, on the other hand, were competent and had the ability to sell their land. University of Minnesota Board of Regents member and United States Congressman Knute Nelson sought to advance the agricultural economic interests of Euro-Americans and in 1889 introduced “An Act for the Relief and Civilization of the Chippewa Indians of Minnesota.”⁴² The passage of the Nelson Act resulted in an astonishing amount of fraud and corruption culminating in losses in the millions for the Anishinaabeg.⁴³

Conflicting understandings of who was a “full-blood” and who was a “mixed-blood” caused confusion and ultimately resulted in the disregard for Anishinaabeg definitions of themselves. Dr. Albert E. Jenks, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, and Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, curator of the Division of Physical Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution, came to White Earth to physically examine the Anishinaabeg and determine their blood quantum; despite the fact that the Anishinaabeg of White Earth did not consider percentages of White blood and Anishinaabe blood a determining factor in who was deemed a full-blood and who was considered a mixed-blood. Rather, for the Anishinaabeg the distinction was cultural and reflective of life ways. If a person

⁴¹ Beaulieu, David “Curly Hair and Big Feet: Physical Anthropology and Implementation of Land Allotment on the White Earth Chippewa Reservation” American Indian Quarterly, Fall 1984, 282.

⁴² Beaulieu, 285

⁴³ Beaulieu, 285-286.

lived a traditional Anishinaabe lifestyle then he/she was Anishinaabe, if a person adopted a Euro-American lifestyle then he/she was classified as a mixed-blood.⁴⁴

While on a leave of absence from the University of Minnesota, Jenks worked for an attorney for the lumber companies and adamantly claimed he could indisputably determine full-bloods from mixed-bloods through various physical examinations, including a cross-section hair analysis. Dr. Jenks worked with Dr. Hal Downey from the Department of Animal Biology in the College of Sciences, Literature, and Arts at the University of Minnesota on the hair tests. In addition to hair analysis Dr. Jenks and Dr. Hrdlicka performed several other physical tests to determine blood.⁴⁵ Blood quantum became the critical determiner in most of the cases, while other significant evidence was ignored. Judge Page Morris went so far as to dismiss cases even before they began based on his personal impression and assessment of the plaintiff's physical characteristics as they stood before him.⁴⁶

"It is a rare moment in the historiography of the relationship of anthropology and the other social science to American Indians to find an

⁴⁴ Beaulieu, 282,288.

Weil, Richard H. "Destroying a Homeland: White Earth, Minnesota" American Indian Culture and Research Journal 13:2 (1989) 71-73.

Meyers, Melissa The White Earth Tragedy: Ethnicity and Dispossession at a Minnesota Anishinaabe Reservation, 1889-1920 (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 1994), 118-128.

⁴⁵ Beaulieu, 282, 293-298.

⁴⁶ Beaulieu, 286-296.
Youngbear-Tibbetts, 106-108.

example where the colonial nature and political purposes and the uses of academic enterprise seems so obvious and direct.”⁴⁷

This cases raises many questions as to the ways in which “scientific” knowledge is created, and used for social purposes. Similarly the case involving research on wild rice, incidentally also directly connected to the University of Minnesota, is another example of the ways in which Anishinaabe ways of knowing were denied efficacy and relegated to the categories of the primitive and non-scientific. In the land fraud cases University of Minnesota experts’ understandings of full-blood and mixed-blood were considered scientific fact and the ways in which the Anishinaabeg classified themselves was unscientific, negligible, and irrelevant. Currently, the University of Minnesota experts are again asserting their dominance over Anishinaabe ways of knowing. Researchers have been “creating” hybrid strains of manoomin (wild rice) as well as mapping its genome. Anishinaabeg insist manoomin is a living spiritual entity and that humans do not have the authority to change this gift from the Creator.

The Western view of plants and nature as available for the manipulation and domination by humans is not a neutral idea but an idea that is firmly grounded in Western culture. In fact, it is reflective of Christianity. The Anishinaabe view of plants and nature is also culturally grounded. It is believed that humans are dependent on plants, animals, and nature and that we can learn from them. Plants are living beings with spirits not unlike humans and animals. “In essence each plant being of whatever species was a composite being,

⁴⁷ Beaulieu, 282.

possessing an incorporeal substance, its own unique soul-spirit. It was the vitalizing substance that gave to its physical form growth, and self-healing.”⁴⁸ The clear difference in these ways of knowing is likely to cause conflict unless both groups afford each other both open communication and, most importantly, respect. Yet, Western science has not been willing to allow room for any valid understandings accept its own, causing numerous problems.

The very essence of research as Western peoples conduct it is deserving of careful evaluation. Linda Smith challenges people to consider the “complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices”⁴⁹ Indeed, the current research being conducted on manoomin is an example of a colonial practice. The patents on manoomin are a form of colonization. The ownership of such a sacred living being is not considered possible by many Anishinaabe people, but dominant society does not recognize those concerns or ways of knowing and continues to pursue ownership of something that has never been given to them.⁵⁰

The research on manoomin done at the University of Minnesota has not benefited Anishinaabe society in any way. In fact, it has caused the prices for manoomin to collapse, resulting in lost income for Anishinaabe ricers.⁵¹ This

⁴⁸ Johnston, Basil Ojibwe Heritage (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 1990) 33-34.

⁴⁹ Smith, Linda Tuhiwai Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples (Zed Books Ltd.: New York, 1999), 2.

⁵⁰ White Earth Land Recovery Project, Wild Rice Committee, Fond Du Lac, January, 24, 2002.

⁵¹ Vennum, 251-254.

reflects the wider problem of research being used to serve the interests of the colonizing society in western academia. “*Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized.*”⁵² Regulation occurs through the formal rules of scholarly disciplines and those institutions that support them, both state and private. Imperialism and colonialism are realized through the various representation of the other in scholarly and popular works.⁵³

The research genetic and hybrid research currently being conducted at the University of Minnesota demonstrates clear refutation of alternative ways of knowing. Smith has described this practice as “research through imperial eyes.” This approach assumes Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas that are rational and hold value. It is an approach that “*conveys an innate sense of superiority and an overabundance of desire to bring progress to the lives of Indigenous peoples—spiritually, intellectually, socially, and economically.*”⁵⁴ In this case the Western view of manoomin as a plant that is available for the control, manipulation, and domination by humans does not allow room for the idea that manoomin is a perfect gift from the Creator, and the knowledge that it is itself a living spiritual entity deserving of respect and honor. This form of research performed at the University of Minnesota assumes an

⁵² Smith, 7-8.

⁵³ Smith, 7-8, 22.

⁵⁴ Smith, 56.

ownership over everything.⁵⁵ In this case, Western researchers assume they have the right to research manoomin. Recently, at a meeting focused on the potential implications for the Anishinaabe communities and what strategies should be undertaken regarding this problem, an Anishinaabe audience member asked: “Did they (University researchers) ask the Creator, did they ask Wenaboozhoo if they could do this research?”⁵⁶

The rationale the researchers have provided for their work on the domestication and hybridization of manoomin sounds hauntingly familiar to many Anishinaabeg. After all, it was not long ago that the justification for the theft of millions/thousands of acres of land was because Euro-American immigrants could “improve” the land, that they could certainly make better use of it than the Anishinaabeg. They repeatedly stated that the Anishinaabeg were not utilizing the land properly. In their eyes the Anishinaabe were wasting the land because they were not stripping it of natural resources and using it for western-style agriculture. This dismissal of the Anishinaabe ways of understanding land and resource management as primitive is remarkably similar to the discounting of Anishinaabe ways of understanding manoomin. Western science promises to “improve” manoomin: will this be the same “improvement” that has devastated the lands of the Anishinaabe? Also central to the land theft was scientific racism. Western science had determined that American Indians were racially inferior to Europeans, but the question remained whether that state was permanent or

⁵⁵ Smith, 56.

⁵⁶ White Earth Land Recovery Project, Wild Rice Committee meeting, Fond Du Lac, January 24, 2002.

capable of alteration. This controversy about the nature of the presumed racial inferiority of American Indians was of “*key importance in the controversy over American expansion.*”⁵⁷

Western science presents itself as neutral, universal, and not culturally connected, when it is in fact, firmly grounded in a very specific set of cultural ways of knowing.⁵⁸ Western science has a bias toward industrial and commercial purposes. It sees natural diversity as chaos in need of regulation and control and human-made things as enhanced and orderly.⁵⁹ One of the University of Minnesota researchers’ goals is to create a uniform western style crop, which they see as “improvement.” What they fail to understand is that “improvement” is a contextual, not a neutral term.⁶⁰ “Improvement” means one thing to paddy manoomin producers and entirely another for Anishinaabe (and other Indigenous people) who hand harvest natural manoomin. For Anishinaabe the value of manoomin is in its biodiversity; this diversity has allowed the Anishinaabe to be able to depend on it regardless of disease and weather, because even if one variety is attacked by disease or does not respond favorably to the environmental

⁵⁷ Horsman, Reginald “Scientific Racism and the American Indian of the Mid-Nineteenth Century” American Quarterly, vol. 27, issue 2 (May, 1975), 153-155.

⁵⁸ Semali and Kincheloe, What is Indigenous Knowledge and Why Should We Study It?, 21-22.

⁵⁹ Shiva Vandana, Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology (Zen Books Ltd.: New York, 1993), 23-24.

⁶⁰ Monocultures of the Mind, 71.

conditions the other varieties will survive and a supply of manoomin is assured.⁶¹ “*The extinction of people’s livelihoods and sustenance is closely connected with erosion of biodiversity.*”⁶² Cultural diversity and biological diversity are inherently connected. The Western desire to eradicate biological diversity in favor of monocrops is explicitly connected to the ways in which the West has been invested in assimilating Indigenous peoples and creating a monoculture.⁶³

The University of Minnesota is a large institution with innumerable programs and projects. It is difficult to summarize the overarching relationship with American Indian communities. Concerns about research and other projects involving American Indians have long been cause for apprehension and concern to American Indian people. The impacts of various research initiatives at the University have been vast, and the continued and potential impacts are impossible to predict. In a letter to Mark Yudof the American Indian Advisory Board recommend that “the University provides information to all departments and the other campus’s that when issues/projects involving American Indians are raised that they can use the American Indian Advisory Boards at each campus to review or gather information providing the University and it’s researchers with a more complete picture before commitments are made.”⁶⁴ It remains to be seen if action will be taken in this direction.

⁶¹ White Earth Land Recovery Project, Wild Rice Committee Meeting, Fond Du Lac, January 24, 2002

⁶² Monocultures of the Mind, 146.

⁶³ Monocultures of the Mind, 65.

⁶⁴ Yvonne Novack, Co-Chair of the American Indian Advisory Board, letter to University of Minnesota President Mark Yudof, 11 February 2002.

Ethical Responsibility of the University of Minnesota:

President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act into law on July 2, 1862. While Universities were once focused on gains of individuals, between 1865 and 1890 they took on, among other new goals, public service. Land-grant institutions took the lead in developing public service initiatives, thus adding a new mission to higher education. Controversial but included in this goal was allowing the public to give direction to universities. The idea was that it was the public that had created these institutions and should therefore shape their agendas. Related to this was the idea that there should be a wide dissemination of knowledge from land-grant institutions and thus research and knowledge created at the University would be shared to allow everyone to benefit.⁶⁵

The specific goals and responsibilities of the land grant institutions have been diverse and, at times, oppositional. Extension service became an integral part of fulfilling the public service element of land-grant institutions. Extension work was ideally expected to help universities develop partnerships with the public. In the early twentieth century, the University of Minnesota saw extension as a way to circulate information of their activities beyond the current students. Agriculture and youth development became the focus of extension work. The goal was for farmers to influence the agenda of researchers and both groups would benefit from each other's insights. The focus became to "help people help

⁶⁵ Peters, Scott J. Cooperative Extension and the Democratic Promise of the Land-Grant Idea. (University of Minnesota: Minnesota Extension Service and Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 1996), 14-18.

themselves.” Individual accomplishments rather than public gain became the reality of extension work. *“Their focus was less on developing public life than on using public life as a tool to improve the private circumstances of farmers.”*⁶⁶

*“. . . the accelerating development of technical expertise, the need to increase agricultural production during the Depression and World Wars, and pressures to take on service functions tended to pull extension away from its educational and civic missions.”*⁶⁷

Ethical standards are implicit to the land-grant mission because they are designed to ensure responsible and conscientious research. There are indications that the University of Minnesota has high ethical standards. The preamble of the Code of Conduct approved by the Board of Regents reads:

*“The University of Minnesota is committed to the highest standards of professional conduct, therefore all members of the University community are expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards of professional conduct and integrity. The values we hold among ourselves to be essential to responsible professional behavior include: honest, trustworthiness, respect and fairness in dealing with other people, a sense of responsibility toward others and loyalty toward the ethical principles espoused by the institution. It is important that these values and the tradition of ethical behavior be consistently demonstrated and carefully maintained.”*⁶⁸

Christine Maziar, former Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, supported responsible research saying *“We’re here to advance the University of Minnesota and make sure we have an institution that we who are working here can be proud of, that our students who are graduating can be proud of, and most importantly that the citizens of the state of Minnesota can be proud*

⁶⁶ Peters, 27-31.

⁶⁷ Peters, 32-33.

⁶⁸ University of Minnesota Board of Regents Policy, Code of Conduct adopted July 12, 1996. www.research.umn.edu, 2-26-02.

of.”⁶⁹ Indeed, the University of Minnesota received a high ranking among public research institutions from “The Center” at the University of Florida; yet it has created and carried out several highly questionable research projects.⁷⁰ Some citizens of Minnesota and graduates of the University of Minnesota are not happy with the research being conducted on manoomin. They have asked for it to stop due to ethical questions including concerns with infringement on sovereignty.⁷¹ If the University of Minnesota is truly concerned with ethical standards they will respect the wishes of the Anishinaabe and others who have raised ethical concerns.

As a land grant institution, the University of Minnesota has a responsibility toward the public. The question is whether the University is willing to count the American Indian people of Minnesota and elsewhere as a part of the public. To be precise, American Indians are citizens of the United States and therefore have a legitimate claim to be included in the public. Yet it seems the University is still in the process of determining their responsibility toward American Indians. Former Associate Dean for Research in COAFES, Dr. Larsen told the St. Paul Pioneer Press: “*The University of Minnesota says it respects Indians but also*

⁶⁹ Maziar, Christine M. Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, www.research.umn.edu, 2-26-02.

⁷⁰ New Research Ranking Puts ‘U’ Among Nation’s Elite Public Research Universities www1.umn.edu/urelate/newsservice/newsrelease/01_08rankings.html, 2-26-02.

⁷¹ White Earth Land Recovery Project “Threats to Manoomin” brochure, spring 2002.

must respect farmers who rely on scientific advancement for their future.”⁷²

Clearly the University of Minnesota does respect farmers (whom Larsen implies are non-Indians) because it has done vast amounts research that has benefited them. Simultaneously, it has done little to benefit Anishinaabeg (and other Indigenous peoples). It is time for the University of Minnesota to stop saying they “respect Indians” and to start showing it. While Larsen does not think that Indians rely on “scientific advancement” like farmers (i.e.-non-Indians), in reality, Anishinaabeg are supportive of scientific advances in areas such as Global Positioning Systems technology, water quality management, and resource preservation. As the original landholders American Indians have a special and significant relationship with public, land-grant institutions.

In addition to the responsibility of the University, individual scientists/researchers have a social responsibility as well. *“Scientists should avoid causing harms to society and they should attempt to produce social benefits. Scientists should be responsible for the consequences of their research and they should inform the public about those consequences.”⁷³* Academic and social responsibilities are multifaceted and entail that scientists have a duty to conduct socially valuable research, to inform the public as to their research, and to consider the possible and probable effects of their research. Some scientists reject the notion of social responsibility and claim to pursue knowledge for its

⁷² Ruble, Renee “Minnesota: American Indians Faulting wild rice genetic research” Pioneer Press May 21, 2002 (www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/living/education/3303270.htm?te.../printstory.js)

⁷³ Resnik, David B. The Ethics of Science: An Introduction (New York: Routledge, 1998), 63.

own sake. Even when this is their aim, however, there are numerous reasons why scientists should take responsibility for the impacts their research has on the public. Although not all impacts of research are predictable, often times many are foreseeable and scientists can be held responsible for those effects that were anticipated. As professionals, scientists have a duty to promote advantageous and avert detrimental consequences of research projects. Scientists are expected to create socially responsible goods and products and are afforded a trust, responsibility, and authority.

Socially responsible research benefits everyone and honors the public trust. As members of society scientists have a moral obligation toward that society. By conducting responsible research scientists can fight the negative images of the socially irresponsible scientist.⁷⁴ The manoomin case is chance for scientists to fight negative imaging and uphold their obligations to the public.

Scientists have done many positive things for society such as alerting the public to environmental concerns such as the hazards of pesticides, overpopulation, and pollution. In fact, some scientists are environmental activists and others have devoted their careers to exposing “junk science.”⁷⁵ This demonstrates the commitment and willingness of many scientists to be socially responsible. The research being done on the domestication of manoomin is another area in which scientists should be held to social responsibility. Scientists must consider the potential outcomes of the domestication of manoomin and

⁷⁴ Resnik, 63-64.

⁷⁵ Resnik, 147-148.

their reasons for supporting this. Their desire to “improve” manoomin is based on the value system of Western society and assumes a right to do research that fails to consider the interests of others.

Cultural Impacts:

Manoomin is connected to the spiritual health of the Anishinaabe. I can only speculate as to the potential cultural impacts of the eradication of manoomin, as we have known it, but they would be vast.

Western science and Western systems of knowledge classify other forms of knowledge as “unscientific” and “primitive” and simultaneously proclaims itself as “modern” and “advanced,” thereby creating a hierarchy that places Western views at the top.⁷⁶ “If we, as Indian people, are forced to reject our own indigenous knowledge and our ways of thought to participate in science, then we will be that much closer to cultural extinction.”⁷⁷ Indeed, some Anishinaabe fear that should manoomin cease to exist in the form that it has been known for thousands of years, so too would Anishinaabe people be in jeopardy of extinction. White Earth Anishinaabe Joe LaGarde has commented: “*We stand to lose everything. That’s what we’re looking at—the future of our people. If we lose our rice, we won’t exist as a people for long. We’ll be done too.*”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Monocultures of the Mind, 9-11.

⁷⁷ Pewewardy, Cornel “Indigenous Consciousness, Education and Science: Issues of Perception Language” in Science and Native American Communities: Legacies of Pain, Visions of Promise ed. James, Keith, (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 2001) 21.

⁷⁸ Joe LaGarde quoted in Clancy, 9.

Economic Impacts:

Research on manoomin has steadily increased at the University of Minnesota, through the support of public tax dollars. This research has simultaneously helped the manoomin industry's move to California and devastated the economy of natural manoomin. "By 1986 California was out producing Minnesota two to one, benefiting from research performed near the natural habitat of the species and funded with Minnesota tax dollars."⁷⁹

In a report titled, Wild Rice: Production, Prices, and Marketing, the University of Minnesota acknowledged that cultivated manoomin has had economic impacts saying: "The advent of cultivated wild rice had a substantial effect on actual harvesters of lake wild rice as well."⁸⁰ The wholesale price for manoomin was \$4.44 per pound in 1967 and declined to \$2.68 per pound in 1976. Although there was increased demand for manoomin in these years it was outstripped by the increases in production. Prices did rise in the late 1970s but this was due to United Wild Rice, Inc. controlling prices for which the Attorney General of Minnesota charged them with violating the state's antitrust statute. They settled out of court on March 4, 1981.⁸¹ The report went on to encourage the "Reevaluation of Minnesota Lake Wild Rice Regulation," which described how Minnesota lake wild rice regulations had remained unchanged despite the great

⁷⁹ Venum, 244.

⁸⁰ Winchell, Elizabeth H. and Reynold P. Dahl Wild Rice: Production, Prices, and Marketing. (University of Minnesota: Agricultural Experiment Station, 1984), 6.

changes in the wild rice industry. The report blamed the traditional harvesting methods for “stifling” the “development” of Minnesota’s lake rice industry. “If present policies are continued by the Minnesota DNR and the Indian reservations, Minnesota’s lake wild rice industry will become increasingly non-competitive.”⁸² The report stated that while cultivated wild rice production requires large amounts of capital and “sophisticated business acumen,” lake wild rice production requires “less capital and experience.”⁸³ This clearly shows bias toward western style agriculture and devalues Indigenous systems of agriculture. It places all value on economic profit, to the point of exploitation of manoomin. In addition it fails to consider the potentially devastating environmental impacts of cultivated manoomin.⁸⁴

Even the early years when the state was still evaluating if it would be favorable to be involved with the domestication of manoomin there were concerns about the potential impacts of this action. At a meeting of the Minnesota Resources Commission on August 11, 1967 there was a great deal of discussion regarding the state of Minnesota’s involvement in the production of cultivated wild rice. Mr. Holbert remarked that for the Minnesota legislature to appropriate money for the domestication of manoomin would be “a little less than idiotic” because it would likely end the near monopoly on manoomin held by Minnesota in the manoomin industry. Kenneth Morgan testified that if manoomin

⁸¹ Winchell and Dahl, 6-8.

⁸² Winchell and Dahl, 35.

⁸³ Winchell and Dahl, 35.

was domesticated many people could grow it and then the price would decrease dramatically.⁸⁵ These remarks show there was an awareness and concern for how the natural manoomin industry could be radically changed by domestication.

Despite the economic losses that have been sustained by traditional Anishinaabe ricers these issues cannot be reduced to a simple dollar amount. As Anishinaabe biologist John Persell has explained: “*You have to understand that aside from being a primary food source, the rice has spiritual associations with the traditional Ojibwe culture and its connection to Mother Earth. You can’t separate that from the economics of it.*”⁸⁶

Conclusion:

The current and past research on manoomin conducted by the University of Minnesota is a continuation of racist, colonialist objectives. It exploits Indigenous people and resources for the economic benefit of dominant society and denies the efficacy of and disregards Anishinaabe ways of knowing. Vennum has quoted Chief Peter Kelly of Ontario: “*Manomin belongs to the Anishinaabeg. . . Wild rice is our tradition, our right. It is non-negotiable.*”⁸⁷ There is no desire to compromise academic freedom of researchers but we do insist that the ethical

⁸⁴ White Earth Land Recovery Project, Wild Rice Committee Meeting, Fond Du Lac, January 24, 2002.

⁸⁵ Edman, Robert R. A Study of Wild Rice in Minnesota Staff Report: Minnesota Resources Commission, 1969, 76.

⁸⁶ Persell, John quoted in Pitter, Peter “A Rice by Any Other Name: The University of Minnesota’s Genetic Research on Wild Rice Goes Against the Grain” City Pages vol. 21 no. 1034, 9-27-00 (www.citypages.com/databank/21/1034/article9005.asp).

⁸⁷ Kelly, Peter quoted in Vennum, 283.

standards that have been set by the Board of Regents as well as those within the scientific community be followed. We are asking that the rights and belief systems of the Anishinaabe and other Indigenous groups be respected. The web site the University has created to inform people about research claims in bold letters: “**University of Minnesota research changes lives and improves communities.**”⁸⁸ This standard must be adhered to because of the obligations the University of Minnesota has as a land-grant institution but also because the University of Minnesota has a commitment to high ethical standards. The Anishinaabeg await an answer to whether they will be deemed part of the public, if they are deserving of being treated with respect and fairness.

“By its nature, the university has to be judged above all by its ability to produce inclusive knowledge; that is, knowledge in the interest of all human beings.”⁸⁹

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⁸⁸ www1.umn.edu/systemwide/research2.html, 2-26-02.

⁸⁹ Fleming, Marie “The Inclusive University and the Problem of Knowledge” in Academic Freedom and the Inclusive University ed. Sharon E. Kahn and Dennis Pavlich (UBC Press: Vancouver, 2000), 128.

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