St. Louis River AOC Wild Rice Restoration Agreement

2022 Annual Report

Fall 2022 wild rice harvest produced a very low yield across much of the state of Minnesota, in particular in the region frequented by harvesters that the Fond du Lac Band is able to purchase wild rice for reseeding purposes. Due to these challenges, less seed was able to be acquired for reseeding into the St. Louis River Estuary sites than desired. Thankfully the Leech Lake Reservation had a fair production year and their tribal members were largely responsible for providing the wild rice seed purchased for 2022. 6,813 pounds were acquired and reseeded into 48.35 acres as follows-

* Landslide Bay-864 pounds covering 6.8 acres
* North Duckhunter Bay- 1,304 pounds covering 13.42 acres
* Rask Bay- 1,866 pounds covering 11.81 acres
* Walley Alley Bay-1,790 pounds covering 12.26 acres
* North Bay- 557 pounds covering 4.06 acres

Canada geese exclosure fencing was installed in early June in North Duck Hunter, Landslide, and Walleye Alley Bays. 21 exclosures measuring 20 feet by 100 feet were installed, 10 in North Duck Hunter Bay, 5 in Landslide Bay, and 6 in Walleye Alley Bay. 8 PVC-framed exclosures from previous years were used for a portion of the install, with snow fencing and wooden stakes used to construct the 13 additional exclosures. The snow fencing exclosures proved to be simpler to transport and install, decreasing staff time needed toward this task, however the panel exclosures are easier and quicker to remove.

Exclosure removal was performed following seed formation and deposition in mid-September. Despite not being seeded in 2021, the exclosure sites of Walleye Alley and North Duck Hunter Bays were productive given the density of plants protected by the exclosure fencing method. Geese depredation continues to be a significant negative factor in wild rice restoration efforts in the Estuary.