St. Louis River AOC Wild Rice Restoration Agreement

2023 Annual Report

Fall 2023 wild rice harvest produced a moderate to high yield across much of the state of Minnesota. Reseeding purchases remained steady from 9/2-9/19. The price per pound for “green” rice seed has now locked in at $6/pound across much of the state. Project partners agreed to take advantage of the successes gained over the past several seasons in particular bays and heavily seed high performing bays at 200 pounds per acre. 10,0047 pounds were acquired and reseeded into 48.69 acres as follows-

* Rask Bay-2,362 pounds covering 11.55 acres
* Landslide Bay- 1,390 pounds covering 6.77 acres
* North Bay- 1704 pounds covering 8.46 acres
* Duck Hunter North-514 pounds covering 2.16 acres
* Duck Hunter Middle- 1,210 pounds covering 6.02 acres
* Duck Hunter South- 1,759 pounds covering 8.7 acres
* Walleye Alley Bay- 1108 pounds covering 5.03 acres

Construction of additional geese exclosures for 2023 began in April in advance of ice out conditions. Supplies for construction were acquired and exclosure frames were built. Canada geese exclosure fencing was installed in early June in Duck Hunter North, Landslide, Rask, and Walleye Alley Bays. 31 exclosures measuring 20 feet by 100 feet were installed; 10 in Duck Hunter North Bay, 5 in Landslide Bay, 8 in Rask Bay, and 8 in Walleye Alley Bay. Exclosure removal was performed following seed formation and deposition in late September.

Resource Management Technicians assisted Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources with goose reduction round up efforts, providing personnel and watercraft for the effort. Geese depredation continues to be a significant negative factor in wild rice restoration efforts in the Estuary. Goose population reduction in combination with exclosures and reseeding will likely need to continue for several years in order to improve wild rice density and further develop a self-sustaining seed bank in the bays of the Estuary.