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Rachel Durkee Walker

University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

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Wild Rice: The Dynamics Of Its Population Cycles And The Debate Over Its Control At The Minnesota Legislature

Dr. Rachel Durkee Walker
University of Minnesota
612-625-8627
walk0303@umn.edu

The causes and consequences of wild rice cycling and its long term viability have both cultural and scientific implications. Wild rice is a sacred plant to the Anishinaabeg. Anishinaabeg worldviews include concern with events that repeat themselves on a regular basis, including the cycling of wild rice. Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous communities recognize the importance of cycles in many ecosystem functions over long time periods. In this thesis, I examine Anishinaabeg views of population cycles in wild rice, the work and views of western anthropologists, and potential ecological factors which control the appearance of cycles. I conclude by examining recent political debate over the introduction of genetically engineered wild rice, a debate which has roots in the divergent views of Anishinaabeg and western culture towards the production of food from ecosystems.