

Great Lakes Manōmaeh (Wild Rice) Gathering 2026

Dates: May 27-28, 2026

Location: Menominee Casino Resort, N277 WI-47, Keshena, Wisconsin

AGENDA

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

- 6:00 pm** **Gathering of Friends (Optional)**
Informal get together and opportunity to say hello and reconnect
Location: [Stubborn Brothers](#), 220 S Main St, Shewano, WI

Day 1 - Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Location: 5 Clans Ballroom (Menominee Casino Resort, Convention Center)

- 7:30 am** **Breakfast & Registration**
- 8:30 am** **Welcome and Opening Ceremony**
Welcome/MC Gary Besaw, Director Menominee DAFS and Director, Menominee Food Distribution Program
Grand Entry, Drum: Skud Nation, Menominee Nation High School
Flag Song
Invocation: Luke "Otaeciah" Besaw, Menominee Language and Culture, Acting Director
Post Colors, Menominee Nation Veterans Honor Guard
Opening Remarks: Chairman Awonohopay (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin)
- 9:15 am** **Intergenerational Perspectives on Wild Rice**
Community members discuss connections to Manōmaeh from different perspectives
Session Leads: Cherie Thunder (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin), Cheyanne Koran (UW Madison, WI DNR)
Speakers:
David Grignon (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Historic Preservation)
Cheyanne Koran (UW Madison, WI DNR)
Gracie Waukechon (College of Menominee Nation)
Chairman Awonohopay (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin)
Deejay Micik (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Department of Agriculture and Food Systems)

10:20 am Sketching a Regional Coordination Plan for Collaborative Wild Rice Stewardship in the Great Lakes (Part 1)

This session will orient participants to the purpose of the *Midwest Tribal Wild Rice Coordination and Planning Project*, its origin in the 2025 Wild Rice Gathering, and how workshop input will help shape a future regional coordination plan for wild rice (Manoomin/Manōmaeh) stewardship and resilience in the Great Lakes.

Session Lead: Riley Jones (Consortium for Cooperative Ecological Resilience)

10:40 am Break

11:00 am Concurrent Sessions - Governmental and Interagency Support

Supporting Manoomin: USDA Federal Programs for Wild Rice Restoration and Protection

Learn how federal conservation and disaster assistance programs can support manoomin restoration and protection efforts. Staff from the Natural Resources Conservation Service will discuss the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and share examples of Tribal manoomin reseeded projects funded through the program. Representatives from the Farm Service Agency will also explain the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), including how it can help cover losses to natural wild rice beds caused by natural disasters.

Session Lead: Joey Tallier (Intertribal Agriculture Council)

Speakers:

Brian Briski (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service)
Beth Mueller (USDA Farm Service Agency, Marathon County)

Geospatial Support from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

Lessons learned from recent remote sensing and geospatial data collection efforts across the region and highlights of geospatial support resources available through BIA

Session Leads: Brandon Krumwiede (NOAA), Chris Kaczmarek (BIA)

Speakers:

John Merrill (Galileo Group, Inc.)
Chris Kaczmarek (BIA)
Brandon Krumwiede (NOAA)

12:00 pm Lunch

- 1:00 pm Wild Rice Resilience Indicators**
 Opportunity to work through the Great Lakes Basin resilience indicators, learn how they can be used to develop strategies and solutions, and how the framework can be used by others in the future
Session Lead: Jeff Feng (STRONG Manoomin Collective, Northwestern University)
- 2:30 pm Break**
- 2:45 pm Perspectives on Water Resilience and Manōmaeh Restoration**
 Opportunity for youth to present their research on wild rice restoration and build on it with knowledge from conference participants.
Session Lead: Sara Smith (College of Menominee Nation)
Speakers: Gracie Waukechon and Riley Tucker (College of Menominee Nation)
- 3:45 pm Food Sovereignty Programs**
 Learn about Tribal Elder Food Box Program and Rising Suns Future Farmers of America (FFA) programs. Both are aimed at tribal and intertribal food security, Food as Medicine, and inspiring and creating the next generation of tribal producers. This session will also include a short (8 minute) video and several slides showing our efforts in action.
Session Lead: Gary Besaw (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin)
Speakers: Klint Hischke (Menominee Nation High School) and students of Rising Suns FFA
- 4:45 pm Wrap-up and Overview of Evening Activities**
- 6:00 pm Feast**
 Join our hosts and enjoy a meal of locally-sourced food together!
Location:
 Department of Agriculture and Food Systems (W2776 Chief Little Wave Rd, Keshena, WI 54135), [Driving Directions](#)
- Evening Activity**
 Film Screening - [Manoomin \(Wild Rice\): Ojibwe Spirit Food](#)
 Introduction by Roger LaBine (Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)
Location: Department of Agriculture and Food Systems

Day 2 - Thursday, May 28, 2026

Location: 5 Clans Ballroom (Menominee Casino Resort, Convention Center)

7:30 am Breakfast

8:30 am Welcome and Reconvening

Reflections from the first day and an overview of the upcoming day's activities
Gary Besaw (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin)

8:45 am Tribal Monitoring of Wild Rice (Lightning Talks)

Whirlwind of monitoring methodology! Opportunity to learn from each other and provide feedback on current tribally-led geospatial and remote sensing work.

Session Leads: Alexis DeGabriele (Little River Band of Ottawa Indians), Jeff Richardson (Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi)

Speakers:

Frank Zomer (Bay Mills Indian Community)

Miles Falck (Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission)

Darren Vogt (1854 Treaty Authority)

Skyler Wolverton (Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi)

Jeff Richardson (Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi)

Alexis DeGabriele (Little River Band of Ottawa Indians)

9:45 am Restoration Panel

Manoomin restoration is strengthened through collaboration, shared knowledge, and a commitment to caring for the waters and ecosystems that sustain it.

This panel brings together perspectives from Tribal communities and state partners to discuss restoration efforts, challenges, and successes across the region. We are honored to welcome Alex Mixtli, Matt Steiger, and Nathan Podney to share their experiences and insights on restoring and protecting manoomin for future generations.

Session Lead: Kathleen Smith (Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission)

Speakers:

Alex Mixtli (Brothertown Indian Nation)

Matt Steiger (Wisconsin DNR)

Nathan Podney (Sokaogon Chippewa Community, Mole Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)

10:45 am Break

11:00 am Restoration & Stewardship Topics - Discussion Café

Opportunity to learn from each other about different tribally-led restoration and stewardship efforts, methods, and issues. Participants will rotate through a series of small groups facilitated by experts on assorted topics, such as:

- **Regional stewardship initiatives / coalitions** - *Facilitator:* Frank Zomer (Bay Mills Indian Community)
- **Addressing impacts of unsanctioned herbicide use** - *Facilitators:* Kris Goodwill (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin) and Guy Reiter (Menīkānaehkem, Inc.)
- **Relationships with other living non-human beings**
- **Seeding methods** - *Facilitators:* DeeJay Micik (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin) and Jeff Richardson (Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi)
- **Manōmaeh/Manoomin health and stressors** - *Facilitators:* Wes Bickford (USGS) and Nathan Podany (Sokaogon Chippewa Community)
- **Education and community engagement** - *Facilitators:* Manoomin Stewards
- **Indigenous place names** - *Facilitators:* Alex Mixtli (Brothertown Indian Nation) & Naz Nazri (Intertribal Lake Winnebago Mayom - Wild Rice - Revitalization Project)

12:00 pm **Lunch**

1:00 pm **Restoration & Stewardship Topics - Discussion Café** (*continued*)

2:00 pm **Break**

2:15 pm **Sketching a Regional Coordination Plan for Collaborative Wild Rice Stewardship in the Great Lakes (Part 2)**

Interactive working session to discuss initial ideas that could be developed into a regional coordination plan for wild rice (Manoomin/Manōmaeh) stewardship and resilience in the Great Lakes. This multi-year, Tribal-led process would focus on the recognized need & opportunity for improved coordination at multiple levels.

Session Leads: Riley Jones (Consortium for Cooperative Ecological Resilience); Katie O'Donnell and Brian Crawford (Compass Resource Management)

4:45 pm **Wrap-up and Closing Ceremony**

Summary remarks and next steps: Planning Committee

Closing Prayer: (Otaeciah Besaw)

Retire Flags: Skud Nation/Menominee Nation Veterans Honor Guard

Traveling Song: Skud Nation