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Table A18.2. Wild rice resources in the Sand-Pike River.

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DEPARTMENT: Natural Resources - Enforcement

DATE : December 7,1987

TO : Amy Loiselle

FROM : Gerald McHugh, Wild Rice Coordinator

SUBJECT : Water Discharge Minntac Tailings Pond

The Wild Rice Beds involved in the discharge down the Sandy River are Sandy and Little Sandy Lakes which in a good year will have about 200 acres of rice. These lakes are about a mile down stream from discharge and seepage sites. There is also a 40 to 50 acre bed further down the river that is a wide spot in the Sandy River.

These beds produce a good quailty rice and generally follow the trend of the region as far as quainty of rice in any given year. I found as many of the old areial surveys as I could in the files in St. Paul. They go back as far as 1966.

Year	Twin Lakes	Statewide
1966	Fair	Fair to Good
1968	Fair	Fair
1970	Good	Good
1972	Good	Good
1973	Fair	Good
1977	Poor	Good
1979	Poor	Poor
1980	Fair	Good

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1981	Fair	Good
1982	Poor	Poor
1984	Poor	Good
1985	Poor	Poor
1986	Poor	Poor
1987	Poor	Good

The bed on the river was not included in the areial survey but was in the surveys I did since 1984. There was good rice in in 1984, 1985 and 1987. The rice was poor in 1986.

These above mentioned rice beds are important not only for the rice that is harvested but also as waterfowl hunting areas which are in relatively short supply in the area. The waterfowl hunting potential is especially good for the Sandy Lakes. A good rice crop on these lakes will attract water fowl which are on the nearby tailings pond. The tailings pond are not hunted and hold several thousand waterfowl in the fall.

The discharge presents two hazards to the above mentioned wild rice beds. First and foremost is the chemical composition of the discharge water. The Sulphate Ion concentration of the water in a series of tests exceeded 200 ppm. and up to over 300 ppm. Wild rice is relatively intolerant of sulphates and no large beds are found in waters with concentrations of over 10 to 20 ppm. sulphate ion conc. Secondly the increased volume of water will exacerbate a already serious problem of high water in the Sandy Lakes.

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The Division of Enforcement is charged with management of Wild Rice in the public waters of the State of Minnesota therefore it is my recommendation that the Division of Enforcement vigorously oppose the granting of a permit to discharge tailings water thru the Sandy River.

Gerald McHugh

Wild Rice Coordinator