

The Manomin Project's Fall Equinox Newsletter



@manominproject

Updates on the Manomin Project

The arrival of autumn signals the beginning of reflection and writing for the Manomin Project. This is very welcome following the busy summer months of data collection.

From June to August, members of the Manomin Project participated in a reading group. They met bi-weekly to discuss selected readings on decolonizing methodologies. We are grateful to have had this time to deepen our understanding of the topic and we look forward to resuming these discussions in summer 2022.

An important part of the Manomin Project is documenting manomin conditions in our photo diaries. This is typically done by band members from Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation. This season band member Guy Henry and UofG researcher Brittany Luby travelled together to photograph ancestral fields. These photographs will be extremely helpful in understanding how environmental conditions impact Manomin.

Since the summer solstice, PhD candidate Sam and URA Elli have visited the Winnipeg River twice, once in mid-August and once in early September. While visiting in August, they gathered data on seed counts, stalk density, and water quality parameters. Later in September, Sam and Elli took sediment samples, observed Manomin's conditions, and retrieved water level loggers that had been deployed since May. They also tried to collect ripe manomin seed samples for analysis in the lab, but a storm left few available for collection. Nevertheless, these visits have allowed our team to gather more data on how environmental conditions impact manomin yields.

After renting boats for the past two field seasons, our team decided to purchase a boat of our own! Thanks to our funders, we have purchased a square stern canoe with a 2.5hp motor. Having a dedicated canoe for the Manomin Project will be extremely helpful for future field work on the Winnipeg River. We are extremely grateful for future field work on the Winnipeg River.



Pictured: The Manomin Project's new canoe.

The Manomin Project and Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation typically close each field season with a Fall Feast, but it was postponed this year. Thankfully, we were still able to gather at the Niisaachewan Community Powwow in early September. We are grateful to have had this opportunity and we are looking forward to returning to Anishinaabe-Aki in 2022.

Meet the Team: Samantha Mehlretter

Samantha, also known as Sam, is a key member of the Manomin Project. She first started working for the Manomin Project as a Research Assistant while completing her Masters of Applied Science degree in Water Resources Engineering at the University of Guelph. After completing her

master's degree in 2019, Sam stayed at UofG to pursue Water Resources Engineering as a Doctoral student.

Now entering the third year of her PhD, Sam coordinates our field work from beginning to end with Chief and Council. Sam plays a key role in data collection and analysis. Her findings will be written up in her dissertation.

"I continue to enjoy my doctoral research with the Manomin Project and feel I'm continually being challenged to consider different perspectives and possible methods to approach the research problem," said Sam. We are proud to have such dedicated members like Sam a part of our team!



Pictured: Sam on a trip to the Winnipeg River.

Manomin Fun Facts

Not only is Manomin crucial to many people's diets, but it is also integral to the diets of many waterfowl! Many birds that reside in wetlands rely on manomin beds for feeding before their fall migration. This includes common loons, great blue herons, and the elusive sora rails – small chicken-like birds that reside in wetlands¹.

¹ Wisconsin Wetlands Association, "Wild rice: food for migrating waterfowl," Wisconsin Wetlands Association, October 28, 2016, accessed August 8, 2021, <https://www.wisconsinwetlands.org/updates/wild-rice-for-migrating-waterfowl/>.



Pictured: A young eagle flying overhead while the Manomin Project team worked on our photo diaries.

Decolonizing Our Minds

In June, members of the Manomin Project began their group reading discussions. They met twice a month to discuss selected readings and deepen their understanding of decolonizing methodologies. These meetings carried on until the end of August.

Over these weeks, our team members read many wonderful articles and learned a great deal about how Western and Indigenous methodologies can co-exist simultaneously. One reading that stood out to our group was "Two-Eyed Seeing': An Indigenous framework to transform fisheries research and management."

Two-Eyed Seeing, as described by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall, is "learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all."² In short, both knowledge systems are used "in parallel to produce an enriched picture and mutual understanding" of the topic of choice.³

Those who are interested in learning more about how Indigenous and Western knowledge systems can co-exist may read the article [here](#).

² Andrea J. Reid et al., "Two-Eyed Seeing': An Indigenous framework to transform fisheries research and management," *Fish and Fisheries* 22, no. 2 (2020): 245, <https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.12516>.

³ Andrea J. Reid et al., 246.

New Publications

We are excited to announce the publication of a new blog post on [NiCHE](#) (Network in Canadian History & Environment)! “Repeat Photography: A Method for Recording Change Over Time,” was written by former Undergraduate Research Assistant Gabrielle Goldhar with Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation.

In this blog post, Gabrielle explains how our team uses repeat photography to document manomin growth at sites selected by NAN’s Elders. These photographs are then catalogued in the Manomin Project’s photo diaries for analysis. You can [read the article now on our website](#).

What’s Next

The Manomin Project is looking forward to an exciting and busy fall season. Many of our tasks will be administration, analysis and education-focused since the 2021 field season has ended.

Dr. Andrea Bradford is completing administration work for the Manomin Project. She is focusing on maintaining and documenting our budget, as well as ensuring that the team stays on task to meet its goals.

Dr. Luby has many exciting projects in the works. She is in contract negotiations with Groundwood, an indie Canadian publisher, about publishing an educational children’s book about Manomin.

Sam is entering the third year of her doctoral program. She is currently researching and writing a paper on the placement of water gauges in Treaty #3. This project was funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Sam will also be analyzing data from the 2021 field season and synthesizing historic data to understand manomin growth on the Upper Winnipeg River over the past 150 years.

Our students are completing many projects. Maggie will continue to manage our social media presence as our Social Media Manager. Emma is advancing our communication strategy and assisting with administration tasks. Jane has returned from her summer leave and will resume her work on the Manomin Project. Elli is wrapping up her time with the Manomin Project as she enters the final year of her engineering degree. We’d like to thank Elli for her contributions to the Manomin Project over the past year and a half – the 2020 and 2021 field seasons wouldn’t have been the same without her.

The Manomin Project is a cooperative research program led by the University of Guelph and Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation. This newsletter reflects our responsibility and commitment to knowledge sharing.