

Indigenous Stewardship Methods And NRCS Conservation Practices

WI Tribal Conservation Advisory Council
IAC/INCA Conference

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Indigenous Stewardship Methods (ISM)

- **Why:** NRCS and Tribes are in need of a cooperative process to expand on the **Federal Trust responsibilities**, foster relationships, **strengthen Tribal (government-to-government) consultation**, and **improve conservation delivery** with indigenous landowners.



Indigenous Stewardship Methods (ISM)

- Purpose of this Guidebook:

To develop and have available
culturally relevant NRCS
Conservation Practice Standards.



Indigenous Stewardship Methods (ISM)

- Background:

NRCS can offer technical assistance to help increase the capacity of Tribes to use the best of both agency methods and indigenous stewardship, and not lose the foundation of indigenous ways for the health and well being of earth and humankind.

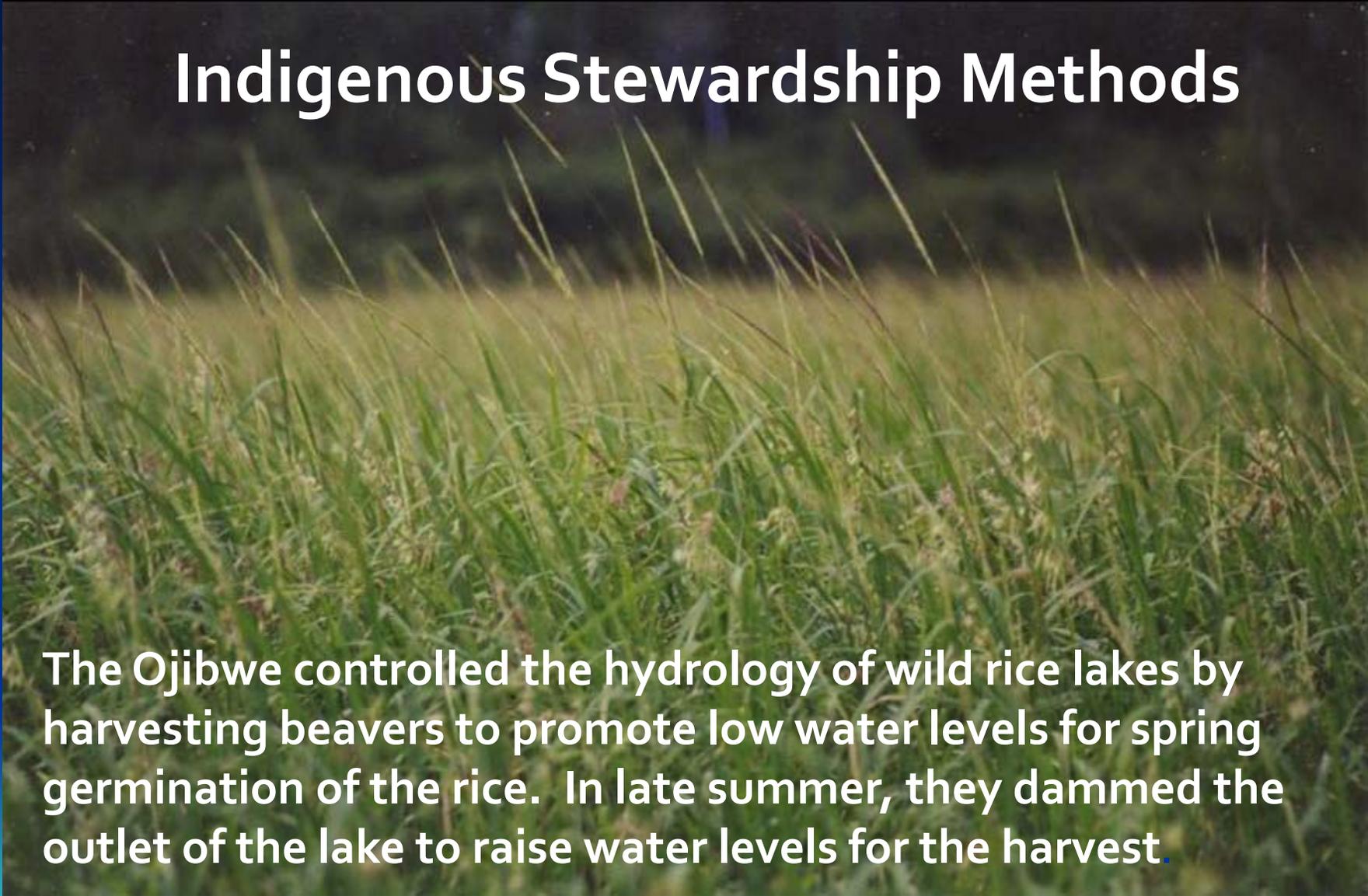


Indigenous Stewardship Methods (ISM)

- NRCS can use technical assistance to empower Tribes, give voice to indigenous ways of knowing, and be a role model for other government agencies and the general public.
- We can gain a better understanding resulting in mutual respect, collaboration, cooperation, and partnership.



Indigenous Stewardship Methods



The Ojibwe controlled the hydrology of wild rice lakes by harvesting beavers to promote low water levels for spring germination of the rice. In late summer, they dammed the outlet of the lake to raise water levels for the harvest.



Blending Indigenous Stewardship Methods with Contemporary Conservation Practices



Indigenous Stewardship Methods (ISM)

- **How:**
 - Culturally relevant NRCS conservation practices result from blending the NRCS processes with ISM through consultation.
 - Figure 2 (page 7) shows incorporation of **ISM** into NRCS **conservation practice standards** by following processes already outlined in NRCS policy, and emphasizing consulting with Tribes.

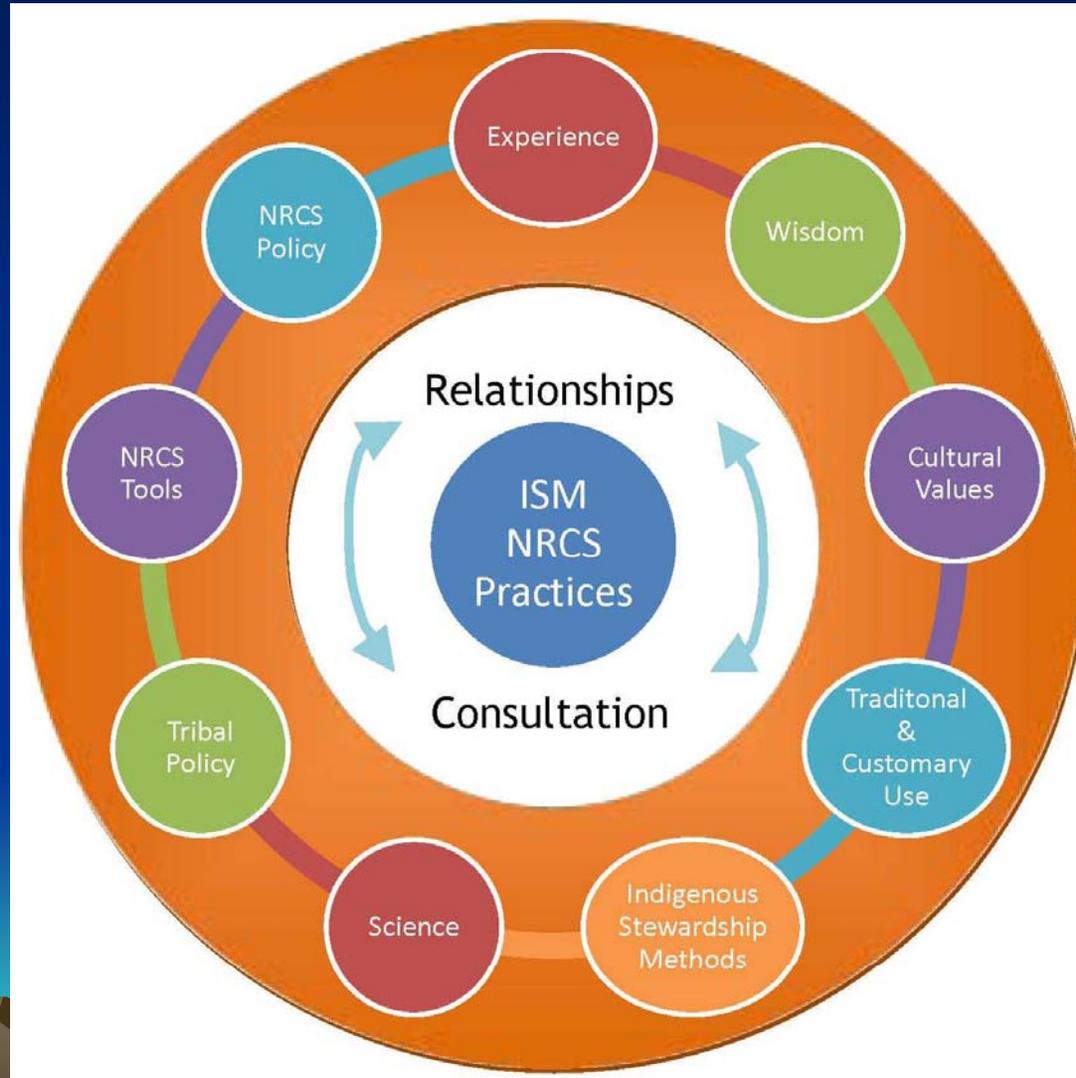


Indigenous Stewardship Methods (ISM)

- The process would incorporate indigenous philosophy and experience into conservation practices.
- Everything is connected: living and non-living things, air, land, water, animals, plants, humans, our ancestors and the future generations.
- It is all the Circle of Life



ISM & NRCS Practices



Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WTCAC)

Development of Tribal Technical Standards



Three Possible Scenarios

- National & State Standards exist but there are no design criteria, or applicable item on the financial assistance docket.
- There is an applicable National Standard, but no State Standard.
- There is no National Standard for the desired practice.



Scenario #1 State and National Standards exist, but there are no applicable design criteria.

- **Desired practice must be clearly defined: Purpose, Resource Concern, Applicability.**
- **NRCS and WTCAC Tribal Technical Specialists work together to either find or develop design criteria.**
- **Design Criteria reviewed by WTCAC Board of Directors for submittal to State Conservationist.**
- **Design Criteria approved by the appropriate NRCS Technical Leader: State Conservation Engineer or State Resource Conservationist.**

Scenario #1 Example

- Paved Surface – Water Access Point (boat landings)
 - Established under EQIP Practice “Access Roads – 560”
 - Justification - Provides protection at water access points used for subsistence food collection. Resource concern must be present on existing water access point to be eligible for practice.



Paved Surface – Water Access Point (boat landings)



BEFORE

AFTER



Scenario #1 Cont.

- Once the design criteria are approved, a flat rate payment scenario must be developed, and payment levels determined.
- Item needs to be added to the payment docket by recommendation from WTCAC acting as Technical Committee to the NRCS State Conservationist.



Other WTCAC Scenario's added to EQIP & WHIP

- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management – 644
 - Wild Rice Seeding
 - Tree Drops
 - Fish Cribs
- Fish Passage – 396
 - Beaver dam removal (road access & remote access)
 - Culvert replacement > 60 inches
- Fence – 382
 - Vehicle Barrier for unique cultural & sensitive environmental areas



Wild Rice Seeding



BEFORE

AFTER



8/15/2000

Tree Drops

AFTER



BEFORE



Fish Cribs



Wood Crib



Brush Crib

Fish Crib



Plastic Crib



Beaver dam removal



BEFORE

AFTER



Culvert replacement



Fish Passage Complete



Culvert Placement

Vehicle Barrier Fence



BEFORE

AFTER



Scenario # 2. National Standard exists but no State Standard.

- **Technical Specialists review the National standard to be sure that desired practice fits the national purpose and scope.**
- **NRCS & WTCAC Technical Team develops new standard.**
- **New Standard approved by NRCS Technical leaders: State Conservation Engineer or State Resource Conservationist.**
- **Design Criteria, found or developed by NRCS & WTCAC Technical Specialists, and approved by Tech Leaders.**
- **Added to Docket as in Scenario #1.**



Scenario #2 Example

- Aquaculture Pond – 397 (lined & unlined)

- Earthwork @ \$3.00/cu yd 7200 cu yds \$21,600.00
- 24"x50' PVC outlet pipe @\$20.00/ft \$100.00
- Equip. Mobilization \$1500.00
- Harvest Kettle \$4000.00
- Outlet Structure \$3000.00
- Liner Mobilization \$600.00
- 45 mil EPDM @\$0.95/sqft \$31,036.00

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Lined Option \$61,836.00
Unlined Option \$30,200.00



Scenario #2 Example



Scenario #3 - No National Standard Exists for the desired practice.

- A review must be done at the National level to determine that:
- The practice does not fit under any currently existing National Standard.
- That the purpose, and scope fall within the bounds of NRCS statutory authority.
- That the practice addresses a legitimate resource concern.



Scenario #3. Cont.

- A team must be formed at the National level to develop the standard, (often takes 1 – 2 years to complete their work).
- The standard must be approved by the authorized technical leader at the National office.
- The standard is added to the National Handbook of Conservation Practices.



Scenario #3 Cont.

- State Standard will need to be developed as in Scenario #2.
- Design Criteria must be developed as in Scenario #1.
- Practice must be added to the docket as in scenario #1.



Scenario #3 Example

- Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops – 798
 - New practice standard that was recently released by NRCS NHQ as a “trial standard for EQIP”.
 - “Practice Standard” was initially developed with the Red Cliff and Bad River Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa in partnership with the Rose Lake Plant Material Center. Based on the traditional Hoop House used by many Tribes.



Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops



Commercial

Anishinaabe



So: Where to start?

- WTCAC determines the following:
- What do we want to do?
- What USDA program would it fit under?
- Does it fit within the scope of the program?
- What Resource Concern, or concerns does the practice address?



Where to start – Cont.

- Determine if a State Standard already exists that would encompass the practice within its' scope.
- If no State Standard exists, does a National Standard exist that would encompass the practice within its' scope.
- Once status of State and National Standards are determined, follow scenarios 1, 2, or 3.



Where to find things!

- National Handbook of Conservation Practices:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/Standards/nhcp.html>
- Section 4 of the Wisconsin Technical Guide, State Standards and Specifications
<http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/toc.aspx?CatID=16855>
- Technical Notes from Wisconsin NRCS Web site
<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/technotes.html>
- Job Sheets from Wisconsin NRCS Web site
<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/jobsheets3.asp>



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