

Frank Bibeau

Frank is a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Pillager Band, enrolled at White Earth Chippewa Reservation and living on Leech Lake Chippewa Reservation in Ball Club, Minnesota with his wife Vicki for most of their lives.



Frank has worked as a tribal attorney for Leech Lake Reservation, White Earth Reservation, Anishinabe Legal Services and private practice in a variety of tribal and state courts. Frank works extensively with Chippewa treaty rights, civil rights and sovereignty, on and off reservation. Frank is also Executive Director for the 1855 Treaty Authority.

Frank was recognized by Minnesota Lawyer in February 2015 in Fish Fight <http://minnlawyer.com/2015/02/26/fish-fight/> for his legal work with Chippewa treaty rights fishing case *Operation Squarehook* (U.S. v Brown). In July 2015, Frank was recognized by the National Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for his “extraordinary commitment to providing equal access to justice through . . . pro bono work with Anishinabe Legal Services.”

Frank currently works with *Honor the Earth*, (<http://www.honorearth.org/>) a native-led, non-profit environmental protection group directed by Winona LaDuke, based on White Earth Reservation, litigating to stop the proposed Enbridge Line 3 Replacement tar sands, crude oil pipeline passing-thru Minnesota.

Frank has worked closely with the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (celdf.org) to develop the *Rights of Manoomin*, a Rights to Nature based law for the White Earth Reservation and off-reservation, throughout the 1855 Chippewa ceded territory in Minnesota.

Manoomin or Wild Rice has special cultural and environmental significance to the Chippewa. Manoomin from an environmental perspective is an important habitat component and is often viewed as an ecological indicator species due to its sensitivity to growing conditions.

The *Rights of Manoomin* is codification of ancient law using present day tribal laws, which are in turn protected by federal laws and treaties between the Chippewa and United States. Protecting Manoomin necessarily requires protecting our Chippewa priority, water quality property rights to clean, fresh water, throughout the upper 250 miles of interconnected watershed resources of the Headwaters of the Mississippi, its tributaries, wetlands, rivers, lakes and aquifers.

This tribal, *Rights of Nature* legal protection strategy is necessary because according to Minnesota Public Radio, *Climate change affects lakes, walleye in complex ways* <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/09/09/walleye-climate-change> and Minnesota’s “Scientists don’t know exactly how big a role climate change is playing in the Mille Lacs walleye situation. But it’s one of the many factors that will continue being part of the equation — for every fish species in every lake in the state.

April 2019