



# My Most Vivid Memory Concerning Water

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## Life on the Wild Rice River

My family lives along the Wild Rice River about 20 minutes south of Fargo. Visitors often comment that our property is a small slice of heaven tucked only a few miles off the intersection of Highway 46 and Interstate 29. Growing up on the banks of the Wild Rice has been filled with joy and adventure; yet has come with challenges as well.

The river provides fun and new experiences. Fishing is one of my favorite pastimes on the river with so many kinds of fish to catch like walleye and catfish. There's always something to catch either by casting a line from the shore or paddling out in a kayak- each fishing experience is an adventure. Fishing isn't the only thing that the Wild Rice has to offer. It's also home to many wild animals like deer, turkey, ducks, geese, and pheasants. Sometimes while out fishing, I spot deer walking on the banks of the river or I hear the honking of geese flying overhead. It's like being in a nature documentary right in my own backyard.

One of my most fond moments while fishing came when I hooked up to a nearly 20-pound catfish. I watched as my orange rod tip nearly touched the water before grabbing on to the pole. I remember how heavy the set felt and instantly knew I hooked up to a Wild Rice River monster. As I was reeling in my line, it felt as if I had a log hooked, not a fish. When the fish finally got close to the landing, I was able to scoop it up with my net. I knew that this was a memory I would never forget due to being the biggest fish out of "my" river.

One of my family's favorite spots to hang out along the river is by a deep ravine on the south side of our property. The ravine stretches about 300 feet from the field on the west side of our property down to the river. Every spring as the snow melts, the waterfall comes to life with rushing water- the sight of it is mesmerizing. When the ravine is dry, it is fun to explore the base and investigate the exposed tree roots; all caused by the power of water flowing into the Wild Rice River.

Living by the river isn't always easy. Springtime often brings melting snow and rain which can cause the river to flood. Thankfully, our house is protected by a ring dike, so even as the water rises it hasn't ever reached our home.

The most vivid memory I can recall concerning water happened in spring of 2019. The water from the Wild Rice River spilled over its banks, through our pasture and came inches away from spilling over the ring dike protecting our home. Not only did the water from the river swell, but overland flooding from the fields surrounding our house and heavy rain filled up the opposite side of the ring dike. There was water up to the top of the dike on both sides! Water was rushing in and surrounding our house from every direction and all we could do was watch and wait. Luckily, the water slowly crested without causing any damage to our home.

With the construction of the F-M Area Diversion Project, we are hoping for permanent flood relief. The Wild Rice River Structure, a part of the F-M Diversion project, has been built to manage Wild Rice River flows into the F-M area and we hope it helps with the flooding on our side as well.

Growing up on the Wild Rice River has taught me so much about nature, resilience, and the importance of taking care of the environment. It's a special place that holds endless opportunities for adventure and discovery and I'm grateful to call it home.