

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION 1 - CONSOLIDATED NOTES

ROOM 1 ROOM 2 ROOM 3 ROOM 4

Please respond to the panelist conversation

RIVER AS A RELATION

Lois Hamilton: I really appreciated the how the panel talked about the River as a relation. I would like this relational understanding of River to be the dominant culture

Denise Mayotte: The panel mentioned traditional trails and I think it's important that people become aware of the trails, the story of the land and use of the land

Carrie Day: I was on a project where a a totem of partnerships were created and marked as a place for all

THE DRAWDOWN

Carrie Day: Great change is slow. We always take time to be respectful to the water and to consult our elders. We carry this responsibility with dignity and respect.

Kevin Bien (Zoom chat): Thank you for the opportunity to listen in - it is my honor to...

Someone said early that the river shouldn't divide us but unite us. We're it so interesting that when the lower dam was dismantled recently for maintenance and the artificial impoundment was removed people flocked to the river with interest and wonder. =>

PUBLIC ART & ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

Robert Haarman (Zoom chat): Hi, I'm a non-native relative working for justice; both human and not. In a shelter, in a parish (Gitchewea Kateri) and protesting the continual displacement of non-sheltered people. Excited this is happening and Indian led.

Denise Mayotte: It's wonderful when artists work can help us learn about the water like the place - based work of Angela Two Stars at Bde Maka Ska.

Tiffany R Beckman (Zoom chat): Feel free to call on us in the future Dr. Tb and JG

Elder June Blue questions what could have happened if Columbus had the intention/interest of learning from and working with Indigenous people. The disruption of Indigenous systems and practices - we could heal those timelines through this work

ABILITY TO TOUCH THE WATER

Kevin Bien: I remember the drawdown - it was a moment of awe and interest. Part of it is thinking about what can be done to restore the River.

Rob Haarman (Zoom chat): Yes Kevin! It was awesome. I asked and was gifted a couple pieces of driftwood.

Sima noted "place connected with identity and wellness"

How are we going to preserve the sacredness of this site? Actually touching the water. Blake Slette @ UMN studying Falls for design project - under apron is part of original wall of falls. Another section of the actual falls still exist under the park. Can some of the infrastructure be removed to expose the falls?

Struck by first stories going to river, Fort Snelling, site and place, your stories not visible or known by others, an alienation from the site

Thinking of the river as a living organism, the idea we need to take care of the river to take care of ourselves. Poignant, non-Western way to think about what we can do here, what is appropriate to do here. Struck by every time it is said.

EXPERIENCE OF SPIRIT ISLAND

The notion of being able to walk on, touch the place of Spirit Island. To hear people long for that is powerful. Need to think more carefully about what that experience could become as well as land under apron.

Notion of reaching out to the other side of the falls, like Blake in his project. What happens with the other side is just as important as what we are doing with Lock & Dam. Something we need to consider and collaborate with Park Board, other entities.

The relationship of humans and the environment back to post-glacial times.

Land Back is very important to my future generations

RIGHTS OF THE RIVER

The concept of the River having legal rights. Can we engage with people who have done this before? How can the Falls and the Mississippi gain the Western idea of legal rights in the future.

Can this site be part of international conversations about Rights of Water?

SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE

The rights of the River must be central to plans for the site - this comment especially encouraging in terms of cherishing rather than developing this site, as so much development is planned that does not contribute to the protection, health, and cherishing of the River

Appreciate the "land back" discussion as well as personal stories.

Interest in climate and Native justice.

Elder June Blue acknowledges how difficult this conversation is to begin and she would like to bring these kinds of conversations to the U of M

Peter is hopeful that that the voices on the panel will continue to be centered and leading through the project

Cathy resonates with the project because of ancestral background - water connection. Ancestors never leaving resonated too, Americans of disconnected Native Americans from Sacred spots. This is about coming back to what's there. Native cultures can be reborn, even though we've been taught economic ways of colonization.

Pat - Teaches at U of M. Learned that this is more complex than we think, relationship of Dakota and Ojibwe, we think of Indigenous people as place-based. Place is territorial as well as specific, valuable insight and resource.

mike - river as center for Native Americans, way to transport, communicate, and ways to use resources vs. the way we see it as resource for energy and manufacturing. Property and land centeric vs. the River as a participant and life and integration resource.

to - the thought of being removed, forcefully disconnected. Change of names, and building on formerly significant places. Legacy of place being taken away. Projects like this reclaiming and recognizing long and deep history. Background in history, deeper center - mentioned in conversation, as well as other sites on the Mississippi and I believe. Place and removal of association of place is super important.

dave - thinking about place, relational perspective of place stood out. End of the day, European history more prone to transactional/resource-based vs relational perspective that I heard from Native panel.

HEALING THROUGH CEREMONY

Elder June Blue - ability to flip the script (example of bringing sweat lodges to U of M rather than "harvesting people") focusing on disrupting space now as an Indigenous woman

Inkpa Mani - reaction to waterfalls is for 200 years there has been a lot of money put into the site for the "betterment" of Minnesota but it has ignored Dakota people and Indigenous history on site - what can be done on site to acknowledge it?

Peter Koenig - planting and educating himself on Native plants and Native culture has revealed the difference in world views and how we can grow beyond what we know - project is a way of restoring land and people. Can we go beyond federal land with Land Back?

Interest in living in concert and conjunction with the land

Sima Shahriar - study how we change narratives (involved with the film society across the river). Interested in cross river connection, how do we share perspectives to a larger population? How can we bring stories to a larger audience?

Paul - notes that U of M partnership seems to be in alignment with project goals. Need to know what U of M would like to see

CROSS RIVER CONNECTIONS

LANGUAGE CONNECTED TO PLACE & CULTURE

amy - place and how it fits into rights of nature, the personhood and being. Falls as resource v. seeing it as an ally/relative. space and place being bigger than a spot, land ownership, and resource that will help you in the moment. Broader links and thinking about place.

kate - tied up in many conversation of why are we homeless on our own homeland, that must feel especially wrong. Can't look away from the trauma and history, unlike us who can choose to not know, it's happening from the place closest and always a part of Native Americans

burial mounds in parks as a place where relatives and ancestors were - this stood out. Ancestors never leave.

language tied to place - language evolves with place, understanding the language that evolved with the place it tells you a lot - a powerful link between the Indigenous languages. Language and culture are inseparable. Ed - school administrator, part of language program, how to teach the language? Relational understanding - if we take a word and put it in a zoo it's still a word! No, spirit of that animal is no longer in relation to its surrounding. Language is key in understanding the place

mike - joseph nicholas nicollet - 1836, fort snelling. Surveyor and cartographer, map in 1843 with John Charles Fremont - explorers that interfaced with Native Americans. Honoring by keeping names

sarah - the word desecration was used many times. Violent treatment of a sacred place. Understanding what it means for a place to be sacred. Trying to understand how to approach other peoples sacred places.

Question for Inkpa - selected to do major sculpture at Waterworks by the site.

Elder June Blue - importance of sweat lodges (personal experience with bringing her out of addition). "The culture is the cure" - ceremonies are the thing that will heal the earth.

"When we heal, the earth heals, and our ancestors heal, and our descendants heal. We heal many timelines." - Elder June Blue

Sweat lodges have helped with PTSD for army veterans

Importance of ceremony on the land, and ability to reclaim that

Relationship between river and the university (when the land was sold the funds were used to purchase endowment land for University) - they are inextricably tied

pat - notion of sacred has been made problematic because it implies there are places we don't care about. Sacred is a place that is reserved and other places can be done with as we please, poking on the concept.

sacred - used as translation

Brad - conveyance is part of that bigger disposition study. Looking at all options, we don't want the structure to disintegrate, archeologist - my role is to look at historic pieces, lock is historic. Federal government also does things different than how we're doing this well, but this is wonderful, the collaboration. Working group on disposition study - some are in that disposition list, but if you want to be included but Amanda is know - pretty similar to what Amanda is doing.

Edna brazatis - question might be specific about the wall the Corp build to preserve the Falls. Also in the realm of discussion. Wall underwater that was built back in the 1880's

amy dietz - work with rights of the Mississippi river, indigenous-led, and trying to get rights for this. We are looking for help and guidance to navigate, especially seeing this movement. Want to connect

amanda - we want to share our process and relationship building as a model for how to change the process for the better. We don't have all the answers but happy to have that conversation.

TAKEAWAY QUESTION: HOW CAN YOU BE AN ALLY?