What We Heard...

Community Conversation 1 Recap

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
- Rob Haarman (Zoom chat): Is there talk or action on transferring this "property" to an Indian org?

  CD: As sovereign Nations, any one of our Nations and bands can have this conversation. Fol will be in this discussion - it is my understanding that if any of the Dakota tribes are interested in the property, then discussion is open. It is a significant discussion with landback.

  This is a unique project since we are centering Native voices first. If this thought of Landback continues - the vision is there and the conversation can continue. - Vision turns into action.

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 Biehn (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. Wasn't it so interesting that when the lower dam was dewatered recently for maintenance and the artificial impoundment was removed people flocked to the river with interest and wonder. =

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 it 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?
- 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.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE

- Ted Tucker - rites of nature and water, appreciated these comments particularly. In an urban area - need to think not just of humans, but River as a living thing and life force. Broader view than how we've been thinking about it
- brad - corps of engineers, disposition study and conveyance piece. The story and treatment of Native American community, and to be able to talk in an open way is progress.
- 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 concentric vs. the River as a partner and life and integration
- liz - 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, teepee center - mentioned in conversation, as well as other sites on the Mississippi and Bdote. 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. Spiritual/relational viewpoint.

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 all of it. 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 wolf and put it in a zoo is it still a wolf? 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 Freemont - 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.
- 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

Please share your perspective as a Native person, a resident, or stakeholder (businesses along the riverfront, arts & cultural organizations, educational organizations, schools, churches...)

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 (Gitchitwaa Kateri) and protesting the continual displacement of non-sheltered people. Excited this is happening and Indian led.
- Angela Two Stars: As a displaced Dakota, my relatives were displaced after the uprising of 1862. I returned home after 150 years in exile and reconnecting with the land has been such a valuable part of solidifying my identity. My grandfather who is a Native artist - this opportunity brought me home. I incorporate a lot of language in my work, our identity about our state - tying our cultural symbols - I was separated from this knowledge. I keep saying moving back because it is my ancestral land. I'm learning all of these stories as well because I didn't have access to this knowledge with our sacred sites. Public art is great because I can share with people. I am learning with my art. I tie in water, it comes up a lot in my work - it is what I am drawn to - shapes my teaching and learning. - have work at Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and Bde Maka Ska
- 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.
- Jeremiah: Welcome home Angela. My roots to being, an ally for Native American and Indigenous people, I'm a descendant of Norwegian immigrants. I'm a white man who has Native Indigenous people who have access to the current land. We dwelling and we encounted with the National Parks. Who better to entrust them to. Park Rangers are the ones who are the ones who are the ones who