

## The Falls Initiative

Community Conversation 2 - March 16, 2022

Zoom Chat Transcript

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**5:02pm Friends of the Falls:**

Thank you for joining today's event. Please note this meeting is being recorded and will be posted online for public view. The program will begin shortly.

**5:03pm karenmonson:**

I am not seeing the presentation yet.

**5:04pm Friends of the Falls:**

Correct. The program will begin with a video and streamed through Zoom shortly. The in-person attendance is gathering. Thank you for your patience.

**5:05pm Ed Minnema:**

Kindly please mute yourself, thank you.

**5:08pm Carolyn:**

The hosts should be able to mute everybody except the presenter.

**5:09pm Friends of the Falls:**

Thank you for joining today's event. Please note this meeting is being recorded and will be posted online for public view.

Please remain on mute during the project introduction and panel discussion. We will divide into breakout rooms later and invite participants to join the conversation. The Zoom moderator may manually mute participants prior to that time.

**5:11pm Friends of the Falls:**

View these graphics in detail on our website: <https://thefalls.org/engage/#commconvo2>

**5:19pm Friends of the Falls:**

There will be a Q&A after the panel discussion where we will take questions from the live and

Zoom audience. We invite you to submit questions throughout the discussion using the chat.

**5:19pm Friends of the Falls:**

Robert Lilligren is President and CEO of the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI), an appointed member of the Metropolitan Council, and Vice Chair of the Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors (MUID). Robert served for 12 years as the Vice President of the Minneapolis City Council, the first Tribal member elected to public office in the City of Minneapolis. He is enrolled in the White Earth Ojibwe Nation.

**5:20pm Friends of the Falls:**

Sharon M. Day, Ojibwe, is the Executive Director and a founder of the Indigenous Peoples Task Force (IPTF), formerly known as the Minnesota American Indian AIDS Task Force. She is an environmental activist and has led 20+ Water Walks since 2011, walking over 10,000 miles to offer prayers for these rivers. These extended ceremonies have occurred along the banks of the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Missouri, the Cuyahoga and Salt Rivers.

Wakinyan Skye LaPointe is Sicangu Lakota, an Indigenous Human Rights advocate, and Co-Convener of the Mni Ki Wakan: Indigenous Water Decade. He centers Lakota knowledge, language, and ways of life in his work across human rights, working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and youth.

John Shepard is an Associate Professor in the Hamline University School of Education and Assistant Director of the university's Center for Global Environmental Education. John's work as a media producer, writer, and educator is largely focused on the intersection of nature and culture. His public service experience includes board memberships with Project Environment Foundation, The Rivers Council of Minnesota, the YMCA, the International Crane Foundation, and the Trust for Public Land.

Whitney Clark, Executive Director, Friends of the Mississippi River. During his 24-year tenure, Whitney has led FMR's growth from a start-up group with one full-time employee to one of Minnesota's largest and most effective conservation organizations. Whitney has extensive experience in environmental policy, lobbying, advocacy and education campaigns, partnership building around environmental issues and fundraising.

**5:22pm Friends of the Falls:**

<https://thefalls.org/about/#timeline> provides project milestones since 2016.

**5:26pm Friends of the Falls:**

There will be a Q&A after the panel discussion where we will take questions from the live and Zoom audience. We invite you to submit questions throughout the panelist presentations using the chat. We will post responses to all questions on our website following the event, including those we do not have time to respond to during the Q&A.

**5:33pm Friends of the Falls:**

Visit <https://mnikiwakan.org/> for more information about Wakinyan and Thorne LaPointe's work.

**5:34pm Friends of the Falls:**

Friends of the Mississippi River engages people to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities region: <https://www.fmr.org/>

**5:40pm Cathy Fuller:**

I have a question for the panelists:

Has there been any discussion of giving the Falls land in trust to our local Native people? I recently read a compelling story in the Atlantic Magazine about giving National Park Lands back to Natives.

Here is the link:

**5:42pm Friends of the Falls:**

This is the Immersive Exhibit Robert mentioned. Explore from your desktop using Google Chrome: <https://thefalls.org/immersive-exhibit/>

Thank you for your question, Cathy.

**5:42pm Cathy Fuller:**

[www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/05/return-the-national-parks-to-the-tribes/618395/](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/05/return-the-national-parks-to-the-tribes/618395/)

**5:45pm Friends of the Falls:**

The Q&A will begin shortly. Please feel free to submit other questions if you are interested in hearing more from the panelists. Thank you.

View this screen on your own computer: St. Anthony Falls Drawdown: A River Revealed:

[https://waterstothesea.org/SA\\_Falls\\_Drawdown/](https://waterstothesea.org/SA_Falls_Drawdown/)

John will play the 2nd video icon on the left.

And show one of the 360 degree images.

**5:49pm Peter Gove:**

The Rebirth film can be accessed on the TPT web site.

**5:51pm Friends of the Falls:**

After today's event, share your comments via our online survey:

<https://new.maptionnaire.com/q/3wl7hpa3pdx7>

**5:55pm Katie Tuma:**

Has anyone read the children's book "The Water Walker" by Joanne Robertson

**6:01pm Ann Laughlin:**

Can Wakinyan further describe his vision for indigenous water programs? What would they look like?

**6:01pm Friends of the Falls:**

Thank you, Ann

**6:08pm Angela Vig:**

Eya!

**6:10pm Trevor Russell (Friends of the Mississippi River):**

What role might 'river personhood' play in your plans for the river moving forward?

**6:13pm Friends of the Falls:**

Save the date for upcoming Community Conversations: April 12, May 21, June 15.

<https://thefalls.org/events/>

**6:19pm sima:**

This question I appreciate as it is addressing not the people here, rather the millions outside of this group. Meaning do we dare to challenge elementary/middle school/high school education?

So many of us learn our history later in life.

**6:21pm Friends of the Falls:**

Thank you Trevor and Sima for your questions. If we do not have time to respond in the Q&A, we will post responses as part of our post-event resources at [TheFalls.org](http://TheFalls.org)

**6:24pm Ron:**

Beyond individual recognition and investigation, acknowledging our non Native advantages from colonialism, isn't incumbent on us to take on the colonial systems that have power over these decisions?

**6:29pm Friends of the Falls:**

In-person attendees will be moving from the auditorium into small group discussions. We will move virtual guests into breakout rooms momentarily as well. Please bear with us for a few minutes.

**6:30pm Phoenix Heller:**

Thank you

**6:31pm Karen Zeleznak:**

Thank you for this conversation!!

**6:31pm WabashaL:**

Duwe Owas, Wopida Tanka

**6:32pm Friends of the Falls:**

Save the date for upcoming Community Conversations: April 12, May 21, June 15.

<https://thefalls.org/events/>

**6:33pm Linda Eagle Speaker:**

Thank you

**6:34pm Friends of the Falls:**

In-person attendees will be moving from the auditorium into small group discussions. We will move virtual guests into breakout rooms momentarily as well. Please bear with us for a few minutes as the auditorium clears.

**6:37pm karenmonson:**

Thank you! This project is a paradigm shifting effort as it goes forward.

**6:40pm Peter Koenig:**

I have to leave, but Thank you especially the elders for being here. I will see you again!

**7:01pm Friends of the Falls:**

Thank you for joining tonight's community conversation. The next event is April 12 - we hope to see you there.

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***Direct messages and chat comments submitted while in Breakout Rooms were not transcribed, but are reflected in our post-event summaries.***