

The Falls Initiative

Community Conversation 5 - June 28, 2022

Zoom Chat Transcript

4:59pm 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.

We recommend selecting 'Speaker' view or to 'Pin' the 'Production' screen by clicking the three dots on the Zoom screen playing slides.

5:06pm 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.

5:07pm Friends of the Falls:

We were welcomed by Carrie Day Aspinwall of CDA Enterprises. She facilitates meetings of the Native Partnership Council. Previously, Carrie engaged residents, stakeholders and institutions across Minneapolis' seventy-one neighborhoods in her role with the City of Minneapolis Neighborhood & Community Relations Department. Carrie is an enrolled citizen of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe/Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

5:11pm Friends of the Falls:

David Malda is a Principal at the landscape architecture firm GGN. His work explores the role of landscape in connecting people to each other through experiences of the land. Recent and current projects include the vision plan for John Treviño Jr. Metropolitan Park in Austin, Texas, the Civic Park at Hemisfair in San Antonio, Texas, and Lincoln Park at the Long Beach Civic Center in California. Narrative and engagement informs his designs, resulting in projects with impacts that extend beyond their sites. David holds a Masters in Architecture and a Masters of Landscape Architecture from the University of Virginia.

5:15pm Friends of the Falls:

David's visuals exploring preliminary design concepts are available here:

<https://thefalls.org/resources/commconvo5/>

5:31pm Friends of the Falls:

Kjersti Duval is Director of The Falls Initiative, CEO of Duval Companies, and founder of Studio Civic | Duval. Kjersti is committed to innovative planning & design methods that authentically engage audiences, implement iconic urban development, and enable creative place-making. She also brings expertise in legislative & government relations, rooted in a decade of direct experience shaping and passing federal, state, and municipal policies and appropriations. Kjersti holds two Masters degrees from Harvard Graduate School of Design, one in Urban Planning and one in Landscape Architecture.

5:34pm Friends of the Falls:

Soon, we will move into Part 2 of tonight's event. Virtual guests will converse as a group, and we'll record comments on a virtual whiteboard. We invite you to respond and ask questions about DESIGN CONCEPTS and NEXT STEPS.

5:35pm Friends of the Falls:

With DESIGN CONCEPTS, we hope to hear your priorities and interest in the various design concepts presented.

When discussing NEXT STEPS, we are excited to hear your initial thoughts about how to build authentic Native-centered programs at this site.

5:40pm Friends of the Falls:

We will transition into the discussion shortly. Please spare us a few minutes as our facilitators to find their seats.

5:50pm Friends of the Falls:

We will transition into the discussion shortly. Please spare us a few minutes as our facilitators to find their seats.

5:56pm Edna Brazitis:

[Edna sent the group an image of the 1805 Treaty with the Sioux Nation.]

6:01pm Tess D:

They went so fast, it was hard to follow, but it all seemed great! Also curious about how any of this would relate to concerns I've heard about the water supply intake upstream.

6:02pm Christine Goepfert:

Dam removal will be considered for the Lower Lock and Lock and Dam 1 when the Corps starts a dispo study for those two structures this fall.

6:06pm Bob Winston:

Thanks Christine - re: the LSAF Lock removal, I was under the impression that the study was done in the past 2 years and the decision was now pending?

6:08pm Christine Goepfert:

The study for Lower/#1 started initially with the Upper study. It was separated out due to some federal legislation that was meant to allow for this Upper study to move ahead sooner. Since then, Lower/#1 has been tabled to finish up the Upper study. The Corps indicates the other studies will be taken up this fall tho.

6:10pm John Anfinson:

Blake Sletti presented an MA capstone project at U of M on restoring the east falls. Has that come up? Removal of LSAF L&D and L&D 1 would define the river below the USAF L&D. Today's presentation makes it hard to separate the projects.

6:12pm Friends of the Falls:

Thanks John. Blake has presented to the Native Partnership Council, and his research certainly reinforced the idea to let water flow at the site again. What that looks like and what the relationship and impact would be with lower lock changes and removals is still very much to be determined.

—Tell us a story.

6:15pm Friends of the Falls:

—What is your perfect day at the Falls? What would you do, where would you go, when is it, with whom are you going (Human, non-human), can you do these things now?

6:15pm Mona Smith:

John, the difficulty separating projects in the vision might be that the visioning has been done centering indigenous history, people and indigenous processes.

6:16pm Friends of the Falls:

—Who should we talk to as we develop programming and partnerships?

6:19pm Mona Smith:

Thorne and Wakinyan are part of the NPC

6:21pm Rebecca (she/her):

The Hennepin County Library - in particular Minneapolis Central Library as it's geographically the closest library to Owamniyami 😊

6:21pm Crystal Boyd:

I think that local historical societies in the watershed would be happy to support Native-led initiatives at the Falls. For example, groups in Golden Valley are starting to think about H̄aḥa Wakpadaŋ / Bassett Creek and how it connects to the Mississippi River just above Owamniyomni.

Also, the Science Museum of Minnesota might have some helpful guidance on river programs and interpretation.

6:22pm Friends of the Falls:

Thank you Rebecca and Crystal! I have Crystal's contact information, but Rebecca we'd love to connect with you directly about opportunities at the library.

6:23pm Christine Goepfert:

Yes there are many people in the region who never go to the river. Would they if they had specific opportunities when they are there? But definitely have to engage them where they are.

6:24pm Rebecca (she/her):

There are several Native focused schools in Minneapolis - Center School (high school), Anishinaabe Academy, and Bdote Learning Center - that might be good to reach out to regarding how educators and students might want to engage.

6:28pm Rebecca (she/her):

There's also Dream of Wild Health and Hope Flanagan who is a cultural educator with the organization. She also holds an incredible amount of knowledge about plants and ecosystems. Thinking about the plants and animals in the area, I would be interested to hear from Hope what plants she would recommend be re-introduced or kept in the area.

6:29pm Bob Winston:

Well, the draw-down of the LSAF was proof positive of the efficacy of such a project re: who might NEWLY utilize the area. The river bottoms were happily overwhelmed along with us kayakers enjoying the newly exposed (wild) features!

6:30pm Crystal Boyd:

Is the University of Minnesota involved through its St. Anthony Falls Laboratory there on the river?

6:31pm Susan Russell Freeman:

The physical neighbors such as the Guthrie, Mill City Farmer's Market/Museum and those across the river as well such as the Mpls Film Society. They may already be involved like Owamni but just wanted to mention

6:31pm Friends of the Falls:

To Crystal's question -- yes, we have connected with the Laboratory to understand their work and priorities along the river.

6:32pm Friends of the Falls:

Susan -- you can find us at the Mill City Farmers Market on July 2! We're also looking to engage the market organizers about their experience and goals.

6:34pm Rebecca (she/her):

I'd also be interested to hear from an organization like St. Stephen's or Streetworks who do street outreach for people experiencing homelessness to hear their perspective on supporting the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

6:39pm Crystal Boyd:

I had a near-perfect day at the Falls! My mom and I parked across the river (for free) and walked across the Stonearch Bridge. We ate at Owamni and enjoyed the view. It would have been great to have an opportunity to access the water, enjoy more green space, and see signage that included Dakota language and history.

6:39pm Friends of the Falls:

Thank you for your thoughtful comments and participation thus far. Sign up for our newsletter to receive updates about upcoming events and engagement opportunities this summer.

<http://eepurl.com/g57K0X>

6:41pm Susan Russell Freeman:

Thank you Rebecca, so needed! I'm a neighbor of the Central library and of the river as well. I am so impressed with how the library engages the unhoused. It could be as powerful in the natural setting on the river.

6:41pm Susan Keller:

I would love to have a picnic of indigenous foods, wade in the river, and watch wildlife like river otters.

6:41pm jvanheel:

I'd like to be able to stand near the bottom of the Falls and look upward into to the sun filled spray.

6:42pm Lama Hasan, GGN:

crystal, that really relates to what we've been hearing in our native partnership council meetings too

the importance of hearing and seeing language

6:44pm Joan Kreider:

perfect day? i remember wonderful days, back 40 plus years ago, going to nicollet island for outdoor concerts. recent experience going out on the walkways on the east bank, from the power plant—it was when the water was at peak height and the spray was big. very exciting! by the way, i love the west bank plans, especially the highlighting of spirit island. to signage: i would love more comparisons of how it has changed over the time since european conquest.

6:45pm Peggy Larson:

I've run several 5Ks where the last leg is over the Stone Arch bridge and it's always been energizing to get to that point with the water running underneath you and feeling like you're in the middle of the river. I think the use of your prompt this evening could be a good way to reach out to more of the general public/neighborhood citizens. With so many large issues to deal with today, a prompt question like that is a happy, comfortable way for people to start thinking about this planning who may otherwise feel "Oh gosh, I have no brain space left to deal with this issue!".

6:46pm **Rebecca (she/her):**

I echo that language representation is important, especially of the Indigenous languages of the area. Thank you for the signage comments!

6:46pm **Susan Russell Freeman:**

More opportunities to be ON the water - equal access for all to have that experience

6:46pm **Susan Keller:**

Yes, I think we need access to see the falls from different points of view and to put in a kayak or canoe and paddle the river.

6:48pm **Joan Kreider:**

like the idea of having a view of falls from below. the closer we can get to the experience of big water, the better. it's good to induce a feeling of awe.

6:49pm **Joan Kreider:**

yes, i have paddled canoe all the way through and its an amazing change of perspective

6:49pm **DAVID STEVENS:**

Regarding the riverfront interpretive signage, the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board has funded a grant to plan an update to the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Trail, which was installed in 1996 and definitely needs refreshing in form and content. The project hasn't gotten off the ground, but perhaps that is just as well, and that signage reassessment can now be done in partnership with other riverfront program efforts like the Falls Initiative and Water Works. - Dave Stevens (Mill City Museum/Minnesota Historical Society)

6:50pm **Susan Keller:**

Wilderness Inquiry takes groups of paddlers on to the river. And the rowing club at the U of MN uses the river to practice.

6:51pm **jvanheel:**

35 years ago my brother canoed on the river from Lake Street to just below the lower lock, at night. Very interesting.

6:51pm **Crystal Boyd:**

How about lighting? When I was a student, it was dark and a little scary by the river, so I wished there were more streetlights. But now I better understand that the Mississippi River is a major

migratory flyway and that light pollution creates challenges for birds, so maybe less lighting is better. Might be hard to balance different lighting needs.

6:52pm Susan Russell Freeman:

Thank you for this wonderful and informative session - I learn so much each and every time

6:52pm Rebecca (she/her):

Thank you for hosting the conversation and listening to community in the planning process. I need to head out, but am looking forward to seeing where the project goes. Thanks again!

6:52pm Friends of the Falls:

Thank you Susan and Rebecca. We look forward to connecting again soon.

6:52pm jvanheel:

How about lighting the Falls with electricity generated at the east side of the Falls.

6:53pm Joan Kreider:

thanks for your work on this everyone!

6:54pm Friends of the Falls:

Sign up for our newsletter: <http://eepurl.com/g57K0X> to receive updates about upcoming events and engagement opportunities this summer.

6:54pm Christine Goepfert:

Thank you for sharing this exciting initiative and making space for our feedback!

Direct messages were not transcribed.