



Smithsonian

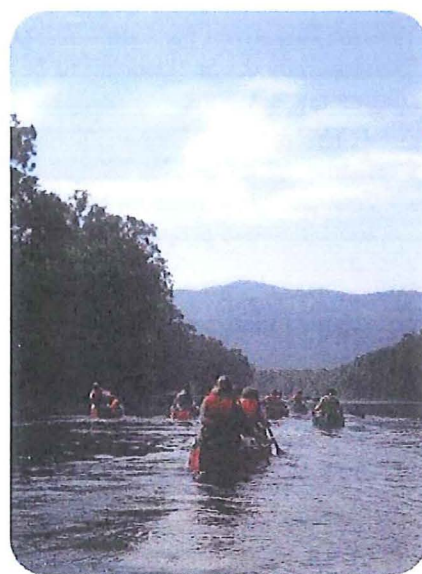
Water Project

Traveling Exhibition & Community Engagement Initiative

Water is a critical resource, an essential component of life on our planet. Minnesota's waters are increasingly vulnerable – demanding a new level of water consciousness and collective stewardship.

Water is invested with deep societal meaning. Our cultural relationship with water – the memories we cherish, the spirituality we find at the water's edge, our deeply ingrained sense of identity and history – offers an opportunity to examine our relationship with water through a fresh lens.

The Smithsonian Water Project is a **traveling exhibition and community engagement initiative in partnership with the Minnesota Humanities Center**. Using the tools of story, history, faith, ethics, and the arts – in addition to science – the initiative is designed to reconnect Minnesotans to the preciousness of our waters and the need to become more actively involved in their protection.



Project Goals:

- Raise the water IQ of targeted communities – helping them see and understand water beyond the tap
- Explore water's connections to local culture and history
- Cultivate water consciousness across sectors – faith, culture, education, recreation, health
- Inspire people and communities to connect their value of water to action
- Catalyze new water leadership and enduring engagement

Local. Participatory. Greater Minnesota focused.

Six Greater Minnesota communities will be invited to explore the rich meaning of water – to tell their local water stories and to collectively envision their water future. The Smithsonian exhibition will reflect back to the community its love of the lakes and rivers and the value of water underground – celebrating the desire to pass our waters on to future generations undiminished, and offering opportunities to connect water consciousness to thoughtful action and stewardship.

Through a year-long engagement before the Smithsonian exhibition arrives, communities will convene leadership across sectors, create companion exhibitions, develop high-profile programs, events, and stewardship projects, conduct local story-collecting initiatives, and create media projects to facilitate community-wide conversations about water and its value to the community and the state.

Smithsonian. A brand that attracts & engages.

The Smithsonian is an iconic, trusted brand – it attracts attention, community involvement, and thousands of visitors. With Smithsonian tours to 33 Minnesota communities – from Austin to Zumbrota – the Humanities Center has a track record of success.

- Proven catalyst for cross-community relationship building
- Engages students and teachers through field trips, classroom tools, teacher professional development, student-designed exhibit elements
- Generates positive press – in local markets and beyond

We had several visitors that mentioned they happened to notice the sign on the highway and had 10 minutes to spare, so they just came to check it out. Most of them were still here an hour and a half later!”

- Carolyn Holje, Dassel Area Historical Society, Dassel, MN

Project Exhibitions

Water: Resource for Life – A Museum on Main Street Traveling Exhibition

Developed by the Smithsonian to fit the specific needs of small towns and small cultural organizations.

- Traveling to six Greater Minnesota communities; six weeks in each community
- Communities develop companion exhibition, public programming, and stewardship projects
- Smithsonian, Minnesota Humanities Center, and its statewide partners provide training and assistance in local exhibition and program development, stewardship projects, promotion, and evaluation

Water Wise – A “Do-It-Yourself” Exhibition

Designed to allow larger museums and colleges to fabricate and customize a Smithsonian exhibition on water.

- Hosts create localized exhibition elements, develop local public programming
- Carleton College, for example, is interested in creating an exhibition for Northfield

Project Partners

The Minnesota Humanities Center, in a proposed partnership with the DNR and MPCA, will recruit, enlist and secure the commitments of other partners and stakeholders in Minnesota. A partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society is also being explored.

The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service’s *Museum on Main Street* program will lead the development of the exhibition, in collaboration with multiple Smithsonian partners, including Smithsonian Affiliations, the Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Consortium for the American Experience.

Timeline

Winter 2014 - 2015

Statewide partner cultivation and host community selection

Spring 2015 - Spring 2016

Host communities convene partners, develop local exhibition, programming and stewardship projects

May 2016 – March 2017

Smithsonian Exhibition tours six Minnesota communities and surrounding regions. Six weeks at each site with local exhibits, student field trips, public programming, events, and stewardship projects.

