



Minnesota
Humanities
Center



For Immediate Release

**Detroit Lakes Final Stop for Smithsonian Exhibit
Water/Ways Connects Communities Through Water and the Humanities
Exhibit Opens at Becker County Historical Society on February 25, 2017**

February 16, 2017—ST. PAUL, Minn.—The Minnesota Humanities Center is pleased to announce the final stop of the Minnesota tour of *Water/Ways*—a new Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition. *Water/Ways* will open in Detroit Lakes at the Becker County Historical Society on Saturday, February 25, 2017. The *Water/Ways* Detroit Lakes Opening Ceremony will be held from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. on February 25 at the Becker County Historical Society in Detroit Lakes. *Water/Ways* is a traveling exhibit that focuses on the relationships between people and water—how water connects story, history, faith, ethics, the arts, and science, all through community.

Water/Ways reveals the central nature of water in our lives by exploring how Americans use water, how water unites communities, how water affects every element of life, and how Americans care for our water and protect this valuable resource for the future. As Governor Mark Dayton mentioned in his 2016 Water Summit speech, “we have critical water quality problems in Minnesota . . . we cannot ignore them. We have to face up to them and work together, to solve them.” *Water/Ways* addresses water resource issues while seeking active solutions to real water problems in the host communities and our state.

Minnesota is one of only five states chosen by the Smithsonian to launch this new traveling exhibit. Developed as part of the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program, *Water/Ways* is a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, state humanities councils across the nation, and local host sites.

“Detroit Lakes can be a leader in forming a new water ethic,” said David O’Fallon, President of the Humanities Center. “*Water/Ways* offers exhibits, events, scientific information, and, most of all, opportunities to meet in community and strengthen our shared commitment. I applaud the Becker County Historical Society for hosting *Water/Ways* and bringing together an array of Detroit Lakes-area partners.”

The *Water/Ways* exhibit is specially designed for viewing in smaller, rural communities and has visited six Minnesota communities in 2016 and 2017. Detroit Lakes is the exhibit’s final stop in Minnesota. Through the *Water/Ways* traveling exhibit, each host community tells its local water stories and envisions the future of water. *Water/Ways* has visited these host sites in Minnesota:

- **New London/Spicer (Kandiyohi County)**, Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. June 25 – August 7, 2016
- **St. Peter (Nicollet County)**, Nicollet County Historical Society. August 13 – September 25, 2016
- **Red Wing (Goodhue County)**, Goodhue County Historical Society. October 1 – November 13, 2016
- **Sandstone (Pine County)**, Audubon Center of the North Woods. November 19, 2016 – January 1, 2017

- **Lanesboro (Fillmore County)**, Lanesboro Arts. January 7 – February 19, 2017
- **Detroit Lakes (Becker County)**, Becker County Historical Society. February 25 – April 9, 2017

As a part of *Water/Ways*, a companion exhibit, *We Are Water MN*, has been developed in conjunction with the Humanities Center’s *Water/Ways* partners, which includes the National Endowment for the Humanities, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minnesota Department of Health, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Section of the American Water Works Association, to tell the Minnesota story. This interactive story collecting exhibit focuses on individuals’ relationships with and responsibilities to water.

“In Minnesota we enjoy a quality of life defined by our water. And the opposite is also true: we enjoy a quality of water—be that good or bad—defined by our life. Right now, 40% of the water in Minnesota is not meeting standards set for safe for swimming, fishing, or drinking,” said Britt Gangeness, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Outreach Specialist. “The *Water/Ways* and *We Are Water MN* exhibits at the Becker County Historical Society are a call for action. This is your last chance to view *Water/Ways* in Minnesota and learn about the specific water issues in our communities, rediscover the reasons we care about clean water, and join a growing community of Minnesotans concerned with water quality.”

The Minnesota *Water/Ways* exhibit tour began on June 25, 2016 in New London/Spicer and ends on April 9, 2017 in Detroit Lakes. The public can participate in the conversation to raise awareness of water on social media at [#wearewatermn](https://twitter.com/wearewatermn). Minnesotans can enter the **#WeAreWaterMN Instagram Photo Contest** to win a variety of prizes (details at pca.state.mn.us/wearewatermninstagram). For more information about exhibit host sites, the Detroit Lakes Opening Ceremony, tour dates and hours, and community activities visit mnhum.org/waterways. To learn more about the nationwide *Water/Ways* tour and other MoMS traveling exhibitions, visit MuseumonMainStreet.org.

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