



Minnesota
Humanities
Center



For Immediate Release

**New Smithsonian Exhibit Debuts in Minnesota
Water/Ways Connects Communities Through Water and the Humanities
Minnesota Tour Begins in New London/Spicer on June 25, 2016**

June 15, 2016—ST. PAUL, Minn.—The Minnesota Humanities Center is pleased to announce the debut of a new Smithsonian Institution exhibition—*Water/Ways*—that will open at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center near Spicer on Saturday, June 25. *Water/Ways* is a free 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 institutions. This exhibit is specially designed for viewing in smaller, rural communities and will visit six Minnesota communities in 2016 and 2017. Through the *Water/Ways* traveling exhibit each host community will tell its local water stories and envision the future of water. The Minnesota host sites for *Water/Ways* are:

- **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

“*Water/Ways* is a conversation about water,” said David O’Fallon, President of the Humanities Center. “It invites us to consider how we—all of us—will take care of this basic resource. *Water/Ways* offers exhibits, events, scientific information, and, most of all, opportunities to meet within our communities. *Water/Ways* is about uniting all of us around the common need and care of water. I applaud Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center for hosting and bringing together an array of partners to *Water/Ways* in New London/Spicer.”

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 include 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 is an interactive story collecting exhibit that focuses on individuals’ relationships with and responsibilities to water. *We Are Water MN* raises awareness about the quantity and quality of Minnesota’s water, connecting exhibit-goers to active water solutions.

“The Minnesota Pollution Control (MPCA) is thrilled to be one of six statewide partners in the Minnesota *Water/Ways* exhibit,” said Britt Gangeness, MPCA Outreach Specialist. “The state partners worked together to develop a companion exhibit called *We Are Water MN*, which includes both scientific and community perspectives on solving our water quality challenges. It invites the visitor to listen to neighbors’ perspectives on water and to identify how they will protect water.”

The ***Water/Ways* Opening Ceremony** will be held at 10 am on Saturday, June 25, 2016 at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center near Spicer. The Minnesota *Water/Ways* exhibit tour begins on June 25 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**. For more information about exhibit host sites, the Opening Ceremony, tour dates, and community activities visit mnhum.org/waterways. To learn more about the nation-wide *Water/Ways* tour and other MoMS traveling exhibitions, visit MuseumonMainStreet.org.

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