The cover image is by Harold Fisk, 1944, plate fifteen, sheet one, showing stream courses from *The Alluvial Valley of the Lower Mississippi River*. The map covers sections of Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee.

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. This means each author holds the copyright to her or his work, and grants all users the rights to: share (copy and/or redistribute the material in any medium or format) or adapt (remix, transform, and/or build upon the material) the article, as long as the original author and source is cited, and the use is for noncommercial purposes.

*Open Rivers: Rethinking the Mississippi* is produced by the University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing and the University of Minnesota Institute for Advanced Study.

**Editors**

Editor:
Patrick Nunnally, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Minnesota

Administrative Editor:
Phyllis Mauch Messenger, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Minnesota

Assistant Editor:
Laurie Moberg, Doctoral Candidate, Anthropology, University of Minnesota

Production Manager:
Joanne Richardson, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Minnesota

**Contact Us**

Open Rivers
Institute for Advanced Study
University of Minnesota
Northrop
84 Church Street SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Telephone: (612) 626-5054
Fax: (612) 625-8583
E-mail: openrvrs@umn.edu
Web Site: http://openrivers.umn.edu

ISSN 2471-190X

**Editorial Board**

Jay Bell, Soil, Water, and Climate, University of Minnesota

Tom Fisher, Metropolitan Design Center, University of Minnesota

Lewis E. Gilbert, Institute on the Environment, University of Minnesota

Mark Gorman, Policy Analyst, Washington, D.C.

Jennifer Gunn, History of Medicine, University of Minnesota

Katherine Hayes, Anthropology, University of Minnesota

Nenette Luarca-Shoaf, Art Institute of Chicago

Charlotte Melin, German, Scandinavian, and Dutch, University of Minnesota

David Pellow, Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

Laura Salveson, Mill City Museum, Minnesota Historical Society

Mona Smith, Dakota transmedia artist; Allies: media/art, Healing Place Collaborative
# CONTENTS

## Introduction

Introduction to Issue Two
By Patrick Nunnally, Editor

## Features

Future River - The Mississippi in Light of a Lifetime Immersion in Water
By Patrick Hamilton

Princeville and the Environmental Landscape of Race
By Richard M. Mizelle, Jr.

Disturbing the Mississippi: The Language of Science, Engineering, and River Restoration
By Christopher Morris

## Geographies

Maps, Geographies, and the Mississippi
By Len Kne

## In Review

Southern Waters
By Simi Kang

## Perspectives

Climate Change and Rivers
By Paul Huttner and Phyllis Mauch Messenger

The National Park Service’s Mississippi River Forum: Meals with Great Minds
By Lark Weller

## Primary Sources

Global Water Data: We’ll Show You the World, Sort Of
By Kate Brauman

## Teaching and Practice

Toward a Pedagogy of Place: the Bdote Field Trip and Absent Narratives in the Classroom
By Kirk MacKinnon Morrow
Toward a Pedagogy of Place: The BDOTE Field Trip and Absent Narratives in the Classroom

By Kirk MacKinnon Morrow

The lessons we teach, much like the places we inhabit, are multivalent and layered in the stories they tell. At the Minnesota Humanities Center, we have long sought to empower educators to create lessons that recognize and amplify absent narratives, the stories that have been systematically marginalized or left out in classrooms and curricula for generations. By interrogating their own worldviews and personal experiences, educators recognize absent
narratives in their work and develop strategies to surface these stories in a respectful way. Perhaps unsurprisingly, engaging with questions of equity requires a deep knowledge of oneself and a firm commitment to one’s community and relationships. In essence, it is grounded in place—not place in the fickle, cartographic sense, but place as the sum of relationships and physical geography, self and the messy complexity of a shared humanity. A deep knowledge of self is always at once a deep knowledge of place.

That said, if place is the organizing principle through which we can effect the kind of searching personal awareness that, in coalescing among teams of educators, begins to countervail centuries of marginalization and absenting, then there is perhaps no more important place than the one on which we stand. As Dakota artist and scholar Mona Smith enjoins educators involved in Humanities Center programming, “To know who you are, you have to know where you are.” This, at its core, is the purpose of the professional development offering Bdote Field Trip: Dakota in the Twin Cities.* Developed out of the multimedia art and deep mapping project Bdote Memory Map, a partnership between Allies: media/art and the Humanities Center, the trip provides an experiential introduction to absent narratives and the human cost of erasure as Dakota scholars and educators tell stories of this land and its first people.

A circle of stones recognizes the seven council fires of Dakota people. Photo by Michael Murray; courtesy of the Minnesota Humanities Center.
A circle of stones recognizes the seven council fires of Dakota people. Photo by Michael Murray; courtesy of the Minnesota Humanities Center. While the confluence, or bdote, of two rivers at the heart of the Minneapolis/St. Paul area might lend itself easily to metaphors of communities coming together, hearing the lived histories of communities and their relationship to this place surfaces more complex truths.

See the seventeen minute video Know Where You Are - Bdote

Editor’s Note: The video above is linked as such for technical reasons. The original is on the website Bdote Memory Map which is a joint project between The Minnesota Humanities Center and Allies: media/art.

Throughout the Bdote Field Trip, Mona and colleagues Ethan Neerdaels and Ramona Kitto Statley guide participants on walks at sites of significance to Dakota people and share personal stories that shape an understanding of Minnesota as a Dakota place despite centuries of oppression. Throughout the journey, participants come to see different dimensions of a region they call home and open their minds to honor Indigenous ways of knowing and being in relationship to place.

The trip’s crescendo comes at midday when sage is burned and participants gather in circle at the site of Historic Fort Snelling. Situated atop the river bluff surrounded by both a thicket of trees and the incessant din of traffic, the site speaks its rawness. In this circle, Ramona shares of the sacred importance of bdote to Dakota people; of

Throughout the day, participants listen to stories of bdote told by Dakota scholars. Photo by Michael Murray; courtesy of the Minnesota Humanities Center.
how Wita Tanka (Pike Island) is the site of gene-
sis; of how treaties signed here took hundreds of 
thousands of acres of Dakota land; of how 1,600 
Dakota women, children, and elders were force 
marched here from Lower Sioux Agency and held 
in concentration camps after 38 Dakota men 
were executed by the United States government; 
of how a military fort, an airport, and multiple 
freeways were built over these sites of sacredness 
and wounding; of how this duality of trauma 
and birth figures in the story of her own family; 
of how erasure forecloses efforts to engage one 
another in reciprocal learning to this day.

In this moment, something changes for 
participants on the trip. The place speaks to 
them, calls them to action and understanding 
in a way no training seminar could ever hope 
to do. Listening to the incontrovertible, human 
truths of Ramona’s story and grounding in the 
stirring tranquility of the bdote site, the dangers 
of absence and erasure are palpable. Planes 
roar overhead and the fort’s outline looms atop 
the river bluff, offering constant reminders of 
how a dominant narrative has marginalized and 
ignored the humanity of this land’s first people. 
Participants leave feeling an overwhelming desire 
to share what they have learned and do what 
they can to promote healing for this place. This 
is a powerful seed of change that, if nourished 
through practice and collaboration, can create 
real and meaningful engagement for students of 
all backgrounds.

*Bdote Field Trips are open to educators and 
members of the general public. Visit http:// 
mnhum.org/bdotefieldtrip to learn more and sign 
up for upcoming trips.

Recommended Citation

umn.edu/openrivers/article/toward-a-pedagogy-of-place-the-bdote-field-trip-and-absent-narratives-
in-the-classroom/.

About the Author

Kirk MacKinnon Morrow works with the Minnesota Humanities Center on education and public 
humanities programming that amplifies stories absented from public discourse to promote a more 
equitable and engaged future. He has a background in comparative literature and is a frequent writer 
of essays and short fiction.