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INNOVATIONS

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from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

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The cover image is of tending water and listening at Water Bar in Greensboro, North Carolina, courtesy Shanai Matteson, Works Progress, and Water Bar & Public Studio.

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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>

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE NINE

By Patrick Nunnally, Editor

Welcome to Issue 9 of *Open Rivers*, which begins our third year of publication! Our tagline, “Rethinking Water, Place & Community,” speaks to our sense that there is a conversation taking place in diverse professional sectors and academic disciplines about the relationships between our human communities and our water communities, and that there is an audience for this conversation, both on campus and in the broader water-oriented professional community.

Accordingly, this issue’s theme of “Innovation” highlights some of the projects that we think are forming a basis for a new way of thinking, seeing, and doing work.

The Water Bar project is becoming increasingly well known as an imaginative way to form community by talking about water. As Shanai Matteson’s article demonstrates, what started as a very simple concept—create a bar that serves



Tending water and listening at Water Bar in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Image excerpted from the article, this issue, “Water Bar: Water is All We Have” by Shanai Matteson, image courtesy Shanai Matteson, Works Progress, and Water Bar & Public Studio.

tap water—has turned into something much bigger and is forging systemic change through new relationships. The work of the Lower Mississippi River Foundation and the Quapaw Canoe Company likewise points the ways to the community-building that will need to take place if we are to continue to enjoy a vibrant, life-giving relationship with our rivers. True community-building requires new ways of seeing; after reading Andrea Carlson’s vivid piece, “On The Uncompromising Hand,” and seeing the accompanying images/video, you may never be able to see St. Anthony Falls as simply an engineered landscape without also recognizing the erasures of community-valued places.

Our usual columns support the concept of “seeing things differently.” Quinn Feller writes about the project of devising a largely visual way to convey the notion of a mountain as a place where three watersheds meet. Nancy Buck Hoffman illuminates an overlooked question about the historic

Fort Snelling complex by asking, “What water did the troops drink?” and telling a story associated with a bottle excavated during archaeological investigations. I write about the enduring value that the nonprofit River Action brings to its local riverfront, pointing out how the organization’s innovative work from 35 years ago has been carried forward in a way that responds to changing circumstances to tell a powerful story. Our “Teaching and Practice” column, co-authored by four undergraduate students from Macalester College, discusses the perils and fun of summer fieldwork and shifts the temporal scale; River Action has been an organization roughly twice as long as these students have been alive. Finally, Margaret Flood reviews an exhibit on the many ways our encounters with all forms of water shape our health, our perceptions of space, and sense of time.

Happy reading!

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About the Author

Patrick Nunnally coordinates the River Life Program in the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Minnesota. He serves as editor for *Open Rivers* and was one of the lead scholars for the University’s John E. Sawyer Seminar, “Making the Mississippi: Formulating New Water Narratives for the 21st Century and Beyond,” funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.