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RETHINKING WATER, PLACE & COMMUNITY

WATER @ UMN

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from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

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The cover image is of The East Bank of the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota and the Mississippi River from the Washington Avenue Bridge. Image courtesy of Patrick Nunnally.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE TEN

By Patrick Nunnally, Editor

Welcome to Issue 10 of *Open Rivers*, which serves as a milestone in at least two ways. First, we have achieved “double digits” in terms of issues, which many publications never achieve. Thank you to the many, many people who have made the journal happen over the years. Second, this issue focuses at home, at the University of Minnesota, where the breadth of work on water is simply staggering. The number of faculty affiliated with Water Resources Sciences numbers well over 100, and it seems that water is becoming part of many of the University’s broad initiatives, such as Grand Challenges Research and MnDrive. This is truly an exciting time to be researching, teaching, and learning about water at the University of Minnesota!

Traditionally, people have thought about water through lenses shaped by scientific inquiry and engineering expertise. Of course, those perspectives are well represented in this issue with articles about the Large Lakes Observatory at the University of Minnesota Duluth, the Natural Resources Research Institute, also in Duluth, and the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center on the St. Paul campus.

Across the country, in the state of Minnesota, and at the University, the recognition is growing that water concerns pervade issues that have not been usually thought of as involving water. It wasn’t too many years ago that discussions of agriculture did not have water at their center; as the article



The East Bank of the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota showing the Washington Avenue Bridge and the Mississippi River. Image courtesy of the author.

in this issue by Ann Lewandowski and her colleagues makes clear, University researchers and educators are now involved in this conversation in several diverse ways.

While some research appropriately looks at solutions to well understood problems, other work redefines problems in terms we had not thought of by reminding us of perspectives that we can't overlook. Simi Kang's discussion of the challenges faced by Vietnamese fisherfolk in New Orleans should expand our considerations of all the regional water problems that are discussed in purely technical or broad policy terms.

There is much more to "Water @UMN" than can be contained in a handful of articles, though. In this issue we introduce a feature that we call "Roundup," which contains short pieces from over a dozen researchers, technicians, and program leaders addressing a very broad range of water concerns. See these pieces for insights into music and computer modeling, views from global perspectives and how one class is involved with a local national park, and for highlights from several community-engaged programs. We also have our usual range of columns in this issue: a book review and discussion of water-centered pedagogy, pieces that focus on "where" water comes to our attention most prominently, a discussion of a perhaps-unlikely source for new insights on water, and a summary of an exciting

national water conference taking place this summer in Minneapolis.

Many writers across a number of genres and media are trying to make water problems simple: if we just do this, or value that better, then we'll "fix the water crisis." In fact, most issues involving water are complex and will remain complex and will require all the perspectives represented here, plus others, to address them successfully. For better or worse, university researchers and teachers are charged with revealing the complexities in matters that we often think of as simple. It's what we do, and, as the perspectives contained here illustrate, the contributions we make are both local and regional, exist at varying scales and diverse sectors of society, and affect all of us nearly every day.

When we began to plan this issue months ago, we involved the University's Institute on the Environment and the Water Council to help us spread the word and make sure we didn't overlook obvious perspectives. Through these two organizations, we were in touch with a number of people, laboratories, and institutes that we did not know of before. The issue is richer for those perspectives, and we thank all of the individuals who contributed.

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.