



Smithsonian Water Project

Host a Smithsonian exhibition in your town

The Smithsonian is coming to town! Museum on Main Street (MoMS) is a partnership between the Smithsonian Institution the Minnesota Humanities Center that brings high-quality traveling exhibitions to small towns across the state. The Humanities Center, in partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), is currently accepting applications to host the *Water: Resource for Life* exhibition during its 2016-2017 tour of Minnesota.

Application Deadline: May 12, 2015
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About Museum on Main Street

Museum on Main Street enables Minnesotans to experience Smithsonian-produced exhibits in their own communities and gives the local cultural organizations hosting the exhibit opportunities to enhance their roles within their communities and regions, engage new audiences and volunteers, expand their knowledge and resource bases, and develop skills that can be applied toward future exhibits and programs. For many past host communities, the experience has been transformative. More information at the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street website: www.museumonmainstreet.org.

About *Water: Resource for Life*

Water is a critical resource. An essential component of life on our planet, water powers the environment’s engine, impacting climate and helping to shape and sculpt the landscape.

Water’s impact on humans is not just biological and environmental; it serves as a source of peace and contemplation. We cherish our connections to nature, particularly the sights, the sounds, and the sense of place we feel at the water’s edge. Many faiths revere water as a sacred symbol. Authors and artists are inspired by the duality of water – a substance that is seemingly soft and graceful that is yet a powerful and nearly unstoppable force.

Water also plays a practical role in American society. The availability of water affected settlement and migration patterns. Access to water and control of water resources have long been a central part of political and economic planning. Human creativity and resourcefulness provide new ways of protecting water resources and renewing respect for the natural environment. This substance that is central to life is also invested with deep societal meaning. Many of the core questions about the relationship between people and the natural environment can be considered through a look at water.

Who is eligible to host the exhibit?

Non-profit Minnesota organizations (museums, historical societies, libraries, preservation groups, main street development groups, or chambers of commerce) located in communities with populations of approximately 10,000 or less.



Hopeful. Participatory. Community-building.

Six Greater Minnesota communities will be invited to explore the rich meaning of water – to tell their local water stories and to collectively envision their water future. The Smithsonian exhibition, and local exhibit and programs, will reflect back to the community its love of the lakes, rivers, and water underground, celebrating its desire to pass them on to future generations undiminished – and offering opportunities to connect water consciousness to thoughtful action and stewardship.

Through a year-long engagement before the Smithsonian exhibition arrives, communities will convene leadership across sectors, create companion exhibitions, develop programs, events, and stewardship projects that facilitate community-wide conversations about water and its value to the community and the state.



Experiences that Reach, Teach, Connect, Empower, Endure

The true magic of Museum on Main Street stems from the learning and community engagement opportunities that spin off of the main exhibition themes. Funds, training, and extensive support from statewide partners are available to communities hosting the exhibition. Through one-on-one consultation and specially designed workshops, the Humanities Center and project partner, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, will work closely with each host organization for 12 months before the exhibition opening to support partnership-building, program and exhibition development, and overall project capacity.

Potential Programs

- Reading and discussion programs
- Concerts
- Film and discussion series
- Speakers
- Art, performances, community mural
- MPCA field work observation day
- Rain garden or shoreline planting workshops
- Water Chautauq or festival
- K-12 field trips, lessons, service projects
- Community-wide water conservation challenge
- Peer-to-peer sharing of best practices for farmers
- Tours of water treatment facilities
- Paddle & picnic learning tours
- Contests: photography, art, short story
- Community-wide stewardship project

Potential Partners

- Faith communities
- Libraries
- K-12 education, colleges
- Watershed Districts
- Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- U of M Extension
- Parks/ Park Service
- Lakes Associations
- Conversation, fishing & hunting groups
- Tribal nations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Lifelong learning/ senior groups
- Arts & music organizations
- Regional and local media partners
- Civic groups: Rotary, League of Women Voters
- Farming/food
- Businesses
- County government
- Health/wellness
- Scouts, 4H
- MPCA regional staff
- DNR Project WET

What are the venue requirements for the exhibit?

- At least 800 square feet of space and eight-foot ceilings
- Handicapped accessible with bathroom facilities for visitors
- At least 25 hours per week of public operating hours
- Secure area for exhibit displays, plus 100 sq. ft. storage space for exhibition crates



What is provided by the Minnesota Humanities Center for selected host sites?

- Rental cost of the Smithsonian exhibition for a six-week period;
- Up to \$1,500 in funds to support local exhibition development and public programming;
- Fundraising materials and support;
- A two-day training workshop and a two-day installation workshop to orient your site to the exhibition content, assist with the development of local companion exhibition and programming, and review installation and shipping procedures (travel expenses provided);
- Promotional tools including exhibit banners, posters, brochures, postcards, teacher resources, docent handbooks, press kit, website, social media tools; statewide promotion, and PR support;
- An exhibition support manual detailing project planning, promotion, and evaluation;
- Ongoing consultation from the Humanities Center and state partners to assist with exhibit and program planning. Host sites will join a “community of host communities” who will share ideas and resources for maximizing impact of the exhibition and related programming.

What are the host organizations responsibilities?

- Secure appropriate venue for 6-week exhibition schedule; supervise exhibit space during open hours;
- Identify project director and assistant project director to coordinate the project and attend all required meetings, direct installation of the exhibition and provide leadership for engagement of community partners;
- Develop a network of collaborating organizations supporting the exhibition and related programming;
- Develop a companion exhibit that relates the themes of water, past and present, to the history and culture of your community or region;
- Plan and implement at least four public programs or events in conjunction with the exhibit;
- Provide in-kind support for the exhibition and related public programs;
- Track staff and volunteer time, facilities, and other resources donated to the project;
- Support project evaluation and report on local outcomes;
- Pay for (or arrange in-kind) shipping of the exhibit to your community; prepare exhibit to ship to next site.

What are the criteria for host community selection?

- Collaboration – Preference will be given to communities that show evidence of a multi-sector network of organizations collaborating to:
 - ◊ explore water’s connections to local culture, history, and identity
 - ◊ cultivate increased water consciousness and stewardship across sectors: arts, culture, K-12 education, faith, local water entities, library, Tribal nations, parks, food/agriculture, health, business, government
- Critical water issue or need, stewardship project tie-in, water stewardship success story to amplify. Evidence that the project could help the community build awareness and action around an important local water issue or issues
- Public Programming – Creativity and strength of proposed public programming, including K-12 engagement and water stewardship projects
- Local cultural and historic connections to water
- Geography – the Humanities Center intends for the tour to serve as many different parts of the state as possible

Application process and project timeline

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| Application due | May 12, 2015 |
| Host communities announced | June 1, 2015 |
| State Planning Meeting (St. Paul) | Mid-late July, 2015 |
| Host communities recruit partners, develop local exhibits & programming | June 2015 – May 2016 |
| Installation Workshop (first host site) | June 24-25, 2016 |
| Water Project exhibition tour | June 25, 2016 – April 9, 2017 |



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