WE ARE WATER

2019-2021 Evaluation Completion Report

Minnesota Humanities Center

MINNESOTA
MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Minnesota Historical Society

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

Table of Contents

Evaluation Prepared By:

Creation In Common, LLC
651-647-4443
www.creationincommon.com

Bryn Meyer, Evaluator

Dana Gillespie, Reporting

Lindsey Burdick, Project
Management

Carlo Cuesta, Principal

Executive Summary

Relationships in the Time of COVID

We Are Water MN is a collaborative partnership between the Minnesota Humanities Center, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Minnesota Departments of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources. More importantly, We Are Water MN is an innovative approach to community engagement that centers relationships at the heart of capacity building. This approach proved highly resilient and adaptive in the face of a once-in-a-century pandemic.

The Humanities Center and its State Partners selected six Minnesota communities to host the We Are Water MN traveling exhibit that showcases information and local stories about Minnesota's defining natural resource, water. Despite the pandemic, these Host Sites brought together a community of partners to develop the local exhibits, plan public activities, both virtual and in-person, and engaged their communities around a shared relationship and responsibility to water.

While the planning period for We Are Water MN Cohort Three started in September 2019, due to pandemic-related delays, exhibit and event activities took place from October 2020 to September 2021. The six Cohort Three Host Sites included:

- University of Minnesota – **Morris**: August 20 – October 19, 2020
- Blue Earth County Historical Society (BECHS) – **Mankato**: October 22, 2020 – March 5, 2021
- Hmong Museum – **St. Paul**: January 7 – March 8, 2021 **(Outdoor Exhibit)**
- City of Rochester – **Rochester**: March 11 – May 10, 2021
- North St. Louis SWCD – **Chisholm**: May 13 – July 12, 2021
- Meinders Community Library – **Pipestone**: July 15 – September 13, 2021

In past cohorts, the We Are Water MN traveling exhibit and events presented Host Communities with an opportunity to come together to share and reflect on their local stories and connections to water. Once the pandemic hit in March 2020, there were serious concerns that the We Are Water MN engagement model could not succeed in an environment of social distancing.

Thankfully, those concerns proved unfounded. In fact, it was the We Are Water MN relationship-based approach to capacity building that made possible a surprising number of adaptations and innovations. This allowed the Host Sites to develop an array of creative content and activities to engage community members around a shared love of water.


As the program evaluator, the Creation In Common team is working to help the State Partners better understand the strengths and potential of the We Are Water MN approach in helping communities make connections and build relationships to water, and better understand the role they can play, both individually and collectively, to advance local, regional, and statewide efforts to protect Minnesota's defining resource.

Utilizing a developmental evaluation framework, this report summarizes data collected over a two-year period and identifies key findings to advance We Are Water MN's impact in the future. Creation In Common continues to utilize the *Social Measures Monitoring System* in conjunction with the *Minnesota Humanities Center Approach* to

help understand and assess capacity building across all activities (see Analysis Framework on page 7, for more information).

Key Findings
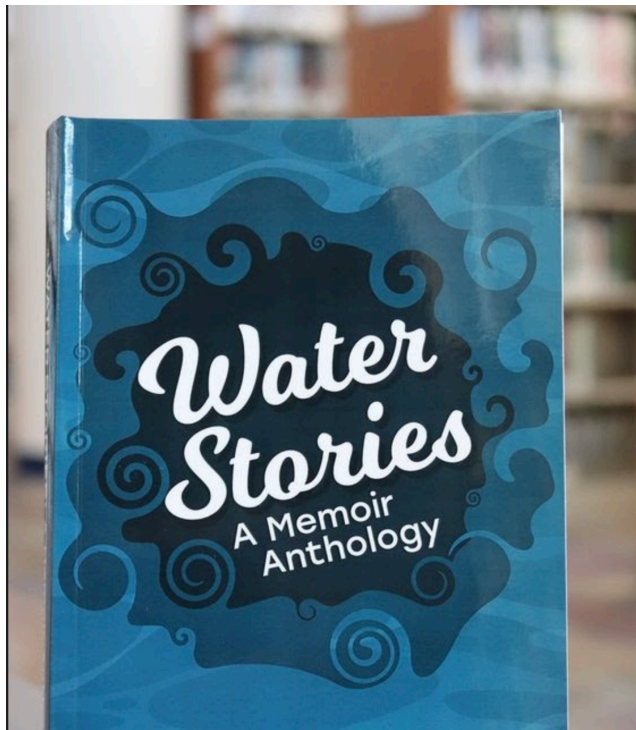
Findings from the two previous We Are Water MN tours have proven the program to be a successful initiative that builds strong local and statewide networks that promote positive social norms and enable the development for a community-wide vision for water stewardship. The most recent cohort put this to the test, leaning into those networks and building new ones in order to deliver on the programming. While there are still areas for improvement, there is clear evidence that the We Are Water MN approach to community engagement…

- Provides a strong foundation for partnership development, especially under stressful circumstances.

- Is an excellent platform for innovative community programming.

- Presents a variety of perspectives and viewpoints to people and their communities that might otherwise be marginalized.

- Has educated and inspired thousands of Minnesotans across 25 communities.

Key findings from the We Are Water MN evaluation include:

State Partner Collaboration

The Minnesota Humanities Center and the State Partners have developed a strong collaboration that provides a critical foundation for the program as whole. This collaboration was central to the COVID-related innovations and adaptations observed by the evaluator.

These include…

- Working together to develop an outdoor exhibit as a backstop to museum closures.

- Working directly with Host Sites on innovative content and activities.

- Improving systems for shared work among the State Partner collaborative to build additional program capacity.

Building a Host Community

The pandemic did not affect all Host Sites equally. Chisholm and Pipestone were initially scheduled to host the We Are Water MN beginning in April and June of 2020, respectively. After the initial pandemic lockdown, they were rescheduled for May and July 2021. Despite these challenges, Host Sites were successful at developing active partnerships based on shared work (See Table 1).

Table 1: Host Site Relationships by Status, Narrative, and Tenure

	Morris	Mankato	St. Paul	Rochester	Chisholm	Pipestone	Totals
Baseline Relationships	**45**	**51**	**49**	**47**	**62**	**15**	**269**
Relationships Pursued	23	14	9	18	16	15	95
Added to Baseline	16	12	19	10	8	7	72
Total Relationships	**39**	**26**	**28**	**28**	**24**	**22**	**167**
Absent Narrative	*12*	*4*	*23*	*2*	*6*	*3*	*50*
New	*22*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*8*	*14*	*68*

- A total of 167 relationships based on shared work were successfully pursued.

- Sixty-eight new relationships were made, despite social distancing.

- 30% of relationships were with partners who represent an absent narrative

Engaging Communities

Host Site community engagement showed the most innovation, with the introduction of virtual events and other socially distanced engagement opportunities. This enabled the Host Community network to remain engaged with one another, strengthen informal social bonds, and facilitate knowledge exchange, while keeping the community safe.

- A total of 4215 visitors participated in 51 events or activities.

- Over half of the events (22) were conducted virtually.

- Event themes included:
  - Seventeen on the Conservation and Preservation of Water Resources
  - Fifteen events presented an Absent Narrative
  - Six had an Historical focus
  - Five focused on the Arts
  - Four presented an Agricultural perspective
  - Four were Recreational

Engaging with People

Across the six Host Sites, a total of 7,038 estimated visitors engaged with the We Are Water MN exhibit. Based on a Visitor survey, 249 respondents indicated the experience had advanced their learning, increased their willingness to share new found knowledge, and increased their willingness to take action.

- 85% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I learned something new about our water resources."

- 78% reported the experience presented a different perspective from their own regarding water resources.

- 64% indicated they were 'likely' or 'very likely' to change how they personally use water.

Analysis Framework

Social Measures Monitoring System

The Social Measures Monitoring System (SMMS) is grounded in a multilevel community capacity model (MCCM) based on decades of study into the factors that make some communities better than others at finding solutions to local problems. SMMS was used to evaluate relationship building across all activities in the We Are Water MN project.

Community capacity is described as the "interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community."[1] The SMMS provides a useful framework for assessing capacity building efforts for water resource protection across multiple levels of community (Figure 1).

Figure 1: SMMS Capacity Levels[2]

---
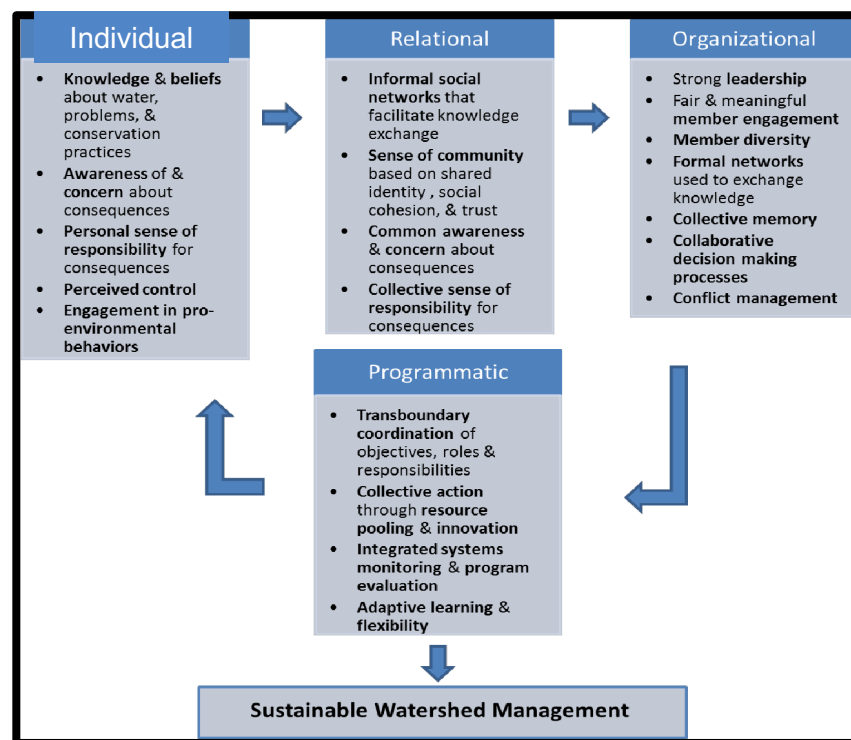
[1] Chaskin, R., Brown, P., Venkatesh, S. & Vidal, A. (2001). *Building community capacity*. New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter.

[2] Davenport, M.A. (2013). Social measures monitoring system overview. Report prepared for the Clean Water Fund Tracking Framework. St. Paul, MN: Department of Forest Resources, University of Minnesota.

Humanities Center Approach

The Humanities Center Approach is a relationship-based approach to community capacity building that can be applied to all levels of the SMMS to ensure that engagement efforts are fair, legitimate, and effective. The approach breaks down as follows:

1. <u>Build and Strengthen Relationships</u>: Strong relationships built on equity, respect, and trust increase a community's capacity to find solutions by drawing upon local knowledge, expertise, resources, and stories.

2. <u>The Power of Story and the Danger of Absence</u>: If strong relationships are built on equity, respect, and trust, then stories are the building blocks. Asking someone to share their story is a sign of respect. Sharing your own story in return is an act of trust. These small steps are key to building an equitable community where all members are empowered to share their stories, experiences, and viewpoints. However, if the narratives of some members of the community are absented from the collective narrative, then the local knowledge, expertise, and resources of these members will be absent as well.

3. <u>Learning From and With Multiple Voices</u>: A relationship-based approach to community building requires a healthy dose of humility. No single perspective has a monopoly on knowledge and wisdom, and there is no one right way to solve problems. Adopting this attitude makes it possible to learn from the multitude of experiences and knowledge that exists within a community.

4. <u>Amplifying Community Solutions For Change</u>: Once relationships have been built, stories learned, and knowledge shared, the resulting community will have a greater capacity for problem solving because it can access the resources of all its members.

Move to Developmental Evaluation

In prior cohorts, evaluators deployed a more traditional evaluation design using a standardized, mixed-methods survey approach to assess host site progress and outcomes. While results indicated progress toward program goals, the design was inadequate in terms of capturing how or why that progress was being made.

Traditional evaluation is most effective when applied to "measuring predetermined outcomes achieved through a linear cause-effect intervention" (Patton, 2006). However, the Humanities Center's relationship-based approach to capacity building is, by

definition, emergent and non-linear. Practitioners should not approach relationship building with a set of predetermined programs and activities, but instead allow the process of learning from and with a diverse group of partners to generate innovative program ideas and opportunities. To that end, the We Are Water MN evaluation design was revised based on a development approach. See Table Two for a comparison of the two approaches.

Table 2: Traditional Evaluation vs. Developmental Evaluation

Traditional Evaluation	Developmental Evaluation
Purpose: Supports improvement, summative tests, and accountability.	Purpose: Supports development of innovation and adaptation in dynamic environments.
Roles and Relationships: Positioned as an outsider to assure independence and objectivity.	Roles and Relationships: Positioned as an internal team function integrated into the process of gathering and interpreting data, framing issues, surfacing, and testing model developments.
Accountability: Focused on external authorities and funders based on explicit and pre-ordinate criteria.	Accountability: Centered on the innovators' values and commitment to make a difference.
Options: Rigorously options-focused, traditional research and disciplinary standards of quality dominate.	Options: Utilization focused so that options are chosen in service to developmental use.
Measurement: Measure performance and success against predetermined goals and SMART outcomes.	Measurement: Develop measures and tracking mechanisms quickly as outcomes emerge; measures can change during the evaluation as the process unfolds.
Evaluation results: Detailed formal reports, validated best practices are generalized across time and space. Can engender fear of failure.	Evaluation results: Rapid, real time feedback, diverse, user-friendly forms of feedback. Evaluation aims to nurture learning.

Traditional Evaluation	Developmental Evaluation
<u>Complexity and uncertainty</u>: Evaluator controls design and implementation and the evaluation process.	<u>Complexity and uncertainty</u>: Learning to respond to lack of control. Staying in touch with what is unfolding and responding accordingly.
<u>Standards</u>: Methodological competence and commitment to rigor, independence; Credibility with external authorities and funders; Analytical and critical thinking.	<u>Standards</u>: Methodological flexibility eclecticism, and adaptability; systems thinking; creative and critical thinking balanced; high tolerance for ambiguity; open and agile; teamwork and people skills; able to facilitate rigorous evidence-based perspectives.

Adapted from: Patton, M.Q. (2006) Evaluation for the Way We Work. <u>The Nonprofit Quarterly</u>. Vol. 13 (1): 28-33. Retrieved via <u>http://www.scribd.com/doc/8233067/Michael-Quinn-Patton-Developmental-Evaluation-2006</u>

This developmental approach is superior for three main reasons. First, it embeds evaluation at the point of process, allowing evaluators to observe how and why improvements are being made. Second, developmental evaluation is geared to facilitate real-time learning among participants, helping Host Sites to learn from and with each other. Finally, developmental evaluation centers accountability with the Host Sites, defining success based off goals developed in collaboration and partnership with their Host Site Communities.

Revised Evaluation Design

Multilevel Community Capacity Goals

Programmatic Capacity
Programmatic Capacity is characterized by the following strengths: Ability to coordinate activities across organizational or bureaucratic boundaries; Pursue collective action objectives by pooling resources and innovation solutions; and Having systems for monitoring program performance and evaluation in support of adaptive learning.

The following Programmatic Capacity goal and outcomes for the State Partner Collaboration were selected.

Goal 1: Programmatic Capacity
Understanding how State Partners engaged and interacted with each other and with Host Communities.

Outcomes:
- State Partners can describe a shared vision for the We Are Water MN collaboration.
- State Partners can describe shared ways of working.
- State Partners will adopt shared language/understanding regarding the MHC approach.
- State Partners will identify new ways to build community capacity through the We Are Water MN exhibit.

Organizational Capacity
Organizational Capacity is characterized by the following strengths: Fair and meaningful engagement of a diverse group of members or stakeholders; Ability to exchange knowledge through formal networks and build collective memory; and Collaborative decision making coupled with strong conflict management.

The following Organizational Capacity goal and outcomes for the six We Are Water MN Host Sites were selected:

Goal 2: Organizational Capacity
Understanding how the Host Site engaged and interacted with Host Community Partners.

Outcomes:
- Host Sites will work to build relationships with a diverse array of community partners, including local and state nonprofit organizations, government agencies, businesses, and community leaders who are not normally represented in their work.
- Host Sites will establish program goals that reflect the perspectives of their Host Community Partners.
- Host Sites will include Host Community Partner perspectives and stories in the exhibit experience.
- Host Sites will organize events with Host Community partners that reflect shared goals and perspectives.
- Formal Community Partners will publicize and promote exhibits and events to their respective audiences.
- Host Sites will be able to identify contributions of Host Community Partners.

Relational Capacity

Relational Capacity is characterized by the following strengths: Informal social networks that facilitate knowledge exchange; A sense of community grounded in shared values and trust; Development of communal norms such as a common awareness of community environmental concerns, and values regarding collective responsibility.

The following Relational Capacity goal and outcomes for the Host Site Community Partner Networks were selected.

Goal 3: Relational Capacity

Understanding how Host Community Partners engaged with the Host Site to enhance We Are Water MN events and exhibit programming.

Outcomes:
- Host Site event and exhibit planning will help build informal network connections between Host Community Partners.
- Host Community Partners will have an opportunity to engage and interact with each other in new ways.
- Host Sites will include Host Community relational perspectives and stories in the exhibit experience.
- Host Community Partners will publicize and promote the exhibit and events to their respective audiences.
- Host Sites will work to develop relationships with community leaders to address gaps in absent narrative engagement.

Individual Capacity

Individual Capacity is characterized by the following strengths: Knowledge and understanding of environmental and conservation practices; Awareness about local environmental concerns; Having a personal sense of responsibility for protecting the environment coupled with a belief that their personal actions will have an impact (perceived control); Engagement in pro-environmental behaviors.

The following Individual Capacity goal and outcomes were selected for the We Are Water MN Exhibit visitors.

Goal 4: Individual Capacity

Understanding how visitors interact with the Host Community's We Are Water MN events and exhibit experience.

Outcomes:

- Exhibits and events will attract audiences that reflect partner network diversity.
- Visitors will be able to identify and articulate problems with water.
- Visitors will experience a diversity of perspectives through the power of story.
- Visitors can identify and articulate their personal norms regarding responsibility for water resources.
- Visitor engagement around water resources will be assessed and further encouraged.

Humanities Center Approach Goals

In addition to exploring the We Are Water MN program's impact on community capacity building, it was important to look at how the MHC approach was applied in building Host Community Networks.

The following goals and outcomes were selected to help explore the application of the HMC approach during this cohort.

Goal 5: Explore formal and informal network development between host sites and host communities.

Outcomes:

- Host Sites will apply the MHC approach to building a diverse Host Community Network.
- Host Sites will learn to work with and not for their Host Community.
- Host Communities will identify new opportunities for community engagement around water resource protection – i.e., new community programs and projects.

Goal 6: Explore how stakeholder perspective influences capacity building for all capacity levels.

Outcome: Better understanding of how to use the MHC approach to building community capacity.

Embedded Data Collection and Learning

Developmental evaluation often relies on intensive qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, and observational research (i.e., ethnography). Deploying these methods requires the evaluation be embedded in program operations and processes to capture real-time learning within a complex, often uncertain environment.

The objective of developmental evaluation is not to stand apart from the process, but to inform it. Once an element of the process has been clarified and better understood, that new awareness becomes an intervention and an opportunity to adapt.

Data collection for goals one and six were conducted by a focus group of the State Partners and evaluator participation and observation of monthly Partner Meetings.

Data collection for goals two and five were coupled with ongoing relationship coaching of the Host Sites and the collection and dissemination of learning among the Host Sites.

Each Host Site worked with a HMC Coach monthly (increased to weekly as the exhibit opening approached) to strategize and troubleshoot relationship building. Host Sites were encouraged to identify what relationships they wished to pursue and prioritize and develop an outreach approach. Following, the coach would check in on progress and provide recommendations or assistance if the Host Site reported any challenges.

These coaching sessions were captured in meeting notes and supplied to the evaluator providing an ongoing record of the networking process. These notes were then used by the evaluator to develop discussion guides for three Host Site interviews to explore the relationship-building process in more detail.

Initially these interviews were intended to be conducted three months before the exhibit opened, a week after the exhibit opened, and final interviews within the two-to-three weeks after the exhibit closed. However, pandemic-related schedule disruptions decoupled relationship building with the exhibit opening, and the interview cadence was adapted accordingly.

In addition to one-on-one interviews, each Host Site was featured and participated in a Post Exhibit webinar attended by the fellow Hosts, providing an opportunity to share what was learned.

Data collection for Goal Three was taken from coaching notes, interviews, and Host Site event forms.

Goal Four was assessed through We Are Water MN Visitor Surveys, and visitor-submitted Water Stories and Water Drops.

Findings By Capacity Levels

State Partners: Programmatic Capacity

Goal 1: Programmatic Capacity: Understanding how State Partners engaged and interacted with each other and with Host Communities.

Goal 6: Explore how stakeholder perspective influenced capacity building for all Capacity Levels.

Review of State Partner Interim Findings

In previous evaluations, data on the State Partner collaboration was collected through the We Are Water MN MN State Partners Bi-Annual Survey. The survey was administered three times over the course of the We Are Water MN Cohort Two. In each installment of the survey, State Partners reported improvement in their ability to utilize shared language and describe shared ways of working.

In this cohort, the Bi-Annual Survey was retired in favor of a focus group and ongoing ethnographic observation to explore improvement using more qualitative methods.

Findings from the State Partners focus group, conducted in October 2020 were shared in the We Are Water MN State Partner Update interim report. The findings are outlined by Capacity Outcome below.

Outcome 1: State Partners Will Adopt Shared Language and Understanding Regarding Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) Approach.
- The MHC Approach is a relationship-based approach to community engagement and capacity building that has been fully adopted by State Partners.
- The MHC Approach aims to be an antidote to more traditional top-down and transactional community engagement practices.

Outcome 2: State Partners Will Be Able To Describe Shared Ways Of Working.
- The We Are Water MN collaboration is greater than the sum of its parts. State Partners can leverage each other's expertise and resources to innovate more effectively, and problem solve.
- The We Are Water MN collaboration excels at communication, information sharing, and problem solving.
- These strengths were on full display in the State Partner's response to the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19. The team was able to develop both

virtual and outdoor alternatives to the existing We Are Water MN exhibit, giving Host Sites an array of safe options to continue their programming.

Findings from Outcomes One and Two were consistent with previous survey results, giving the evaluator a better sense of the State Partner consensus regarding the strengths of the collaboration.

Outcome 3: State Partners Will Identify New Ways To Build Community Capacity Through The We Are Water MN Exhibit.

- State partners identified that project-based work, such as the We Are Water MN exhibit, provides an excellent platform for deploying the MHC approach to capacity building. Shared work gives host communities an opportunity to develop shared values, norms, and ways of working.
- State partners recognized that the impact of the We Are Water MN exhibit is limited by their sphere of influence. They would like to identify ways to apply the MHC approach to a wider array of programs and contexts, making it more accessible to practitioners outside of the State Partner collaboration.
- Recruiting and training state agency leaders to adopt and practice the MHC approach was identified as a promising tactic to help achieve broader adoption of relationship-based capacity building.

Findings from Outcome Three provided the State Partners with new clarity regarding program objectives. This includes the desire to broaden their sphere of influence by exploring new applications for the HMC approach.

In addition, State Partners identified a promising tactical approach to achieving broader adoption of relationship-based capacity building. This includes obtaining leadership buy-in through targeted recruitment and training.

Outcome 4: State Partners Will Be Able To Describe A Shared Vision For The We Are Water MN Collaboration.

- The State Partners would like to see their collaborative approach to community engagement and capacity building applied on a broader scale. To that end they have identified two capacity-building strategies they would like to pursue in the near term.
  1. The team would like to develop internal systems and structures to better facilitate shared work and maximize the team's existing capacity.
  2. The team would like to explore systems-thinking approaches to identify strategies and tactics that could be deployed externally to help build capacity for change.

Goal 6 Outcome: Better understand how to use the MHC approach to build Community Capacity

Over the last year, State Partner collaborations made progress toward the objectives identified in the interim report.

The State Partners worked together to revise the We Are Water MN cohort design and timing. Cohort Two consisted of six Host Sites who were trained in the HMC approach and hosted the exhibits over the course of 18 months. Each Site hosted the exhibit for two months, and the minimum time allotted for relationship building was six months. The team decided to shorten the cohort timeframe to 12 months, recruit five sites to host the exhibit over the course of 10 months, leaving two months for the exhibit to be displayed at a non-Host Site location, selected to maximize awareness of the program.

It is hoped that this change will increase the number of communities that can be trained and given the opportunity to apply the MHC relationship-based approach. It will also serve to make the approach more accessible to a wider array of programs and contexts (See Outcome Three, Finding 2). However, by shortening the exhibit tour to 12 months, Host Site cohorts' engagement will need to overlap (as one cohort is wrapping up, the next will need to be recruited and trained). This will result in an increased workload for MHC and MPCA, the State Partners most responsible for program coordination.

To make this change possible, the State Partners have worked to improve internal systems and structures to better facilitate shared work (capacity-building objective from Outcome Four), assigning and delegating a wider array of tasks amongst the collaboration.

The new cohort design will also give State Partners an opportunity to pursue the tactic of engaging leadership. The first two months of the 2022 We Are Water MN Exhibit tour will be held at the State Capitol building. The State Partners are working to organize several events aimed at engaging state legislators with the exhibit and program approach in an effort to strengthen leadership buy-in for the project moving forward.

Building a Host Community: Organizational Capacity

Goal 2: Organizational Capacity
Understanding how the Host Site engaged and interacted with Host Community Partners.

Exploring formal and informal network development between host sites and host communities.

Goal 6: MHC Approach
Exploring how stakeholder perspective influences capacity building for all Capacity Levels.

Evaluation Design – Learnings and Adaptations

As with previous cohorts, during the We Are Water MN orientation, Host Sites were facilitated in brainstorming an initial list of potential relationships, organizations, and individuals they wanted to work with during the exhibit tour. This initial list was entered into a Relationship Map tracking spreadsheet, where they were asked to answer the following questions for each potential partner:

- Is this relationship new or already established?
- Is this a formal (organization-to-organization) relationship, or informal (person-to-person) relationship?
- Is this a relationship with a community that has not typically been represented in your organization's work?
- Does this relationship represent an absent narrative (e.g., communities of color, immigrant communities, etc.)?
- Does this relationship represent a professional discipline you do not commonly work with?
- Please choose where you are on the relationship continuum.
    - 0: The relationship has concluded
    - 1: We have made no effort to deepen this relationship
    - 2: We have connected one or two times with potential relationships
    - 3: We have met more than once to discuss partnering
    - 4: The relationship has moved to a partnership
    - 5: We are actively working and planning in partnership
    - 6: We are in a deep relationship with our partners and are creating new ways of working together

These initial questions were found to be too simplistic to effectively capture qualitative distinctions between partners. For example, "Is this relationship new or already established?" begged the question: new to whom? While the We Are Water MN Host Site grant is held by one organization, most Host Sites are a collaboration between two or three organizations, each with its own existing network of established relationships.

For the sake of continuity with past cohorts, new relationships were tracked based on the grant-holding organization. However, moving forward it might be useful to develop a better metric to gauge the relationship starting point.

In addition, many Host Site organizers found the questions to be confusing and hard to answer, indicating that the questions were not well crafted nor applicable to real-world relationship building. Based on these learnings, the evaluator developed a set of metrics better suited to the process.

Relationships - A Functional Typology

A key component to building and strengthening relationships is shared work. Through observation, the evaluator identified the following functional roles performed by community partners which contributed to Host Site "success" at shared work.

Coordination: Assisted the host site in the coordination and production of exhibit content and/or event output.

Content: Provided content or expertise for the exhibit or an event (e.g., providing local content for exhibit panels, or speaking at an event).

Networking: Introduced the Host Site organizers to other potential partners.

Promotion: Provided publicity for the exhibit or events.

Funding: Provided financial support for program events or activities.

These roles are not exclusive. A partner can provide both the role of coordination and networking. However, by assessing which roles a partner performs it provides a more objective measure of the level and strength of their engagement.

Relationships by the Numbers

Host Site relationships were coded across the following traits:
1. Which functional roles did the partner perform in pursuit of shared work?
2. Was the relationship (with the grant-holding organization) *new* or *established*?
3. Was the relationship with an organization, group or individual who represented an Absent or Dominant narrative community?
4. What capacity level does the partner occupy?
   a. Individual Capacity: These relationships were generally with individuals, not associated with a larger organization or group.

b. Relational Capacity: These partners were generally informal volunteer groups, or individuals associated with such groups.
c. Organizational Capacity: Formal organizations, or individuals representing them, who partnered with the Host Site in an official capacity.
d. Programmatic Capacity: Organizations with the capacity to coordinate across boundaries. Often governmental agencies.

Relationships were analyzed for statistical significance using a chi-square test. The following patterns were observed.

Table 3: Combined Relationships by Capacity Level, Tenure, and Narrative

	Individual	Relational	Organizational	Programmatic	Totals
Total by Capacity	**38**	**26**	**77**	**26**	**167**
New	21	9	33	5	**68**
Established	17	17	44	21	**99**
Total by Narrative					
Absent	*18*	*11*	*19*	*2*	***50***
Dominant	*20*	*15*	*58*	*24*	***117***

There is significant association between capacity level and both relationship tenure (new vs. established) and narrative (p-values; .031 and .002, respectively).

The association between capacity level and narrative is relatively straightforward. Absent narrative partners were overrepresented at the individual and relational capacity levels, while dominant narrative partners were more likely to operate at the organizational and programmatic levels. This is not surprising given that it is easier to muster resources and build capacity as a member of the dominant social group. Moreover, programmatic partners are often governmental entities or departments which skew towards the dominant narrative. Only two programmatic partners also represented an absent narrative; both partners are tribal government affiliates.

The cause of the association between capacity level and tenure is not as clear cut. It might be a bi-product of pandemic-related disparities. COVID-19 mortality and morbidity rates fell disproportionately on BIPOC communities. Hence, formal organizations representing these communities logically prioritized pandemic relief efforts over partnering on We Are Water MN, and had a lower risk tolerance for in-person activities and events.

Table 4: Combined Relationships by Capacity Level and Role

	Individual	Relational	Organizational	Programmatic	Totals
Coordination	1	9	52	23	85
Content	38	18	49	19	124
Networking	0	12	23	12	47
Promotion	2	12	47	16	77
Funding[3]	0	0	6	4	10
Total by Capacity	**38**	**26**	**77**	**26**	**167**

The association between capacity level and role type was significant for all four roles tested (p-values; .000 for all associations). This is not surprising given that lower capacity levels might preclude certain roles. For instance, partners operating at the individual level universally provided content, usually as an event speaker, or contributor to the exhibit and/or website. Conversely, if an individual played a networking role, they were operating at a relational capacity level by helping the Host Site organizers make connections using informal networks. Higher capacity partners were also more likely to perform a larger variety of roles.

Table 5: Combine Relationships by Role and Narrative

	Coordination	Content	Networking	Promotion	Funding[4]	Total by Narrative
Absent	12	40	12	17	0	**50**
Dominant	73	84	35	60	10	**117**
Total by Role	*85*	*124*	*47*	*77*	*10*	**167**

A test of partner role by narrative showed some interesting patterns. Partner role was significantly associated with coordination and promotion (p-values; .000 and .040, respectively), but not for content and networking. This is likely a biproduct of the association between capacity level and narrative. Absent narrative partners were more likely to be operating at a lower capacity level which might preclude certain roles. For example, assistance with event or exhibit coordination was more likely to be provided by partners operating at the organizational or programmatic level. However, providing content or networking assistance does not carry the same capacity constraints.

---

[3] Statistical tests for Funding are not reported due to the small sample size.
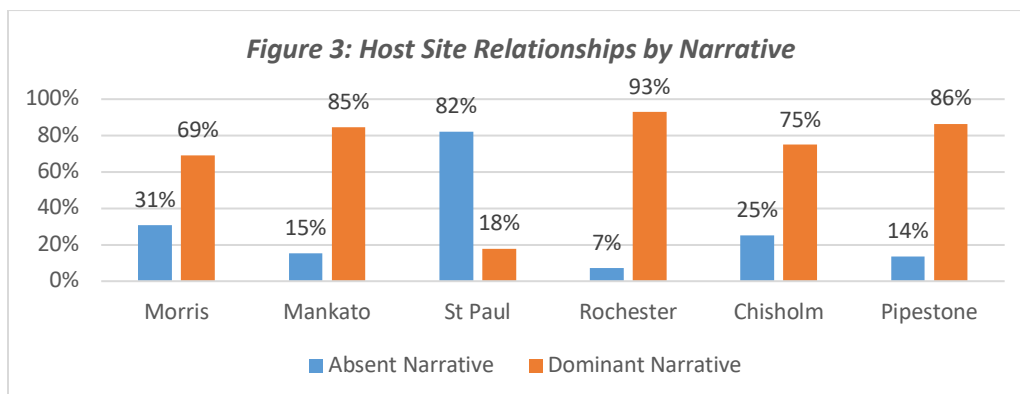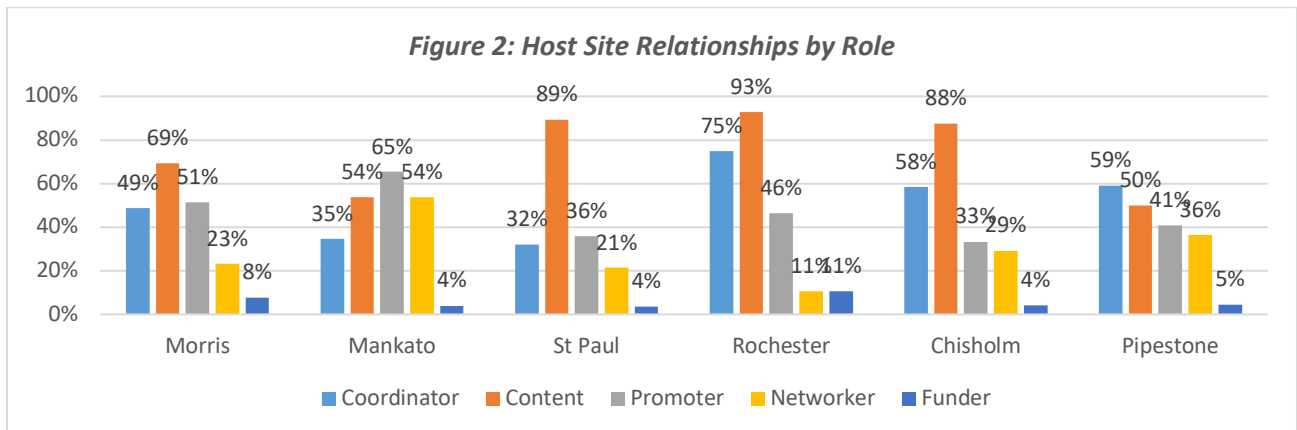[4] Statistical tests for Funding are not reported due to the small sample size.

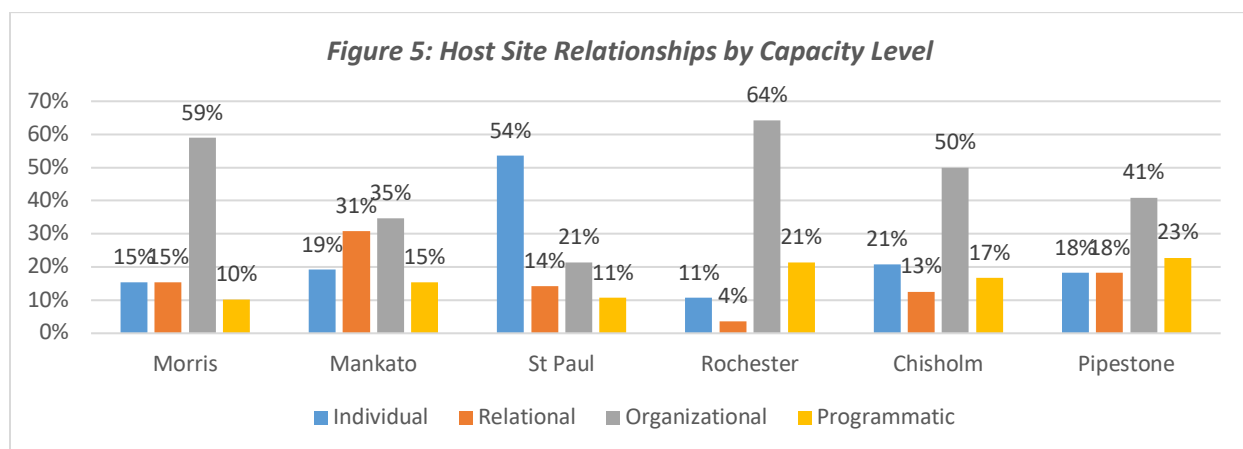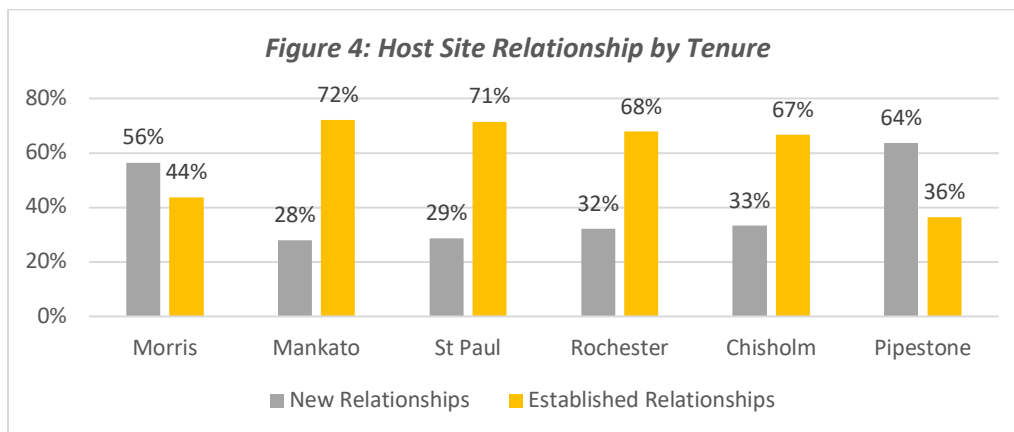*Table 6: Combined Relationships by Role and Tenure*

	Coordination	Content	Networking	Promotion	Funding	Total by Narrative
New	31	50	11	22	2	**68**
Established	54	74	36	55	8	**99**
Total by Role	*85*	*124*	*47*	*77*	*10*	**167**

Role and relationship tenure were significant for networking and promotion (p-values; .004 and .003, respectively), but not for coordination or content. This is likely a biproduct of pandemic-related adaptations. Social distancing forced Host Sites to lean into their existing relationships for introductions to potential partners. This resulted in a disproportionate number of established partners performing a networking role. These adaptations will be covered qualitatively in the following section.

Relationships Qualitative Findings

In adapting to the pandemic, each Host Site deployed a different set of strategies and tactics based on their unique situation. Looking at the Host Site relationships by partner roles, narrative, tenure, and capacity can shed light on their varied approaches and the outcomes they produced.

Figure 2: Host Site Relationships by Role

Figure 3: Host Site Relationships by Narrative

23

Figure 4: Host Site Relationship by Tenure

Figure 5: Host Site Relationships by Capacity Level

University of Minnesota – Morris

The We Are Water MN Morris Host Site was unique in its composition. The program grant was held by the Director from the University of Minnesota Morris Office of Sustainability, who worked in collaboration with a representative from Clean Up the River (CURE), and Stevens County SWCD. The three Host Site organizers were joined by two university interns to form a five-person "Core Team," who worked closely together to coordinate exhibit content, activities, and events.

A benefit of this Core Team design was network capacity. The three Host Site organizers each brought their own personal and professional networks to the collaboration, providing a much wider base of existing relationships for partnership development. This combination of networks proved essential in light of pandemic restrictions. Most of the new UMN Morris relationships were not developed from scratch, but by introduction from other Core Team members, or partners.

Another benefit of the Core Team design was improved event and content capacity. With the help of two interns, UMN Morris was able to pivot much of its content to a

virtual platform, providing community members with a virtual engagement option during social distancing.

Blue Earth County Historical Society - Mankato

Mankato had the dubious distinction of hosting the We Are Water MN exhibit during the worst peak of the COVID pandemic in Minnesota. The exhibit was forced to close on November 13, 2020, in accordance with Governor Tim Walz's executive order tightening COVID-19 restrictions. The exhibit reopened on January 11, 2021, and remained at the Historical Society until March 5, 2021. This extended tour was made possible by the decision of the St. Paul Host Site to opt for the newly designed outdoor exhibit.

Mankato's experience is an interesting case study regarding relationship building and partnership development during difficult times. The results of this experience are as follows:

- Mankato's existing relationships and networks proved to be a critical resource to navigating the crisis. At 72%, this Host Site reported the highest proportion of established relationships. The host site leveraged these relationships to produce and promote their virtual events. Their success shows how past relationship development can, and should, be leveraged in a crisis.

- When trying to work with partners during difficult times, informal partners (e.g., citizens-based groups, volunteer organizations, recreational clubs, etc.) have greater freedom to engage than formal partners (e.g., professional non-profits, government agencies, businesses, etc.). Mankato had the highest percentage of partners coded at the Relational capacity level as was observed during their event organizing. Informal partners, such as Bend of the River Photography Club and Le Sueur River Watershed Network, were critical to producing and promoting event content. Whereas traditional formal partners, such as local area schools, did not have the freedom to take on the additional workload.

- A temporary inability to work together does not prevent relationship building. Mankato initially started with 15 event opportunities for their We Are Water MN programming. The majority of these had to be canceled or delayed due to strict social distancing guidelines. That did not prevent Mankato from initiating relationships with new partners, most notably with Sharon Day a Nibi Walk leader, and Megan Huetmaker with the Minnesota State University Center for American Indian Affairs. They are hopeful these relationships will result in a number of post-pandemic events from an Indigenous perspective.

Hmong Museum – St Paul

Due to indoor social-distancing restrictions, St. Paul organizers opted to host the outdoor We Are Water MN exhibit, making them the first Host Site to trial this exhibit format. The outdoor exhibit was located on University Avenue in St. Paul, in the Little Mekong business district. While an attendance number was not available for the outdoor exhibit, the location was only a few blocks away from the State Capitol and enjoyed a high level of foot traffic.

Given St. Paul's tour was scheduled during the coldest months of winter, the Host Site organizers chose to decouple their events from exhibit hosting. In-person live events were delayed until September 2021. Instead, St. Paul invested significant energy in developing website content to complement the outdoor exhibit. These COVID-related adaptations resulted in some unique relationship patterns.

As with other Host Sites, St. Paul leaned into their existing partner networks to help produce their virtual content. Most of their partners were pulled from the Twin Cities' Hmong community, resulting in St. Paul having the highest percentage of Absent Narrative relationships. Partnerships by role skewed heavily toward content development. This was a result of 17 community partners volunteering to participate in extended Water Story interviews, professionally recorded and produced by a Program Coordinator with the Hmong American Partnership (HAP). St. Paul's experience with online virtual engagement is covered in more detail in the Host Community Network section, below.

City of Rochester - Rochester

Rochester was one of the more unique host sites for this cohort. The lead organizer is an Environmental Education Specialist with the City of Rochester's Public Works Department, and a veteran of the We Are Water MN program, having hosted the exhibit in a previous cohort. This combination of specific organizing experience and municipal professional networks resulted in an impressive water-related event itinerary. Each We Are Water MN host site is required to organize and evaluate four events during the grant period. Rochester evaluated five We Are Water MN events plus, in collaboration with their partners, helped to coordinate at least 12 additional events.

Rochester is a good example of a host site with high Organizational Capacity based on the Social Measures Monitoring System (SMMS). The organizational capacity elements observed were strong leadership, fair and meaningful partner engagement, use of formal networks to exchange knowledge and coordinate activities, and collaborative decision making. Initial findings provide three main observations from Rochester's experience.

First, by operating firmly at the organizational capacity level, Rochester engaged in a much more formal Host Site network. Rochester had the smallest percentage of partners coded at the Individual capacity level, and the highest percentage operating at the Organizational capacity level. This is not to say that interpersonal relationships were not strong, or critical to the success of the collaboration, they most definitely were. However, most of the partners involved were government or nonprofit professionals representing their organizations and operating within those formal authority structures. As a result, community partners had very similar professional norms. There was little need to negotiate differences in ways of working, which appeared to make collaborating on events much easier.

Second, one observed biproduct of Rochester's more formal approach is that partnership development at the informal Relational Capacity level tended to occur one removed from the host site's existing network. Rochester relied on its partners' community networks to connect with local artists, writers, and historians.

Finally, one unintended consequence of Rochester's reliance on formal networks was the lack of active partners representing an Absent Narrative. Rochester had the lowest percentage of partnerships coded as Absent. This difficulty connecting with Absent Narratives was not exclusive to Rochester. The pandemic forced most host sites to lean into their existing networks as opposed to developing new relationships. In Rochester's case, that meant relying on a professional network which disproportionately represented the dominant narrative.

North St. Louis SWCD – Chisholm

Chisholm was originally scheduled to host the We Are Water MN exhibit in April 2020 but was rescheduled for May 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. According to host site organizers, the delay caused significant attrition among their community partners. Of the 62 potential relationships identified during their initial baseline, only 16 of those relationships remained active by the end of the exhibit. Their experience provides an interesting opportunity to explore what it takes to maintain relationships during an extended crisis. The following observations emerged.

First, as was evident in earlier host sites, Chisholm relied heavily on their existing relationships and networks. These established relationships proved critical to the success of their event series. The most notable example was their Spring Fling! outdoor booth event, at which they were able to recruit and coordinate with over ten partners to produce one of the first in-person community events since the start of the pandemic.

Second, when trying to maintain relationships during difficult times, partnering with groups that serve a convening role might prove advantageous. This was observed in

Chisholm's engagement with the North St. Louis County Community Leadership Team. The Team is a small coalition of local organizations including host site community partners such as the City of Virginia and the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability. The coalition has a regular cadence of meetings which helped Chisholm maintain their connection with multiple partners, despite pandemic fatigue. In addition to partnering on events, coalition members provided valuable assistance with We Are Water MN promotions and networking.

Meinders Community Library – Pipestone

Pipestone was originally scheduled to host the We Are Water MN exhibit in June of 2020 but was rescheduled due to the pandemic. Hosting during the summer of 2021, gave Pipestone organizers the opportunity to present exclusively in-person events and activities. They were the only Host Site within their cohort that did not produce a virtual event. However, all events were held outdoors to allow for social distancing.

The easing of COVID restrictions allowed Pipestone to enjoy a more typical hosting experience. The had the highest proportion of new relationships at 64%. Part of their success in developing new relationships during a pandemic was due to their targeted approach to partner selection at baseline. Pipestone's initial baseline relationship list had included only 15 potential partners. Pipestone remained in active partnership with all 15 baseline partners, while adding seven to their final list.

Pipestones' success at securing and maintaining new relationships can lend support for a quality or quantity approach to relationship building. This observation has led the Humanities Center to incorporate relationship goal planning as the first step in Host Site partner development coaching.

Host Community Network: Relational Capacity

Goal 3: Relational Capacity

Understanding how Host Community Partners engaged with the Host Site to enhance We Are Water MN events and exhibit programming.

Events by the Numbers

We Are Water MN events and activities were the locus of most pandemic-related innovations. This is the first tour of the We Are Water MN Exhibit to feature virtual events as an alternative to traditional in-person engagement. All told, 51 events were reported by the six Host Sites. Total attendance for events was estimated at 4,215 visitors.

Figure 6: We Are Water Event Visitors by Host Site
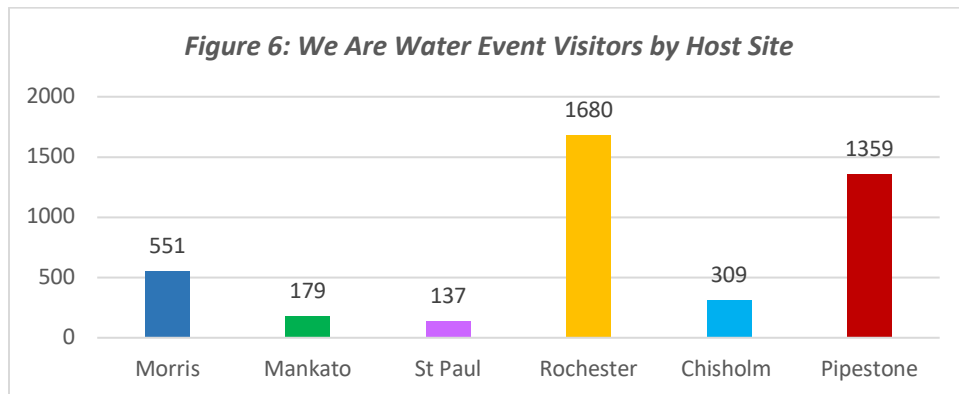
Event Types:

1. Twenty-two Virtual Events – This was the primary pandemic related innovation. These events included webinars, podcasts, and virtual exhibits. These events provided a way to share We Are Water MN content and stories while maintaining social distancing.
2. Eight Field Trips or Tours – These were generally outdoor events with a conservation focus. Activities included a freshwater mussel survey or a tour of a water treatment plant.
3. Seven Presentations and Performances – These events included in-person events featuring a speaker or panel discussion, play, or film, as well as two awards ceremonies.
4. Five Tabling Events – Often conducted as part of a larger festival or workshop, these events were smaller scale opportunities for Host Partners to have one-on-one discussions with visitors and engage them in hands-on activities.
5. Three Exhibit Opening Ceremonies – Due to the pandemic, only three in-person opening ceremonies were reported.
6. Three Self-Directed Activities – These events gave community members a hands-on way to engage with We Are Water MN content from the safety of their home or local park.
7. Three Miscellaneous Activities – These included two Nitrate testing clinics and a tree sale.

Primary Themes:

1. Seventeen on the Conservation and Preservation of Water Resources
2. Fifteen events presented an Absent Narrative
3. Six had an Historical focus
4. Five focused on the Arts

5. Four presented an Agricultural perspective
6. Four were Recreational

Target Audience:
1. Thirty events were intended for a general audience.
2. Ten events were family focused.
3. Five were youth events.
4. Two events targeted professionals and community leaders.

Events: Partners as Audience – UMN Morris Case Study

We Are Water MN Morris piloted an interesting innovation in partner engagement. In their baseline relationship map, the Morris Core Team identified a number of university academic departments as potential partners. Instead of trying to partner individually with each of these departments, the Host Site engaged department instructors as an audience in their first virtual event, *Conversations with Dr. Michelle Montgomery*. The event was used as a networking opportunity, introducing Dr. Montgomery to University instructors, and encourage them to connect with her directly.

In doing so, Morris acted as a networker for their Community Partners, bringing them together in a collaborative forum with no predetermined agenda on what should be accomplished. This innovation immediately resulted in an entirely unplanned, large-scale event. One of the professors in attendance connected with Dr. Montgomery and invited her to speak with the entire freshman Chemistry class.

This a good case study in how investing in relationships without preconceived notions of what should be accomplished (Goal 5, Outcome 2: Host Sites will learn to work with and not for their Host Community), allows for more creativity and innovative program development.

Events: Pandemic Innovations

The move to virtual events was not without growing pains but resulted in several innovations that might be worth continuing once the pandemic is over.

Hmong Museum – St. Paul

As previously described, the St. Paul Host Site opted focus entirely on virtual content during their exhibit tour. As part of this content, they produced 17 extended Water Story interviews. These interviews were conducted by Chonburi Lee with the Hmong American Partnership (HAP). Interviews ranged from 13 to 39 minutes in length, for a total of seven hours and 20 minutes of content. Audio clips from five of the interviews

were selected as traditional Water Stories and included in the outdoor exhibit, accessible via QR codes.

To promote this content, the Hmong Museum coordinated the release of their water stories, and other website content, with a social media campaign to draw viewers to the website. Website and social media tracking data indicate that the campaign was successful. In Figure 7 you can see how website traffic correlated to social media announcements of new content and coverage of the exhibit.

Figure 7: Hmong Museum We Are Water Website Traffic
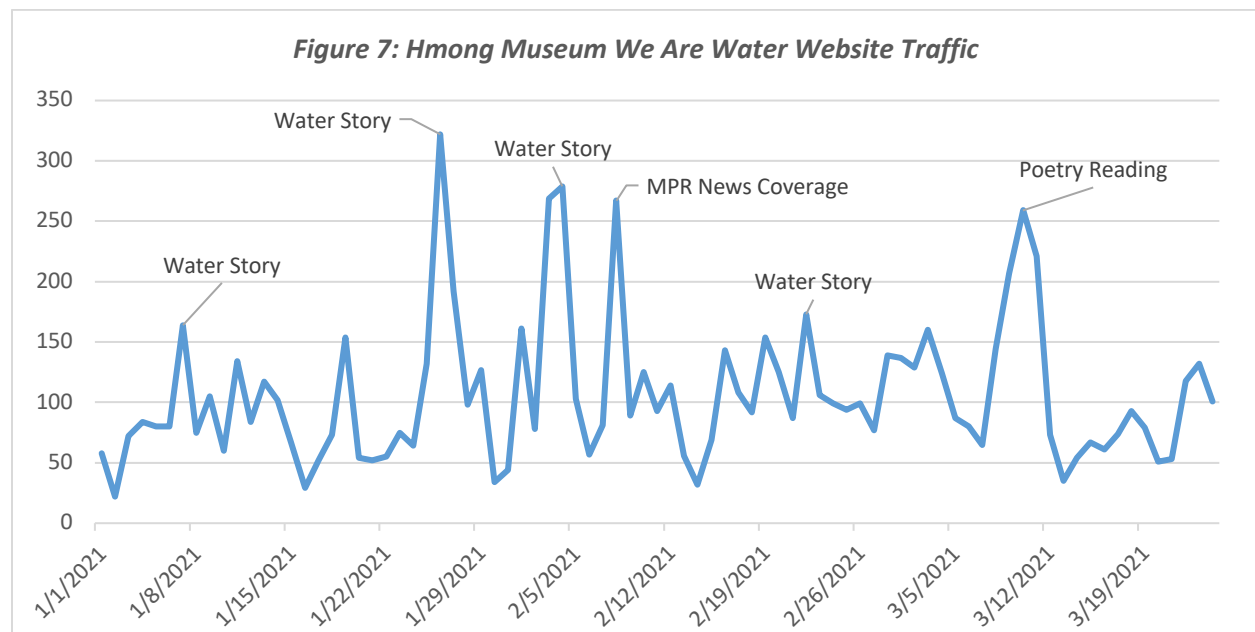
This is a good example of how using website content and social media to get the public conversation started in advance of an event generates interest and can increase participation. These innovations could be a useful addition to in-person programming post-COVID.

Permanent Content

The move to virtual events presented an opportunity to create a variety of permanent digital content that can be re-used in a variety of future contexts.

Morris produced a webinar series called Sharing Stories: Building Relationships with the Land, featuring a local farmer perspective. Webinar speakers were local farmers recruited because they represented perspectives often overlooked in agricultural conversations, including women, youth, and farmers of color. In advance of the webinar, the farmers participate in a 10-minute professionally produced video interview. These videos were used to introduce the speaker at the start of each webinar, setting the stage for a lively conversation. The videos will continue to be used by the UMN Morris

on their website and amplified through their partner network, ensuring that these absented farmer perspectives can be used to educate future audiences.

Another example of permanent content was created by Mankato in collaboration with the We Are Water MN State Partner, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and Macalester Undergraduate student, Kori Suzuki. Mr. Suzuki produce an eight-part podcast using interviews collected by the Mankato Host Site. The podcasts were released weekly in advance of the exhibit opening, to generate interest and promote the program. For an independently produced podcast, it was quite successful. As of March 2021, the podcast received a total of 563 plays. These recordings can still be accessed on Spotify and used for a variety of future program applications.

Exhibit Experience: Individual Capacity

Goal 4: Individual Capacity
Understanding how visitors interact with the Host Community's We Are Water MN events and exhibit experience.

Exhibit by the Numbers

Hosting the in-person We Are Water MN Exhibit was one of the greatest challenges presented by the pandemic. In most cases, exhibit capacity was limited to 10-25 visitors at a time, depending on the prevailing social distancing recommendations. Visitors were required to always wear masks, and groups were encouraged to schedule their visit in advance. Mankato required advance scheduling for all visitors. Despite these restrictions, an estimated 7,038 visitors were able to tour the exhibit.

Figure 8: We Are Water Exhibit Visitors by Host Site

Host Site	Visitors
Morris	400
Mankato	174
St Paul	949
Rochester	1560
Chisholm	3146
Pipestone	809
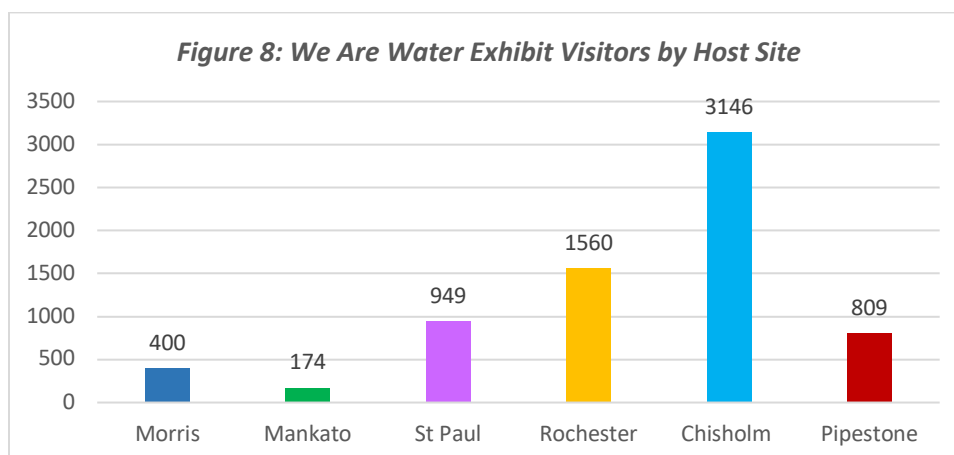
Visitor Surveys

Collecting visitor surveys proved difficult in the early months of the pandemic. Fear of catching COVID by contact with contaminated surfaces, discouraged visitors from completing hardcopy visitor surveys. Visitors were given an option to complete the survey online using a QR code accessible in both the in-door and outdoor exhibits. This option did not prove popular, however. Only 19 online visitor surveys were collected. The majority of those were from the outdoor exhibit, where a paper option was not made available.

Due to the difficulty in collecting visitor surveys, sample sizes between the Host Sites varied greatly. As a result, visitor responses for the majority of questions are combined.

Visitor Survey Demographics

Table 7: Visitor Survey Respondent Gender and Age by Host Site

	Gender N=230[5]			Age	
	Female	Male	Non-Binary & Transgender	Range	Mean
Morris	4	4	0	11 – 64	27.9
Mankato	16	8	0	18 – 82	49.7
St. Paul	6	5	0	15 – 56	30.1
Rochester	20	7	1	15 – 79	43.6
Chisholm	19	6	1	7 – 76	36.7
Pipestone	80	48	5	8 – 84	33.8
Total	**145**	**78**	**7**	**7 – 84**	**33.76**

Most of the survey respondents were female, a repeat of the trend seen in the previous cohort.

Table 8: Visitor Survey Respondents Race/Ethnicity by Host Site

	Asian and Pacific Islander	Black	Latinx	Native American	White	Multiracial	Total
Morris	0	0	0	0	5	3	8
Mankato	0	2	1	1	18	0	22
St. Paul	5	0	0	0	5	1	11
Rochester	0	1	1	0	23	1	26
Chisholm	3	0	1	1	18	0	23

---

[5] 19 respondents selected "prefer not to answer" or left the question blank.

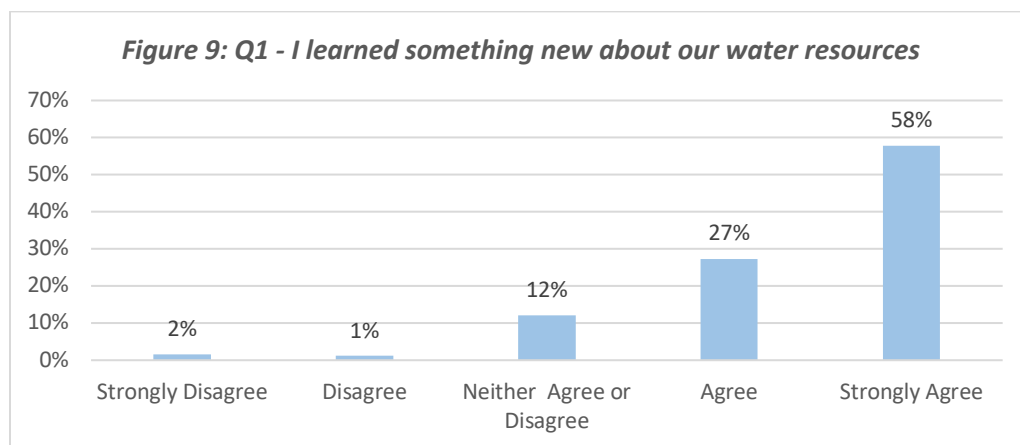|							
Pipestone	2	6	9	3	100	3	123
Total	**10**	**9**	**12**	**5**	**169**	**8**	**213[6]**

As with previous cohorts, most of the survey respondents identified as white. Unfortunately, the sample size for BIPOC respondents was not large enough to allow for statistical analysis based on race or ethnicity.
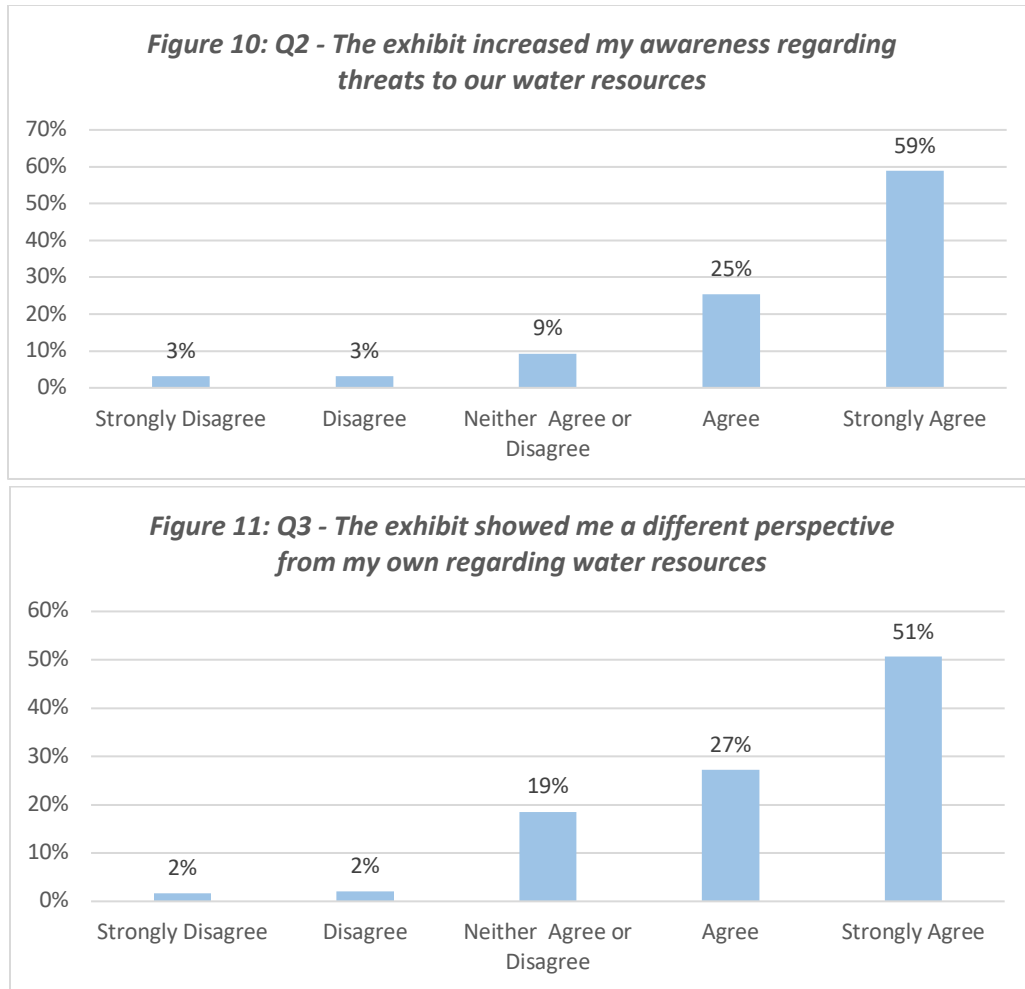
Survey Results

Survey results were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA to identify areas of statistically significant variation in respondent perceptions based on gender and age, as defined by generation within the following age groups:

- Gen Z: 24 and younger
- Millennials: 20 – 40
- Gen X: 41 – 56
- Boomers: 57 – 75
- Post War: 76 – 93

Survey questions 1-3 were intended to capture visitors' general impressions regarding how informative they found the exhibit to be. Respondents were asked to score their level of agreement or disagreement with three statements using a five-point Likert scale. Most respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with all three statements (see Figures 9-11).


Figure 9: Q1 - I learned something new about our water resources

---

[6] 36 respondents selected "prefer not to answer" or left the question blank.

Figure 10: Q2 - The exhibit increased my awareness regarding threats to our water resources

Figure 11: Q3 - The exhibit showed me a different perspective from my own regarding water resources

Questions two and three showed significant variation of opinion based on gender, with women being more likely to agree (p-values; .002 and .006, respectively).

Responses to all three questions were significant by generation and showed a similar pattern in each instance with Boomers and Millennials reporting more agreement, and Gen X and Gen Z reporting less (p-values; .002, .001, and .012, respectively).

Questions five and six were design to gauge visitor norms regarding responsibility for, and purpose of, protecting water resources. Most respondents indicated that protecting water is a communal responsibility (Q5), and that water resources should be preserved independent of human use (Q6).

Figure 12: Q5 - Protecting water is an _individual_ responsibility
Protecting water is a _communal_ responsiblity

Figure 13: Q6 - Water resources should be _conserved_ for human use;
Water resources should be _preserved_ independent of human use
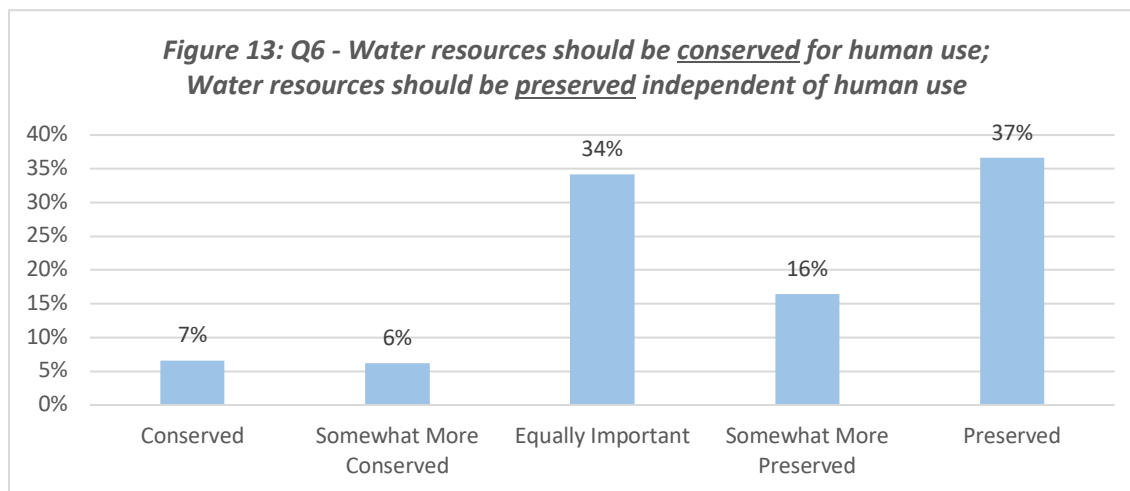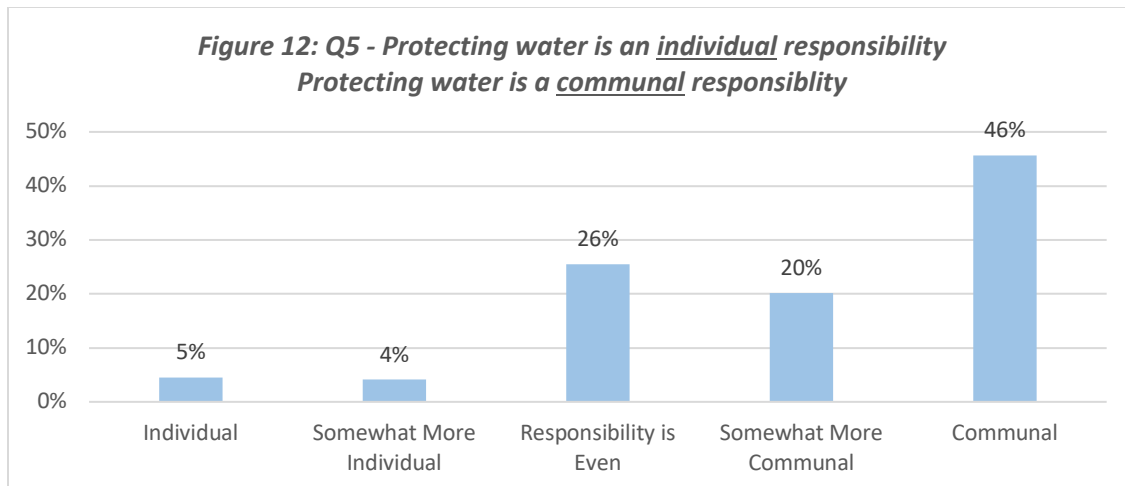
For question six, there was a significant variation in agreement by generation (p-value = .038) that showed a linear relationship by age. Boomers were the most likely to say that water resources should be preserved independent of human use, with a mean response of four. Agreement declined for each subsequent generation, ending with Generation Z, with a mean response of 3.4. This was the only question to display that pattern by generation and might be an interesting topic to explore in future cohorts.

Questions 7-9 were intended to assess visitors' general willingness to adopt more pro-environmental behaviors about water resources. Visitors were asked how likely they were to take three specific actions after visiting the We Are Water MN exhibit. Their responses were scored on a five-point scale from Very Unlikely to Very Likely. Most respondents reported they were Likely or Very Likely to take the actions described. However, question nine ("I will get involved with local organizations working to protect water resources") showed the greatest variance in responses.

36

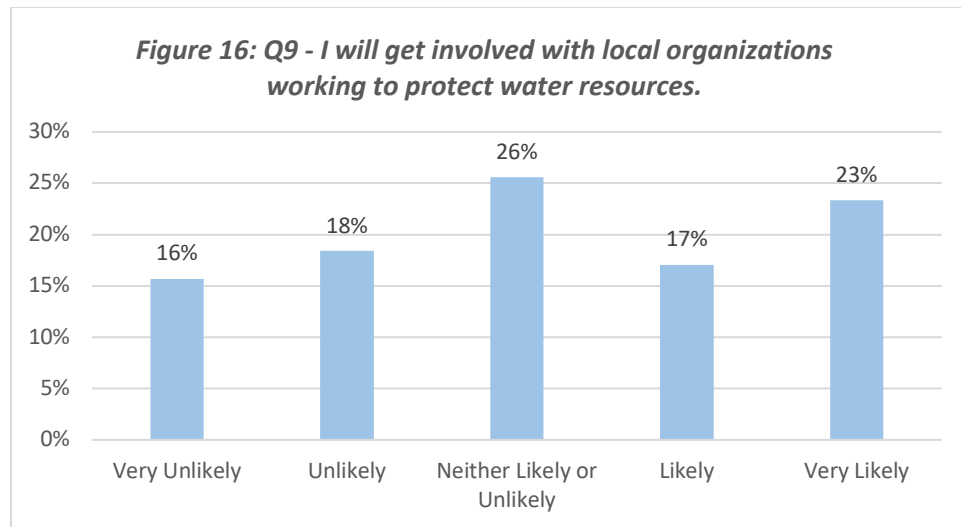*Figure 14: Q7 - I will change how I personally use water*
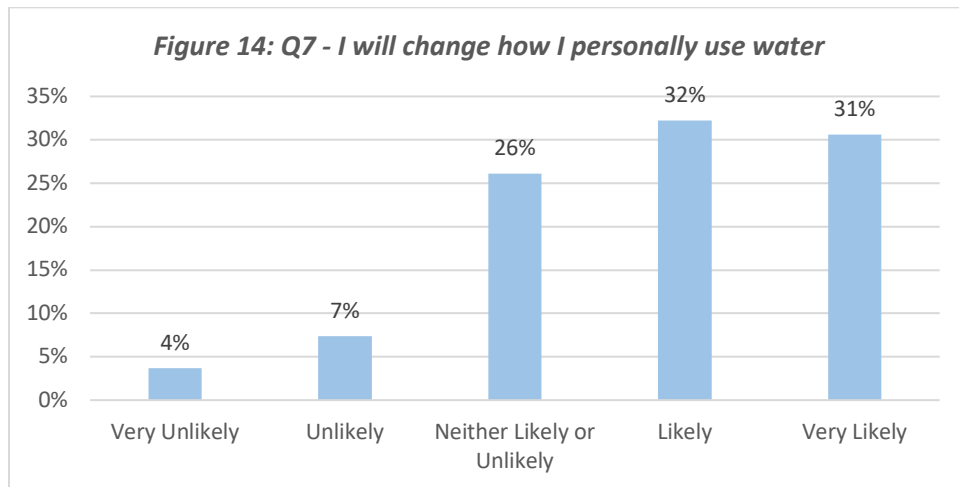
Question seven showed significant variation of opinion by gender (p-value = .001), with women being more likely to report a willingness to change how they personally use water.

Opinion also varied significantly by generation (p-value = .007), with Boomers most likely to report a willingness to change how they personally use water (mean = 4.2). Gen Z was the least likely age group to indicate a willingness to change their water use (mean = 3.6).


Figure 15: Q8 - I will share what I learned with others
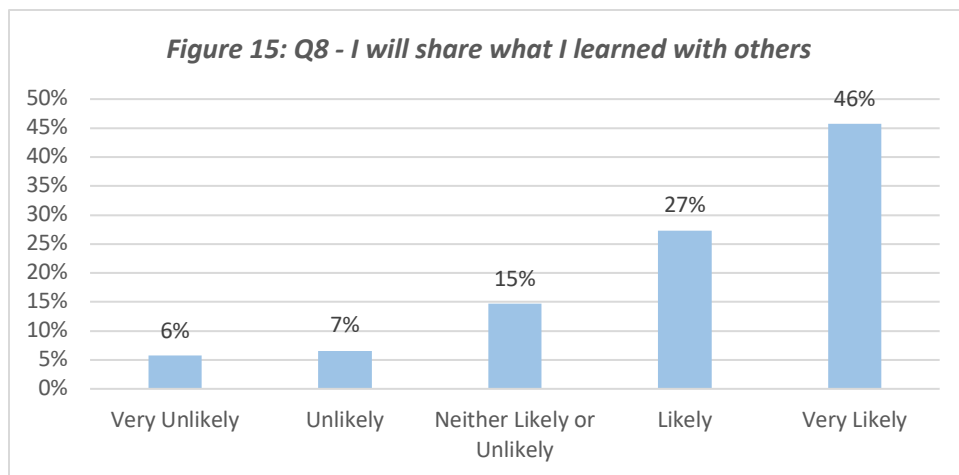
Question eight was significant by both gender and generation (p-values; .002 and .000 respectively). Women were more likely to agree that they would share what they learned with others. Among the generations, Gen Xers were most likely to agree, and Gen Z reported the lowest agreement.

Figure 16: Q9 - I will get involved with local organizations working to protect water resources.

Question nine showed no significant variation by either gender or generation.

Water Stories & Water Drops

*Figure 17: Total Visitor Stories from Five Host Sites*

224 Visitor Water Stories

+

57 Audio Water Stories

=
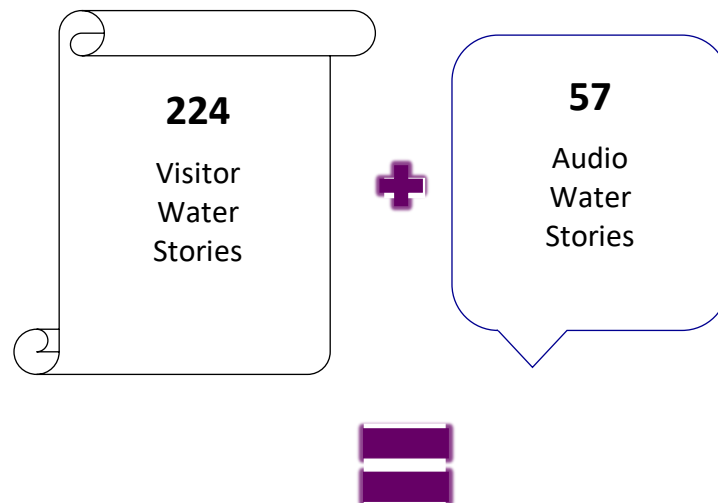
281 Visitor Stories Collected

Two hundred twenty-four visitor water stories were submitted across five Host Sites: 205 paper copies and 19 online submissions. St. Paul was unable to support these interactive elements with the outdoor exhibit. The water stories were coded across three variables: 1) the community capacity level reflected in the story (based on the Multi-level Community Capacity Model); 2) The relationship context in which the story occurred; and 3) The primary theme of the story.

Only 78 visitor stories could be coded by capacity level. Figure 18 shows the distribution of those stories, with the majority coding at the individual capacity level.

Figure 18: Combined Visitor Water Stories by Capacity Level (N=78)
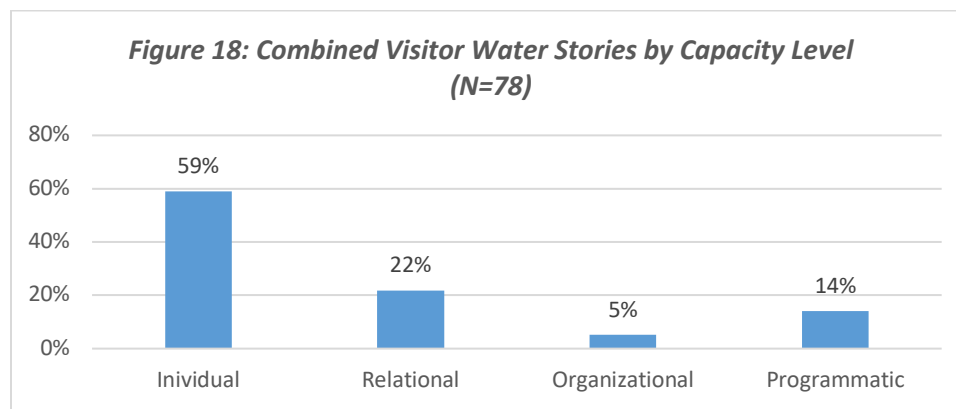
As seen in previous cohorts, the prompt for the Visitor Water Stories display encourages visitors to respond in a relationship frame as opposed to capacity level. Two hundred two stories could be coded by the following relationship contexts:

- Nature: Stories where the relationship with Nature is most prominent.
- Friends and Family: Stories where the relationship is focused on friendship and familial bonds.
- Community: Stories where the relationship is focused on immediate community (e.g., neighborhood, town, tribe).
- Greater Community: Stories where the relationship is focused on the broader community.

The most common relationship context was friends and family, followed closely by a relationship with nature.

Figure 19: Combined Visitor Water Stories by Relationship (N=202)
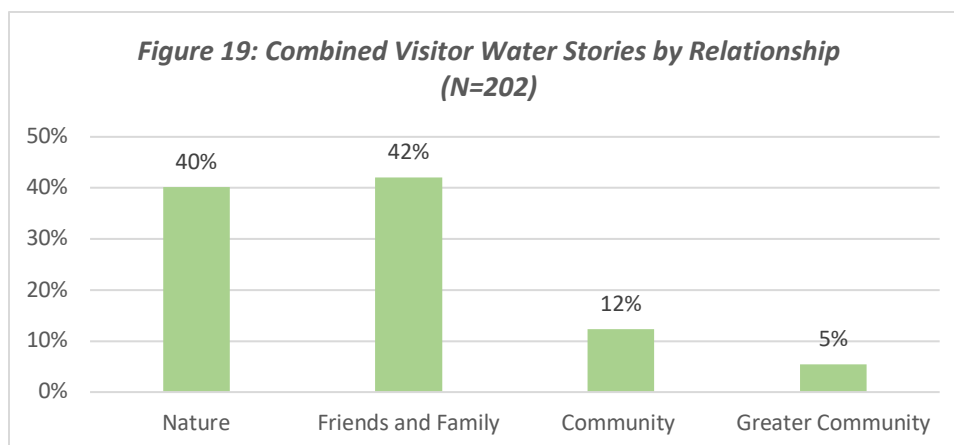
The most common theme found among visitor water stories was recreation. This coupled with the relationship focus on nature, friends and family could be an indication of pandemic fatigue. Engaging in recreational activities, alone or with friends and family, was a common risk reduction strategy utilized during the summer months to take the edge off quarantine related isolation.

Figure 20: Combined Visitor Water Stories by Theme (N=204)
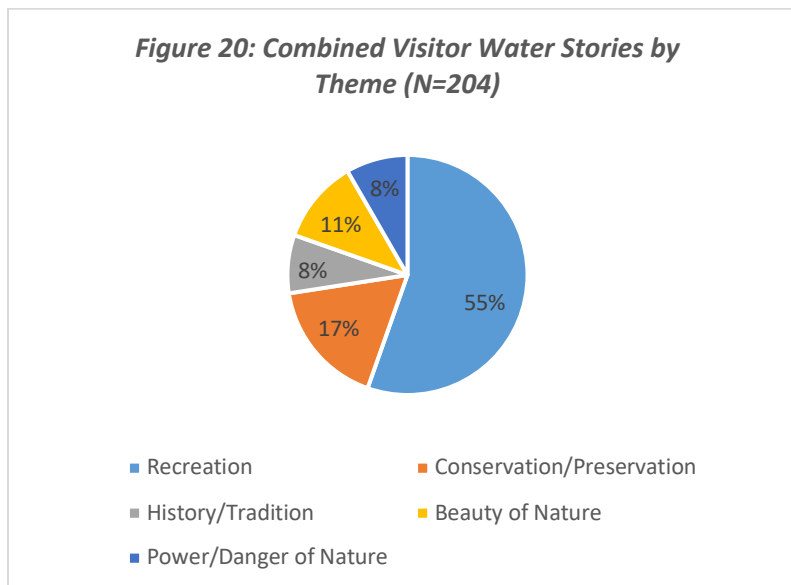
Audio Water Stories

Fifty-seven Audio water stories were produced and shared across all six Host Sites. Audio water stories were coded for community capacity levels and relationship context. Given the longer length of stories, and their intentional curation, they are more likely
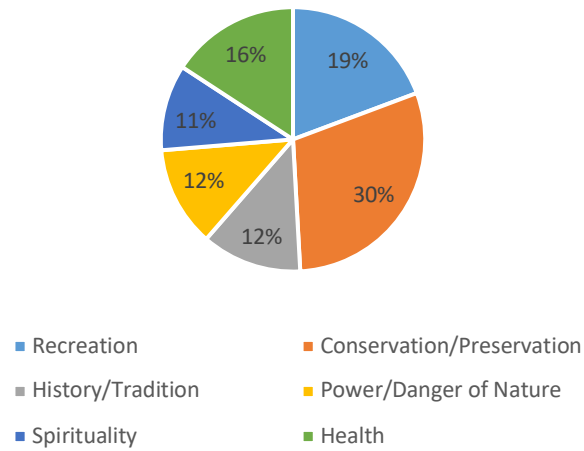
than visitor stories to have a very clear relationship context and higher capacity level with most stories coded above individual capacity.

Figure 21: Combined Audio Water Stories by Capacity Level

Figure 22: Combined Audio Water Stories by Relationship
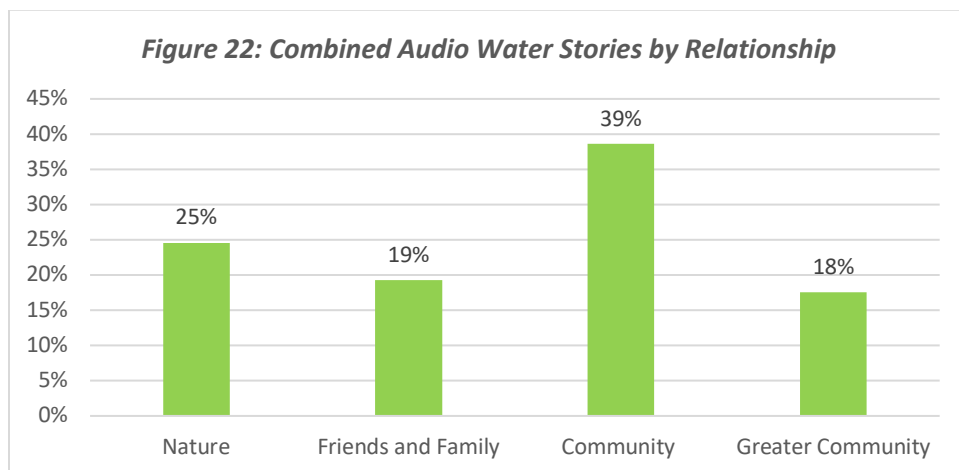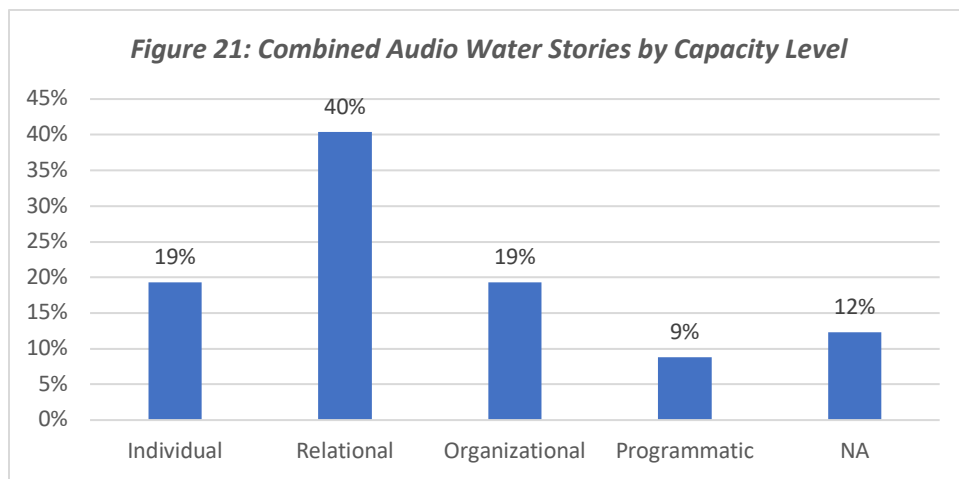
Audio water stories also had greater variation and nuance of themes. Two new themes regarding spirituality and health were identified.

Stories coded as "Spirituality" were initially classified under the visitor theme "Beauty of Nature" but were each found to have an explicit spiritual context.
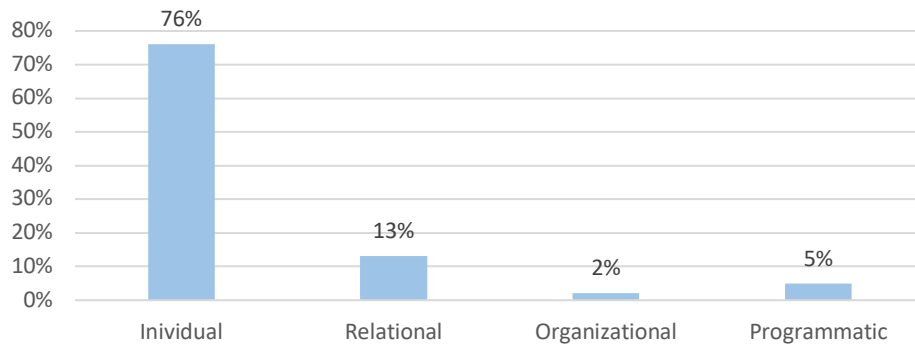
Figure 23: Combined Audio Water Stories by Theme

- Recreation
- Conservation/Preservation
- History/Tradition
- Power/Danger of Nature
- Spirituality
- Health

Water Drops

One hundred eight-four water drops were collected across five Host Sites. Submissions were coded solely on capacity level.

Figure 24: Combined Visitor Water Drops by Capacity Level (N=177)

Appendix

Appendix A – Exhibit Visitor Survey

Appendix B: Visitor Water Story and Map Locations

Appendix A – Exhibit Visitor Survey

Was the exhibit informative? Please circle the number that best describes your level of agreement with the following statements.

1) I learned something new about our water resources.

| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree |

2) The exhibit increased my awareness regarding threats to our water resources.

| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree |

3) The exhibit showed me a different perspective from my own regarding water resources.

| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree |

4) What is one piece of information from the exhibit that broadened your perspective regarding water resources? How did it broaden your perspective?

Who is responsible for protecting our water resources? Please circle the number that best indicates which statement you agree with more.

5)

| Protecting water is an individual responsibility | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Protecting water is a communal responsibility |

6)

| Water resources should be conserved for human use | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Water resources should be preserved independent of human use |

What action will you take? Please rate how likely you are to take the following actions after attending the We Are Water MN exhibit.

7) I will change how I personally use water.

| Very Unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Very Likely |

8) I will share what I learned with others.

| Very Unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Very Likely |

9) I will get involved with local organizations working to protect water resources.

| Very Unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Very Likely |

10) What is one thing that you are inspired to do after visiting the We Are Water MN exhibit?

```

```

11) What motivated you to attend the exhibit? Select the best answer.
- ☐ I personally find the topic interesting
- ☐ A friend recommended it to me
- ☐ A local organization promoted the exhibit
- ☐ I attended as part of a school field trip or student group
- ☐ I heard about the exhibit at a We Are Water MN event
- ☐ I was in the neighborhood and thought it looked interesting
- ☐ Other (please specify)_____

Please tell us a little about yourself. This information will help us know more about our audience.

12) How do you identify your gender?
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Transgender female
- ☐ Transgender male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other (please specify)_____

13) What is your age? _____

14) How do you identify your race or ethnicity? Check all that apply.
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino/Latinx
- ☐ Native American, Indigenous or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White or Caucasian
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Appendix B: Visitor Water Story and Map Locations

Key				
UMN Morris	Blue Earth County Historical Society - Mankato	City of Rochester	North St Louis SWCD - Chisholm	Meinders Community Library - Pipestone

Figure 25: Combined Visitor Water Story Map Locations