Why be a member?
- Know you are supporting programs you believe in at an organization that is important to your community.
- Receive information and invitations to special events at Prairie Woods.
- Benefit from discounts on equipment rentals and programs.
- Continue to receive the Warbler newsletter three times a year.

Join Us!
PRAIRIE WOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER
Annual Membership for 2016

- New Member
- Renewing Member

Supporter’s Membership
- Individual Membership ................. $30.00
- Family Membership ..................... $45.00
- Organization/Business Membership ... Please call for rates.

Benefactor’s Membership
- $100 to $499
- $500 to $999
- $1000

1 / I we are interested in volunteering at Prairie Woods.

Name(s) ________________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________________
City/State/ZIP ____________________________________________________________
Email ___________________________________________________________________

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center
12718 10th St. NE
Spicer, Minnesota 56288

Questions or comments? Please call us at 320-354-5894 or e-mail us at pwele@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

Nonprofit Organization US Postage Payee Twin Cities MN Permit No. 1926

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Prairie Woods Warbler
VOLUME 28
SPRING 2016
ISSUE 1

Spring into Action with Prairie Woods ELC!

EARTH DAY and Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale–Saturday, April 23, 2016 8am-1pm

Join us on April 23rd for a great day of fun, food and learning! Start off the day with a pancake breakfast, enjoy the debut performance by the PWELC Puppet Theatre of Dr. Seuss’ Tu Loan, stroll through exhibits and learn about a variety of environmental issues and ideas for living well with self, others and the environment. Bring a water sample to be tested for nitrates at the MPCA and Kandiyohi SWCD booths, learn about “water wise” gardening from Master Gardeners, and chat with dozens of natural resource specialists about caring for our water, air, soil and energy resources. Lots of kid activities including a scavenger hunt, DNR fish tank, laser shot, climbing wall, tie-dye t-shirts and more.

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As a special treat, on Saturday, July 2 at 10:30 am come out to experience the Water/Ways exhibit and a performance by the GRAMMY Award winning Okee Dokee Brothers! The Okee Dokee Brothers inspire children and their parents to get outside and get creative. The three-time Parent’s Choice Award winners have garnered praise from the likes of NPR’s All Things Considered and USA Today. The Okee Dooker Brothers album Can you Canoe? won a Grammy for Best Children’s Music Album in the 55th Grammy Awards and Through the Woods was nominated in the 57th Grammy Awards! Check out their music at www.okeedokee.org and then call your friends and family to join us for a free concert on July 2nd at PWELC. (Bring Your Own Blanket or lawn chair)

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Thank you for your support.
Welcome to Spring! After one of the mildest winters on record we are seeing a very early spring at Prairie Woods. Our first wood tick sighting came on March 12th, the same day that ice went out on Kettle Lake. The chipmunks have resumed their hyperactive state; we are seeing (and smelling) skunks on the road, hearing hundreds of geese flying overhead and enjoying the appearance of tundra swans and sandhill cranes. We are preparing for Earth Day, judging of YES! Team projects, and the onslaught of thousands of birds during April and May as dozens of schools return to PWELC for their spring field trips. Spring is definitely an exciting time at Prairie Woods.

Please plan to join in some of the spring traditions at PWELC including Earth Day, the Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale and Paddle the Crow. Also plan to take in the Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit from June 25-August 7th and for sure plan to come out on July 2nd to enjoy a concert by the Grammy award-winning Okee Dokee Brothers. Details on the Okee Dokee Brothers and a kick-off celebration for the Smithsonian exhibit are in the works.

In addition, no pun intended, the Pavilion Project is coming along nicely and we look forward to putting the project out for bids soon. Can you picture a timber frame pavilion at the farm site? We already have—click on a link to a 3D model on www.prairiewoodselc.org

Please enjoy catching up on the news at PWELC through this newsletter and then go immediately to your calendar and save some dates to enjoy and support the work of Prairie Woods. Thanks for all that you do for PWELC. We are grateful for your support and friendship.

Let’s keep it growing!

Dave

NICE THINGS DONE FOR PRAIRIE WOODS BY PEOPLE LIKE YOU!

Tommy Swenson Memorial Ice Fishing Tournament donated $1500 for youth programs at PWELC
Wendy Englebrekt E Graphics donated PWELC custom apparel
Willmar VFW Post #1619 donated $500 for PWELC youth sporting programs
Willmar Walmart donated $1000 for challenge course equipment
Vickie Vogt coordinated food at Sleigh & Ski Fest
Tom Bahr of Custom Signs donated banners for Sleigh & Ski Fest
Jennie-O’Turkey Store donated chili for Sleigh & Ski Fest
First District Association donated cheese for Sleigh & Ski Fest
NLS National Honor Society volunteers helped w/ Sleigh Fest, Halloween Haunt and Earth Day
Vision 2040 co-sponsored Sleigh & Ski Fest
Three Sisters Furnishing co-sponsored Sleigh & Ski Fest
Bob Williamson donated several very nice kayaks and paddling equipment for the gear sale
United Way of West Central MN continues to support outdoor recreation and rebuilding at PWELC
Pat Laib & Laibs Gunsmithing contributed to the outdoor sporting programs

YES! Updates - Kory Klebe

YES! Currently has 32 teams working around the state in four different regional co-hort groups.
This update from the West Central Region gives you a taste of what is happening in winter workshops around the state.

“... the sun will come out tomorrow, tomorrow...” was the phrase going through everybody’s head during the YES! West-Central Solar Winter Workshop held in February at PWELC. YES! teams from ACGC, Dream Academy, and NLS attended. The day may have been gloomy but the students were bright!

The day started with Solar Panels 101 presented by Dan Tepler of Kandiyohi Power Cooperative. When most people think of electricity it is only as far as flipping the switch and the light comes on. So, it was a great lesson on electricity talking about volt’s, n-type semi-conductors, and AC/DC (the current – the buzz).

Jenna Totz with Climate Generation posed some interesting questions to the participants which included “How is solar connected to Climate change?” The students figured it out pretty quick that using the sun’s renewable resource to make electricity is a step in the right direction to helping our environment. They also learned that MN is ahead of the national average in using renewable resources for our energy consumption (Minnesota at 21% vs. national avg. of 5%).

The sun never did come out for our solar workshop but in a quick, one-word, survey participants described the day as interesting, cool, fun, and electric. The NLS team talked of incorporating solar into a new school addition and ACGC discussed their plan to add solar to parking lot lights. It will be neat to see how teams use solar power in future projects.

Earlier in January, the NLS YES! Team hosted the Lac qui Pare Valley YES! Team for a Winter Greenhouse Workshop. Both teams currently have greenhouses in operation at their schools and this was a neat opportunity for the two teams to share ideas and learn from each other’s experience. The students started with harvesting lettuce; greens together for their opening ice breaker. While harvesting, students heard short presentations from Teresa Copley and the NLS YES! team, Bonita Kallestad a master gardener, and Tracy Tebben – NLS’s Ag teacher who led the design and building of NLS’s cold weather greenhouse.

On the way home, the LQPV team stopped by the MinnWest Technology Campus in Willmar where they met Aaron Larson and Nancy Johnson. Aaron is a former Willmar H.S. YES! team member and current volunteer at a greenhouse that is planned to be utilized by a food hub. The greenhouse had been revitalized as a Willmar H.S. YES! project. Aaron is now working with Nancy to help get a food hub, dispenser of local foods, up and running in Willmar.

Similar YES! Workshops have been held in other regions around the state and now the groups are preparing for regional competitions scheduled in April. We are excited to hear their presentations and look forward to recognizing the top teams with cash awards. Check out team accomplishments at www.youthisenergysummit.org and be sure to like YES! on Facebook.

Major funding for YES! is provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund, Southwest Initiative Foundation and the McKnight Foundation.

NEEDS AND GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

* Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale items
* Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale Customers
* Buy a piece of the Pavilion. Donate funds to help PWELC build a timber frame pavilion in the PWELC farm site. Put your name or the name of a loved-one on a post or beam.
* Donate shoes for our WorldWear shoe collection. *De-clutter your closets and your life.
* Purchase a piece of PWELC apparel
* Volunteer for a shift to help at Earth Day as an exhibitor, pancake flipper, or ????
* Volunteer as a docent for the Smithsonian Water/Ways Exhibit.
* Volunteer to assist with maintenance of buildings, trails and equipment.

Parle Valley YES! Team for a Winter Greenhouse Workshop. Both teams currently have greenhouses in operation at their schools and this was a neat opportunity for the two teams to share ideas and learn from each other’s experience. The students started with harvesting lettuce; greens together for their opening ice breaker. While harvesting, students heard short presentations from Teresa Copley and the NLS YES! team, Bonita Kallestad - a master gardener, and Tracy Tebben - NLS’s Ag teacher who led the design and building of NLS’s cold weather greenhouse.

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REMEMBER- We Want Your SHOES!
Please bring used shoes in good condition to the Earth Day event…or drop them off any day during office hours.

* Join the Music Under the Prairie Stars fundraiser committee
* Buy a raffle ticket to help support the annual wheelchair accessible Special Hunt.
COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

FULL MOON CANOE.....................................(Grades: 5th and up)
Come with your friends or family to enjoy the solitude of a Prairie Woods wetland while watching the sun set and the moon rise all in the same evening. Canoe, paddles, life jackets and instruction provided by Prairie Woods ELC. Children must be accompanied by an adult. (Meet at main building)

NATURE DAYS ........................................(Grades K-3)
What’s that????? Let’s check it out! For three mornings we will explore the natural world in which we live. We will use hands-on farm site.

OUTDOOR SURVIVAL 101...............(Grades 4th and up)
Can you survive?? This class will take you outside and show you how to build a shelter, fire, and maybe find something to eat. (Meet at main building)

Date: Tuesday, August 9th • Time: 8:00-12:00
Cost: $15 per person

What ever that means???
Can you guess? Answer to be revealed April 23rd at PWELC’s Earth Day Celebration. (Next year PWELC program available for outreach starting April 24th)

OUTDOOR SURVIVAL 101

Date: Tuesday, August 9th • Time: 8:00-12:00
Cost: $15 per person

Time Travel - Mari Klebe
Travel back to 1888 - a time when a tweet was from a bird, a text was a book, hard work made you sweat, and fun was... Fun!

What was life really like? Here’s just a sampling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1880</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmland/acre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Use</td>
<td>5 gal/day/person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household Size</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Salary</td>
<td>$40/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train Engineer</td>
<td>$100/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy</td>
<td>40 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information gathered from the Consumer Price Index, US Dept. of Labor and OldRecipeBook.com

One of many lessons students might walk away with during a time travel experience. Check out the unique experiences planned for the summer on our website or sign up for a birthday party!

LADIES’ NIGHT OUT.........................IN THE WOODS!
Guided by Anne Dybsetter & Mari Klebe
Who: Women 6th grade and up (children must be accompanied by an adult)

Ever thought of a hike on the Superior Hiking Trail, a paddler in the Boundary Waters, or just taking that next step from car camping but don’t know where to start? Well, call your sister, mother, aunt, daughter, and friends. Here’s your chance to join knowledgeable staff on a weekend backpacking trip through Prairie Woods ELC. This experience will cover basic outdoor skills like how to pack a bag properly, fire building, orienteering, outdoor cooking, Leave-No-Trace ethics, and some nature facts along the way. This is an introductory course and novices are welcome. We will be hiking 5 - 7 miles and carrying gear on our backs. Some gear can be provided. Please call for more details.

Date: Friday, August 5th at 7:00 pm until Sunday, August 7th at noon
Cost: $100 for individual, $160 for pair, $225 for a tent full (3)

Please remember Prairie Woods in your estate planning and annual giving.

PRAIRIE WOODS
www.prairiewoodselc.org 320-544-5894
pwe@co.kandiyohi.mn.us  Spicer, Minnesota

High Notes from the Challenge Course - Steve Friedlein, CC Coordinator

Our Indoor Rock Climbing gym was a huge success this past fall and winter. Having an indoor climbing facility allows for a year-round challenge course experience, which is something unique that Prairie Woods offers our community. Every week, we host youth and adults of all ages and skill levels. The fun and fulfilling part for me is to witness their enthusiasm and skill level grow with each session and with every climb. Not only does our climbers’ confidence grow with each season, but so does our climbing community! Some participants have been attending our Climbing Gyms for over two years. We are all excited to watch it grow. If you or someone you know would ever like to join us, look for our community offerings on the PWELC webpage www.prairiewoodsdelc.org. The Indoor Rock Climbing gym is offered throughout the entire year on a reservation basis. Give us a call (320-554-5894) to set up a climbing experience for your group.

The spring and summer are always an exciting and busy time at Prairie Woods ELC. We are preparing for thousands of students from all over Minnesota to visit us for their annual field trips. Each year we welcome over sixty schools and dozens of youth groups to the challenge course at PWELC. We provide these groups with the opportunity to challenge themselves by making their own choices and setting their own goals. It is beyond words for our team to witness groups united and pulling together, to hoist their classmates to the top of the Flying Squirrel. Or how about watching two people problem-solving and encouraging each other to go one step further up the Giant’s Ladder while their classmates support them from the ground below. And perhaps one of my favorites, when an entire group cheers on a first time climber or encourages their friend to reach their goal. Maybe that goal is to reach the top or maybe it is to climb just one more step further than last time. As facilitators, our role is to engage and empower the participants, setting an example and honoring each participant’s choice. Last, but not least, we offer a wide range of Team-Building & Initiative Games that have an incredible ability to promote a supportive and cohesive group experience. It’s fun to watch our visitors commit to their experience and grow as individuals and as a group, one of the many privileges for us out here at PWELC.

Along with on-site programming, we look forward to our second year of outreach programs with the Prairie Woods Pinnacle, our 27 foot Mobile Rock Wall. The Pinnacle is already scheduled to visit many different community events around the area in 2016 including:

- Broten, Bonanza Valley Days: Saturday, July 9th 2016
- Sauk Centre, Minnesota Wacky Water Days: Wednesday, July 13th 2016
- Kandiyohi County Fair: Saturday, August 13th 2016
- Viking Sportmen’s Youth Event Alexandria, Minnesota: Sunday, August 28th 2016
- MWA Prairie Pothole Day: Saturday, September 10th 2016
- University of Minnesota Morris Homecoming Football Game: Saturday, October 8, 2016

*Come on out to one of these events and experience The Pinnacle first hand! If you’re interested in a list of upcoming events or would like to schedule a Challenge Course program, please contact Steve at 320-554-5894 or email: steve.e@co.kandiyohi.mn.us. Be sure to check out our website and Facebook to follow the Pinnacle.

REMEMBER WHEN?

20 years ago:

- Legislative lobbying efforts were underway to include PWELC in the MN State bonding bill to build facilities at PWELC. Legislation was introduced by Representative Tom VanEngen and Senator Dean Elton Johnson.
- PWELC volunteer efforts were guided by Kim Embretson & Genevieve Consultants
- An access road was constructed into the proposed building

10 years ago:

- Jeff Vetsch hired as first full time Building & Grounds Steward - previously, all maintenance and property care done by volunteers, program staff and Service to Serve workers.
- 34’ voyageur canoe donated by Charles and Marjorie Dickman - launching Project Eco-Voyageur
- Prairie Restoration project spearheaded by Joel Schmidt
- Wind turbine installation “wind breaking” celebration at Earth Day.

PRAIRIE WOODS
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THANK YOU!!!

3RD ANNUAL SLEIGH & SKI FESTIVAL
CONTRIBUTORS
VISION 2040
JENNIE O’TURKEY STORE
FIRST DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
THREE SISTERS FURNISHINGS
E. GRAPHICS - WENDY ENGLEBREKT
CUSTOM SIGNS - TOM BAHR
CEDAR CREEK BAND
FRED & JOY ZWART
GARY & KATHY STAI
DALE AND GRACE FLADEBOE
KENNY WETZEL HARNESS SHOP
PHELENDON-LOCAL HERITAGE HONOR SOCIETY
PWELC GOVERNING BOARD, STAFF AND TRUSTEES
WILLMAR HS NORDIC SKI TEAM
KDJS
LAKELAND BROADCASTING
VICKIE VOGT

SLEIGH DRIVERS: DALE FLADEBOE, FRED ZWART, MIKE RILLATZKI, KENNY WETZEL, STAN GLIMSDAHL, HANK HEGLUND, JIM AND KAREN NELSON, GARY AND KATHY STAI, NORMAN BOERING, TOM GAUSTASON

ALSO A HUGE THANKS TO THE DOZENS OF VOLUNTEERS WHO MADE THIS DAY POSSIBLE!

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION.......................................EVERYONE

Open to all
2016 will be the “YEAR OF WATER” at PWELC. We will have booths, exhibits, and activities for all ages offering information about land and water stewardship, energy efficiency, outdoor recreation, and much more. This year’s main presentation will be Dr. Sauer’s. The Lunch performed by PWELC. Pancake and sausage breakfast from 8-10am (free will donation). Contact PWELC if you would like to share an exhibit.

No pre-registration necessary.
Saturday, April 23rd • Time: 8:00-1:00pm
Cost: Free

Challenge Course
Indoor Rock Climbing Gym
All Ages (All Ages)
Climbing offers a chance to challenge yourself both physically and mentally at your own pace. Rock climbing is a true adventure sport. Beginners can learn about the sport, exercise, and have fun! Experienced climbers can come train and refine their skills. The Prairie Woods ELC instructors are here to help every climber reach new heights! Equipment will be provided. Meet at the main building. Sign up for one or more.

Dates: Thursday, June 9th 2016
Thursday, July 7th 2016
Thursday, August 18th 2016 • Time: 4:00pm – 5:30pm
Cost: $10 per climber / per session

OUTDOOR ROCK CLIMBING.............................. (All Ages)
Join us at the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center outdoor challenge course for an afternoon on the rock climbing tower. The three sided climbing tower offers multiple thirty and forty foot routes. All ages and skill levels are welcome. Equipment will be provided. Meet at the Farm Site. Sign up for one or more.

Dates: Thursday, July 21st 2016
Thursday, August 4th 2016 • Time: 10 am – 12 pm
Cost: $15 per climber / per session
*July 21st- staff will be available 12:00-1:00 to supervise participants who are also signed up for Pioneer game day. Bring a sack lunch.

TIME TRAVEL PROGRAMS – MARIE KLEBE INSTRUCTOR
GAME DAY AT THE PIONEER CABIN... (Ages: 3rd-6th Grade)
Who’s up for some friendly competition? After dressing as a pioneer, unplug for a morning of blind man’s bluff, a three legged race, a game of geese (hoops & sticks), Swedish kabob and many more pioneer games. If it’s raining out we’ll see how you do at jacks, pick up sticks, and card games. (Meet at farm site)
*Staff will be available 12:00-1:00 to supervise participants who are also signed up for outdoor rock climbing. Bring a sack lunch.
Date/Thurs, July 21 • Time: 10 am – 12 pm
Cost: $8

COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

STORY HOUR AT THE PIONEER CABIN... (Ages: 3rd-6th Grade)
Come to the Pioneer Cabin at Prairie Woods! Dress as a pioneer and listen to a story about the legally family and what pioneer life was like. We will take a page out of the book and do an activity that Laura did. It will be a different story and activity each month. Kids, ask your parents if they want to come too! (Meet at Farmsite)
Date: Tues, June 28, Thurs, July 14, Wed, Aug 17
Time: 10 am – 11:15 am
Cost: $5/session

PIONEER SKILLS ............................................... (Ages: 3rd – 6th Grade)
Do you have what it takes to live as a pioneer? Test your knowledge while participating in our version of “Oregon Trail”. Brush up or develop your compass skills. Try your hand at the cross cut saw and bow saw. If time allows, you might go home with a craft as well. (Meet at Farmsite)
Date: Tues, June 28 • Time: 9 am – 12 pm
Cost: $15

SHOOTING SPORTS
3D DEER ARCHERY SHOOT............................... (Grades: 5th and up)
If you have a couple archery team members under your belt or are thinking about hunting deer with a bow and arrow for the first time—this class is for you! This class is a chance to add new or develop existing deer hunting archery skills. We will talk about shooting form, judgment distance, ethical shooting, and tracking deer. The class will go out and practice the skills on some 3D deer targets. (Meet at farmsite)
Date: Fri, June 24th • Time: 8-12
Cost: $15

YOUTH SPORTING CLAYS OPEN SHOTGUN SHOOT
SPONSORED BY TOMMY SWENSON MEMORIAL ICE FISHING TOURNAMENT... (Ages: 11-18)
Did you know that Prairie Woods ELC has a sporting clay range? The clays come from the left, right, straight at you, behind you, and there is even one that rolls on the ground. Bring your own 12 or 20ga to use or borrow ours.
There will be 2 ranges set-up. One for youth with shooting experience and a Second for 1st time shooters. (Meet at the Westby Shooting Range)
Date/Thursday, July 28th
Cost: $15

TIMED OPEN SHOTGUN SHOOT
Sunday, August 14th 2016 • Time: 8:00am – 12:00pm
Cost: $25

1ST ANNUAL SHOOTING SPORTS CHALLENGE
AUGUST 18TH 2017
Fairfield County, Minnesota

PRAIRIE WOODS
A NATURAL CHOICE FOR WEDDINGS, RECEPTIONS, FAMILY REUNIONS, AND CORPORATE RETREATS.
Glup, Glup.
What’s up with the water in your cup?

April 23rd 2016  8am - 1pm
Prairie Woods
Environmental Learning Center
12718 16th St. NE, Sprow
320.354.9694
prairiewoodswtc.org

SCHEDULE:
8:00a - 10:00a  Pancake Breakfast (free)
8:00a - 1:00p  Recycled Outdoor Gear Sale
8:00a - 1:00p  Activities & Exhibits
10:30a  Groundwater Presentation
10:30a  Puppet Show reading of The Lorax

RECYCLED OUTDOOR GEAR SALE
Gear donations welcome until day of sale.

WE WANT YOUR SHOES! WORLDWEAR PROJECT
Bring gently worn shoes to Earth Day as fundraiser for PWLDC

FREE NITRATE TESTING
Bring a small sample of water in a clean glass or A MN Soil & Water District or MPCA will test the nitrate levels.

ATTRACTIONS FOR KIDS & ADULTS:

EVENT ORGANIZERS:
CROW SWCD  SANDIUM  SWCD  NEWKIRK

EVENT SPONSORS:
Carr West  Cull Truss  Jannex  MN Gamer Association  MN Ponds Producers  E2Star Creative
Free Concert at
Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center
Saturday, July 2nd, 2016 • 10:30AM
Bring Your Own Blanket (or lawn chair)

In partnership with National Endowment for the Humanities, Environmental Protection Agency, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Historical Society, Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, Minnesota Department of Health, and Minnesota Section of the American Water Works Association

Smithsonian WATERWAYS
A traveling exhibition

An exhibit exploring the central nature of water in our lives

Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Spicer
June 25 – Aug 7, 2016
Hours, special events, and resources for teachers: www.mnhum.org/waterways

In partnership with National Endowment for the Humanities, Environmental Protection Agency, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Historical Society, Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, Minnesota Department of Health, and Minnesota Section of the American Water Works Association