



## Community Science Exchange

**Project Title:** Reflections from a relationship building community-university summit

**Location:** *Minneapolis, Minnesota*

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### **The Initial Challenge:**

Following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in May 2020, a wave of activism spread across our city of Minneapolis, our Earth and Environmental Sciences Department at the University of Minnesota, and our national and global geoscience community. Motivated by the local, in-the-streets calls for racial justice, undergraduate and graduate students in our department wrote a letter to faculty and staff advocating for change across our academic community. One call to action was increased department engagement within our surrounding Twin Cities community, specifically those traditionally marginalized in the geosciences (e.g. urban residents, people of color). Rather than waiting for faculty leadership, a group of students and staff (this writing team) organized and hosted a summit between members of the department and local community organizations with a focus on environmental issues. The goal of this summit was to initiate and support meaningful relationships, with the hope that they would grow into research and curricular partnerships in support of the community's priorities and self-determination. Along the way, our organizing team connected with and learned from community engagement scholars and practitioners both within the University of Minnesota and within community organizations partnering with UMN. Informed by these relationships, we hosted the summit in November of 2021, which brought together 19 department members and 23 members of environmental community organizations including neighborhood associations, urban gardening organizations, youth outdoor programs, and water rights activist groups. Following the event, a few collaborative projects have taken root, and yet we still have more work to deepen and maintain these relationships and transform our department to support this work. This paper details our process to develop the summit, advice for anyone envisioning a similar event, and personal reflections from the organizers and some participants. While this event had an overwhelmingly positive reception, we also share our challenges, mistakes, and struggles in both creating this event and moving forward with building these relationships. We believe that these personal stories of our efforts to build relationships are critical within the conversation and process of transforming the geosciences to work towards justice.

## Introduction:

### Context for Activism

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed during an attempted arrest in South Minneapolis, about 4 miles from the campus of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. His death set off widespread protests around the world, and Minneapolis was thrust into the center of the international conversation on Black Lives. Geoscientists also joined this conversation, including at the University of Minnesota. The Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences published a communally written statement in the days following George Floyd's murder that decried the act and affirmed the department's commitment to combatting racism and making our department a more inclusive and equitable place.

Numerous individuals and groups within the department took action in the following months. Undergraduate and graduate students began organizing in June 2020 to brainstorm action items that they (we) wanted to see implemented in the department. In the fall of 2020, students presented a letter to the department, with many suggested action items under the categories of improving department diversity, inclusive pedagogy, and community research partnerships. With regards to community partnerships, students advocated for the department to "build meaningful and long-term relationships with local environmental justice organizations, and find ways to support these organizations with department resources and community-driven science."

Faculty wrote a letter in response in which they grouped the student action items into three categories: current actions, doable or potentially doable in the foreseeable future, and more complex or longer-term issues and/or items that require significant discussion. Students wrote a second letter over winter break that provided more resources and concrete plans. This second letter was motivated by frustration for the lack of attention given to certain issues within the faculty response. The faculty decided that exchanging letters was not a productive way to move forward, and did not provide a further immediate response. Faculty and students organized a facilitated conversation about these concerns and ideas that took place the following semester in November of 2021.

While the conversation between faculty and students stalled during the Spring of 2021, a push for activism remained among graduate students in the Earth & Environmental Sciences department. We were interested in improving our department's relationships with local environmental organizations. This was one of the items identified by graduate students in the original letter that was categorized as "doable or potentially doable" in the faculty response letter. Though the department has existing outreach activities, our perspective was that meaningful connections between our department and our local community were lacking. We saw this as a failure of our land-grant mission, an opportunity to build meaningful, local relationships with communities underrepresented in the Earth Sciences, and potentially an avenue to attract, support, and grow our departmental diversity.

We recognized that our department was generally interested in community partnerships, but we were wary of repeating exploitative patterns with community partners. We know that community

partners have expertise that our department lacks: local environmental concerns and lived experiences, skills in building relationships, disrupting institutional and racial power structures, and knowledge of local history and relationships. We wanted to do something that would bring our department in conversation with community organizations interested in connecting with us, but we also recognized that we needed to compensate non-UMN folks for their time and knowledge.

### **A Note on Language**

Throughout the paper, we use the term “community groups” to refer to non-university participants. We recognize this as problematic, given that university members are also a part of their local communities. But we use the term in the vein of community-based scholarship. Additionally, there are many words to describe community-based scholarship, including community engagement, community science, community-driven science, and community-based research. While these terms are distinct, we use these terms interchangeably to mean partnerships between University folks and community organizations that center community priorities and work to support their self-determination.

## **The Methods:**

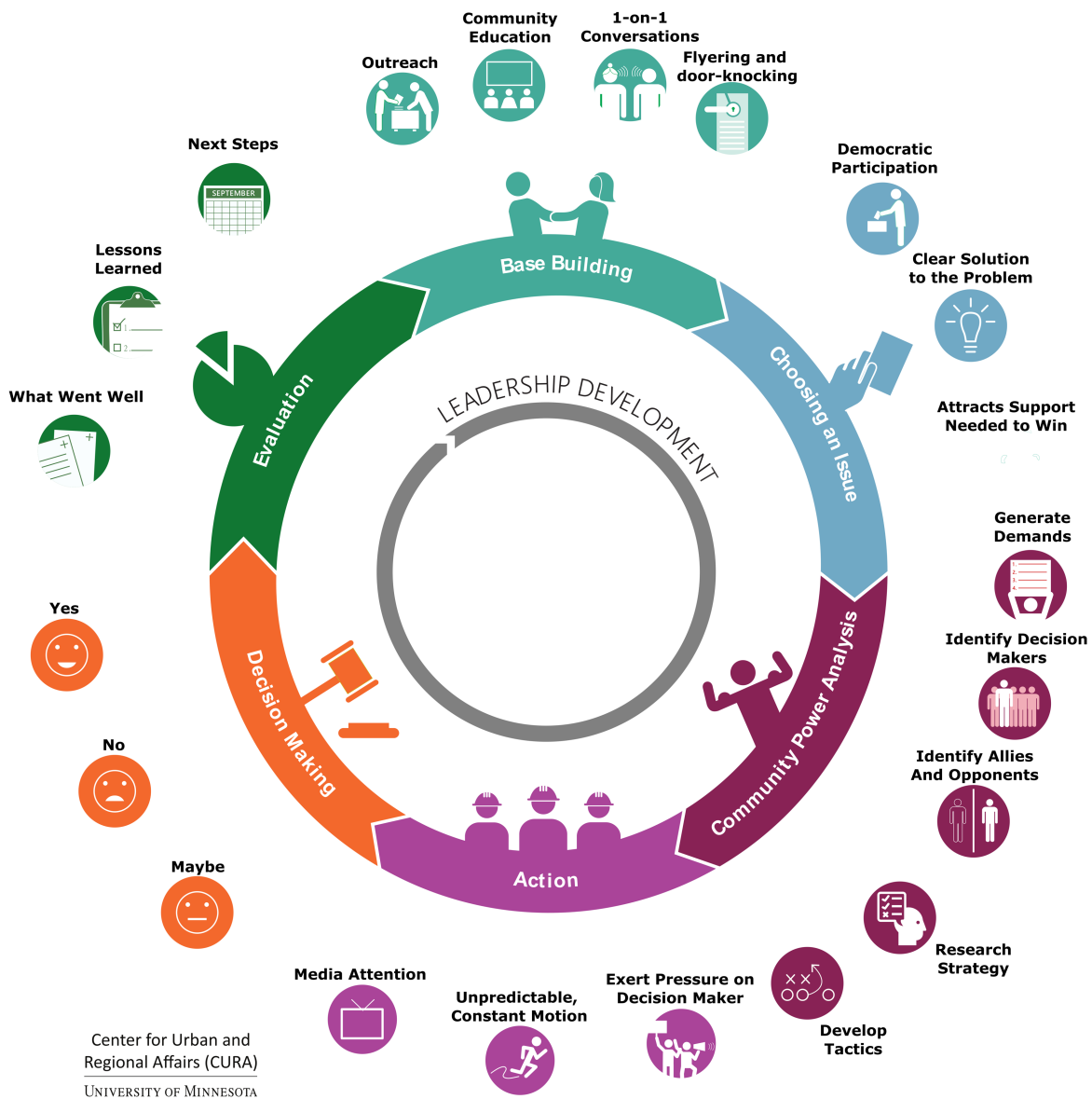
### **Organizing Timeline**

Thankfully, our department has an internal grant fund for outreach, established by two alumni in honor of their advisor, Sam Sawkins. In Spring 2021, authors MN, JJ, and KC, along with one undergraduate, Kali Mansur, applied for funding through the Sawkins fund to hold a summit with local environmental organizations (application provided in Resources). In our application, we noted that Earth scientists are uniquely positioned to help people face environmental challenges and inequities, but that there is a need to establish connections outside of the academy in order to address those challenges. This event was intended to begin developing those connections.

We also requested funding to compensate the student organizers for their time in this work. We were committed to contributing our time and energy to this project in service of racial justice in the Twin Cities community, but we also did not want to set the precedent that the department should expect free labor and expertise from the student body. Most local outreach in our department has been done by graduate students without compensation. Rather, we wanted to set the standard that this work is important, should be valued within the academy, and is worth compensating. Before we submitted the proposal, we were informed that this funding was not intended to pay graduate students, but we included this in our budget anyway. In May of 2021, our proposal was fully funded by the Sawkins fund.

While our organizing team collectively had previous experience working on community-driven research projects (Matson et al., 2021), taken coursework in Indigenous and community-based participatory research methods, participated in workshops through the National Socio-

Environmental Synthesis Center, and done community organizing, we knew we still had more to learn. So our first step was to draw on existing expertise in community-engaged research both within and outside of the university. We wanted to make sure that our approach was in line with best practices, and we wanted to pay special attention to the unique dynamics in Minneapolis and St. Paul. We started with folks in the University of Minnesota: we met with individuals from the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, the Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center, the Office for Public Engagement, and the Institute on the Environment - offices within the University of Minnesota that work with community partners. These meetings happened throughout the course of 2021 and helped us frame our organizing approach (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Life Cycle of an Organizing Campaign. C Terrence Andersen of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs encouraged us to envision our work as part of an organizing campaign to shift the culture of our department. This diagram outlines the steps of an organizing campaign beginning from base building all the way through program evaluation. Figure adapted from the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota. Original accessed at [https://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.umn.edu/files/2019-08/Life\\_Cycle\\_of\\_an\\_Organizing\\_Campaign.pdf](https://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.umn.edu/files/2019-08/Life_Cycle_of_an_Organizing_Campaign.pdf)

At the same time that we were meeting with University collaborators, we began to reach out to community organizations. We compiled organizations in a number of ways: some from existing personal connections with students and faculty who had done community-based work, some based on recent news coverage/notoriety, and some from online searches. We prioritized

groups based in Minneapolis and Saint Paul and organizations founded or operated by people of color. We focused on these groups because the campus of UMN-Twin Cities is in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, and because urban populations and people of color have historically been ignored or excluded by the geoscience community.

We sent cold call emails to organizations inviting them to an initial meeting to introduce ourselves, learn about them and their organization, detail some of the expertise and research interests in our department, and explain what we were trying to accomplish with this event. We reached out to 18 organizations, 8 of which didn't respond, 3 of which said they were not interested in working with us, and 7 of which said that they were interested. The organizations that participated in the event included neighborhood associations, urban gardening organizations, youth outdoor programs, and water rights activist groups. The specific organizations were: Rights of Mississippi River, Frogtown Neighborhood Association, Urban Roots, SE Como Neighborhood Association, Global Peace Farms, and Minneapolis Edible Boulevards.



**Figure 2.** Vegetable garden at George Floyd Square in South Minneapolis. Plants, flowers, and food have been a key part of George Floyd Square since it was established in May 2020, with gardens maintained by Jay Webb of Global Peace Farms.



During the fall semester, we began preparing people in our department for the upcoming event. We sent surveys to faculty and researchers to gauge their interest in taking part in the event. We also hosted two workshops with the Office for Public Engagement during a pre-existing internal seminar time. These workshops were an introduction to community-engaged research and provided institutional perspective about the value of community-based research and the resources available to university members. Serendipitously, Dr. Raj Pandya of the Thriving Earth Exchange was scheduled to present a department seminar in November 2021. Dr. Pandya gave a seminar detailing the work to the Thriving Earth Exchange and spoke about the need for and mentality required to do research in support of community priorities.

The final piece of internal preparation was to recruit facilitators for our discussions. We invited graduate students in our department to contribute as facilitators, knowing that they were interested in connecting with community groups and suspecting that they would be a good intermediary between faculty, researchers and non-university participants. We held a meeting with all of our facilitators to answer their questions and provided them with a facilitation guide (guide provided in Resources).

### **The Summit**

The summit took place on Saturday November 13th, 2021 in the Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center building in North Minneapolis (a university-owned, off campus facility). We welcomed department and community members into the space for a 4 hour event split before and after lunch. At the door, we had people sign in, create name tags, and share their address so that we could mail out financial compensation after the event. In an attempt to create a welcoming environment, we arranged the tables and chairs into a big circle and provided coffee and a few breakfast treats.

Once most people had arrived, we began by introducing ourselves, the main organizers of the event, and the purpose for this gathering. We outlined the norms for the discussion as well as our department's history and current action with respect to Indigenous communities and community-based scholarship. We then opened up the conversation for each person to introduce themselves, their community, and what they were hoping to get out of this summit. With a room full of 45 people, this took us an hour and a half and took us up to lunch time.

For lunch, we provided box lunches and invited people to move around the room and converse with each other. During lunch, one of our organizers asked each community organization which department members they would like to talk with during the event. After lunch, we began World Cafe style conversations: each community group was stationed at a table and university researchers rotated between tables every 30 minutes. We placed researchers at specific tables initially based on our lunch-time check-ins with community groups. Each table also had one graduate student facilitator who guided the conversation around discussion prompts and invited all people at the table to participate. To conclude each conversation, we had facilitators prompt conversations about what next steps might look like for building relationships between these department members and community groups.

After three rotations in the World Café style conversations, our event came to a close. We invited all participants to reflect on their experience. We asked everyone to write down their response to these questions: 1) What is something that you learned during the event today and 2) What are the next steps that you are going to take after today? We then had a few folks share their answers with the larger group to close out the day.

We also had participants fill out an evaluation of the event. Our evaluation questions were: 1) Did you find today to be useful? If so, why? If not, why not? and 2) What could have improved this event? We collected and compiled responses to these questions and they helped to inform our reflections and recommendations in this article.

Lastly, we invited participants to exchange contact information and make plans for following up with each other. To assist in their next steps, we provided a resource document for both university and non-university participants. The resource guide included a brief biography and contact information for all the university participants, local and national funding opportunities available to university and non-university folks, logistical resources such as organizations that do science consultation for community groups, training resources for professors and students, a list of relevant courses at the University of Minnesota, a list of organizations and societies that support community-drive science, and readings on community-based research (resource guide included in Resources).

### **Follow-Up Activities**

Following the event, we submitted community member's addresses to our accountants to get their financial compensation (\$200 checks) mailed out. We also had a COVID-19 exposure during the event, so we quickly communicated this to all participants. A month after the event, we followed up with everyone thanking them for their participation and inviting them to share feedback and any actions they had taken so far. At this time, we learned that participants still hadn't received their checks, so we followed up with our accountants and communicated the timeline with all of the participants.

In January, we convened a conversation with department members who had participated in the summit to hear what they were doing and what road-blocks they had experienced. Several people informed us that they had been working with community groups. We also heard about challenges, which have informed our following reflections on this event.

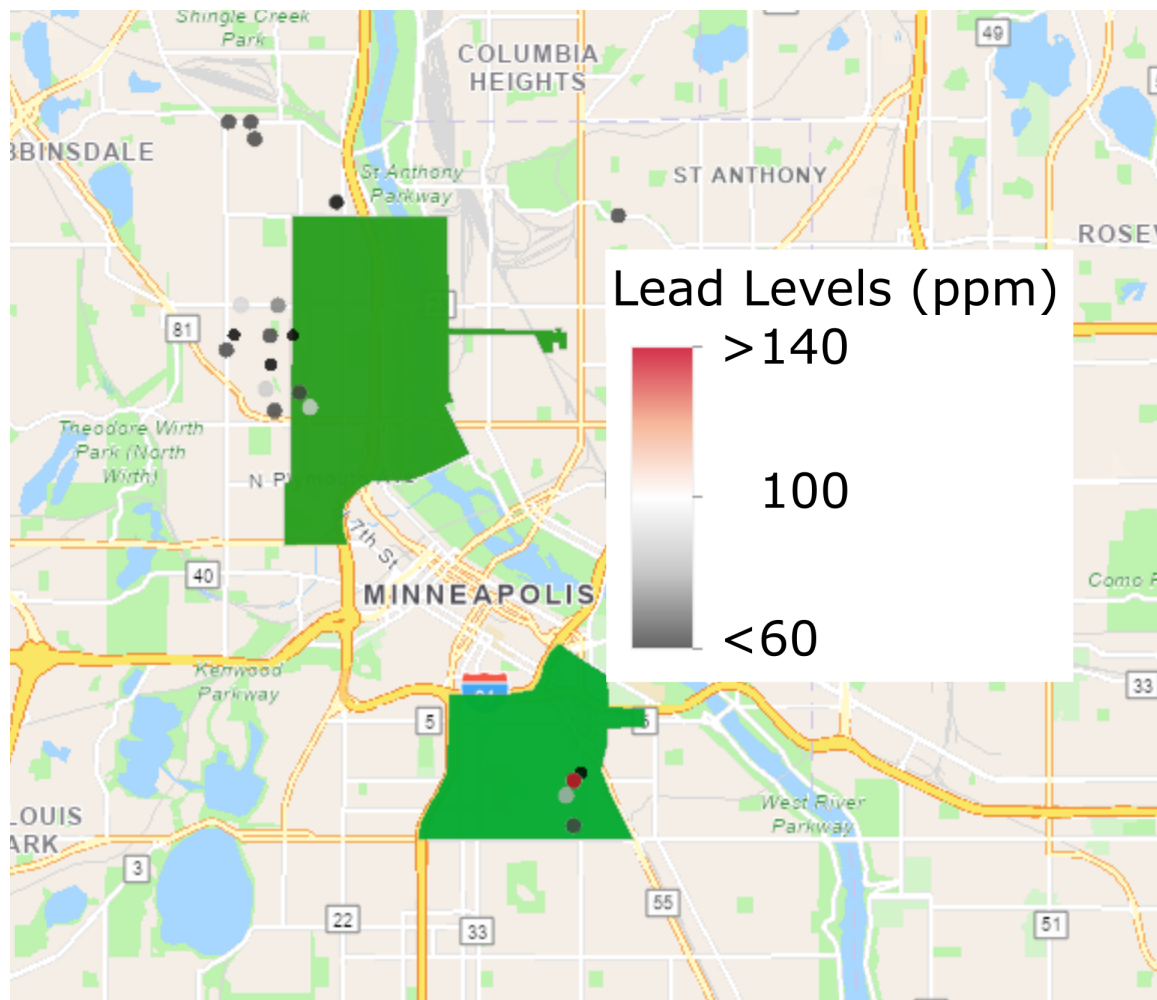
One of the community participants also reached out to us about hosting the summit again in the Fall of 2022, possibly at George Floyd Square in Minneapolis. This conversation has pushed us to start talks with our department leadership about hosting this event annually and how to create a sustainable process for organizing this event. We believe that continuing to show-up in community and continuing these conversations, especially when invited, would be a powerful step in building relationships and transforming our department and our science.



## The Results

We held this event to start the process of building relationships with Twin Cities communities marginalized within the field of earth science. While this work must be a long-term commitment, some short-term connections have emerged from the summit:

- Two university researchers hosted a GIS workshop for Minneapolis Edible Boulevards to develop interactive digital maps of community garden sites and soil test data sites in the two Minneapolis Green Zones. These maps are being shared citywide to help community members find spaces where they can grow fresh produce and identify what the lead levels are in or near their neighborhoods.
- One university person has been joining the meetings of Rights of Mississippi River.
- A lab group in ESCI is working to find funding to support a project with Urban Roots.
- We have been invited by Jay Webb of Global Peace Farms to host a similar event at George Floyd Square.
- One university person is helping to run soil samples for Global Peace Farms and facilitate connections with other departments.



**Figure 3.** GIS map of soil sample locations from Minneapolis Edible Boulevards and Minneapolis Green Zones. This data visualization was generated during GIS workshops hosted for Minneapolis Edible Boulevards, with support from the Minneapolis Green Zones' Task Force Initiative that funded two young community leaders.

## Reflections

### Knowing Our History

We learned early on that understanding the history and context of our department, university, and local community was a critical first step to appropriately engage with community members. Both university and community members come to these conversations with different backgrounds and levels of understanding about the University of Minnesota, the Twin Cities, and earth science. Many university people, including two of the authors, are transplants who only live in the Twin Cities temporarily, making it difficult for them to learn the complexities of local issues.

We learned that many local groups have had negative experiences with the university or local government contributing to their suspicion or disinterest in our relationship efforts. In our conversations with community groups, we did our best to share the honest state of our department. Several groups told us that they were not interested in working with us, including one person who told us that our plan for compensation was not fair.

Given this history and context, we realized we would cause harm to community organizations, as the University has done in the past, by failing to follow through on our commitments, failing to provide adequate compensation, creating an intimidating, unwelcoming environment, and perpetuating power dynamics that privilege the University. How we proceeded needed to be informed by this context so we could do our best to avoid these harms and create the change we wanted to see.

### Embracing Humility

While we attempted to approach this work thoughtfully and with good intentions, we were working within structures set up to benefit those already in power. So we inevitably ran into road-blocks and made mistakes in pursuit of the goal of shifting power away from the University. Therefore, it was important for us to operate from a place of humility, where we were open to learn and change based on feedback.

### Being Honest

We found that being honest with our community groups about where our department was essential in building meaningful relationships. We were open with community organizations that community partnerships have not been a central priority of the department but we are working to change that. Department members are just learning how to work outside of academia and both

time and money are limited to engage with community groups. We also were respectful when community groups declined to engage with us, especially given how much learning we all still have to do. While these rejections stung, we also were able to find partners who wanted to participate in the event and potentially collaborate with the department in its current form.

### **Prioritizing Hospitality**

Our efforts towards hospitality were essential in making this event a success. Throughout the entire process we strove to make people feel welcomed and valued. Some community participants shared these reflections following the event:

“I feel so supported.” ~ Community Group Member

“Seems like you thought of ways to make everyone comfortable and move at a reasonable pace.” ~ Community Group Member

We met with every group ahead of time to start building relationships, hear their concerns, and to communicate our intention to prioritize their experience. We held these meetings at a location convenient to the community group, mostly over Zoom but also one meeting in person at George Floyd Square. The summit was directly informed by their goals and suggestions. During the event, we provided food, free parking, ample time for introductions, and a gathering space off campus large enough for us all to gather without extensive limiting on participant numbers. Renting a space unaffiliated with the University, locally-owned by any of our community partners, may have provided a deeper way to connect with these community organizations.

We also chose to hold our event over several hours on a Saturday, as that seemed to work best for most community groups. Originally, we had envisioned a 2-day event, but realized that would be asking for a lot of time from everyone. We also learned that Saturdays are generally a hard time for most faculty to attend due to family and professional obligations (and, in this case, COVID concerns), limiting their attendance:

“5 hours was difficult. Also I wish there were more faculty. I wonder if some would have liked to come, but 5 hours on a Saturday just didn't work.” ~ UMN Department Member

“Would have been nice if more faculty stayed throughout the event but I'm grateful for the time they committed all the same.” ~ UMN Department Member

During our initial survey of the faculty, we learned that Saturdays would not work for a lot of them, but decided to move forward with this date in order to prioritize our community groups. Unfortunately, this did mean fewer faculty were able to attend. Additionally, our event did happen before an increase of COVID-19 cases due to the Delta variant, and we did have a COVID-exposure at the event.

## **Intentionally Structuring Conversations**

Our efforts to structure conversations through a large group introduction and then World Café conversations helped break the ice, make each person feel welcome and valued, and generated the space for relationship building. We were also intentional about who we invited, bringing together community organizations interested in local environmental concerns. Here are some quotes from participants:

“The structured networking helped, the day took its time didn't feel rushed while also not feeling as if my time is being wasted.” ~ Community Group Member

“I feel hopeful after meeting so many committed and passionate people. I got some good ideas from talking with others. I feel excited about possible collaborations with the university.” ~ Community Group Member

“I met people I would love to connect with about community change - mixing art with science to create change.” ~ Community Group Member

“My conversations w/community members and others at the U alike both expanded on existing ideas and passions and introduced me to new ways of thinking. There were some tangible outcomes (e.g. grant ideas) & some more ideological (how do we think about natural systems and people?) - all useful!” ~ UMN Department Member

“It felt like a safe place to ask naive questions, and I genuinely feel that this was the most meaningful step towards community engaged science that I've made during my time in the department.” ~ UMN Department Member

But in our effort to provide flexibility, some people felt they didn't have enough structure to envision concrete plans:

“It was great as a non U of MN affiliate to hear of honest outreach work that you all are looking to do with partners but the open endedness can also be a challenge in learning what is possible.” ~ Community Group Member

And while we were intentional about who we invited, we were also given feedback that we should invite more youth and elders into future events.

## **Building Internal Community**

Having people supportive of community-engagement and DEI efforts within the department was an important catalyst for this event. And, the event itself helped to strengthen and grow a sense of community within the department. Our department has grown around DEI issues since the murder of George Floyd, and this event was another step in that process. We also have had one very visible community-engaged project in our department: [Kawe Gidaa-naanaagadawendaamin Manoomin \(First We Must Consider Manoomin/Psinj\)](#), a collaboration

between University members and local tribes to understand declines in Manoomin/Psiq (wild rice) abundance. Graduate students who work on the Manoomin project were important supporters of this summit, including co-authors MN. Additionally, this project's publicity has highlighted the value and increased the awareness of community-based research to everyone in our department.

While we are grateful for the supportive community present in our department, community-based work is still relatively new for many. So we hosted internal workshops to provide university folks with resources and to open a space to talk about barriers and opportunities. These workshops served as a space to continue building support and capacity for community engaged research in our department. Spending more time within the department before the summit would have improved this event, but we were limited with time and resources. Specifically, one of our participants suggested that we provide additional help for faculty in thinking through how their skills and expertise may be relevant and useful to community partners:

“Maybe address whether people have to have directly applicable expertise. I think everyone can get involved! And some people maybe didn't come b/c they thought they had little to offer.” ~ UMN Department Member

### **Shifting Department Culture**

In our meeting with C Terrence Anderson from the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, he encouraged us to think of this event as the beginning of an advocacy campaign (Figure 1). This was not a one-time event, but a step in shifting the culture of our department and our discipline. He challenged us to see our summit as a visible example of the change we envisioned and a tool for building a coalition of supportive people. This summit would not bring about a complete transformation from day one. From that initial coalition, we could continue to build and grow our network. As more and more people become involved and committed, they push the institution to make sustainable changes. C Terrence Anderson's advice of building out our coalition aligned with feedback we received during the summit about how we could improve this event:

“More faculty + people w/power & resources present perhaps presence from other environmental-related departments like SWAC & CFANS” ~ UMN Department Member

### **Creating Sustainable Change**

Given our commitment to shifting the department culture, we recognize the need to create change that will outlast our tenure as graduate students. Looking forward, we are seeking to build a coalition of faculty, staff, and students willing to seriously champion this work with their time and energy. We are especially interested in faculty leadership, because faculty have a large role in department culture through teaching and research. However, we recognize the difficulties faculty face in committing to community-driven work given the institutional constraints and rewards structures of many academic institutions. We also know that this kind of labor often

falls on the groups of people who regularly engage in DEI and outreach: women (Guarino and Boden, 2017), faculty of color (Jimenez et al. 2019), and students.

### **Sharing this Work**

One barrier to shifting department culture is that we have limited venues for sharing community engagement, DEI, and teaching innovations. We have several departmental seminar timeslots, but the majority are used for academic research talks, with fewer people discussing teaching or service (though this has been changing over the last year). We believe that talking about community engagement and DEI work in the same venues as research affirms its importance and value. And we hope that sharing and receiving feedback on this particular work will inspire others to pursue further community-engaged research.

### **Navigating Personal Tensions**

Author JJ feels personal tension between working for the university and trying to do community work. As a fourth-year graduate student, I do not feel that I represent the university, or agree with all of its priorities and strategies. And yet, I'm employed by the University, and am reliant on certification from the University to provide credibility and legitimacy to my career. Even in approaching community groups, our email opened by saying that we are a team from the University of Minnesota. We were intentional to describe where our department is with respect to community engagement, and one of our goals is to redistribute resources (money, researcher interest, access to scientific equipment) to people outside the university.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Lean on Existing Institutional Knowledge**

We were fortunate to work with colleagues from a number of offices and departments who already engage in community-driven scholarship. These sources are dispersed across the university and coordinating meetings was no small undertaking, but the knowledge and connections we gained was invaluable. We also relied on an existing funding source to support our event. And there are many other creative funding sources spread across the university that we considered. We didn't consider non-university resources for this event, but that possibility was raised by a university participant:

“Perhaps consider opening this kind of event in the future to AIPG, AWG, and other professional geoscience chapters. Many of the companies participating in those societies might be willing to financially sponsor future events.” ~ UMN Department Member

## **Figure Out Compensation Well Beforehand**

We knew that it was important to compensate community members for their time and expertise, and we made sure to include this in our budget. But the logistics of paying 20+ people through the university accounting system was complicated. Due to unforeseen circumstances, it took nearly two months after collecting everyone's information for them to receive payment, and we fielded many frustrated questions about why the process took so long. This threatens to erode the trust that we worked so hard to establish. Having checks or even cash at the event to give out to participants would have been more efficient, but likely difficult within the restrictions of the University.

## **The House Doesn't have to be Completely in Order to Invite Guests**

We felt it was important to provide training and resources to members of our department prior to the event, so that there were clear expectations that this event was directed towards community members. However, not everyone in our department attended the training or the event. Rather than pushing for complete consensus and agreement from our department, we chose to engage with people who were interested. And through those workshops and discussions, we recruited faculty who previously had no experience with community-engaged work, including some who did not see their research as immediately relevant to community priorities. And while we wanted clear pathways for collaboration between community groups and faculty to emerge from this event, several community group members shared their gratitude for simply being able to connect with a university professor:

"It was a rare opportunity to pick the professor brain." ~ Community Group Member

From this, we learned there is value in bringing people together for conversations, even if all of our faculty were not sure of what they had to offer and project plans did not emerge right away.

## **Involve Staff and Faculty to Sustain Effort**

This effort was initiated by students, who are always transient within the university system. To create more sustainability moving forward, we are involving more university outreach staff from multiple environmental-related departments and academic centers for future planning. We hope these staff will provide continuity and institutional support to current and future student organizers. Also, by diversifying the departments involved we aim to spread out the workload, connect with more faculty, and leverage more funding sources.

We hope that with time and institutional change, faculty will be able to fully engage in and champion community-driven work. Our department is currently in the process of revising tenure and promotion documents, including language to support community-engaged research. We also believe that a flow of student leaders is vital to this work, to bring in new ideas and constantly push for change. We also hope that future students receive professional credit and financial compensation for their work.



## **Provide Time for Community Groups to Meet with Each Other**

From our summit evaluations, we learned that community groups would have appreciated more time to connect with each other. We had structured the event to specifically connect university members with community groups, and did not build in time for each group to connect with each other:

“More time for community groups to connect” ~ Community Group Member

We learned that the opportunity to gather organizations with common goals is rare due to all the scheduling and time constraints that people have.

## **Connect More Often, More Deeply, with More Folks**

Lastly, we heard feedback about connecting with more community group members, especially youth. Other feedback shared called for more workshops to increase our interactions and provide more time for community groups to talk with all of the researchers. Additionally, thoughtful facilitation tips were also shared to deepen our connections with one and other:

“Healing exercises or breathing intro, ice breaker in the beginning and lunch”  
~ Community Group Member

## **Summary**

Following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, students, staff, and faculty at the University of Minnesota increased their efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion. We were interested in building relationships between our department and local environmental organizations, with a special emphasis on urban residents and people of color. We hosted a summit that brought together 6 community groups and members of our department to have conversation and begin building community. Reception of the event was overwhelmingly positive, and several collaborations resulted from our time together. We learned a great deal from organizing this event and have several insights that can inform others interested in hosting a similar event: draw on existing expertise, be honest about institutional history and current situation, provide compensation for community members, provide training for university members, build in sustainable practices, and work to maintain relationships. We plan to host similar events moving forward, and look forward to continued learning and growing.

## **Sources**

Guarino, C.M. and Borden, V.H.M. 2017. Faculty service loads and gender: Are women taking care of the academic family? *Research in Higher Education*. 58. p. 672-694. DOI: 10.1007/s11162-017-9454-2

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inclusion. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*. 3, p. 1030–1033. DOI: 10.1038/s41559-019-0911-5

Matson, L. et al. 2021. Transforming research and relationships through collaborative tribal-university partnerships on Manoomin (wild rice). *Environmental Science & Policy* 115, p. 108-115. DOI: 10.1016/j.envsci.2020.10.010

## Resources

Sawkins fund application: <https://bit.ly/EJSawkinsApp>

Resource document: <https://bit.ly/ESCResources>

Facilitation guide: <https://bit.ly/ESCIFacilitationGuide>

CURA Life Cycle of an Organizing Campaign:  
[https://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.umn.edu/files/2019-08/Life\\_Cycle\\_of\\_an\\_Organizing\\_Campaign.pdf](https://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.umn.edu/files/2019-08/Life_Cycle_of_an_Organizing_Campaign.pdf)