

AASHE STARS 2.2. Innovation Credit

Title: Launching the We Are Water Program in West Central Minnesota

Description:

In 2020-2021 UMN Morris worked with community partners to launch the West Central Minnesota We Are Water program in west-central Minnesota. The Minnesota Humanities Center runs a program called We Are Water. The program engages organizations across the State in a program intended to help build a shared water ethic in the state. A big part of the WRW program is bringing a water-themed exhibit to the campus. Additionally, the campus also brought the Why Treaties Matter exhibit to campus at the same time. Pairing these exhibits together helped the campus make connections to water in Minnesota and the lives and history of Indigenous people in Minnesota.

UMN Morris partnered with Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) a local environmental non-profit in rural Minnesota and the Stevens Soil and Water Conservation District to create programming that aligned with the goals of the We Are Water program. The partnership team also engaged several other organizations in the region. UMN Morris students were engaged in helping to organize and plan the WC-WRW effort. This included creating a website to communicate with the public, organizing water testing clinics, and more.

Results:

Our WC-WRW partnership team delivered a lot of programming for UMN Morris students and community members in our region. Our team brought two amazing exhibits to campus. Our team also created a webinar series focused on exploring the lives of people in our region who have unique relationships with the land. Our team also developed a set of videos that reflect on the themes of the exhibit that are being used in the classroom. More information about the program can be found at the press release below.

<https://extension.umn.edu/rsdp-happenings/digital-engagement-strategies-grow-sustainable-connections-southwest-minnesota>

<https://www.wearewaterwcmn.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYwv3UtpRHIVDia52VyK0RV5btLqiqdbf>

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