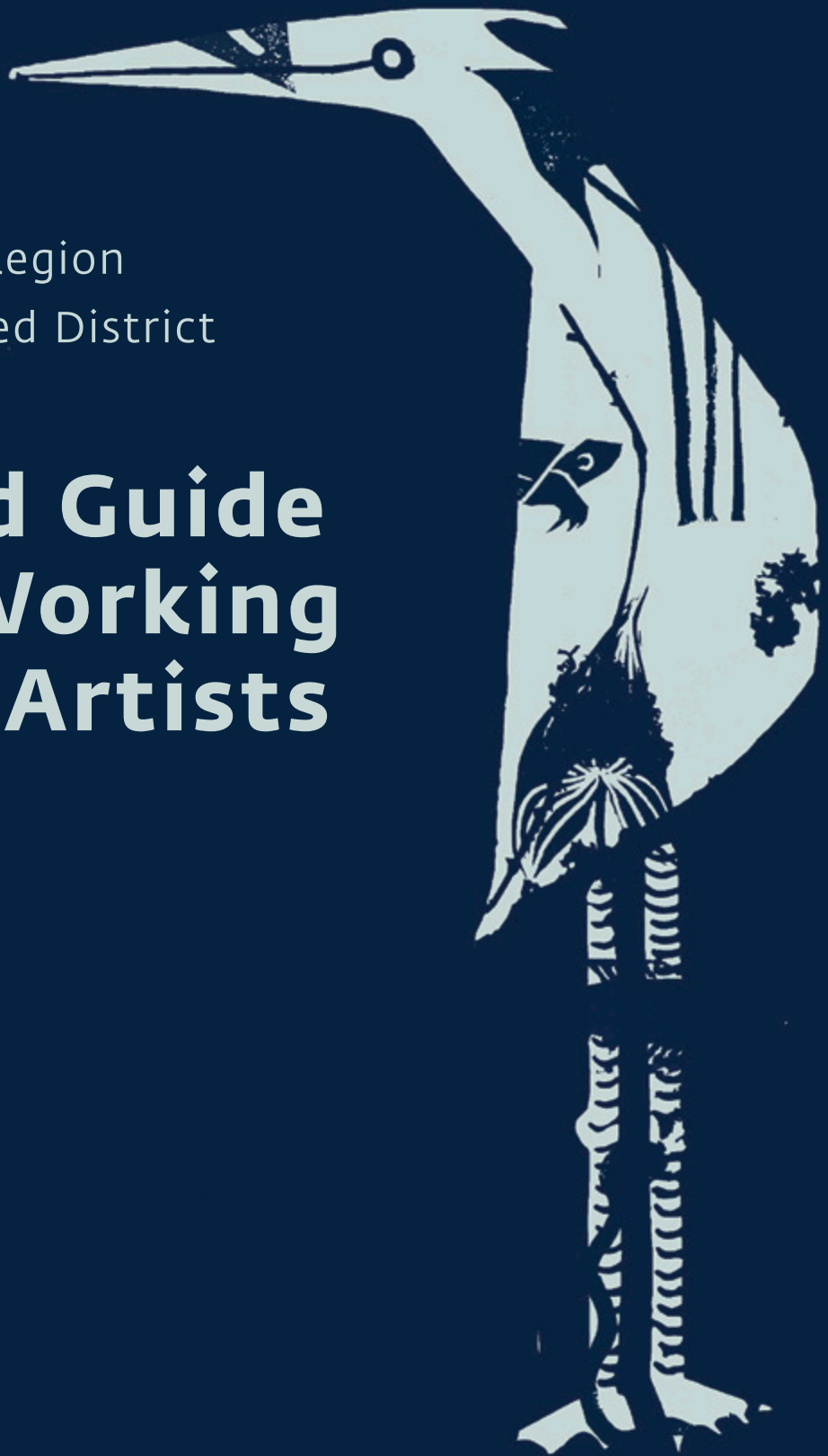


Capitol Region
Watershed District

Field Guide for Working with Artists







CAPITOL REGION WATERSHED DISTRICT

Field Guide for Working With Artists

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Capitol Region Watershed District Field Guide for Working with Artists

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An Introduction

to Capitol Region Watershed District's Field Guide for Working with Artists



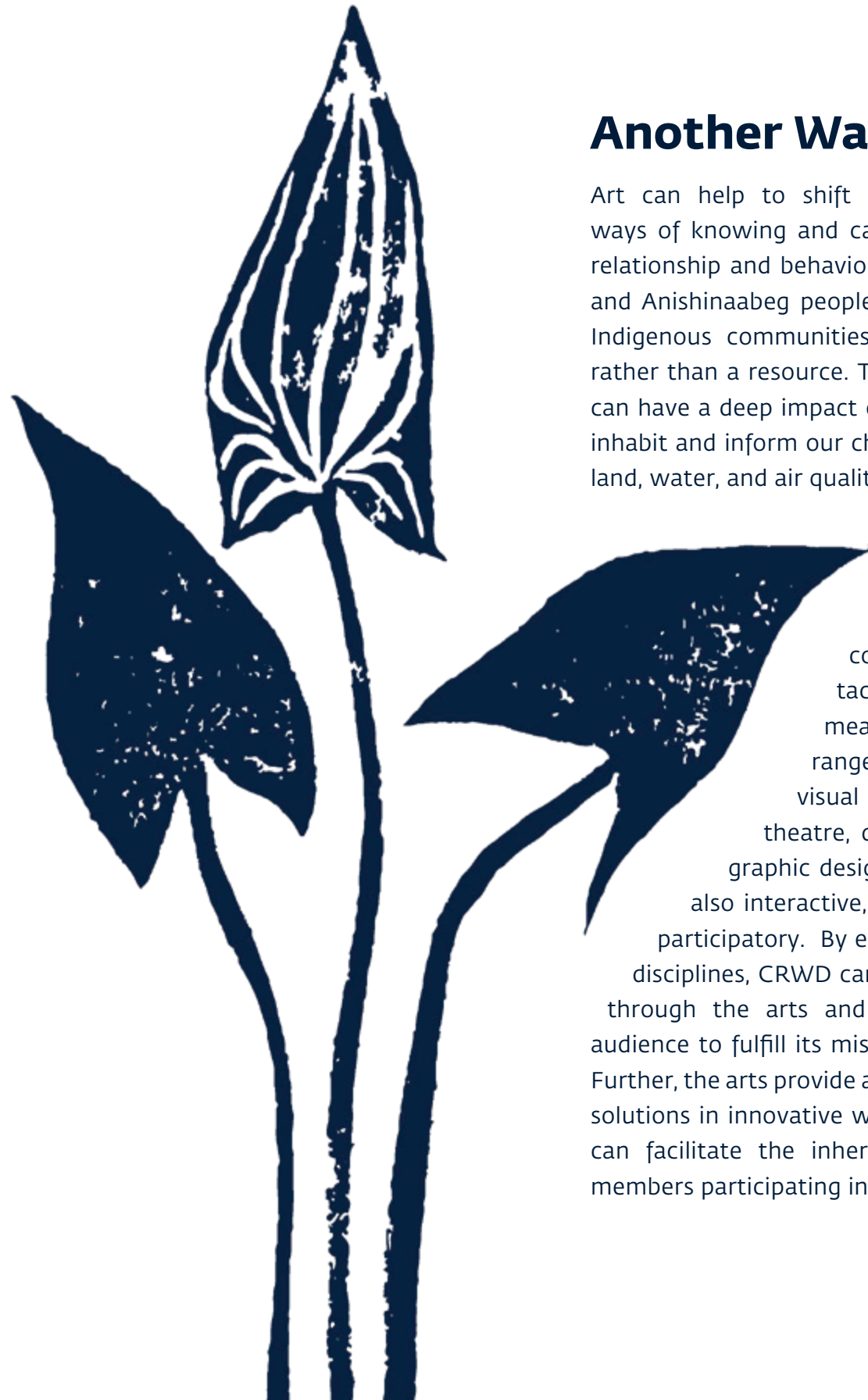
Purpose

The Field Guide for Working with Artists outlines recommendations and existing models of working with artists to facilitate integrating art and artists into the work of Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD). CRWD's mission is to protect, manage and improve the water resources of the District. Integrating art and artists into the projects and programs of CRWD helps us achieve this mission by creating connections between water resource managers, engineers, community partners and our residents, resulting in more clean water projects and actions. The Field Guide provides a roadmap for CRWD staff and board members, acknowledging that these approaches may change over

time. It is intended as a flexible, living document rather than a static list of prescriptive recommendations. This guide covers a broad range of art approaches that include a **residency model, short term engagement, internships, commissions, and inclusion of artists on project teams**. A menu of options for identifying, engaging, and contracting with artists is included as well as important considerations for contracting for services. Additional resources including a detailed description of the history of the Artist in Residence program at CRWD can be found at capitolregionwd.org.

The term “Art” is often conceived as an image or object created by a single individual, such as a painting, sculpture, or photograph. While this more conventional idea of art persists, artistic practice has expanded to include a wide variety of approaches that are often inter-disciplinary and socially engaged in nature. Art thus serves as a catalyst to facilitate engagement in place-based, environmental, educational, and social justice work. Artists can play a key role in reimagining how to care for the vital living systems and inhabitants of the city - Water, Earth, Air, plant/ animal species, and people - and how we can shape a healthy and vibrant watershed.

– Christine Baeumler



Another Way of Knowing

Art can help to shift perceptions and explore different ways of knowing and can eventually lead to changing our relationship and behavior toward the environment. Dakota and Anishinaabeg people, as well as other members of the Indigenous communities, teach that Water is a Relative, rather than a resource. This more relational way of thinking can have a deep impact on our orientation to the places we inhabit and inform our choices about how we act to protect land, water, and air quality.

Art can also provide a significant platform for dialogue and engagement. The arts often communicate through emotional, tactile, metaphorical, and experiential means. The arts encompass a broad range of practices including, for example, visual art, sculpture, poetry, storytelling, theatre, dance, music, video, sound art, and graphic design. Much contemporary artwork is also interactive, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and participatory. By engaging artists from a variety of art disciplines, CRWD can expand its ability to communicate through the arts and involve a broader, more diverse audience to fulfill its mission of environmental stewardship. Further, the arts provide a mode of thinking about discovering solutions in innovative ways. Ongoing dialogue with artists can facilitate the inherent creativity of staff and Board members participating in the various facets of CRWD’s work.

Guiding Principles for CRWD's Public Art Program

An interdisciplinary and socially engaged Art approach can impact how we think about problems and act out solutions. How can creative processes themselves be infused into different aspects of the District's work? These principles were drafted after conducting a Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) exercise in 2020 with the goal of providing direction on how best art can further our mission. REM is a method of evaluation and data gathering used by the University of Minnesota for community development and involves engaging a focus group in appreciative inquiry, interviews, and, a group mapping and brainstorming session that generates a mind map of the ideas shared. This data is then clarified, coded, and analyzed by a professional.

Integrating art and artists into the work of the District not only adds beauty, but creates opportunities to engage with our communities in new and creative ways, helping bring water back to the consciousness of our residents.

- 1. Institutionalize the role of Art and artists into the fabric of CRWD's mission**, identify themes, and goals throughout the organization. Share CRWD's innovative approaches with other water quality organizations and the general public.
- 2. Identify projects and programs** in which art/artists can contribute to (and potentially transform) the work through innovative ways of thinking.
- 3. Use Art to engage with the wider community** through hands-on engagement, aesthetic design, and educational materials and interactions.
- 4. Whenever possible integrate Art into Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)**. Explore the role of artists early in CIP planning through contracting and Request for Proposals processes. Art could play a significant role in drawing attention to CIPs that are below ground as well as those on the surface that seem no different from traditional infrastructure or features.
- 5. Consider how Art could play a role in CRWD's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals**. Examples include engaging a more comprehensive range of artists, introducing different cultural ways of knowing, celebrating, and experiencing water (for example, as a Relative rather than a Resource), and lifting up, including voices that have been marginalized in the past and connecting CRWD to more diverse audiences.

“...how
artists
might
make the
invisible
visible to
achieve
improved
water
quality”

Field Guide

For Working With Artists



Watershed Artist in Residence Program

The Watershed Artist in Residence (AiR) program is predicated on long term engagement with CRWD that reflects a foundational understanding of the mission, goals, and values of CRWD as well as the work of the different divisions.

The Watershed Districts Artist- in- Residence (AiR) program for CRWD was launched as a partnership in 2010 between Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD) and Public Art Saint Paul (PASP). According to the Central Corridor Art Plan “The broad goals of this collaboration between the Watershed District and PASP were to open a dialogue with water resource managers about how artists might make the invisible visible to achieve water quality improvement and to identify initiatives.”

A lecture by artist Cliff Garten on “The Expressive Potential of the Watershed” kicked off this initiative. Subsequently PASP convened a workshop that engaged a broad cross-section of water quality

experts, environmentalists, social scientists, and artists. Artist and former CRWD board member Seitu Jones was a key advocate in creating an AiR position at CRWD. The position was inspired by Public Art Saint Paul’s, City Artist-in-Residence model. This initial partnership and AiR work led to the creation of the Watershed Language of Art plan and a continued presence of a CRWD AiR.

Recruitment and Applicant Review

The recruitment of the Watershed AiR can be done through a Request for Qualifications process that combines an open and invitational call for potential candidates. To create an opportunity that ensures a diverse group of applicants,

the call should go out to organizations and groups that can reach a broad group of artists. A description of the position, scope of work, expectations, and term could be shared through locally based arts organizations, as well as to list serves, and on social media platforms. A link to CRWD's website should be included in the call for artists who may be unfamiliar with the organization.

CRWD should be attentive to some of the barriers that may impact an artist's ability to commit to an AiR position. The AiR is not a full-time position and most artists would need to have other employment and may also have family obligations. While it is important that the AiR is flexible to work with staff during daytime work hours, and to establish this individual as a member of CRWD's team, it would be worth noting that this requirement may be a limiting factor for artists who have work schedules that conflict with CRWD work hours.

The review process should include a consideration of materials such as an artist resume, statement of interest, description of their expertise, and how that work can enhance CRWD's work and mission and images of artwork and projects. The review committee should include staff, members of the Board of Managers Communication and Community Committee, and a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) representative as well as an external review member (ideally, an artist or public art professional that is familiar with the

work of CRWD).

Position Term and Artist Role

While the term of the AiR would be determined by mutual agreement between CRWD and the artist, **ideally the candidate would be able to make a three-year commitment.** This reflects the need for an onboarding process and developing familiarity with the work of the divisions and working relationships with the staff. Since the intention of the AiR is a long-term engagement rather than one based on discreet projects, a minimum of three years allows them to more deeply understand and work collaboratively with staff to integrate the arts into larger projects and understand how CRWD fulfills its mission.

The role of the AiR is to carry out CRWD's Public Art Guiding Principles and to understand the big picture of how art is being integrated into the fabric of the watershed's work. **One of the key lessons in the AiR process is to involve artists "upstream" in projects and programs.** Early engagement creates more opportunity not only for the art to be more fully integrated, but for the creative process to have more impact in the way the project or program is conceived. Engagement that happens later can result in art that is more about enhancing a project or program rather than providing an innovative perspective. In all of these cases, each AiR will have a unique way of merging the work of CRWD and the artists own expertise and interests.

ARTISTS IN THE ECOSYSTEM

The AiR will engage with CRWD's staff and partners in two phases. First "upstream", the AiR is integrated into the humming ecosystem of CRWD's projects and goals to provide a creative perspective in the development and execution of District initiatives. Second, "downstream", where the AiR will plant new seeds by introducing and implementing work of their own creation. The following page lists an array of ways the AiR can be integrated into this flow.



In-Depth Opportunities for the AiR

Serve as an on-site or remote colleague for staff to consult with to gain an artistic or creative perspective and work as a member of CRWD's team.

Identify and facilitate art related interdisciplinary work and tools for citizen science and engagement.

Assist in developing the CRWD Public Art Policy.

Execute the annual work plan provided by staff that outlines the goals, priority projects and programs, and activities for the upcoming year.

Assist with development and implementation of art related programming in CRWD's Office.

Present opportunities for art to help further CRWD's mission and build relationships with community members of the watershed.

Provide guidance for CRWD commissioned projects including Capital Improvement Projects by identifying or working with artists.

Plan and **execute** an art project or program designed by the AiR and using their unique expertise and skills.

Assist in planning and coordination of CRWD hosted events for or led by artists.

Investigate how art can be a tool for implementing goals outlined in CRWD's Watershed Management Plan and other plans of the District.

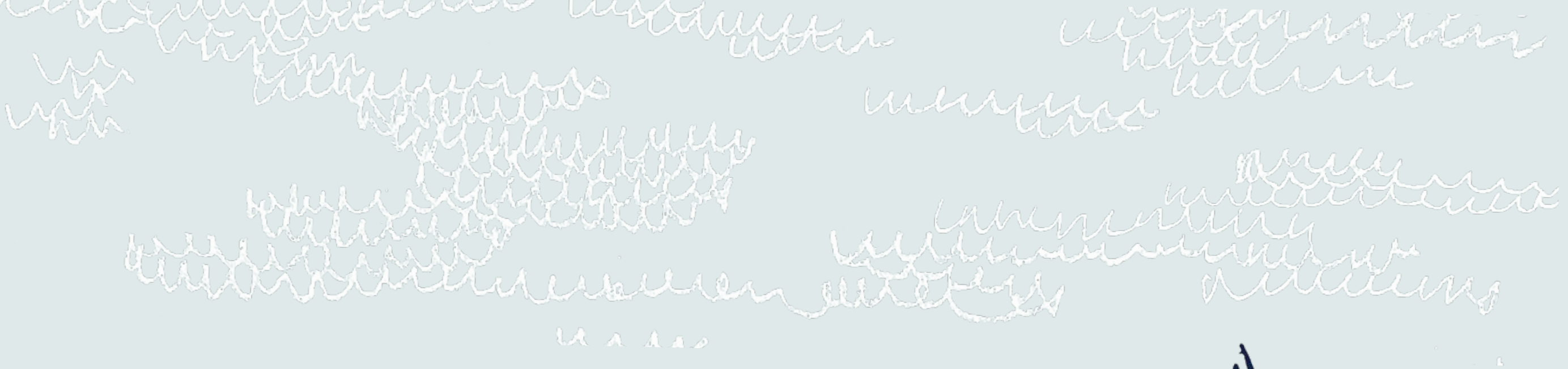
Assist in sharing the work CRWD is doing and has done with the Arts community with a broader audience.

AiR On-boarding Process and Staff Support

One of the unique opportunities provided to the AiR is a thorough introduction to the watershed and the work of all of the divisions, including the work of the Administrator and CRWD's Board. This investment in time to get to know the watershed, individuals, and the types of work that staff engage in upfront has proven extremely valuable. This orientation prepares the AiR to work effectively as part of the CRWD team and also to increase their ability to recognize art opportunities across the divisions of CRWD.

Orientation:

- **Shadow staff** by going into the field to observe monitoring practices, visit Best Management Practices, and significant sites of ongoing engagement.
- **Learn about the cultural history** and current demographics of CRWD and unique cultural perspectives related to water.
- **Become familiar with CRWD's water resources**, public spaces, and key sites by spending independent time exploring and connecting with these areas (may include Willow Reserve, Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Trout Brook, Mississippi River, Swede Hollow Park, Como Lake, Lake McCarrons, and other urban natural spaces).
- **Gather and source a variety of perspectives** on CRWD's work. This could be done by hosting listening sessions with community members (grantees, local water activists, residents, Board Managers, CAC members, City of Saint Paul AiR).
- **Participate**, when appropriate, in meetings with Partner Grant recipients.
- **Participate in safety training** (such as Personal Protective Equipment, fall protection or confined space entry) consistent with CRWD Safety Training Guidelines and the type of work performed.
- **Attend** some of CRWD's monthly Board or CAC meetings.
- **Meet** with CRWD's Minnesota Water Stewards.
- **Attend** CRWD panels and artist lectures.
- **Attend** Metro Watershed Partners gatherings and become more familiar with the work of other watershed districts.
- **Attend** local, regional or national conferences on water quality issues, including but not limited to the Minnesota Association of Watershed District's Annual Conference, MN Water Resources Conference, and the International Low Impact Development Conference.
- **Review of CRWD's plans** (10 year Watershed Management Plan; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan; Communication and Engagement Plan).



Staff as a guide

While the Artist-in-Residence is responsible for evaluating and engaging in activities, it is expected that the staff will maintain consistent, helpful, and timely communication with the AiR, include the AiR in important meetings with staff and consultants, and create a welcoming atmosphere. AiR management and communication tasks include:

- Serving as a staff point person who will maintain regular contact with the AiR and facilitate monthly office hours and check-ins with staff from different divisions on upcoming projects by email and in-person.
- Developing an annual work plan to set the goals, priorities, and activities for the upcoming year.
- Coordinating an annual meeting to review work over the past year and what was executed from the work plan and offer insight to staff for setting goals and priorities for the work plan for the following year.
- Inviting and coordinating AiR attendance at Board or CAC meetings pertaining to projects and programs that the AiR is involved in.
- Facilitating project based check-ins with specific staff involved and including the AiR in initial meetings with external partners where staff identify a potential role for an artist or an artistic element.



Developing & Deepening Relationships

with Artists Other Than the AiR

CRWD can actively encourage a community of practice for artists who are interested in water quality, environment, and socially engaged approaches to art. By convening artists at CRWD's office or online, CRWD can create a deeper, more inclusive, and diverse pool of artists that have the familiarity and capacity to work with CRWD. The following are possible approaches to engaging and utilizing these collaborations:

Workshops

An annual workshop for artists supported by CRWD to introduce the work of the District and potential opportunities and sites for engagement. Conversely, artists are often looking for partners for grant opportunities, such as the Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative grant, and the artists could provide resources such as other sources of funding to work on projects.

Panel Discussions

Panels of experts from different fields, supported by CRWD in conjunction with other organizations, could provide interdisciplinary insight into watershed management and the arts. These panels could be open to the public and provide a way to build a community of practice across disciplines. CRWD could partner with other arts organizations or colleges/universities to sponsor speakers. Making these panel discussions available on CRWD's website or social media channels would help to share these conversations with a wider audience.

Artist Lecture Series

A lecture series through partnerships with local arts organizations or educational institutions in coordination with the AiR, would feature local, national, and international artists who are engaged in water related projects. These talks could be offered as live events (in-person or on a virtual platform) and be archived on CRWD's website, (with the permission of the speaker). This archive would serve as a valuable tool for expanding the visibility and a sharing of approaches locally, regionally, nationally, and even internationally.

Collaborative Event Planning

CRWD, with assistance of the AiR, can collaborate with other science/arts-based centers in the Twin Cities (such as the Institute on Environment and Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Minnesota, the Bell Museum, Minnesota Science Museum, Springboard for the Arts, Public Art Saint Paul, FORECAST, and with other local arts organizations) to host water related events and speakers that could leverage resources and expand audiences.

Communicate with Local Arts and Cultural Organizations

Ensure that CRWD communication efforts and opportunities are reaching local arts organizations. If time and capacity permits, working on building relationships with these partners may result in more meaningful engagement between artists and CRWD.

Paid Internships

Internships are a valuable way to introduce students and emerging artists to the work of CRWD and how the arts can be deployed in this work. The AiR could work with interns in a mentorship capacity as the interns assist on projects. Some opportunities/examples include:

- Curatorial studies students could assist in rotating exhibitions in CRWD's Office and the Trout Brook Room..
- Environmental education students could work with youth on water-related citizen science initiatives.
- Interns could research arts-based approaches to connect the work of CRWD with place-based and socially engaged activities.
- Printmaking and graphic arts students could be engaged in the creation of signs and printed materials.
- Landscape Architecture, Ecology, and Socially Engaged Art students could participate in site specific design and engagement programming.

Engaging Artists in CRWD Projects & Programs

Stepping stones to building relationships

Our District is committed to engaging a broad and diverse pool of artists in inviting, compassionate, and meaningful ways.

Establish a CRWD Public Art Policy

The establishment of a CRWD Public Art Policy would assist in streamlining the process of working with artists other than the AiR on individual projects and programs and create a consistent way of identifying, inviting, reviewing, contracting, compensating, and working with a broad and diverse pool of artists. **As part of this policy, CRWD would establish and maintain a contact list of artists and arts organizations with special attention to those representing or working with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).** The list would be used when sharing new opportunities and could be made available to entities such as engineering firms and other contractors who would like to include artists on their teams. CRWD's Public Art Policy will also offer guidance on involving artists in the District's Request for Proposal (RFP) process by adding related skills to our requested list of qualifications as well as guidance on the (RFP) process such as requiring an artist on a project team or having CRWD engage an artist directly. These are two ways that artists can be integrated into the RFP process.

Build protocols that support independent artist relationships

Contract

Once developed, CRWD's Public Art Policy would provide specific guidelines for contracting that follow CRWD's Procurement and Contracting Policy and Guidance. **Clear communication with the artists regarding compensation, timelines, and expectations** are important to create a relationship of mutual understanding and benefits.

Payment

Unlike other types of contractors, artists are often working with more challenging financial situations. Artists may need partial upfront payment for materials and labor and to be paid in installments rather than wait until the end of the project to be fully paid. Following are considerations for how to manage payments to artists.

- The payment cycle and process should be agreed upon in the contract so that the artist and CRWD have a clear understanding and expectations about when the artist will be paid.
- Paying for materials or other fabrication costs can be a financial burden for artists. CRWD and the artist should agree upon the timing for reimbursement of materials and costs of fabrication.

Insurance

The consultant requirements for insurance have been an ongoing issue, not only for the AiR but for other commissioned artists and consultants. Many artists do not carry insurance policies for their practice. Insurance companies are often reluctant to agree to policies with large liabilities to individuals and the annual cost may be prohibitive. Finding more flexible options to address these insurance requirements for artists working as individuals would help to streamline processes to ensure it is not a financial burden or barrier for artists.

CRWD should determine and work with the artist to see what kind of insurance is required for a project and if the cost of insurance can in some way be addressed.

Sharing CRWD's Art Programming with Partners

CRWD's innovative integration of the arts and its AiR program would be valuable to share with other watershed districts, cities, and agencies. Not only would this make the work of CRWD more visible, but it would encourage other organizations to consider art as a catalyst for water quality infrastructure, education, and outreach. Opportunities might include:

- Presentations about CRWD work at local, regional or national conferences on water quality issues and at art conferences
- Interactive Exhibits & Signage
- Trout Brook Room Programming



Final Thoughts

On collaboration, arts, and the environment

It Begins with a Single Spark

CRWD's journey of integrating art and artists into its work has been one of continued growth both in terms of developing new partnerships and relationships in our communities as well as expanding how we define art and create engagement opportunities throughout the District. Partnering with artists has offered new ways of envisioning, connecting, and valuing our precious water resources, while recognizing different perspectives and ways of knowing.

The arts can powerfully convey stories which serve to inspire residents to learn about our water, natural resources, and clean water projects above and below ground in new and innovative ways. This may include observing a kinetic sculpture to understand the speed at which water moves throughout a storm sewer tunnel, interacting with an exhibit to see how water moves in a natural versus man-made system, or learning about wildlife that depends on clean water through a scavenger hunt stamped into the sidewalk. Art can inspire a personal understanding and appreciation for the beauty, power, and cultural meaning of water.

This work began with a spark ignited by former CRWD Board Manager and Saint Paul Artist Seitu Jones, who encouraged us to explore the many ways art and artists can enhance our work – making it more beautiful and impactful, and helping us engage more of our residents, particularly those we have not yet met. It is the result of a collaborative, reflective process, designed to provide insights and tools for the District and its colleagues, partners, and others to continue incorporating the arts and artists into their work. While we do not know what new and creative projects lie ahead, we know that they have the potential to reach our communities in new and meaningful ways.

We welcome your questions and hope you find this Field Guide helpful on your journey. For additional resources including a History of CRWD's Artist in Residence Program, visit capitolregionwd.org.

Our Vision

Cleaner waters through innovative, resilient, effective, and equitable watershed management in collaboration with diverse partners.

About Capitol Region Watershed District

CRWD is a special purpose local unit of government that manages water resources within portions of Lauderdale, Falcon Heights, Maplewood, Roseville, and Saint Paul, Minnesota. Staff carry out a range of programs, projects, and capital improvements designed to protect, manage, and improve the resources within its jurisdiction, including creeks, wetlands, lakes, natural areas, and the Mississippi River. CRWD's work includes monitoring and research, permitting construction projects, providing technical and financial assistance for clean water projects, ongoing communications and community engagement, and building partnerships to leverage resources and encourage stewardship of our water resources.

All the water in the District eventually drains to the Mississippi River, *Wakpá Tánka* in the Dakota language.



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