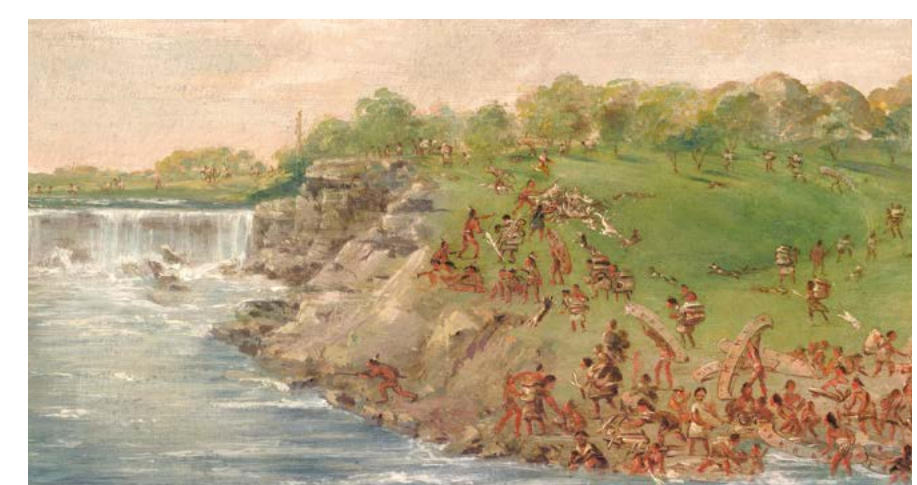
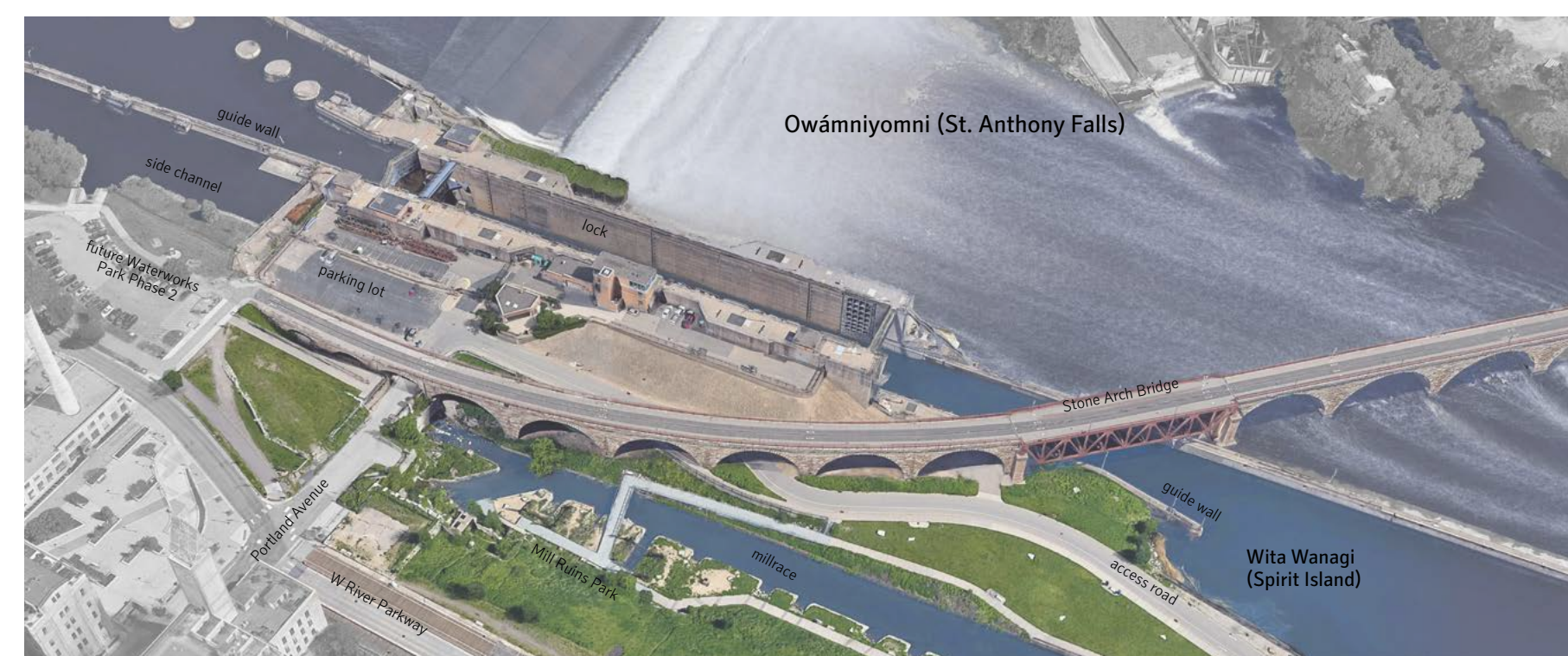


Restoring a Story Disrupted



The Falls: Past and Present

The Falls Today



Ojibwa Portaging Around the Falls of St. Anthony, 1835-1836, George Catlin; The waters of the mighty Mississippi River at historic St. Anthony Falls once cascaded over a 50-foot limestone drop. Dakota people came to Owánniyomni for ceremony, and to Spirit Island to give birth.



Falls of St. Anthony, 1860, Minnesota Historical Society; The Mississippi River was harnessed and industrialized. To Native people, these activities were a desecration, incompatible with a world view in which the River is a Spirit and in which all living natural things are our relatives.

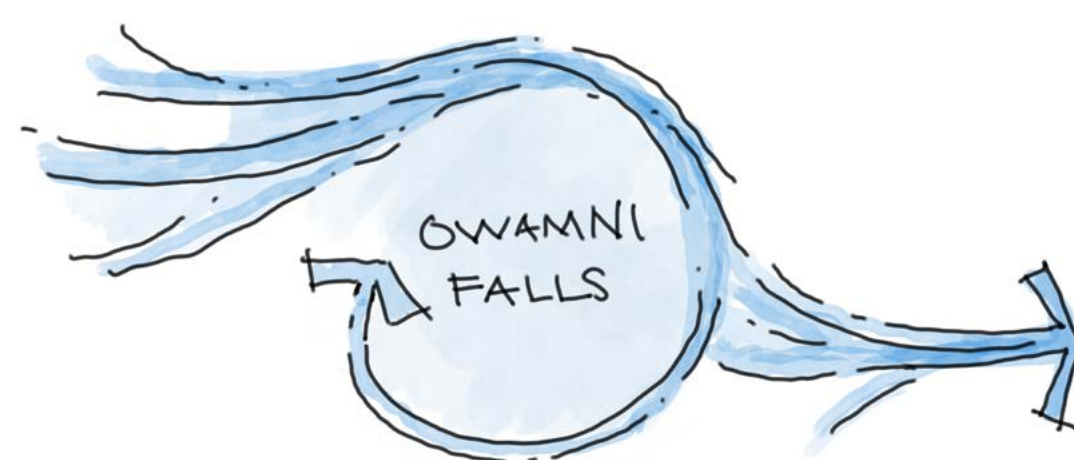


Spirit Island, 1868, Hennepin County Library; Spirit Island, historically located just below the Falls, was an especially important spiritual site for Dakota people where Dakota women traditionally went to give birth.

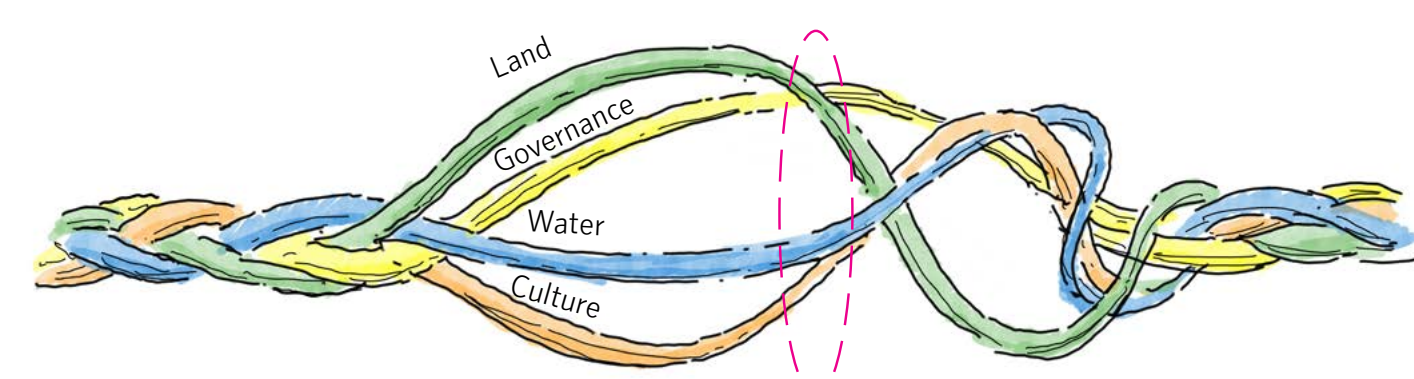


Spirit Island, 1960, Source Unknown; Spirit Island was dismantled by the Army Corp of Engineers to dredge boat passage to the lock and dam.

Native Partnership Council Guiding Themes



- restoring a story disrupted
- powerful place
- building connections
- water is life

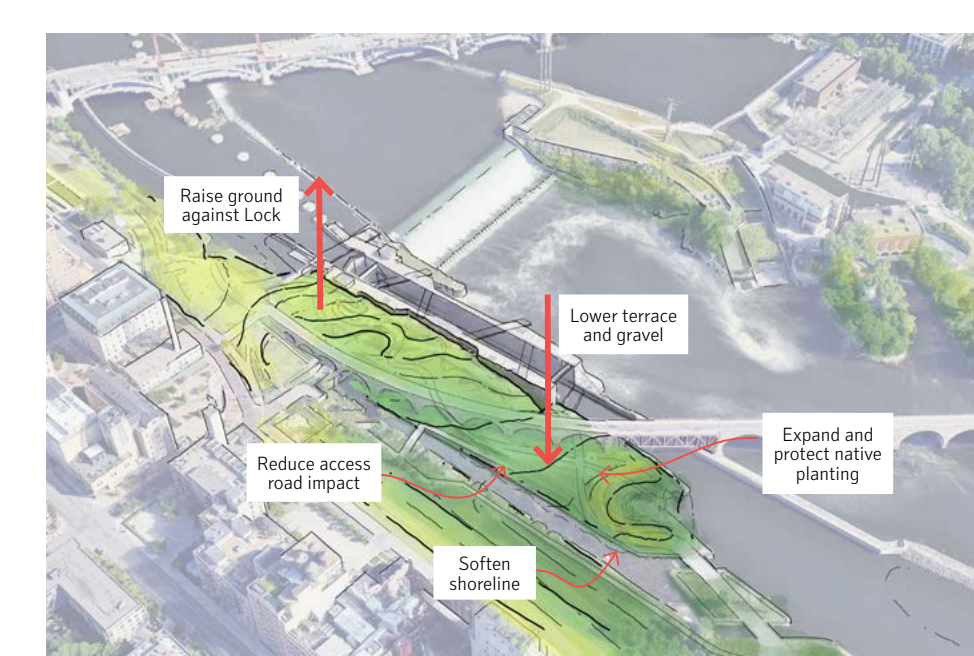


Time of Connections Time of Disruption Returning and Reconnecting Expanding Connections

The many threads of water, land, culture, and governance that were intentionally isolated to control the Falls through colonization cannot fully be reconnected in a single season of work, but will take generational effort. The idea of weaving celebrates the central role that relationships play in this work and the continuity of the Indigenous story of this place.

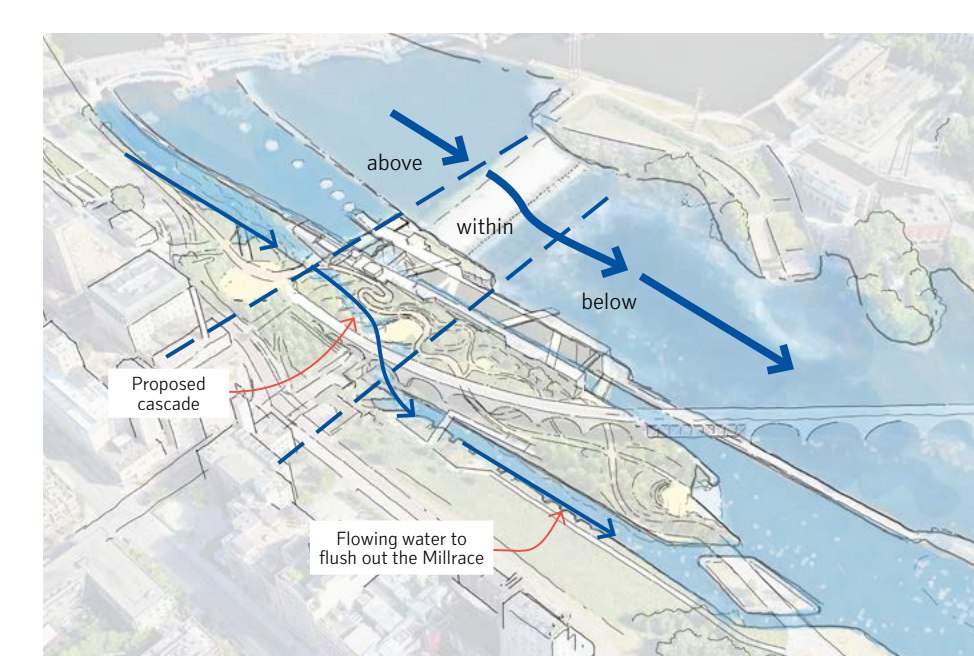
Design Approach

Restore the land and its relations



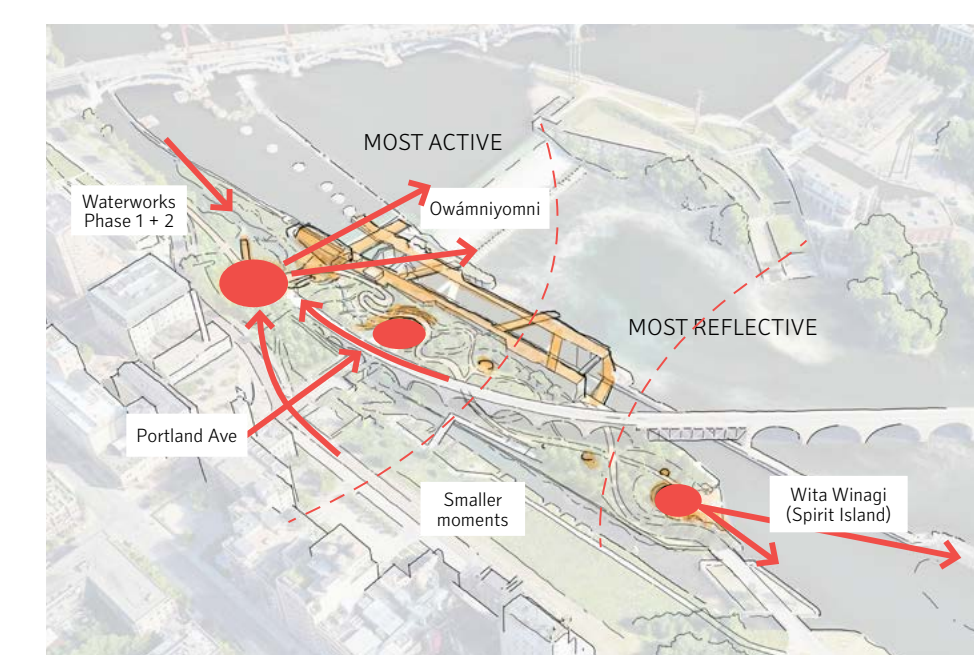
The land is shaped and ecological restored to support diversity of plants and animal relatives. Restoration is planned as a process that continues to change through time.

Reconnect and support the health of the River



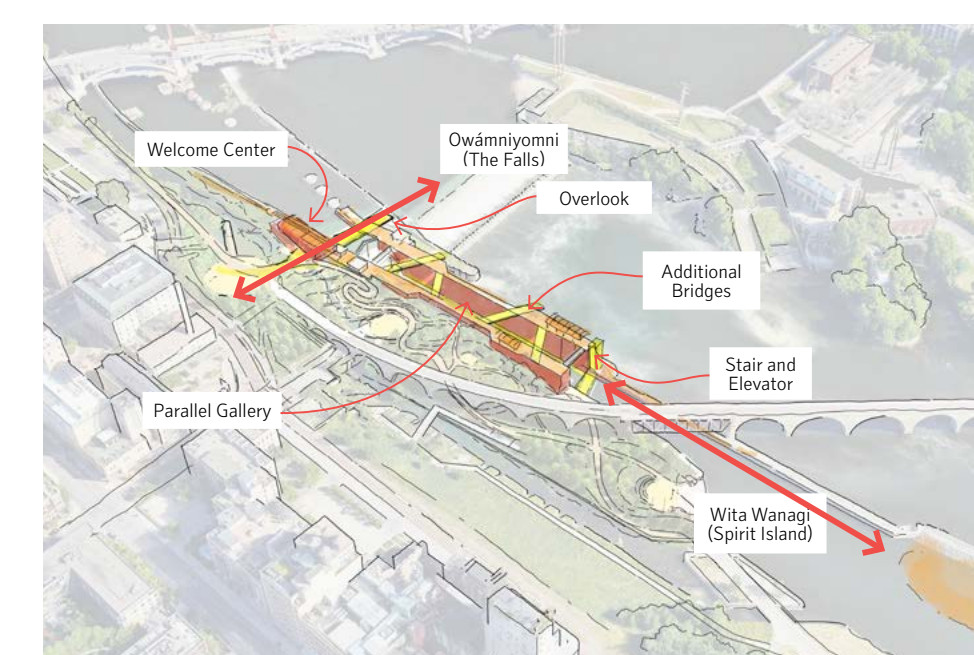
Water is re-centered within the story and experience of this place where it is currently missing. Water above and below the Falls is proposed to be re-connected responsibility to enable healthy flow while upholding Congressional intent to prevent invasive species moving upstream.

Center Native voices and programming



Multiple scales of spaces with emphasis on unique moments and experiences are shaped by relationships between land, water, Lock, and the city. Spaces are designed for representation, gathering, celebration, teaching, and remembering.

Engage the decommissioned lock



Creative occupation of the Lock structure is proposed to transform and Indigenous through art, events, and significant visibility of the Parallel Gallery. Spirit Island is honored through art, teaching, and reverence.



Image credit: Friends of the Falls

GGN Friends of the Falls Minneapolis, Minnesota

7 Acres | 2019-2022

Friends of the Falls

Project Team

GGN, Landscape Architect & Community Engagement
VIAA, Architect
EOR, Ecology & Engineering

CDA Enterprises, Facilitation
Studio Civic Duval, Project Management & Conveyance Coordination
Cassye Consulting, Graphic Recorder
Full Circle Indigenous Planning, Native Perspective on Design & Programming
Interboro, Programming
Studio Thalo, Graphic Recorder

Friends of the Falls and the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) are partnering with the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board to consider the future of the decommissioned Upper Lock at Owánniyomni, St. Anthony Falls, through centering Indigenous perspectives tied to this place. The lock was constructed at the Falls where the industrialization of the river fueled the growth of the modern city while systematically disrupting the relationship between the Dakota and other Native tribes and this place of great spiritual power.

Through a series of discussions with the Native Partnership Council in the first season of the Falls Initiative, several themes emerged that helped to ground our understanding of this place. The Friends of the Falls engagement process is focused in its goal to center Native voices through a process grown from listening and relationship-building. By connecting story-telling and public education around the deeper truths of the Falls and Indigenous knowledge, the team worked towards amplifying the principles and broader values of the Native Partnership Council, formed to guide the future of this place.