

The following information has been assembled to assist and inspire you in developing local exhibitions and public humanities programs to complement the themes of the *Water/Ways* exhibition. As the exhibition suggests, water is universal, but the ways we use it and appreciate it are very diverse. The program ideas described here reflect that diversity.

Think Collaboratively!

Who are the best partners to help you tell you all of your area's water stories? Think broadly. There are a number of potential collaborators to consider including health clubs and spas, nature centers and conservancies, art and history museums, aquariums, and clubs of all varieties. Be sure to work closely with your local public library. There are a wide range of books and films for children, young adults and adults (see accompanying lists) exploring water as a theme. Ask to have space set aside in each respective area in your library (or a local bookstore) to showcase *Water/Ways* theme-related books, audio books and DVDs.

Each of the themes in the exhibition provides an excellent opportunity to work with local scholars and experts on the topic to provide deeper context and meaning. Here are a few ways to think about water in your programs.

Stories

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) is all about American stories. Sure SI tells big stories related to the incredible objects in their museums like Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis airplane or the Hope Diamond, but they are interested in all the stories that make up the fabric of our country. "Stories from Main Street" is the Smithsonian's project for collecting stories from America's small towns and rural communities. Created by the Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program, "Stories from Main Street" is an effort to learn about small-town America through stories told by rural communities themselves. Consider adding your local exhibitions and history projects to the "Stories from Main Street" website.

Start programming even before the exhibition comes to your community. You might take the opportunity to organize and host an oral history workshop to help local residents and students learn to collect local stories. The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), has prepared an oral history interview guide for you to download. You might be able to create and package a workshop that other *Water/Ways* host sites in your state or region could join. Contact your state humanities council and centers for oral history that populate many university campuses for help. Take advantage of festivals, fishing derbies, sporting events and other community gatherings and activities that feature water to scan photos and collect stories for your patrons and your own collection. A historic or contemporary display of your community might grow out of this activity.

There are homegrown stories and folklore retold by storytellers that you can feature in your programming. These stories often communicate the quirkiness of different parts of the country, like the dry wit of Garrison Keillor's *Lake Woebegone* stories from Minnesota or *Bert and I*, the folksy tales set in the "Down East" culture of coastal Maine. Are there Native or ethnic communities with unique local stories or important traditional stories and lore to share? You might work with your state arts commission or storytelling centers to host a workshop or contest to identify storytellers and find the newest talent presenting these stories in your region.

Water and Work

Are there water-related industries or leisure activities that have their own culture, tall tales and histories? Depending on the water-related jobs located in your area, you might bring in fishermen, loggers, quarrymen, scientists, maritime historians, water managers, boat builders, coaches, lifeguards, seamen, longshoremen, boaters, rafting guides, surfers, ice truckers, underwater archaeologists or treasure hunters to discuss their unique relationships with water. Seek out clubs, unions and universities to build a network of ideas and participants.

Poetry and Literature

Poetry is filled with the imagery of water. Poets are inspired by and reflect on the serenity of rain and gently lapping waves or the drama of violent storms and lonely isolation. Programming might include poetry readings from classic anthologies such as Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and other American writers or writing workshops or poetry slams for upcoming or seasoned poets. Perhaps writing clubs might craft their own water anthologies for sale in your gift shop. Again, work with writing centers, humanities councils and arts agencies for help and ideas. Programmers and teachers should consult the accompanying *Water/Ways: the Poetry of Science* resource.

The reading and film lists include a variety of books and stories for all ages covering all aspects of the exhibition. Depending on your audience and collaborators, the Web will help you locate numerous lists compiled by experts and enthusiasts on a variety of topics.

Performing and Visual Arts

Music

Story seems to move seamlessly to all art forms. Different regions, vocations, maritime history incidents, battles or folk traditions have all inspired music. How is water depicted in music in your area? Again, look for opportunities to build new collaborations! Can you partner with performing groups in your area like symphonies, choral groups, opera groups, and community bands? Check out Smithsonian Folkways' website at www.folkways.si.edu for help in regional identification and recordings. Work with your state or local arts council to identify performers.

There are a number of music festivals celebrating the sea and our waterways. Mystic Seaport, the Museum of America and Sea in Mystic, CT hosts an annual Sea Music Festival each June to celebrate songs of sailors and the sea. Folk singer Pete Seeger and his wife, Toshi Seeger, founded The Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc. in 1966. The organization's mission is to protect the Hudson River and surrounding wetlands and waterways through advocacy and public education. Besides its sailing vessel, the sloop Clearwater, the organization is known for an annual music and environmental festival, the Great Hudson River Revival.

The inspiration of water and music is clearly not limited to folk and traditional song. Classical music has many water references. Claude Dubussy's *Le Mer* easily conjures up visuals of French Impressionists' paintings of sky and sea. George Frideric Handel's 1717 *Water Music* or Antonio Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (1723) also come to mind. The work of American composer, arranger and pianist Ferde Grofé (27 March 1892 – 3 April 1972) could provide a whole music series either by recordings or performances. Over the course of his career he wrote and arranged a number of suites inspired by waterways and great American landscape including Niagara Falls (1969-61), Death Valley (1949), San Francisco (1960), Yellowstone (1960), the Hudson River (1955), Hawaii (1965), Mississippi (1925) and the Grand Canyon (1931) (also an animated short film created by Walt Disney in 1958). Disney's *Fantasia* (1940) has many classic pieces with water references and imagery.

Music might be part of programming (lectures, performances) or simply might serve as background music creating theme and ambiance for visitors to your site. Just be sure to acquire the correct licensing for any music used.

Dance

Music and dance combine gracefully in a number of dance performances. Classic ballets such as *Swan Lake* composed by Tchaikovsky in 1875–76 is a favorite with adults and children alike. *Ondine* (Sir Frederick Ashton and Hans Werner, composers) (1958) features a water nymph that is the object of desire of a young prince. The famed Alvin Ailey Dance Theater's performance of *Revelations* (1960) tells the story of African-American faith and tenacity from slavery to freedom through a suite of dances set to spirituals and blues music. The second section, *Take Me to the Water*, combine dance with gospel music in a dramatization of a ceremonial baptism.

Theater

A number of American musicals and other dramatic performances use water as a unifying theme or hook. *The Rainmaker*, *Showboat* and *On Golden Pond* are referenced in the reading list. Might a community theater be enticed to have play readings or a performance in conjunction with the run of the exhibition?

Visual Arts

Art museums would be excellent collaborators to develop a companion exhibition, or lead tours and illustrated talks featuring water-inspired works in their collections. In many people's minds there are classic images such as Claude Monet's *Waterlilies* and *The Birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli telling the story the goddess Venus emerging from the sea upon a shell. There are also numerous works by American artists depicting their own communities. Art colonies dot the entire United States and many have water features that drew the artists to the region (The Traditional Fine Arts Organization provides a list of art colonies on its website at: www.tfaoi.com/aa/6aa/6aa119.htm). Whether it is the coastal art colonies of Lyme, CT; Provincetown, MA; Laguna, CA; St. Augustine, FL; or Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt's grand Hudson River School paintings of the raw American landscape and great American West. Others were painting the White Mountains of New Hampshire and the desert landscapes in the American Southwest. George Catlin is famous for his paintings of Native Americans of the West. George Caleb Bingham (March 20, 1811 – July 7, 1879) was an American artist whose paintings of American life in the frontier lands along the Missouri River exemplify Luminism. Water did not escape Abstract painters such as Mark Rothko or Jackson Pollack's *Blue (Moby Dick)* (1943). Commercial illustrators like Currier and Ives romanticized paintings of riverboats. Many maritime museums have collections of ships and naval vessels. Work with local art clubs and galleries to develop local and regional exhibitions.

Architecture and the Built Environment

Not every community has an architectural gem like Frank Lloyd Wright's *Fallingwater* (1935, Mill Run, PA) but many areas have interesting bridges or other landmarks built when water dictated the need or desire for their construction. The engineering of significant bridges, the experiences of the people that built them, and the politics involved in their creation may offer fascinating stories for public programming (see reading lists). Are there geological features or man-made sculptural treasures that draw visitors to your water?

Water, Weather and the Seasons

The season your institution hosts the exhibition might influence your programming. Spring is a good time of year to talk about rain in most parts of the country. Cynthia Barrett's book *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History* (2015) is a fascinating read and the first book to tell the story of the subject of countless poems and paintings; biblical stories; top of the weather report; and the source of the world's water. It could be a part of a book discussion series but also a great resource for programmers thinking about types programs to organize for a variety of audiences.

Gardening and Household Water Conservation

In many parts of the country, spring gets people thinking about their gardens. Consider working with garden clubs and Master Gardeners to talk about best practices for gardening and conserving water. What gardening tips and water conservation efforts are important in your region? What plants can tolerate heat and drought? Introduce ways to collect and use rain water and have a discussion of how mulching helps retain precious moisture. Invite gardeners and landscapers to discuss local water management issues and introduce visitors to plant and lawn varieties that require less water. How can homeowners make more water-conscious decisions about their lawn and landscape design?

Kids and gardens! *The Carrot Seed*, by Ruth Kraus and illustrated by Crockett Johnson, is a great first book to introduce young children to how plants grow, following the life cycle of a carrot from seed to table. Is there a place at your institution to have a garden or could you work with a community garden to introduce a spot for young gardeners? Indoors and out, depending on your climate, you might have cactus, orchids or air plants that need very little water as a comparison to most plants. A workshop to help children create their own terrariums is a great way to help youth learn more about the water cycle. Create faerie gardens or storybook themes to help inspire their designs.

The seasonal change to fall continues gardening cycle discussions that began in the spring. Are there harvest festivals in your area where you can continue the discussion of water?

And, what could be better than a film series featuring the most romantic kisses in the rain?! (www.gurl.com/2013/04/07/kissing-in-rain-romantic-movie-scenes). Is it *The Notebook*? *Breakfast at Tiffany's*? or Gene Kelly dancing and singing in the rain? Perfect for February programs.

Recreation

It is almost too much fun to think about programming if you are lucky enough to host the *Water/Ways* in the summer. A beach party is an obvious choice for any age group. There are also opportunities for summer reading programs, movies festivals featuring animated films like

Finding Nemo, and music highlighting fun along the water's edge by the Beach Boys and other artists. Is there a park or beach where you can show movies under the stars? Kids love to dress up as pirates and treasure hunt. Explore ways to add learning opportunities about water use and management to these activities. Are there local ship wrecks or pirate stories in your community? Are there local festivals like a Blessing of the Fleet if you live in a fishing community? That might be another opportunity to explore different cultures and capture stories.

How about sailing or surfing or rowing competitions? Community boating programs and yacht clubs are good collaborators as they are always eager to hook new participants into their passion. No doubt there is history to be shared and documented in local competitions.

What about the lore of local camps and visits to lakeside cabins? Do any camps host reunions where you could collect photos and stories for your archives?

Fishing

Rod, reel, line, hooks and any one of a wide range of baits...what are the *fish* stories in your community? Whether fishing is done for recreation, sport, competition or commerce, there are many anglers who want to talk about their experiences and learn more. See the book and film lists to find fiction and non-fiction, classics like *Moby Dick* and newer adventures such as *The Perfect Storm* to fuel your programs for all ages. Many sites on the eastern seaboard host marathon readings of *Moby Dick*.

Fish stories take on a whole new appetizing appeal when you consider cuisine, either dockside or in the kitchen. Are there regional debates over seafood recipes or specialties? Do people in your area prefer New England, Manhattan or Rhode Island clam chowder? What about the impassioned debate over cheese on seafood? Regional, ethnic and historic seafood cuisine is a popular topic and offers opportunities to hold cooking lessons, taste tests, and competitions. A "chowder-off" featuring a competition among local restaurants might be a good fundraiser for your institution. See the book lists (YA and Adult) for Mark Kurlansky's fascinating histories of seafood and its influence on American culture, history and cuisine. You can also trace seafood history on www.foodtimeline.org.

Environmental Programming

Each season presents countless ways to explore water and the natural environment. Work with your nature centers, science museums and land conservancies to find experts to lead tours to help locals identify unique natural features during each season. What seasonal changes are experienced in your area? How does water have an impact on these changes? What are the effects on flora and fauna? Are there noticeable migratory bird patterns that occur? What about the geological features in the area? How does the ecosystem work in different parts of your region? Garden clubs, nature centers and camps are great partners for developing nature activities for children and adults. Helpful websites include the National Wildlife Refuge System within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (www.fws.gov), the National Park Service (www.nps.gov), and conservation and environmental management agencies within your own state.

Whale watching is popular on the coasts of the US. If you are inland, there are also powerful 3D films that capture the whale watching experience. Local aquariums can help introduce visitors to sea life of all varieties and can feature aquatic animals native to your region. Collaborations can be complemented with readings and films.

Besides the issues of conservation of water, you might work with your collaborators to include environmental issues of concern in your region. Water rights, acid rain, climate change, and pollution impacts may be great program topics for your community. Work with nature centers, science museums, conservation groups, watershed organizations, river keepers, and action committees to raise and discuss issues, debate solutions and develop action plans to educate your community. Lead hikes, walking or canoe tours to observe and uncover the issues. The reading and film lists have a number of books and films for all ages on these subjects and in all parts of the country.

Water Use, Cultural History and Public Policy

Aside from the scientific and environmental side of your landscape, how has the water in your community shaped its history? Is water a physical boundary between your state and the next? Or between towns? Were there or are there land disputes over water and water rights? Water access is still hotly debated in the West in areas where water is scarce. Was water and water power a significant influence in the location and founding of your town? Is it still? Are there physical remains of past industries? Walking tours, canoe and boat tours are very popular ways to get out and learn about local history. Work with your local historical society and area college professors to lead these tours. Are there on-going discussions of re-adaptive use of old mills and other industrial buildings?

Sadly pollution still plagues our waters. As consider the impacts of pollution in communities like Flint, Michigan, introduce visitors to pollution concerns in their own area. How can your venue help promote discussion about the best ways to address any local issues?

Depending on where in the country you live, winter brings a whole new look at water as water turns to ice and snow. What winter sports are popular in your region? What about ice fishing? What work or industries are important to your region in the winter? Ice trucking? Snow removal? Or, maybe you live in warmer parts of the country and your residency changes drastically in the winter with the influx of tourists and "snowbirds". Might they want to reminisce about the winter weather they left behind? You can bring discussions on all of these topics through your programming. Perhaps water is not the central theme, but there are many popular books and films with these subjects.

Before home entertainment units, travelogues were a programming staple in libraries and other community centers. And, when was the last time you sat in a friend or relative's living room to see a presentation of a recent trip? Help your patrons explore parts of the world with spectacular water features or sandy beaches. This is particularly successful programming for nursing homes or senior centers. www.touropia.com is a stunning website with an on-line newsletter. www.fathomaway.com/postcards/quirk/best-travel-blogs-and-websites offers easy reading and photographs. Local travel writers can be helpful collaborators and speakers.

Since water is essential to tea...high tea, Japanese tea ceremony, a tea party with dolls or teddy bears or tea etiquette seems like a perfect winter escape especially around Valentine's Day or in spring for Mother's Day.

Body, Mind and Soul

All sorts of sport, fitness and rehabilitation can be accomplished in and on the water; and for all ages! Whether it is learning to swim, competitive meets, swimnastics or therapy there is an

audience that shares enthusiasm for the health and fitness benefit of water. Boating of all types provide active movement, sport and relaxation. Partner with your local Y, clubs, community or athletic centers both for programming, collaboration or to market your exhibition. The value of water for hydration and relaxation is practiced in many spa treatments. Practitioners will be valuable presenters and kindred spirits in your effort to bring water to the forefront. Imagine takes over to think about topics, programs, demonstration on and off site. Don't hesitate to approach these agencies for fundraising help...tap them for trial memberships, treatments or lessons.

Spirituality

The following are some great resources regarding water in spirituality.

www.native-languages.org/legends-water -- for lists of Native American water traditions and legends

http://www.quality-drinking-water.com/bible_and_water.html -- explores how the Christian Bible and water are very much connected (Water is mentioned 722 times in the scriptures.)

<http://www.lenntech.com/water-mythology> -- a fascinating and rich assemblage of myths and legends from all cultures on water and water creatures. From Noah to Achilles, Atlantis to the Underworld, and Mermen to Sirens, these stories have endless programming possibilities for drama, artwork, storytelling, costume parties and more.