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RETHINKING WATER, PLACE & COMMUNITY

RIVERS AND MEANING

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from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE TWENTY

By Laurie Moberg, Editor

Over two years ago, before the global pandemic upended our lives, *Open Rivers* started talking with Professor Mary Modeen, an artist, academic, and convener based at the University of Dundee in Scotland whose work, creativity, and generosity have created an international network of collaborators doing place-based work. For this issue of *Open Rivers*, Modeen stretches the journal toward international perspectives on the meaning of rivers. This collection of artwork and reflections, place-based engagements and community-driven actions demonstrates exactly that—the meaning of rivers to so many people in so many different places—through stunning

exhibits and galleries, lyrical prose, and reflections on waters in place.

In her introduction, Modeen begins by welcoming us, drawing us together from our scattered places in watersheds around the world to share with us the river that shapes her place. She gathers us as readers just as she gathered the many contributions to this issue, connecting artists, scholars, writers, and practitioners from across the globe to bring their stories together in this striking issue of *Open Rivers*. The international community of authors Modeen assembles in this issue is even more impressive and even more critical given

the challenges of the past two years. Relying on digital communications and overcoming time differences, this issue of *Open Rivers* creates a space for these authors to share their places and for readers to find connection in the commonalities and differences of our waterways.

Modeen also suggests that we all have our own storied places to share. In that spirit, allow me to introduce my place and the home of *Open Rivers*. I come to this issue from Minnesota, with snow falling outside as the Mississippi River courses through the gorge just a short walk to the west; I come to this issue from Mni Sota Makočhe,

Dakota land. From this place, I encounter the Tay and the rivers of Ilhabela, the Bow and Elbow, the Tweed and the Yangdeng and so many other locations in this issue as these stories draw me into a space for contemplation and beauty. Together, the articles in this issue provoke us to consider not only how humans make meaning with rivers, but how rivers themselves might make their own meanings. These global authors and rivers demonstrate that by understanding other places we might better understand our own. Enjoy.

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About the Author

Laurie Moberg serves as editor for *Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community* and as the project manager for the Environmental Stewardship, Place, and Community Initiative at the University of Minnesota. She earned her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Minnesota in 2018. Her doctoral research investigates recurrent episodes of flooding on rivers in Thailand and queries how the ecological, social, and cosmological entanglements between people and the material world are reimagined and reconfigured in the aftermath of disasters. In her current work, she approaches public scholarship as a critical strategy for expanding whose stories are heard, for shaping our public conversations, and for forming solutions for our shared ecological challenges.



*Low clouds in Glen Forsa on the Isle of Mull, Scotland, UK.
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