

A hand wearing a black sleeve and a brown watch holds a clear glass bottle with a faceted stopper. The bottle is partially filled with water and has some sediment at the bottom. The background shows a wide river under a clear blue sky, with a sandy bank and some bare branches in the foreground.

ISSUE 28 : WINTER/SPRING 2025

OPEN RIVERS : RETHINKING WATER, PLACE & COMMUNITY

MISSISSIPPI RIVER OPEN SCHOOL

<https://openrivers.umn.edu>

An interdisciplinary journal of public scholarship rethinking water, place & community
from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

ISSN 2471-190X

The cover image is courtesy of Michelle Garvey from her article in this issue.

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Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community is produced by the University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing Services and the University of Minnesota Institute for Advanced Study.

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ISSN 2471-190X

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE 28 | MISSISSIPPI RIVER OPEN SCHOOL

By Laurie Moberg, Editor

In the current moment, I find myself struggling with seemingly endless uncertainties. Environmental, political, social, and personal conditions create a charged sense of precarity and anxiety, like sharp rocks poking through smooth water of a river, scratching at my foot as I cross or catching my paddle as I try to stay afloat. And I suspect I'm not alone.

Amid this turbulence, I'm looking for "glimmers"—the small moments that give me hope,

joy, calmness, and connection.[1] From laughing with a friend to seeing sprouts grow from seeds, from reading with my child to observing the seasonal changes of the local landscape, glimmers keep me grounded so that I can face each tumult.

This issue of *Open Rivers* offers glimmers in abundance. The articles in this, our first-ever double issue, focus on the *Mississippi River Open School for Kinship and Social Exchange*, a project that engaged participants along



A view across the Mississippi at Wyalusing, Wisconsin. Image by Dave Hoefler, via Unsplash.

the Mississippi River's entire length around place-based practices and the challenges of the Anthropocene. The projects shared here demonstrate not only a commitment to enduring social and ecological relationships but also give strategies we, as readers, can apply to foster our own well-being and connections to people and place.

The provocations and practices within this issue I carry with me as glimmers, like sunshine sparkling off the burbling waters of a stream as it runs its course over rocks and shifting riverbeds. As you explore the content of this issue, I invite you, too, to find your own practices of connection and your own glimmers of joy, hope, and courage.

Footnote

[1] Deb Dana coined the term “glimmers” to describe a set of positive reactions that counterbalance triggers, our reactions to negative stimuli that inspire our fight-or-flight responses. Deb Dana, *Polyvagal Theory in Therapy: Engaging the Rhythm of Regulation* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2018).

Recommended Citation

Moberg, Laurie. 2025. “Introduction to Issue 28 | Mississippi River Open School.” *Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community*, no. 28. <https://doi.org/10.24926/2471190X.12512>.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24926/2471190X.12512>

About the Author

Laurie Moberg is the editor for *Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community*, a digital journal of public scholarship published at the University of Minnesota (UMN) by the Institute for Advanced Study and UMN Libraries Publishing. She earned her PhD in anthropology from UMN 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.