



Otter Tail County Story Mapping: A Cultural Asset Mapping Toolkit



Otter Tail County Historical Society



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Toolkit Contents

Toolkit Contents	1
Introduction	4
Project Partners	5
What is Cultural Asset Mapping and why does it matter?	6
What Are Cultural Assets?	6
Rethos Cultural Asset Gathering Process	8
Rethos Cultural Asset Mapping Core Values And Principles	8
One County, Two Years, Fifteen Projects	9
Getting Started	9
Setting Expectations	10
Engaging Stakeholders and Partners	11
The Process	12
DETERMINE	12
CONNECT	12
ENGAGE	13
Finding Story Mapping Partners (SMP): Community Member Invitation	13
Local Community Partners	13
Community Story Workshops	14
Engagement in Action	14
Proposal Process	14
Contracting	15
Supporting Projects	15
Curated Cultural Asset Gathering	15
Organic Cultural Asset Gathering	15
Story Mapping Project Steps by Story Mapping Partners	16
Naming and designing the project	16
Develop a timeline	16
Identify story collection methods and goals	16
Partner with local institutions	16
Plan engagement events	16
REVIEW	16
Final Report and Submissions	17
Finding Themes	17

CREATE	17
Step 1: Creating a Basemap	18
Step 2: Choosing a Model for Presentation	18
Step 3: How to Represent Each Project	19
IDENTIFY	20
Turning Input into Action	20
Final Report Materials	21
SHARE	21
Otter Tail County Asset Mapping Project Details	21
Project Implementation in the Time of Covid-19	21
Successes	21
Challenges	22
Surprises	22
FUNDING	23
How much does it take?	23
Sample budgets	23
Frequently Asked Questions	24
Appendix	25
List of Community Engagement Projects: Otter Tail County	25
Mind Your Business by New York Mills Regional Cultural Center (Betsy Roder and Cheryl Bannes)	25
The Winter Sauna by Dorothy Eskelli	25
Otter Tail County 1,000 Lakes (and more ponds) Have Stories to Tell by Jan Smith	25
Fantastic Fishing Tales by Rebecca Albright	26
Memory Lake by Rebecca Umland	26
Common Ground: Community Garden Portraits by Jon Solinger	26
Leif Erickson Artifacts by Barbara Olson	27
The Wadena Beach Story by Stephen Henning	27
The Rearing Ponds Story by Stephen Henning	27
Nourishing Narratives: A Latinx Foodmap of Community Comida by Kandace Creel Falcón	28
Old Clitherall Booklet by Elizabeth Peterson	28
Promotion: Sample Press Release	29
Promotion: Sample Workshop Invitation	32
Promotion: Sample Workshop Poster	33
Community Participation: Partner Agreement	34
Community Participation: Story Mapping Partner Contract Template	37
Community Participation: Project Proposal Guidelines Template	39

Community Participation: Sample Project Application	42
Evaluation: Sample Project Final Report Template	45

Introduction

Dear Community Leader (you may be a City Staff Member or Elected Official, Historical Society Staff, Tourism Staff, or simply someone actively engaged in preserving the stories of your community or region):

Places are best spoken about and known by those with deep rich connections to them. Those who can dissect the nuance of cultural norms while connecting with others through a shared sense of place. Focusing on the shared experience of place can bind people across invisible boundaries, with this sort of connection fostering authenticity in speech and expression through story. For these reasons, the Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project (OTCSMP) in partnership with the Otter Tail County Historical Society and Springboard for the Arts, sought to engage community members throughout Otter Tail County, Minnesota, to collect and tell their stories with the intimacy only cultivated by lived experience.

We know that the terms “story mapping” and “cultural assets” might be new, and even confusing to reference. While the big idea is that by gathering the stories of folks who have roots in your community and region helps to map the places and values that might not be identified simply by a traditional location on a map, we’ve included a section “What is Cultural Asset Mapping and why does it matter?” to help unpack what exactly this process is and how it can be not only insightful but useful to your community.

Throughout this toolkit, you’ll find stories and lessons from story mapping community members implementing a community based cultural storytelling project. You will also learn about the process Rethos and its project partners implemented to gather stories and map them on a county wide scale. Also included in this toolkit are templates, worksheets and prompts to help you frame and plan your own Cultural Asset Mapping project.

Whether you are a city staff member, a historical society volunteer, a Main Street leader, or county administrator, our hope is that this toolkit serves as a guide to rethinking how you engage residents in identifying the cultural assets of your community.

Sincerely,

The Otter Tail County Asset Mapping Toolkit Team

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Project Partners

Rethos: Places Reimagined

Rethos: Places Reimagined is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working nationwide for the use of old buildings and sites. Its mission is to lead and inspire people to connect with historic places, promoting community vitality. They are holistic in their thought and flexible in their approach. Ethos is the cornerstone of their work, the essence of a community, and they believe communities flourish when places are reimagined, cultures are celebrated, learning is inspired, and small businesses are supported. They do this work by activating spaces, investing in communities, and reimagining what can be.

Otter Tail County Historical Society

Otter Tail County Historical Society is a private, nonprofit organization whose purpose is the collection, preservation and interpretation of Otter Tail County's history and heritage. This is achieved through a variety of services including the Society's exhibit gallery, educational outreach program, special public programs, archival and object collections, and a genealogical and local history research library. The development of these services has made the Society an active partner in the educational and cultural life of Otter Tail County.

Springboard for the Arts

Springboard for the Arts is an economic and community development organization for artists and by artists. Springboard for the Arts' mission is to cultivate vibrant communities by connecting artists with the skills, information, and services they need to make a living and a life. Their work is about creating communities and artists that have a reciprocal relationship, where artists are key contributors to community issues and are visible and valued for the impact they create. They do this work by creating simple, practical solutions and systems to support artists. Those programs support their goal to help create a local culture movement.

What is Cultural Asset Mapping and why does it matter?

Through cultural asset mapping, communities can better identify, understand, and interpret their unique cultural characteristics in productive ways. Using a map to identify places or themes that are culturally important can serve a number of purposes: economic development, tourism initiatives, cultural events, etc. Visually, asset maps provide a glimpse of cultural cohesion across a geographic area. They can communicate how people move, where they congregate, and the relationship between seemingly disparate institutions or demographics.

As a planning tool the maps offer a visual dissection of common themes or attitudes across a community. By recognizing these things communities can better assess their personal needs by identifying what is valued or missing along with creating new ways of expressing and celebrating themselves. People, governments, and developers can use this information to make grounded decisions related to the needs and wants of communities, though cultural asset maps should not be used as a substitute for engaging communities but rather as another tool or jumping off point for visualizing and interpreting.

As a component of our downtown assessment work we have previously designed cultural asset maps with the Logan Park, Cedar-Riverside, Elliot Park, and Whittier neighborhoods in Minneapolis along with downtown New Ulm, MN. These maps are informed by on the ground community engagements in these areas rooted in the idea of meeting people where they are and showing up as a constant presence to build trust. Information from one-on-one conversations and survey work is compiled into a broader map representing the places important to a community, both past and present, as well as the intangible characteristics that people in a place identify with. Visualizing these community assets has influenced neighborhood projects, new planning processes, and can inform development or cultural initiatives.

What makes Cultural Asset Mapping and Story Mapping different than a traditional map of historical or cultural sites? Several items help to shape the big picture:

- Stories are gathered by people with deep roots and ties to the community. Their insight and knowledge of a place goes deeper in more varied categories than are typically identified by consultants or projects focused on mapping “traditional” historical sights.
- Values, traditions, and non-tangible items are included in an asset map, things which are hard to pinpoint
- Assets can be helpful to know for a myriad of things--from future planning to events to even special exhibits and fundraising, knowing the hyperlocal values (or assets) of a place lead to more thoughtful and actionable plans

What Are Cultural Assets?

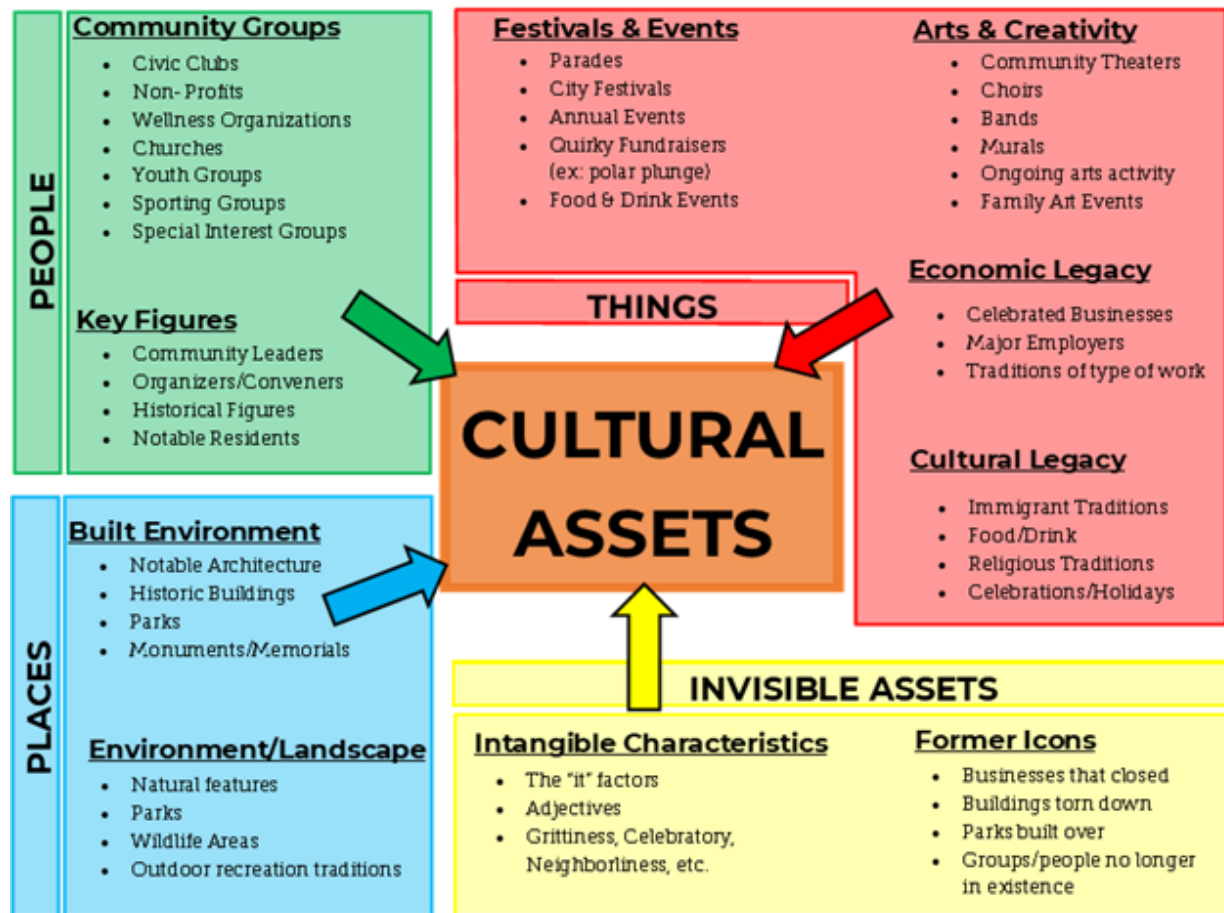
- Cultural Asset identification comes from the INSIDE: residents, workers, business owners, etc.
- Takes time to gather and evaluate
- Requires multiple means of engagement
- Includes things like recurring words/phrases, body language, demographics of respondents

How would you tell your community's story? How would you talk about its distinct character?

These can often be tough questions, and answering them is central to sustaining, activating, and promoting the vibrancy of your community. Cultural Asset Identification and mapping can help provide you with answers you can use to start building short- and long-term community vitality, and preserve your community's stories for the future.

Cultural Asset identification comes from inside your community, from past and current residents, local workers, business owners, kids, and anyone else interacting regularly with the area of focus. Assets take time to gather and evaluate, and don't come from a single session or means of engagement. Rather, they're pulled from numerous info gathering sessions and a large variety of types of engagement. Assets aren't always tangible. Sometimes they're recurring words/phrases, body language, demographics of respondents, or people and places that no longer physically exist.

At Rethos, we've separated out assets into the categories that you see on the accompanying graphic. This isn't an exhaustive list, but rather a starting place for asset identification.



Rethos Cultural Asset Gathering Process



Rethos Cultural Asset Mapping Core Values And Principles

Establishing core values and principles is essential to guiding a localized cultural asset mapping project. As projects unfold, having these benchmarks should inform every step of the process, from initial community engagements to supporting local story collection. It is beneficial to set

these out for your organization then discuss with local partners to establish broader values for the project as a whole.

1. **Maintaining agency and ownership.** From the outset we knew that maintaining agency and ownership for the community was a necessity for this project. Ensuring agency ensures that project participants are able to conduct story collection in a way that is true to their vision. While Rethos offers initial dialogue about the form of the projects, particularly how to maximize reach and resources, project leaders are left alone to carry out their vision. We also stress that Rethos does not own these stories, projects, materials, or final forms. We exist to allocate money and act as a resource when needed, all while compiling the individual projects into a more cohesive visualization of Otter Tail County.
2. **Amplifying Underrepresented Voices.** Our histories are dynamic and multi-layered which can make exploring them difficult and raises the potential that not all perspectives will be represented. It is necessary to maintain respect for all cultures by striving for equitable representation through your story mappers as well as the stories themselves. Amplifying the voices of racial and cultural groups is essential to painting the complete picture of a place. In doing so, new or lesser known histories and perspectives may arise, drawing connections between ideas while providing a more rich and diverse portrait of a place's history. Through this process we may better understand history on the ground from those who know it best, uprooting dominant narratives and providing a robust view of what makes places important in different ways to different people.
3. **Work with local residents to tell their stories.** In the initial stages of the projects we offered guidance and worked alongside participants and local partners to review and shape projects, lending unique experience gained from community engagement through downtown assessments. But acting as a gatekeeper of knowledge and resources should not happen during the execution of individual story mapping projects and beyond. Once projects are finalized it is absolutely necessary to step aside and let project leaders conduct the project how they see fit. Additionally no gatekeeping should happen in regard to preference of project or topic. Each project should be treated as equal based on the needs that are expressed in their application. Offering extra assistance or funding based on preference of topic or personal relationship is an unethical form of gatekeeping that will only hurt the community driven nature of this project. Ultimately the OTCSMP broadly and all individual projects should reflect the idea that localized community knowledge is invaluable and takes precedence over all else.
4. **Partnerships.** Perhaps the most important aspect of this project outside of the story mappers themselves are your partners on the ground who are intimately familiar with the communities. These partners help connect community resources, provide support to local story mappers, and are the expert liaisons between Rethos and the community. For

us these individuals are involved with local libraries, historical societies, art and cultural centers, non-profits, and city governments.

5. Pay participants and partners for their time. In an effort to value the time spent on this project we made it a point to pay project participants and local partners for the work that they are doing.

One County, Two Years, Fifteen Projects

Getting Started

Over the course of 19 months, the OTCSMP unfolded in collaboration with local project leaders and community residents throughout Otter Tail County, Minnesota. Local residents, or Story Mapping Partners (SMP), submitted project proposals to tell stories across Otter Tail County in creative and engaging ways. These stories were then compiled into a broader story map to include information about communities, landmarks, and culture throughout the county.

Located in West Central Minnesota Otter Tail County is home to 57,000+ total residents. The large county boasts 22 cities with 63 townships across a land mass of 1,972 square miles. Many of the cities and townships contain small populations creating pockets of rural communities peppered between Otter Tail County's vast number of lakes. Boasting 1,048 lakes, the most of any county in the United States, there is a strong emphasis on lake culture and fishing.

Utilizing a framework of engagement established through our downtown assessments combined with aspects of the Minnesota Artist on Main Street program, we sought a new sort of community engagement. This bottom up approach to engagement centers residents, empowering them to tell the story of place through unique and creative projects. With so many different towns throughout the county we sought to connect people across geography through these on the ground neighborly engagements, to celebrate what it means to be from Otter Tail County while highlighting the common threads that run throughout the projects.

Setting Expectations

While amplifying local voices one should be mindful that not all perspectives may seek to uplift or provide positive views of history. Some perspectives may contain hateful or divisive rhetoric, while it is Rethos position that such dialogue has no place in these projects. Identifying bad actors or the potential for charged projects can be done by paying close attention to the language used in applications and recognizing who is using it. Your local partners will also be incredibly helpful in this regard as they may have a better idea of the motives behind individuals and their messaging.

You may also encounter project participants proposing projects dealing with cultural groups they are not a part of. This outsider approach can be problematic as far as inaccurately telling a story without the perspective of affected or represented people in mind. If the project participant is working in conjunction with members of the represented community or has a team of advisers then you might consider going ahead, but not without serious conversation on equity and representation beforehand.

For example, during our first wave of applications a project was proposed telling stories related to the discovery of a fossilized woman in the early 1900s. The fossil has since been repatriated to a Native American community and a local group has worked with tribes at past events. During our conversation with the project leader it became clear that the project would not be done with any advisors, or with consideration to the Native perspective of this story. The project was framed as a shared history that was experienced by locals and therefore the local perspective needed to be told, while on some level this is true the lack of pre-established advisors giving their blessing to the project along with a disregard for the perspective we were presenting forced us to deny the project funding. This became particularly evident through comments that were made downplaying the importance of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the law under which the fossilized person was repatriated to the tribe. With the values of our approach to community engagement, the Otter Tail County team did not approve this project, and communicated to the applicant our reasons why it was not approved.

Engaging Stakeholders and Partners

While Rethos has a broad statewide network through administration of the statewide Main Street and Artist on Main Street programs, we recognize our positionality as an urban institution. When we work in a small community we utilize that network to guide us through hosting, engagement, and logistics. Drawing on our existing Artist on Main street relationship with Springboard for the Arts, we were able to partner with their Fergus Falls rural office, located in Otter Tail County.

We continued our outreach by actively partnering with leaders in three communities in Otter Tail County, who were active partners in each stage of this project. Living and working throughout Otter Tail County gives them a more informed perspective on the projects themselves and expertise on avenues to conduct the project. At first local partners helped us to organize events, providing logistical and outreach efforts as well as assisting in hosting the events. Beyond that they were crucial in helping to review applications, considering strengths and weaknesses of the projects while examining the feasibility of executing the proposals. Decisions were always made in conjunction with our local partners, while Rethos made recommendations, decision making was ultimately handled by our local partners.

We also recognized Rethos' positionality as an urban organization coming into a rural place and the importance of local partners. Springboard, OTC Historical Society, Henning Landmark Center, Pelican Rapids, and the New York Mills Cultural Center were critical to this project, and

frankly we would not have attempted something like this without their strong partnership and input.

Steering Committee

When beginning your project, identify your Steering Committee--the people or institutions that are leading the project and have their name involved. The Steering Committee promotes and reviews all materials, project applications, and final documents as a team.

For the Otter Tail Project this included: Rethos Staff (Sarina Otaibi who was part of the project from its inception through May 1, 2021, Emily Kurash Casey, Tyler McDaniel), Springboard for the Arts Staff (Michele Anderson), Otter Tail County Historical Society Staff (Chris Schuelke), Local Pelican Rapids Partner (Wayne Runningen), Local Henning Partner (Daniel Broten), Local New York Mills Partner (Betsy Roder).

The Process

DETERMINE

The first step for a project that involves a map is to determine the physical area in which the project will be taking place. As you set your project area, consider things like population density, land area, landscape variation, official/unofficial boundaries (such as townships, school districts, or cultural areas and neighborhoods), and project partner opportunities.

We knew that the Asset Map would cover Otter Tail County, but since the county is nearly 2,000 square miles it was important to specify a few communities to lead and focus efforts. The Project Partners selected Henning, New York Mills, and Pelican Rapids as communities where workshops would take place, as well as have Community Partners to assist them when needed. That did not mean projects could not have a focus area outside of those specific communities--any area in Otter Tail County was included, and we received asset mapping projects in multiple towns, townships, unincorporated areas, lakes, and natural areas.

One aspect we did not consider during this project but will in the future is the creation of the asset map around a theme. While we had an identified region, as the process continued in Otter Tail County we received an incredibly wide array of project and community engagement topics. Going forward we plan to work with local partners to determine a more cohesive theme, for example in Otter Tail County we could have looked at the theme of “water” or “cultural and folk traditions,” rather than having such a wide swath of projects in a variety of theme areas. This determination will aid clarity and future project training for Story Mapping Partners.

CONNECT

Once your Project Partners and mapping area are in place, set a date for beginning the work in the community. This includes orientation meetings for your full project group to identify roles/responsibilities, outline how to access project information, and create plans for future meetings. Once that initial connection of the core group is set, it's time to connect with your greater community to invite them into the process.

For Otter Tail County, we set dates for workshops to teach community members how to tackle community engagement work. Local Project Partners helped to secure workshop areas, ideal times of day for workshops, and publicity outreach. Staff prepared training documents, and made sure that workspaces would be stocked with refreshments, as the workshops are up to three hours long and happen during times of day when people are often used to eating. In

preparing for these workshops, staff made sure to work with local vendors to be fully supportive of small businesses in our partner communities.

One workshop was held in each partner community, and publicity for the workshop varied based on each community's needs and preferred means of outreach, ranging from social media, email blasts, posters, newspaper articles, press releases, and word of mouth. Community members, some who had previous experience working on projects that required engagement and some who were entirely new to the process, attended these in-person trainings in late January 2020, with initial plans for additional in-person meetings which were thwarted by the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We did learn that the early process is incredibly important, and communicating to the public early through means beyond simply a press release is critical. Often people are more apt to read a newspaper feature or interview rather than a press release and call for artists. Going forward, we'll schedule more narratives and engaging ways of publicizing the Story Mapping Partner and Community Engagement Workshops beyond press releases, items that we used later in the Otter Tail Project process but could easily shift forward.

ENGAGE

Finding Story Mapping Partners (SMP): Community Member Invitation

In an age of diverse audiences who access and receive information in a variety of formats, thinking outside the box is crucial for spreading the word about your project. To prepare for outreach, crafting a press release is important for breaking your project down into simple terms for broad audiences and traditional media outlets. Beyond the traditional outlets like newspapers it is beneficial to research institutions and groups locally who might also be able to spread the word or directly engage potential story mapping partners. Groups ranging from local clubs or social organizations to themed Facebook pages and local organizations such as historical societies, art institutions, and non-profits will have built in networks to get the word out. Government boards are typically made up of community leaders who may have access to diverse audiences as well. Towns with human rights commissions, diversity coalitions, arts, or heritage boards are great places to reach out to for support. Teachers are also a fantastic resource for sourcing story mappers, either as participants themselves or for uplifting the unique perspective of young voices. This relationship can be especially fruitful if you are able to wrap story collection into curriculum. A broader list of traditional and non-traditional places to advertise your project include:

- Newspapers/News sites
- Libraries
- Historical Societies/Museums
- Local Facebook groups/pages (history focused, cultural, hobby)

- Radio
- Clubs/Groups
- Historic Preservation groups
- Government boards (Human Rights Commission, Diversity Coalitions, Historic Preservation)
- Teachers/Educators

Local Community Partners

With a working knowledge of local information channels the local community partners will be the biggest asset connecting you with the above resources. While compiling your team of local second-tier community partners it may be best to look to these institutions for people who may fill the roles of being partners. Second-tier partners will help with project review and connecting resources on the ground. Utilizing local connections and knowledge these partners can also spread the word to the above organizations to disseminate information about the project and associated workshops. They may also assist in organizing venues and logistics for local workshops or provide space for story mapping partners to host story gathering sessions.

Community Story Workshops

Community Story Workshops will be ground zero for informing locals about the larger project. Taking place at local institutions these workshops should articulate your project to interested parties and potential SMPs. These workshops are a great chance to provide background on how the larger project came to be as well as providing examples of forms that the smaller projects might take. Not only is this the perfect opportunity to introduce yourself and your organization but to also give space for your high level and second tier partners to explain the roles they play.

At this stage you will want to properly articulate and explain the language and concepts of the project. Story mapping and cultural assets are foreign concepts to most people so properly breaking down each of them as well as how your participants play into them is vital here. In retrospect we realized that the title Story Mapping Partners was confusing to some participants, giving them a false sense that all projects must be map based instead of being open to interpretation. While we made efforts at this stage to keep the project parameters broad in order to encourage creativity it would have been beneficial to have a longer conversation about project forms.

Using other strategies to brainstorm the idea of stories and get participants thinking creatively can be constructive as well. For example, using the Place It activity where participants pick objects and toys that the host brings to create a representation of a prompt given by the hosts. Prompts are meant to elicit stories from participants and encourage creative expression of memory, some prompts could be to build a scene of your favorite childhood memory, create a

place that is special to you, or build a space that is representative of something. Activities like this will jog creativity and give participants a glimpse of how to think outside the box.

- i. Otter Tail County Story Mapping project workshops were held at the following locations: Henning Landmark Center - Henning, MN, New York Mills Cultural Center - New York Mills, MN, Pelican Rapids Library - Pelican Rapids, MN, virtually via Zoom.

Engagement in Action

Proposal Process

Initially the plan was to have two rounds of proposals--an early deadline within two weeks of the story mapping workshops for folks who were ready to go right away, and a second round approximately six weeks after the workshops. We did adhere to these deadlines, but the COVID-19 pandemic hit right at the same time as the second deadline. This may have limited the project proposals, we received about half the amount we expected to.

Upon approval to move forward with all projects after the pandemic pause, we made the decision to do more rounds of applications. We worked with all story mapping partners who had previously turned in applications to make sure their plans were safe and adhered to state guidelines. We then held a virtual story mapping workshop that was also recorded to send out to interested parties. Having the information on hand from this workshop made spreading the word about the project easier. Moving forward we envision creating a virtual component before we ever do on the ground engagement. This approach will help establish interest and investment beforehand instead of bringing community members in blind.

During our third round we offered a second type of application--the Ready Set Story Mapping application. This application was geared toward people who were new to any sort of community engagement or mapping project, but wanted to participate. It was tailored to be a lower-cost (a standard fee of \$1000), smaller-steps project proposal, and offered more staff guidance on how to implement story mapping projects. We also allowed for the general project application for folks who had done community engagement or mapping work previously, and who's projects could be funded at a higher level (up to \$2500).

After a successful third round of applicants we held virtual presentations on Zoom where SMPs could present their in progress projects. These themed events were well attended and included break out sessions where attendees could share their own stories and reflect upon the event themes of lakes/water and foodways respectively. Building off of these events we hosted a final round of applications which ended up being our most successful.

Throughout the proposal process we learned that interspersing non-traditional engagement methods like virtual components or project presentations yielded greater interest than the traditional workshop models with submission deadlines. Allowing for greater flexibility with

submission rounds and timelines will allow the project to gain momentum over time. Proposals could be turned in on a hard copy form, or via an online application.

Contracting

Upon approval, all Story Mapping Partners had a conversation with Rethos staff about details, and to confirm they understood the process and contract. Staff sent a copy of the contract to the SMP that they each returned, and upon returning the contract the SMP received 80% of their funding to begin work. The final 20% of their funds are given upon completion of their projects and submission of final materials.

Supporting Projects

Rethos and local Otter Tail County staff are available to assist with any issues or questions SMPs may have. This includes being able to provide direction or guidance regarding projects, and Rethos staff handles the higher level aspects (funds, materials, etc.) while the local partners handle on-the-ground questions, such as how to find contacts or where to seek specific information. Rethos also offered creative visioning and brainstorming sessions when needed in order to help SMP's realign their projects during the pandemic or rethink their forms of engagement if something wasn't working.

Curated Cultural Asset Gathering

- Focus Groups: quick, accessible, and where people ALREADY are (virtual and in-person)
- Online engagement via surveys (<5 mins)
- Planned conversations with identified person(s)
- Info tables at events

Organic Cultural Asset Gathering

- Quick on-the-street conversations
- Chats with people at bars, restaurants, coffee shops, stores, parks, other gathering spaces
- Be present at local events (ex: weekly concerts)
- Recurring conversations with locals—higher frequency builds trust and depth in topics
- Reading info in local online groups (facebook groups, community message boards, newspaper comments section)
- Attend public forums

Story Mapping Project Steps by Story Mapping Partners

Naming and designing the project

Simple is fine, but something creative and personal or regionally driven can bring more attention and intrigue.

Develop a timeline

Based on timeline of overall project, consider time allotted for initial research, outreach, community engagements, compiling responses/stories, finishing all work.

Identify story collection methods and goals

Use different methods. Oral history, audio (podcast, sound bites, guided tour, etc.), written reflections, drawings, maps, videos, or really anything. Be open to different forms of collection and expression which will make the projects stronger.

Partner with local institutions

Recognize the institutions, people, places that help your project come to fruition. Host events for story collection or have follow up events to host your projects in an exhibit style. Brings people out and community together to connect, strengthening a sense of place.

Plan engagement events

Give enough time to spread the word with at least 2 weeks notice if not more, be consistent with messaging and frequency of advertisements. Think about budget, time allocated, and refreshments. What is the point of workshops? What will participants contribute/take away? Could engagements be more informal and involve talking to people at public events or businesses?

REVIEW

As Story Mapping Partners begin to turn in their work, it's time to review their projects and take stock of what assets are recognized in their story gathering. As you saw in the earlier graphic, assets can range from physical places and people to cultural traditions, former places, celebrations, and feelings.

Final Report and Submissions

Final SMP projects will come in multiple means: they'll submit the final version of whatever their project was (website, documentary, book, photos, compiled writings, etc.) as well as complete an evaluation. Rethos staff will also work with SMP to compile complete information for the comprehensive Story Map which was designed solely by Rethos with feedback from local partners. All of this information is considered during the theme identification for the Asset Mapping process.

Finding Themes

While it might seem daunting, it's helpful to create a somewhat succinct list of assets, rather than a very large and specific list. We took these individual listings such as "leisure," "outdoor activities," and combined them, as the stories were similar in nature with activities being aligned under a heading like "outdoor recreation." These asset categories are then reflected in the online Asset Map, and can be sorted out to view separately, presenting a visualization of how different values, ideas, activities, and so on take place across the county.

To sort through your large list of input from SMP, consider the following:

- Pull out similar words/phrases, feelings, and activities that are being used to describe places, initiatives, events, businesses and whatever else has been gathered through community engagement.
- Count! Staff should closely track the frequency of common words and phrases. Repeated assets in conversations or survey responses can clarify community values. For example, repeated use of stories of family activities, places, and local traditions led us to recognize the importance of "Generational" and their passing of information as an Asset very important to Otter Tail County.
- Note what's sometimes unsaid. In Minnesota, it's common for people to want to be "nice" in their comments and responses, and that sometimes requires some translating and deeper conversation to get to the root of the input.

CREATE

It is important early on to establish what mapping software you will use. Stemming from using ArcGIS StoryMaps in our earlier downtown assessments we went with this software, though there are others as well. While ArcGIS does offer a free version there are limitations and subscriptions can be pricey, though there are discounts for non-profit organizations. Explore these price points and options beforehand, working them into your budget if need be.

Esri's ArcGIS is a powerful tool for describing and visualizing the complex relationships between data sets. While typically used by governments to represent a variety of systems the software has a broad range of visualization capabilities. The software is robust, constantly evolving, and

can have a steep learning curve that might be confusing at first. Within this there are also a number of simpler visualization options and picking which works best is dependent on a number of factors: what is the purpose of your project, what types of information are you trying to convey, what forms help to best visualize that information, what is the scope of the area you're working with, how many different stories are you trying to communicate, and a host of other questions that come up along the way.

Within the Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project each of the fifteen projects from SMP's offered different sets of data, goals, and outcomes that a broad range of visual forms was necessary to properly represent each one. With diverse storytelling methods at the forefront utilizing one form of data visualization would have been a disservice to the partners, participants, and emotional investment in the stories being told. While we spent a lot of time brainstorming the process still took a fair amount of trial and error to establish the final forms. The process of creating our visual representation for this project can be broken into 3 steps:

Story Map details.

Step 1: Creating a Basemap

For any visualizations involving a map a basemap is required. In creating the basemap we determined that we wanted the most basic information for our map: Project Name, Location, Description, and an optional media field. From there the choice of how to visualize was a difficult one, should we represent through lines, geographic shapes, points, or a combination? To stick with a cohesive visual style and to keep our map legend well organized we went solely with points. This form also presented problems for projects with no singular location, such as countywide story collection projects. For example, the project *Otter Tail County's 1,000 Lakes (and more ponds) Have Stories to Tell* represents some 55+ stories around the county and is represented by a random point placed within a lake.

In response to this we created individual basemap layers for projects taking place across geographic areas that would benefit from a spatial representation as opposed to a storytelling model. For the aforementioned project we created a project specific layer that had a point for each collected story as well as the methods for collecting each story, this layer can be toggled on and off over the main map in the final presentation. Though not all projects are best suited for this approach.

Step 2: Choosing a Model for Presentation

Dealing with 15 projects of varying forms made choosing a single model to represent them all difficult. Through trial and error we worked through a few formats, beginning with the traditional StoryMap style as well as the tour presentation used in our downtown assessment mapping. This form minimized the detail present in certain projects.

After experimenting with a few styles we chose the ArcGIS Experience as the main method for communicating each project's unique presentation. ArcGIS Experience operates as a sort of GIS based website with the ability to create unique individual pages and link map based data sets. Within the Experience we connected our basemap and built out a menu that linked to individual pages we created within the experience as well as outwardly to specific project websites.

Step 3: How to Represent Each Project

With such wildly different storytelling methods this was perhaps the most difficult portion of designing the project. Thinking creatively how to best represent each project was an exciting challenge that yielded multiple interpretations. For some projects we utilized our specific ArcGIS layers to illustrate a geographic area and auto-populate different forms, for some we created entirely unique scrolling Experience pages with different sections, for some we created traditional StoryMaps and linked to those, and for some we linked out to the project specific websites our SMPs designed. Instead of getting into our reasoning behind designing each project I will illustrate a few of the projects representing each style and our reasoning behind their design.

- External Link (Stories of West McDonald): In this project our Story Mapping Partner created her own ArcGIS Story Map collection telling the broad and personal histories of West McDonald Lake. With the project compiling so much information into a singular space and form there was no need to recreate or compile the information in new ways. Since the project exists in such a robust form that doesn't require additional context we linked directly to the project landing page. (other projects represented by external links: Hollander's Arrival Creates Butler Township)
- Map Based (Trivia Poster Contest): Since the Trivia Poster Contest features ten questions about Fergus Falls we felt this project could best be represented by spatially visualizing the town. Using a map as the key visual component and linking the Experience's list capability to the map allowed the information of each point to autofill a scrollable area. When clicking a point you are immediately taken to the part of the scrollable area where the question is represented. Allowing the user to read information on each question, see the attached media, and have a visual guide for where in the town the question is based as well as the proximity to other areas. (other projects represented in map based forms: Memory Lake, Otter Tail County's 1,000 Lakes (and more ponds) Have Stories to Tell).
- Creating a StoryMap (Common Ground: Community Garden Portraits): This project combined photo portraits, short written components based on oral histories, and drawings of garden plots from participants. Due to the overt storytelling across multiple forms and the need to easily navigate between multiple focus points, building a StoryMap was the easiest form to represent each project component. The StoryMaps

simple navigation exists at the top of the page, with each gardener of focus getting their own navigation button leading to their section. This created dedicated space to combine the photos and written components into a cohesive whole. (other projects represented by StoryMaps: Mind Your Business and Truth Booth and Reconciliation Station)

- Unique Page (Native Skies Story Project): While this project shares stories from people around Otter Tail County the program is rooted in Glendalough State Park and the efforts to establish an official dark skies area. To best share multiple stories taking place in one park we decided on a scrollable page featuring photos and reflections under different headings. This takes you through the questions in a steady reflective way that mirrors the tone of the project, while allowing for greater flexibility with photos that the StoryMaps form doesn't allow. Other pages are less interactive and include simple information about the project, along with an external link or the project materials such as a book or video. (other projects with unique pages: Flyover Logic, Honeycutt House, Nourishing Narratives, Rearing Ponds Story, Wadena Beach Story, The Winter Sauna)

IDENTIFY

Final Report Materials

Upon completion of their projects, SMP will turn in their information. This will be a combination of physical notes, photos, drawings, podcasts, maps, videos, writings, or any way they document their story collection will be shared with you. Their information is what you as the project leader will work through to begin defining assets.

When Assets have been identified and the Story Map has been created, it's time to consider and act on how this information will be used. There is no wrong way for this data to be helpful. Your community could simply want to gather stories for historical value, but you may also want to look at ways this information could be important. Some examples are:

- Using the identified assets to identify priority areas for National Register or local historic designation
- Creating educational opportunities around cultural traditions that may be dwindling
- Collecting more stories from older generations about significant past local historical events
- Identifying a place for a future event or celebration based on community desire to use a space or establish new tourism initiatives
- Publicizing the Asset Map and Stories to local teachers to share with younger generations who may lack a connection to a place

There are so many ideas and opportunities to use the Asset Map, and we encourage you to consider any and all methods. That being said, there are some steps to take note of as you start to use the Asset Map.

Turning Input into Action

- Organize data points around high emotion topics. Some assets and stories may be particularly emotional and even traumatic for folks to remember or look through. Be conscious of how information is shared
- Evaluate which assets can turn into part of the action plan. For example, people may miss gathering in a space that is not used frequently anymore and would like to do so again, but making sure that space is safe and accessible to gather in is important.
- Be realistic with cost, time, and energy. Focus on the items that can be achievable within the ability of the people working with you, your budget, and your community's desires.

SHARE

Once your assets are identified and your story map is created, it's time to share the findings with everyone! The Project Partners will have been involved in the entire process, and should be a great help in determining the next steps for how to roll out the final project in the community. This could be a virtual showcase, an in-person reception, a travelling exhibit, or presentations at conferences. There's no limit in how to share this exciting work!

Thinking about how this work may live on is important to think about early in the process. For your project to live on local partners may link to the map on their own websites. Social media posts on your or your partners channels about specific projects may also be used to draw interest and create attention. These posts may even create new relationships with organizations that have a targeted interest in the project topic but never saw collaborative potential before.

In Otter Tail County, we still faced limitations brought on by the Covid-19 Pandemic even at the end of the project in Summer 2021. As more folks were vaccinated and gathering was safe, we faced extremely limited time from Project and Story Mapping Partners on scheduling safe interactions and presentations amidst delayed travel plans, vacations, and other local events. Although the Otter Tail County project will have been officially completed in July of 2021, the Steering Committee is working on scheduling a fall reception and showcase of projects and assets, traveling virtual exhibit, and other publicity options to celebrate the work of all partners creating an exceptional piece of data during an incredibly difficult time.

Otter Tail County Asset Mapping Specific Project Details

Project Implementation in the Time of Covid-19

We would be remiss to put this toolkit out without sharing more deeply about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Otter Tail Story Mapping Project. The onslaught of the pandemic shifted the entire timeline of the project, and significantly altered the course of how we led education sessions, how our project partners could interact with Story Mapping Partners, and how Story Mapping Partners could implement community engagement and story gathering sessions. Covid-19 truly dictated much of how the Otter Tail County Asset Mapping project played out, and there were both positive and negative surprises and learnings that came with this challenge.

Successes

- **Broader Audience of Story Mapping Partners:** While we were initially concerned about connecting with folks who may be interested in becoming Story Mapping Partners, our additions of virtual trainings actually garnered an audience of people who may not have been able to participate in project workshops in-person. This included folks with time-constraints, or who had deep connections to Otter Tail County but did not live there currently.
- **Different Pool of Story Sharing Participants & Innovate of Community Engagement Methods:** Alternative methods of engagement also led to a different pool of respondents in story gathering. From virtual focus groups, info dropboxes, postcards, letters, emails, surveys, and careful in-person socially distanced conversations, Story Mapping Partners found ways to interact safely, gather stories, and also reach out to people that may have not attended an in-person session at all.
- **New Best Practices for Rethos on Virtual Trainings:** Rethos facilitated all the virtual trainings, special presentations, and recordings, with the support and assistance of all the project partners. Rethos had been using virtual means for meetings around the state for some time, but the relationship with Otter Tail County allowed us to create a method that led to focused trainings, functional question and answer sessions, and presentations that were helpful for all partners. We worked with partners to find the best means for storing and sharing files, video, and checklists for this group, many methods which we've begun to use for other programs around the state.

Challenges

- **Travel Pause:** First and foremost, we didn't get to be IN the communities for learning and engagement sessions. Luckily, the local project partners were able to step in and be even more communicative with Story Mapping Partners and local media sources.
- **Communication Barriers:** As Rethos staff were unable to attend anything in Otter Tail County in person, and all group gatherings were virtual, we had to rely on calls and emails to connect with Story Mapping Partners. While this was mostly successful, there were occasionally lapses in contact that led to confusion.
- **Lack of Physical Connections:** A project like story mapping and asset gathering focuses on connecting and sharing, and while we were thrilled that stories were still able to be gathered, a big component of the project was connecting in person with project partners, Story Mapping Partners, and residents of Otter Tail County. This portion of the project is a loss, but we're incredibly grateful for the resiliency and willingness of all partners to venture into new means of story gathering.
- **Rethinking Projects:** Many of our earlier SMPs were forced to rethink their projects and forms of engagement. This led to Rethos staff helping brainstorm creative solutions such as placing story collection boxes in local bait shops, along with generally reorienting social media engagement and shifting historic research approaches. The pandemic forced our partners to think creatively, with many commenting on appreciating being challenged to find new methods of connecting.

Surprises

- **Virtual Story Sharing Workshops:** We were quite pleased to offer two sessions of two Story Mapping Partners each during Fall 2020. Across two themed events taking place on Zoom, one focusing on lakes and water and another on foodways, we showcased four projects. We paid the Story Mapping Partners who shared their work for their time, these events also featured story sharing breakout rooms and conversations with the SMPs that led them to think more deeply about their projects moving forward while also making new connections. These events were well attended with _____ participants and served as a precursor to our round 4 applications which ended up being our most successful.
- **New Local Partnerships Formed:** Also from the Story Sharing Workshops came partnerships in the local area. A few Story Mapping Partners are now working with the local Project Partners to present their work, lead workshops, or hold exhibits in the community. These may never have happened had the Asset Map project not taken place.
- **Timeliness of Story Mapping Partners Materials:** We were concerned about Story Mapping Partners being able to turn in all project information on time. Our communication was limited to calls and emails, which can be difficult when working with deadlines. However, we were incredibly pleased that all SMP had their final project information turned in (at the very latest) a few days before their deadline, giving us the

time we needed to sort through the information to pull out assets and create the final report materials.

- **Ability to Successfully Complete Asset Mapping:** After the onset of the Pandemic and the entire Otter Tail Asset Mapping Project was paused, approved to continue, and restarted, staff and Project Partners were inwardly (if not outwardly) concerned about whether or not the project would be able to actually be successfully completed. A community engagement project without a traditional type of community gathering seemed nearly impossible. We can truly say that we were surprised by a number of factors that came together: the resiliency of the SMP to embrace new methods of engagement, the ability of the community to share despite being safely distanced, and the attitude of Otter Tail County to still do good work amidst an incredibly trying time.

FUNDING

How much does it take?

This project was made possible by a Heritage Partnership Grant from the Minnesota Historical Society, within this grant Rethos was allotted \$30,000 dollars and encouraged project leads to value their time at \$15-20 per hour. During the application and budgeting process we felt that many project leads were underestimating and undervaluing their time. During conversations where we reviewed the projects and their budgets we raised this concern and many were indeed hesitant to ask for too much money or unsure of how to properly value their labor. We encouraged leads multiple times to reevaluate the time spent on the projects, valuing it at the aforementioned rate, including reimbursement of gas mileage.

Sample budgets

\$10,000 - \$25,000 range for one community

The below budget is for a 6 - 12-month program that funds up to 10 \$1000 community based cultural storytelling projects, hosts a community story workshop, and covers other related expenses like photo/video documentation, staff management, etc. Amounts could easily be increased or decreased based on community context (marketing might not be an expense for a community that relies on word of mouth or more organic forms of promotion) or opportunities for in-kind services (such as space rental).

	Community story project fees (10 @ \$1000)	10,000
	Space rental for community story workshop	500
	Hospitality for workshop	150
	Documentation (photography/videography)	1000
	Marketing	1000

	Admin	1500
	TOTAL	14,150

\$25,000 - \$100,000 range for multiple communities or as a county project

The below budget is for a 12 - 24-month program that funds up to 50 \$1000 community based cultural storytelling projects, host several community story workshops throughout the year, pays partner and selection committee stipends, and covers other related expenses like photo/video documentation, staff management, etc. Once again, amounts could easily be increased or decreased based on community context or opportunities for in-kind services.

	Community story project fees (50 @ \$1000)	50,000
	Space rental for community story workshops	2,500
	Hospitality for workshops	750
	Documentation (photography/videography)	5,000
	Marketing	5,000
	Partner and committee stipends	2,000
	Admin	5,000
	TOTAL	70,250

Frequently Asked Questions

Project Partner/Steering Committee Questions

Do I have to know how to use Arc GIS software to do a project like this?

No! Rethos Staff handle all ArcGIS map creation, and input all the stories and assets gathered.

How long does this take?

The Otter Tail County Asset Mapping Project took two years, but was significantly delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We expect future projects to take a minimum of one year, but could take up to eighteen months.

How do I find and engage Story Mapping Partners?

Use your local networks to publicize and share! This could be local media, email lists, posters, and word of mouth. It's also helpful to enlist allies in the project to share information with people they know. Also look to local clubs, government commissions, schools, and social media pages for historians and hobbyists.

What if we don't find any Story Mapping Partners?

We're confident that you will find Story Mapping Partners--people do not have to be experts in mapping or community engagement to be great partners with lots of incredible ideas. There are likely many people in your community with the ability to tell, gather, and share stories, and that's exactly who you're looking for. Be sure to let people know that they don't need to be historians or creatives, that all stories are valuable and they come in many forms.

Story Mapping Partner Questions

What if I've never done any official type of community engagement before, I just have an interest in stories?

It's ok! Story Mapping Partners' greatest task is gathering stories. We'll teach you skills and tips for tracking information and curating a list of stories from the people you will talk to. Previous knowledge of traditional community engagement is not needed.

How many responses should I get to my project?

This will depend on your project. It could be as few as three or four in-depth stories up to over a dozen short ideas and anecdotes. This is something we'll be able to help you work through as your process continues. You don't have to have a book full of stories to have done meaningful and valuable work.

Do I need to have an organizational partner for my project?

It's often helpful to have an organizational partner for your project, but it's not necessary. The local project partners and Rethos will be actively available for you to use for questions and guidance.

How do I figure out what my budget should be?

Read through the budgeting section and sample budget documents, but take into account that you should value your time, and take into consideration travel or supplies you may use to complete your project. Since the Story Map is made up of lots of Story Mapping Partner stories, don't try to take too much into your project and undervalue your time.

How does the map impact me/do I need to create a map?

The map is simply the final form of the broader project where all of the simpler projects are compiled. You don't have to do any mapping, have knowledge of maps, or consult maps. Simply create your project in whatever form you see fit and leave the mapping to us!

Appendix

List of Community Engagement Projects: Otter Tail County

Common Ground: Community Garden Portraits by Jon Solinger

Through a combination of photo portraits, interviews, and drawn garden plots this multi-faceted project explores the gardeners and culture at the Pelican Rapids community garden. Interviews with gardeners yield creative narrative write ups telling the stories of community involvement and generational relationships to the act of cultivating food. Each gardener also provided an illustration of their garden plot to better visualize the layout and food alongside photos of them at work.

Potential Quotes:

- *"Through the Community Garden project, I have made new connections to local organizations and individuals that will lead to interesting projects for me about rural work, connection to the land and local food production. Building trust and gaining access to these people and places takes time and work, and this project gave me some good new leads.*
- *"The project will make its biggest impact in the local community this summer when I install the photographs, subject-made documents and written information in the storefront window of the Food Shelf. The public and Food Shelf participants will get to know some of the growers who provide produce for the weekly Food Shelf Farmer's Market." (longer version of this is available)*

Flyover Logic Podcast by Tami Vigesaa and Mike Thorson

Flyover Logic is a podcast where two friends with different viewpoints discuss current events and politics. Mike and Tami attempt to bring a rural Midwestern perspective, while also modeling respectful conversations with folks from "the other side". It turns out we have more in common than we often think and are typically just seeing a different version of the internet.

As part of the Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project the Flyover Logic Podcast recorded six special episodes taking the following approach:

"We did a series of interviews with people who either grew up in Otter Tail County and then moved away OR people who lived elsewhere and moved to rural OTC. We utilized our podcast for this project and asked questions about the influence of rural culture. We recorded all of these interviews and published them as episodes of our podcast.

Several of the conversations were inspiring and also enlightening. We talked about issues of diversity in rural areas, access to opportunities, how to make connections to obtain access, and why people should invest in rural areas. We have had overwhelmingly positive feedback about these conversations and we both learned some things as well."

Potential quotes:

- *"Several of the conversations were inspiring and also enlightening. We talked about issues of diversity in rural areas, access to opportunities, how to make connections to obtain access, and why people should invest in rural areas. We have had overwhelmingly positive feedback about these conversations and we both learned some things as well."*
- *"Conversations around diversity and access to opportunities for young people with big dreams are relevant and certainly necessary as we consider growth in rural areas and why people leave or why they feel comfortable staying."*

Honeycutt House Racial Reconciliation Project by Lynette Higgins-Orr

Through extensive research this project highlights and honors the legacy of one of Fergus Falls' most influential African-American residents, Prince Albert Honeycutt. In addition to compiling a short historical sketch of Honeycutt's life and influence an event was held at the house he occupied to commemorate his legacy. The event included speeches from the descendants of the "original 85," the first Black settlers in Fergus Falls as well as a local dedication recognizing Prince Albert Honeycutt's importance to local history.

Potential Quotes:

- *"This event was a great success. The community will never be the same, is the statement many have said. Family members found connections of old classmate from 1940's and others realized their bloodline never discovered before. Many have asked that we continue this project and have offered to volunteer for the next gathering."*

Memory Lake by Rebecca Umland

Memory Lake compiles photos and memories submitted by the residents of Otter Tail County. With a focus on lakes this project seeks to show the multi-faceted ways that residents throughout the county navigate and use the bodies of water around them. Whether recreation, work, family, sport, leisure, or a drive time commute there is always a memory. Stories were collected through digital engagement and outreach, primarily a Facebook page that encouraged participants to reflect while sharing stories in conversation with one another.

Potential Quotes:

- *"I gained the understanding that some projects require a bit more pursuing to accomplish a specific goal. People in general need that in-person conversation vs. a printed, tech-readable or group setting to act... In the future, I would prefer to do story-collecting in a less broad manner, focusing on a smaller group of people."*
- *"My expectations were extremely squashed 4-5 months in. Going into the project, I assumed people would generally be willing to share images and stories on their own, given the sharing that happens on social media every day. My goal was to have 200+ lakes represented on the map. This will take much more effort directed at people personally."*

Mind Your Business by New York Mills Regional Cultural Center (Betsy Roder and Cheryl Bannes)

Through a mix of in person, community, and virtual engagements the New York Mills Cultural Center (NYMCC) hosted a wide ranging exhibit called Mind Your Business. The exhibit drew focus to and celebrated the history of New York Mills businesses and families through a mixture of photos, essays, newspaper articles, story collections, and personal interviews. This information was collected and on display in the visual arts gallery for the month of December 2020. During this time attendees were invited to identify the people and places in the photos using post-it notes, or to share their own reflections of the places on display.

In response to the COVID pandemic Mind Your Business was not able to hold as big a reception as intended but did allow small groups into the gallery while also hosting a series of socially distanced conversations on Facebook live with locals talking about the history of New York Mills. Those who attended the show were invited to write reflections about the displayed businesses on post-it notes and stick them to the wall around each piece.

This project allowed for a wide range of reflections on the cultural and built environment in New York Mills. Attendees were able to get a glimpse of what the town looked like in its early days while celebrating some of the pioneering businesses that made the town thrive. While not all businesses or institutions were displayed due to a lack of archival material, the exhibit drew attention to the importance of recognizing and preserving local culture.

Potential Quotes:

- *"This project reiterated for us that while personal connections/visits can seem time-consuming at first, in the long run they are definitely the most effective and efficient way to connect. We got very little response from the initial letter. Though it certainly had to do with COVID distractions, we agree that personal visits from the beginning would have been best. Part of our organizational vision is to celebrate the local, so we will most definitely continue to connect with businesses, organizations, and residents in a personal way in the future, and the skills we learned in this project will help us be more effective."*
- *"We learned a lot not only about our local history but also how this method can reach out to a larger audience. The benefit of this was getting the story and photos to people who once lived in New York Mills or the snowbirds who would otherwise not have been able to participate in this show. I know one 80 year woman in particular who after seeing one of the interviews, pulled out her old NYM high school yearbooks to reminisce about NYMills from her high school days. The show made connections and brought community members together in ways we had not anticipated."*

Native Skies Story Project by Joan Vorderbruggen

Rooted in the acknowledgment of Otter Tail County as Dakota and Ojibwe land, this project connects the spiritual, practical, and meditative aspects of star gazing to the human experience. By grounding in the Dakota and Ojibwe traditions of using the stars to communicate storytelling

and creation this project encourages locals to more deeply explore their relationships with natural landscapes, the night skies, and constellations. Links on the project's webpage connect to resources for learning about Indigenous perspectives of star gazing while inviting residents to go out and share their own experiences and reflections with the night sky.

Through a partnership with Glendalough State Park Joan developed parameters for in person and virtual stargazing and story sharing, with the hope that this project will live on through in person sharing of the dark skies in Otter Tail County.

Potential Quotes:

- *"I love the idea of story-telling, and it fits in so beautifully with how the Indigenous People have passed along important life lessons, instructions, spiritual beliefs, etc. I would like to explore the realm of story telling more. I believe it possesses powerful ways to not only capture peoples' imaginations, but it can help us form stronger bonds with others who are part of the story circle. I also learned that the questions were maybe too focused. I had wanted so much for people to try to stretch themselves to look at the stars through a different lens, and in the end, I think most people just wanted to just tell of their personal star-gazing experiences. In retrospect, those ARE their own Native Star Stories."*

Nourishing Narratives: A Latinx Food Map of Community Comida by Kandace Creel Falcón

Nourishing Narratives tells of the multi-faceted foodways of Latinx people across Otter Tail County. Focusing on stories in the communities Pelican Rapids, Fergus Falls, Dent, and Erhard this project takes a broader look at foodways from personal to the community level. Stories include personalized anecdotes about family connection to food, local restaurants, Hispanic grocery stores, and food trucks. This well rounded view of people's relationship to food is communicated through oral history interviews and photographic portraits .

Additionally, a series of paintings called "Kitchen Saints" were created. Made with oil paint on reclaimed wood, these paintings weave imagery of hot sauce bottles with traditional spiritual santos to interrogate gendered and spiritual relationships to food.

Potential Quotes:

- *"Because my project happened in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were times when restaurants were closed to the public and were only providing takeout or delivery options. Additionally, I and others did not feel comfortable with me coming to their homes and so I strategized on finding ways to connect with their stories without sharing physical space. My project also took place during a national election season where many Latinos once again felt directly under threat based on the rhetorical attacks of the previous federal administration related to supposed Mexican criminality. These combined factors made it very difficult to connect with people with whom I did not previously know."*
- *"This feels particularly relevant at this point in our human history and in our geography, I want to continue to center the experience of people who are often marginalized by factors like (but not limited to) gender, sexuality, race, or class, or even migration status. As my work often touches on themes of home and belonging finding ways to create more understandings of people's (including*

my own) access to belonging in whatever community of which they are a part is one of my life's goals."

- *"For the people I was able to formally speak with, I do believe they felt honored to be a part of the project. One respondent told me that it was important for her to be a part of the project because she sees the significance of food in her ancestral line and in the lives of her children. Because the Latinx communities in Otter Tail County remain largely peripheral to the centers of power, highlighting Latinx stories in our rural places give light to the resilience of people's lineages and claims to home space that challenge assumptions about what Minnesota looks like and is like."*

Otter Tail County's 1,000 Lakes (and more ponds) Have Stories to Tell by Jan Smith

Across a variety of research techniques this project collects stories involving water in Otter Tail County from the 1800s to the present. Through archival research in local newspapers, press releases in local newspapers, in person engagements, and story collection boxes placed at bait shops 60+ stories were collected. These stories have been compiled into a PowerPoint for individuals to browse or use in presentations on the cultural importance of water and fishing in Otter Tail County. Stories range from historical efforts to create hatchery, tales of tragedy, stories of local clubs, reflections on family and friendship, humorous anecdotes, and, of course, lots of fishing.

Potential quotes to include:

- *"I reused my "teacher" skills in different ways to make people feel comfortable so that they would tell their stories wherever I was."*
- *"My historically documenting what life was like will continue to create interest in and spur memories of times past and reasons to pursue exploring the various corners of this county to find new places to seek out and reimagine."*
- *"A visit to the Good Sam Retirement community here in Battle Lake before the pandemic hit was very lucrative. Most everyone had a story and not only was willing to share but curious to hear other's stories. Times well spent."*

Stories of West McDonald by Shana Crosson

Through the use of historical maps this project tells the history of the area around West McDonald lake from larger community and personal perspectives. Beginning with the acknowledgment of the area as Dakota and Ojibwe land the project discusses colonial settlement and the seizing of lands through broken treaties. These changes in the landscape and ownership are represented by 19th century archival material such as plat maps. These visual materials illustrate the changes in the area up through the present.

In addition to the broader history Shana also explores her familial connection to West McDonald Lake through the history of a family cabin and her ancestors residence in the area. Slowly she begins to weave her personal narrative within the larger history and in turn exploring the social, cultural, and labor histories of the place. When concluding, the project contains a form that

people can use to submit their own stories and reflections of their connection to West McDonald.

Potential Quotes

- *"I hope I'm sharing information they didn't already know, or giving them a new perspective. I also really hope it builds some connections among people on the lake so we all know a bit more about each other. The area is very divided politically right now, and maybe some conversations about where we all come from can create commonality... I realized how little I knew about a place I've been going for my entire life! Hopefully, this will help others learn more about the place, too."*

Suitcase of Memories: Hollanders Arrival Creates Butler Township by Carmen McCullough

Using a mixed media approach this project resulted in a book that tells the history of a group of Hollanders who settled in Butler township and created a community of Dutch culture and tradition. From a mixture of photos, newspaper clippings, and historical documents found in a worn suitcase owned by the Story Mapping Partner's Grandmother the book uses thought provoking imagery with easily digestible anecdotes to explore the history of Butler township from founding to the present.

Potential Quotes:

- *"Those we talked to were extremely supportive and excited to help with the project. During the process, we had suggestions for documenting additional "lost communities" in Otter Tail County."*
- *"When putting the information together for the book, I was surprised and saddened to see how many of the structures have deteriorated (my Grandparent's farmhouse and the Holy Cross memorial monument) or have been lost to time (my Grandparent's barn, two Holy Cross churches, and more)."*

The Rearing Ponds Story by Stephen Henning

With a short documentary Steve Henning explores the long history of the Rearing Ponds from farm land, to failed fishery, to a space that has inspired community action. The Rearing Ponds were a parcel of land purchased by the DNR from a local farmer around 1950, and developed into a short-lived fishery. The story of the Rearing Ponds is really the story of private citizens coming together to "do the right thing," resist commercial development of a failed (and for many years neglected) government project, and restore it as a public-use wildlife area to be preserved for public use indefinitely.

Potential Quotes: None

The Wadena Beach Story by Stephen Henning

Revisiting the documentary form, Steve Henning this time explores the history of Wadena Beach by talking to the families of those with generational roots in the area. This documentary explores the built, familial, and social dynamics of the area from those who know them best. Featuring interviews with descendants that discuss how the area has evolved while maintaining

its historic character and charm. The anecdotes range from playful and lighthearted to more serious dissections of shifts in the built environment alongside the community minded relationships of those in the area.

Potential Quote:

- *"I was amazed at how the original structures from the late 1800's and early 1900's still remain, but are just covered up by later styles of architecture and hidden by recent remodels... every house we entered had a history, and a historic structural component that went with it."*

The Winter Sauna by Dorothy Eskelli

Based on a childhood memory of having a sauna with her mother the Winter Sauna explores childhood memory alongside familial and cultural histories. Having been originally built by Dorothy Eskelli's grandfather, a Finnish immigrant who settled with the strong Finnish community in New York Mills, it was built as a holdover of traditions celebrated in Finland. Using these traditions Dorothy created a short story bringing in her family along with broader cultural traditions. Alongside this story she drew multiple saunas with paper cutouts of people that allow readers to create their own sauna scenes. Upon completion Dorothy created copies for multiple institutions throughout Otter Tail County to hold as reference materials or to sell as a benefit for their organization.

Potential Quote:

- *"The project included assembling 30 copies of the Winter Sauna to disseminate to county nonprofits to be used for fund raising. I have done limited fund raising for organizations in the past, but this was a new experience. The libraries and museums all planned to archive a copy, in addition, to offering them for sale."*
- *"It has sparked more interest, curiosity and appreciation in my Finnish heritage. I hope my storytelling of the sauna experience will elicit warm memories and cause others to put it on their bucket list. And, I didn't even get to the jump in the lake or snow while still naked and hot part! The fun has just begun!"*

Trivia Poster Contest by Maxine Adams

Over a series of ten questions this project challenges participants to better know the history of Fergus Falls, MN. Questions cover a variety of topics: notable local figures, art, the built environment, cultural/business anecdotes, education, and general history. While many of the questions include links to research the topic further, a few encourage the participant to get out and explore the town to find the answers. This approach creates an on the ground form of engagement so that locals may better spatially understand and know the place they are rooted. In order to disseminate this project Maxine partnered with a local newspaper who advertised the contest and hosted the online version. After a period of time three prizes were awarded to people with the highest scores.

Potential Quote:

- *I hope that taking the quiz increase people awareness that people of all backgrounds have contributed to our town and that there is a back story to places we drive by every day. I hope some people are now curious about the town's history and will continue to learn more about our history.*

Truth Booth and Reconciliation Station by Lindsey Scherloun

Centered around the idea of using community storytelling to safely explore controversial topics, the Truth Booth and Reconciliation Station seeks to connect participants as real people rooted in authentic places around issues affecting their communities. The Truth Booth is an interactive kiosk with instructions that uses prompts and questions to invite the public to share their story in a safe space while the reconciliation station is the output wing that displays the responses, this includes the booth itself, story map, a project website, and any future in-person displays. Prompts and questions are block printed to give a unique artistic and textural experience to the responses while creating a visually comforting space for them to exist. Overall the project is meant to use the displayed responses to provoke dialogue, gather diverse perspectives, and change the dynamics of places.

Potential Quotes:

- *"Several people who took the time to sit and think about answering the prompts reflected that they appreciated being asked the questions involved, that they hadn't taken time to think about their relationship to MN or this region and that it was an opportunity to really consider that, remember their history, and their place in the fabric of this region. In talking to people about the project as I developed it, especially non-white friends, folks were really hopeful about having their voices shared among all the others that often drown them out."*

Promotion: Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release

Emily Kurash Casey
Rural Programs Coordinator
Rethos: Places Reimagined
507-205-2335
emily@rethos.org

Funding Available for Community Story Projects in Otter Tail County

(ST. PAUL, MINN.—March 3, 2020) - The Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project is a pilot project by Rethos: Places Reimagined in partnership with the Otter Tail County Historical Society and Springboard for the Arts. The purpose of this project is to collect and map the stories of Otter Tail County by engaging community members through small projects led by local organizations, historians, artists, students, businesses, etc.

The story map will then be a local resource for Otter Tail County that may assist the following: economic development strategies, pathways to safeguarding heritage resources, future philanthropic investment, planning and other policy decisions and promotion, and partnerships and connections.

Otter Tail County residents participated in community story workshops on January 30th and 31st, 2020, where they learned about what story mapping is, methods of gathering community stories, and project ideas ranging from one-on-one conversations to more creative and public projects. Following these workshops, participants are eligible to apply for project funds ranging from \$500 to \$2500 to implement a community story project between March and June 2020. The total project funds available from Rethos is \$30,000. Projects can vary in topic and presentation, with participants encouraged to do any sort of creative initiative that will result in the collection of stories. This includes highly personal narratives or publically engaged events and projects. The first deadline for these projects was February 20, and several projects were awarded funds:

- Story gathering focused on the lakes of Otter Tail County: Fishing, Boating, and other memories set on the water
- Businesses in New York Mills: Highlighting new, longstanding, and closed businesses that were key to the New York Mills Community, which will culminate in a photograph and story based gallery show
- Sauna Culture: Sharing one family's story of their smoke sauna and sauna culture in Otter Tail County

The second deadline for project proposals is Thursday, March 19. Anyone who attended the community story workshops are eligible to apply. If you are interested in the project but did not attend a story workshop, visit www.rethos.org/community-engagement and click on "Otter Tail County." From there, you will see a link for the Informational Webinar, which you may view in order to learn more about the story mapping projects, and then be eligible to apply for funding to complete a project. For more information, reach out to your local community partner, who's contact information is listed below.

For questions about this project, please contact Emily Kurash Casey, Rural Programs Coordinator at emily@rethos.org.



This project was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

###

Local Community Contacts:
Henning

Dan Broten, Director
Henning Landmark Center
218-548-5760
danielbroten@me.com

New York Mills
Betsy Roder, Executive Director
Cultural Center, New York Mills
www.kulcher.org
218-385-3339
betsy@kulcher.org

Pelican Rapids
Wayne Runningen
Community of Pelican Rapids
wrunning@loretel.net

Project Partners

Rethos is the statewide, private non-profit organization advocating for the preservation of Minnesota's historic resources. Rethos was established in 1981 as the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota by citizens concerned about the loss of irreplaceable segments of our state's heritage, structures, neighborhoods, and community fabric. Its mission is to "lead and inspire people to connect with historic places, promoting community vitality."



Otter Tail County Historical Society is a private, nonprofit organization whose purpose is the collection, preservation and interpretation of Otter Tail County's history and heritage. This is achieved through a variety of services including the Society's exhibit gallery, educational outreach program, special public programs, archival and object collections, and a genealogical and local history research library. The development of these services has made the Society an active partner in the educational and cultural life of Otter Tail County.



Springboard for the Arts is an economic and community development organization for artists and by artists. Springboard for the Arts' mission is to cultivate vibrant communities by connecting artists with the skills, information, and services they need to make a living and a life. Their work is about creating communities and artists that have a reciprocal relationship, where artists are key contributors to community issues and are visible and valued for the impact they create. They do this work by creating simple,



practical solutions and systems to support artists. Those programs support their goal to help create a local culture movement.

Promotion: Sample Workshop Invitation

For Immediate Release

Sarina Otaibi
Rural Programs Manager
Rethos: Places Reimagined
(c) 320-262-9514; (o) 651.293.9047;
sarina@rethos.org

Funding Available for Community Story Projects in Otter Tail County

(ST. PAUL, MINN.—January 14, 2020) - The Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project is a 10 month pilot project by Rethos: Places Reimagined in partnership with the Otter Tail County Historical Society and Springboard for the Arts. The purpose of this project is to collect and map the stories of Otter Tail County by engaging community members through small projects led by local organizations, historians, artists, students, businesses, etc.

Otter Tail County residents are invited to participate in community story workshops on January 30th and 31st, 2020, where they learn about story mapping, methods of gathering community stories, and project ideas ranging from one-on-one conversations to more creative and public projects. Following the workshops, participants will be eligible to apply for project funds ranging from \$500 to \$2500 to implement a community story project between March and June 2020. The total project funds available from Rethos is \$30,000. There will be two deadlines for project proposals are February 20 and March 19.

- Henning Landmark Center: 10 am -12:30 pm, Thursday, Jan. 30
- New York Mills Cultural Center: 2 pm – 4:30 pm, Thursday, Jan. 30
- Pelican Rapids Public Library: 10 am – 12:30 pm, Friday, Jan. 31

The story map will then be a local resource for Otter Tail County that may assist the following: economic development strategies, pathways to safeguarding heritage resources, future philanthropic investment, planning and other policy decisions and promotion, and partnerships and connections.

To register for a workshop, visit www.rethos.org/eventspage. Registration is free and open to the public. For questions about registration, please contact Emily Kurash Casey at emily@rethos.org. For questions about this project, please contact Sarina Otaibi, Rural Programs Manager at sarina@rethos.org.



This project was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Promotion: Sample Workshop Poster



RETHOS: PLACES REIMAGINED

Rural Programs



All workshops are free and open to the public!

Henning Landmark Center

10:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Thursday, January 30th

New York Mills Cultural Center

2:00 PM - 4:30 PM
Thursday, January 30th

Pelican Rapids Public Library

10:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Friday, January 31st

Registration:

www.rethos.org/eventspage

This is a free event, but registration is required.

COMMUNITY STORY WORKSHOPS

What is your story? What is the story of your favorite place? Are there community stories you'd like to share or bring to life? Do you have project ideas around gathering community stories?

These three workshops are a part of the Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project, a 10 month pilot project by Rethos in partnership with the Otter Tail County Historical Society and Springboard for the Arts. The purpose of this project is to collect and map the stories of Otter Tail County by engaging community members through small projects led by local community members, like you!

During the Community Story Workshops, you'll learn:

- What is a story map
- Methods of gathering stories from your community
- About project ideas from one-on-one conversations to more creative and public projects
- How to apply for funds, ranging from \$500 to \$2,500, to implement your community story project

Who should attend?

- Anyone who is interested in leading a community project to gather stories!
- Teachers and students
- Historical society members and volunteers
- Artists
- Business and property owners
- Economic development professionals
- Chambers of Commerce staff and volunteers
- City officials
- Community residents

If you can't make it to one of the three workshops, we are offering an online webinar on Monday, Feb. 3, 2020 at 4 - 5:30 pm.

Questions? Please contact Rural Programs Manager Sarina Otaibl at sarina@rethos.org, or at 651-293-9047.



CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

This project has been financed in part with funds provided by the State of Minnesota from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.

PROJECT PARTNERS



Otter Tail County Historical Society



SPRINGBOARD
for the arts

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Henning Landmark Center
New York Mills Cultural Center
Community of Pelican Rapids

416 Landmark Center 75 W. 5th Street St. Paul, MN 55102

rethos.org

Community Participation: Partner Agreement

Otter Tail County Story Mapping Partner Agreement

THIS AGREEMENT, by and between Rethos, a charitable, educational and nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the state of Minnesota, whose legal address is 75 W. 5th Street, 416 Landmark Center, Saint Paul, MN 55102, (hereafter referred to as "Rethos") and New York Mills Arts Retreat and Regional Cultural Center, an entity organized under the laws of Minnesota, whose principal office is located at 24 N Main Avenue, New York Mills, MN 56567 (hereafter referred to as the "Local Partner"). Rethos and the Local Partner are referred to collectively as the "parties." This updated contract continues work on the Story Mapping Project begun in early 2020 and covers the extension of the Story Mapping Project through July 2021 due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. In consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein, the parties agree as follows:

Term: The term of this agreement is from July 31, 2020 to July 31, 2021.

Rethos will provide the following services and resources to the Local Partner:

- \$2,500 total throughout the entirety of the project for Local Partner to use in implementation and promotion of workshops and projects.
- Technical assistance and support with the community engagement process and workshops, story mapping training, mapping project data input, and community-led story mapping projects.

The Local Partner will dedicate \$2,500 funds specifically to:

- Publicize story mapping community engagement workshops and projects through their own and affiliate organization's social media outlets, email blasts, flyers, posters, and other promotional media channels. (Completed in January and February 2020.)
- Assist Rethos and county partners in identifying and communicating with local story mappers in Otter Tail County. (Completed in January and February 2020.)
- Attend up to three story mapping team meetings (each approximately 2-3 hours)
- Be available to participate in one-hour team calls with both parties as needed.
- Provide technical assistance as needed for story mapping projects.
- Document the progress of story mapping projects through videos and photographs and send to Rethos when available.
- Provide feedback on toolkit and cultural asset map as it develops.

Documentation: Partner agrees to permit Rethos, Otter Tail County Historical Society, Springboard for the Arts, Minnesota Historical Society, and its designated personnel to photograph, video record and document the project, and use the resulting materials without restrictions or royalties paid to the Partner or Rethos for archival, promotional, marketing, website, educational and such other purposes as Rethos shall determine. Such photographic and documentary materials shall be the property of Rethos.

Credit Acknowledgement: Any written documentation of project acknowledges the following support:

"This activity is part of the Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project, a partnership between Rethos, the Otter Tail County Historical Society, and Springboard for the Arts with support from the Minnesota Historical Society. This project was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund."

_____ Please initial here to indicate your willingness to be contacted by interested media outlets (TV, newspaper, etc).

Employment: The Partner is not an employee of Rethos and will not represent themselves as such.

Hold Harmless: The Partner agrees to indemnify, save, and hold Rethos, their employees and representatives harmless from any and all claims or causes of action, including attorneys' fees, arising from the performance of this Agreement.

Entire Agreement: This Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties. No modification of this Agreement shall be valid unless in writing and signed by both parties. Any waiver or modification of one part shall not affect the other portions of this agreement.

Governing Law: The laws of the State of Minnesota shall govern this contract; any litigation shall be brought in the courts of that state.

Termination of agreement: Should the project not be completed within the specified time frame, Rethos has the right to terminate the agreement and require repayment of funds paid.

Representatives:

Sarina Otaibi, Rural Programs Manager, is hereby designated as the Representative of Rethos and is authorized to exercise general direction, supervision, and administration of the performance of this Agreement on its behalf.

NAME, Executive Director, is hereby designated as the Representative of the New York Mills Arts Retreat and Regional Cultural Center, and is authorized to exercise general direction, supervision, and administration of the performance of this Agreement on its behalf.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement with the signatures of their duly authorized representatives, effective as of the date first written above.

Rethos:

By: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

New York Mills Arts Retreat and Regional Cultural Center

By: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Community Participation: Story Mapping Partner Contract Template

Otter Tail County Participation Agreement

Rethos and story mapping partner NAME ("SMP") make this Partnership Participation Agreement for purposes of implementing a community based cultural storytelling project, NAME OF PROJECT in Otter Tail County, Minnesota.

1. Roles and Responsibilities of Story Mapping Partner
 - a. SMP is responsible for implementing Project as detailed in their submitted proposal (attached).
 - b. SMP completes Project and submits final report by June 1, 2021. SMP will participate in quarterly check-in with Rethos Staff until project is complete.
 - c. SMP provides project updates and maintains communication, especially regarding events and activities to which the public is invited in order for Rethos and local Otter Tail Partners to help promote them.
 - d. SMP is responsible for arranging any desired insurance coverage. SMP assumes all risk of loss and damage to the Project from any cause, and agrees to hold Rethos harmless for loss or damage from any cause.
 - e. SMP is responsible for upkeep and maintenance of any physical portions of the Project for the duration of the project. Rethos will make no alterations, repairs or maintenance to the Project.
 - f. Any significant changes or alterations to Project and/or timeline must be approved by Rethos staff.
2. Roles and Responsibilities of Rethos Staff
 - a. Assistance, when requested, in supporting implementation of the project on a best-effort basis.
 - b. Promotion of Project, when requested, through Rethos online resources, social media, local Otter Tail Partners and other networks.
 - c. Provision of Rethos promotional materials for distribution by SMP in conjunction with Project, if appropriate.
 - d. Interpret and compile projects into a story map of Otter Tail County.
3. Copyright: SMP retains copyright over any materials produced as part of the Project.
4. Documentation: SMP agrees to permit Rethos, Otter Tail County Historical Society, Springboard for the Arts, Minnesota Historical Society, and its designated personnel to photograph, video record and document the project, and use the resulting materials without restrictions or royalties paid to the Partner or Rethos for archival, promotional, marketing, website, educational and such other purposes as Rethos shall determine. Local partner retains Copyright ownership of all photographic and documentary provided, and allows usage by Rethos for this project.

5. Credit Acknowledgement: Any written documentation of project preferably acknowledges the following support:

"This activity is part of the Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project, a partnership between Rethos, the Otter Tail County Historical Society, and Springboard for the Arts with support from the Minnesota Historical Society. This project was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund."

____ Please initial here to indicate your willingness to be contacted by interested media outlets (TV, newspaper, etc).

6. Employment: The SMP is not an employee of Rethos and will not represent themselves as such.
7. Hold Harmless: The SMP agrees to indemnify, save, and hold Rethos, their employees and representatives harmless from any and all claims or causes of action, including attorneys' fees, arising from the performance of this Agreement.
8. Entire Agreement: This Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties. No modification of this Agreement shall be valid unless in writing and signed by both parties. Any waiver or modification of one part shall not affect the other portions of this agreement.
9. Governing Law: The laws of the State of Minnesota shall govern this contract; any litigation shall be brought in the courts of that state.
10. Termination of agreement: Should the project not be completed within the specified time frame, Rethos has the right to terminate the agreement and require repayment of funds paid.
11. Fees:
- Rethos agrees to pay SMP a fee of \$AMOUNT for the work specified above.
 - Rethos agrees that it will pay SMP 80% of the total fee, \$AMOUNT upon execution of this agreement.
 - Upon completion of SMP's Project and submission of final report, Rethos agrees to pay SMP the remaining fee of \$360.10.

Signed:

NAME, SMP

(date)

Sarina Otaibi, Rethos

(date)

Community Participation: Project Proposal Guidelines Template

WHAT IS THE OTTER TAIL COUNTY COMMUNITY STORY MAPPING PROJECT?

The Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project is a pilot project by Rethos: Places Reimagined in partnership with the Otter Tail County Historical Society and Springboard for the Arts. The purpose of this project is to collect and map the stories of Otter Tail County by engaging community members through small projects led by local Story Mappers (local organizations, historians, artists, students, businesses, etc).

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE OTTER TAIL COUNTY COMMUNITY STORY PROJECT?

1. To share Otter Tail County's community stories on a customized digital story map.
2. To engage new and non-dominant perspectives in identifying overlooked cultural assets that are important to Otter Tail County's history and identity.
3. To bring greater awareness, foster interaction and build relationships around the people, places, events, cultural traditions, objects, family histories, etc. that are important to local residents.

HOW IS THE GENERAL PROJECT APPLICATION DIFFERENT FROM THE READY SET STORY MAPPING PROJECT APPLICATION?

In simple terms, the general project application is more free form, and the Ready Set Story Mapping Project is more guided.

For folks who feel confident in their project, need a budget more than \$1000, perhaps have multiple partners, and have a strong plan already in mind, the general project application is what they should fill out.

The Ready Set Story Mapping Project is meant for folks who may feel less confident about a project, perhaps because they're new to community engagement. There will be guided prompts for applicants to use if they wish, and they are limited to a \$1,000 project. This project is ideal for people with the beginnings of an idea, but need a bit more assistance in making it happen.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO GET INVOLVED?

If you live, work or have a connection to Otter Tail County, you are eligible to develop a project idea

Attend a Community Story Workshop (If you did not attend a workshop in early 2020, this can also be done virtually on www.rethos.org/community-engagement).

Prepare your proposal and budget and submit through this form. Project support ranges from as low as \$200 to as much as \$2,500.

Questions or need to discuss your project? Please reach out to Tyler McDaniel at tyler@rethos.org or Emily Kurash Casey at emily@rethos.org or 507-205-2335.

HOW IS MY PROJECT REVIEWED, AND WHEN WILL I FIND OUT IF IT WAS FUNDED?
Proposals will be reviewed by a committee made up of representatives from Rethos, Springboard for the Arts, Otter Tail County Historical Society, New York Mills Cultural Center, Henning Landmark Center, and other community leaders.

You will be notified of your project status within two weeks of the proposal deadline.

Projects may be given feedback for small adjustments before being officially funded.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PROJECT IS ACCEPTED?
Sign your contract.

Once your contract is signed you will receive 80% of your project support funds (i.e. \$800 if you're requesting \$1000).

Initiate your project and submit all evaluation materials by June 1, 2021. (Sooner is better. If your project is complete, please submit materials ASAP.)

Help Rethos communicate information to the public about your project while it is happening. There are additional requirements that Rethos will share, or you can read more about them by downloading the pdf of the application at www.rethos.org/community-engagement.

WHAT SHOULD MY BUDGET LOOK LIKE?

You will determine what your budget will be, out of which you should include funds to pay yourself. You should also take into account any supplies you may need to purchase (technology tools or subscriptions, printing, documenting, art supplies, etc.) as well as if you intend to travel and would like to include funds towards mileage. As you consider your project, keep these structures in mind.

Budget Example 1:

Your time of 35 hours @ \$20/hour	\$700
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Supplies for Project	\$400
Travel costs	\$100
Total Project Budget	\$1200

Budget Example 2:

Your time of 12 hours @ \$20/hr	\$120
Supplies	\$450
Total Project Budget	\$570

Community Participation: Sample Project Application

NOTE: This application was created as an online form, with a pdf copy as an option if requested.

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Best way to contact:

Did you take place in a community workshop or story mapping webinar? (Yes/No)

Do you have a name for your project?

Which community/communities in Otter Tail County will you be focusing your project?

- Battle Lake
- Bluffton
- Clitherall
- Dalton
- Deer Creek
- Dent
- Elizabeth
- Erhard
- Fergus Falls
- Henning
- New York Mills
- Ottertail
- Parkers Prairie
- Pelican Rapids
- Perham
- Richville
- Rothsay (part)
- Underwood
- Urbank
- Vergas
- Vining
- Wadena
- Other: (Unincorporated communities and townships are welcome)

What topic are you focusing on?

This could be a broad topic like:

- Main Street/Downtown
- Churches
- Lakes

- Cabins

Or a more specific topic like:

- Otter Tail County Folklore
- Local crime blotter history
- Communist Activity in Otter Tail County
- Political evolution of the county
- Refugee and immigrant populations--immigration history
- Smaller towns/unincorporated communities
- The evolution of gathering/meeting spaces for socializing
- Local residents of note/Otter Tail County characters
- Musical round robin/song trade
- High School Stories
- Sports (official or unofficial recreational)

What is your intended outcome of the project?

- Seek more information to catalog places
- Document people, places, or things
- Gather unknown history of physical locations
- Record stories from local residents

What will the product of your project be?

- Video
- Book
- Photography Exhibit
- Website
- Podcast
- Display
- Map/storymap
- Oral Histories
- Other?

What is your project plan? What are you going to do, and how are you going to do it?

How does this address the goals of community engagement and the scope of the project?

Describe the activities and timeline required to complete your project.

Budget Question #1 of 3: What is the total cost of your project? This includes your time, materials required, and other cost factors. We will breakdown these costs in the next two questions. Please list in this format: ex: \$1,500; \$750. *

Budget Question #2 of 3: What is the amount of the funds you are allotting for your time to complete the project? Suggested value of your time is \$15-20/hour, and tell us how many hours you expect this project to take. (This should be included in the above total.)

Budget Question #3 of 3: What is the amount of funds required for materials?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your project? If you have any photos, forms, or articles that would help to explain your project, please email them to Tyler@Rethos.org.

Evaluation: Sample Project Final Report Template_

This evaluation was provided as a hard copy form to all Story Mapping Partners.

Your name(s):

Project Title:

Project Dates:

Recap your project for us. What did you do? How did you do it? What information did you track?

In which communities of Otter Tail County did you gather information?

How many people participated in this project (how many people did you interview or interact with)? Describe who they were (i.e. age, relationship to project or other demographics)

What new skills or capacity did you develop through this project? Do you anticipate doing any projects like this or story-collecting in the future?

Please describe the impact of this project. How do you think it affected people or the community?

Do you think your project will positively impact the following (select all that are applicable):

- Historic Preservation Efforts
- Retention of Local History
- Local Economic Development
- Tourism Initiatives
- Other:

Were there unexpected results that came out of this project?

Anything else you'd like to share with us?

Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project

FINAL BUDGET TEMPLATE

Please attach a final budget breakdown or use the template below (supplies, payments, artist fees, etc). *NOTE: We do not require receipts, but we recommend you keep yours for your own records.*

Expense Item	Cost
Time	
Materials (describe)	
Other	
Total	