



Minnesota Parks Artist-in-Residence (MNPAiR) Program

Reporting on Year 1 Pilot and Preparing for Year 2



Minnesota Parks Artist-in-Residence

Minnesota's first statewide artist-in-residence program, MNPAiR, was a year-long initiative to embed artists across all state and regional park systems in Minnesota, with a cohort exploring community and belonging. Unlike traditional residency opportunities, this program focuses on how artists can serve as partners to and ambassadors for the parks and contribute not just art, but ideas.



MNPAiR Partners



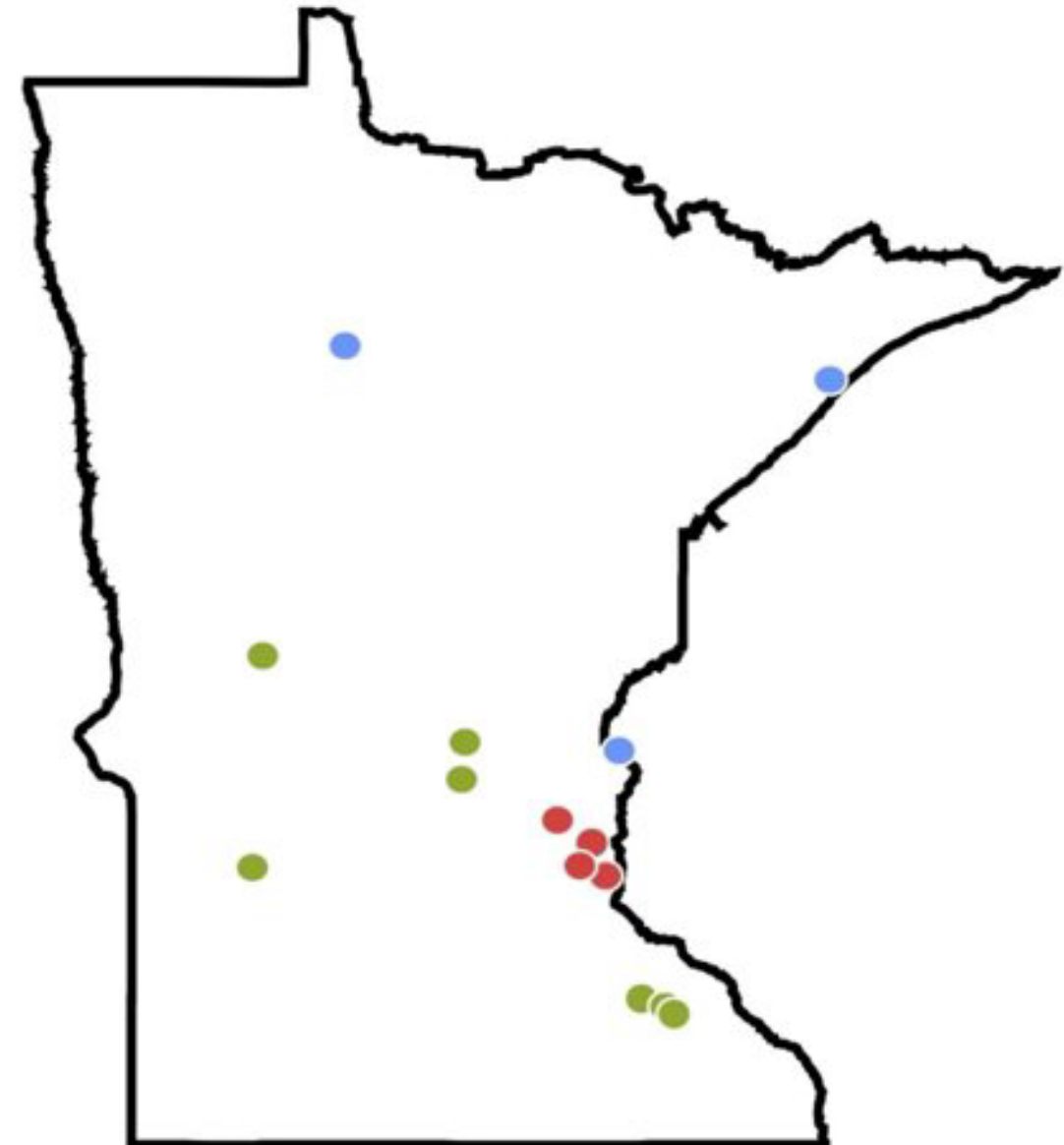
FORECAST

MNPAiR Artists

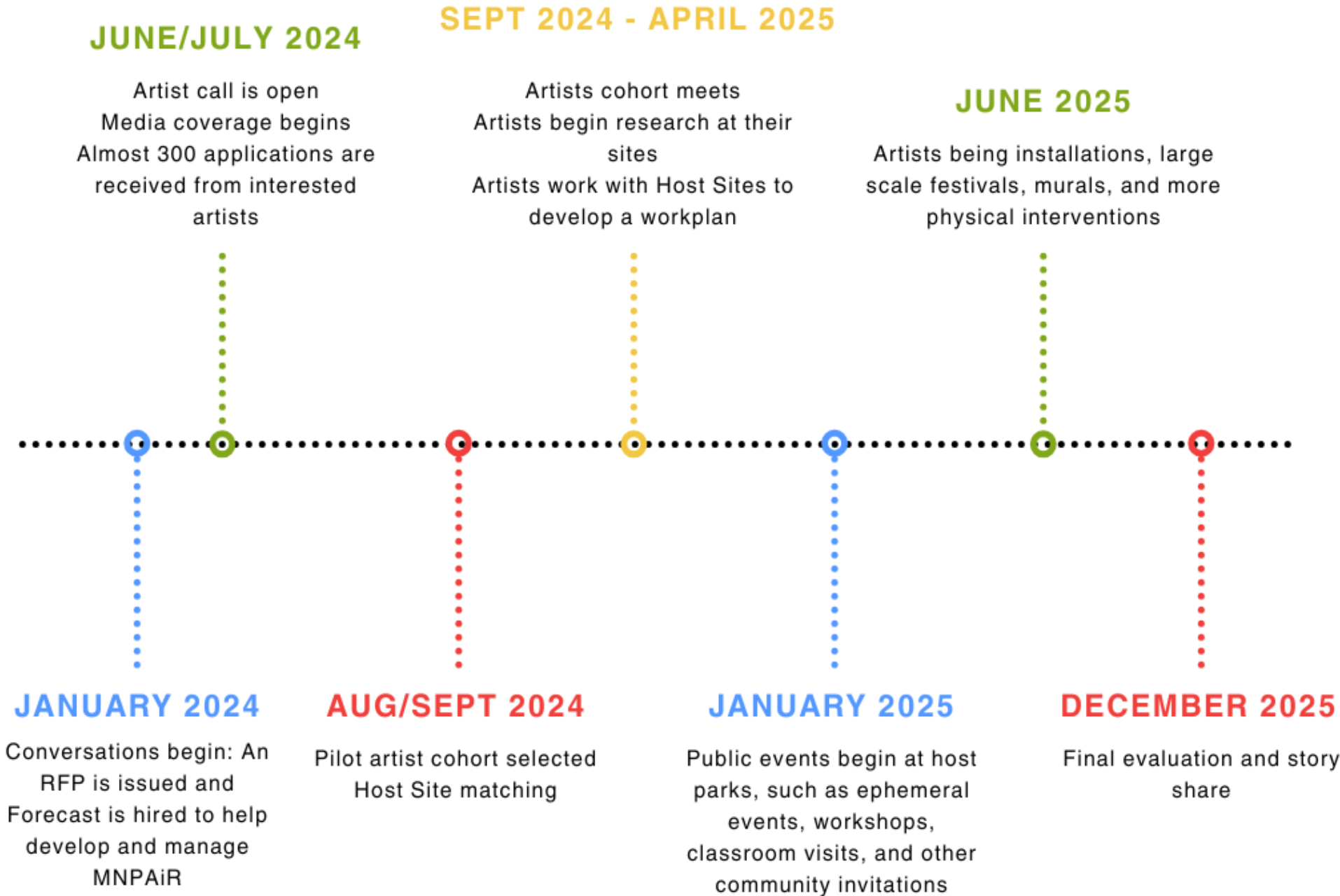


MNPAiR Host Sites

- **Battle Creek Park**
- Cascade Lake
- Chester Woods
- **Dakota County Parks (Incl. Lebanon Hills and Spring Lake Park Reserve)**
- Granite Falls Memorial Park
- Lake Bemidji State Park
- Lake Brophy Park
- **North Mississippi Regional Park**
- Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo
- Quarry Hill Nature Center
- Robert Ney Park
- Two Inlets at Bdé Heháka - Omashkooz
- Zaaga'igaans Regional Park
- Tettegouche State Park
- Wild River State Park



MNPAiR Pilot Timeline



MNPAiR Guiding Values

- **Curiosity:** a genuine curiosity around both the opportunity, the sites and the systems
- **Belonging:** an interest in exploring the physical and abstract concepts of place and belonging
- **Discovery:** a desire to investigate group and individual processes, materials, etc. as a path to the discovery of new things and ways of knowing



Ramsey County: Marlena Myles and Tanáǵidan To Win (Tara Perron/Blue Hummingbird Woman)

- Four community celebrations at Battle Creek
- Brought together Dakota ancestral teachings, modern Indigenous artists and artistry, and community-building activities to honor what it means to people who have called this area home for thousands of years
- Created a medicine garden full of native plantings and an outdoor classroom.
- 20–30 Native vendors at each event



Ramsey County: Marlena Myles and Tanáǵidanǵ To Win (Tara Perron/Blue Hummingbird Woman)

“It’s been such a joy being a Minnesota Parks Artist in Residence, collaborating with Tanáǵidanǵ To Win while partnering with Ramsey County to create spaces of belonging at Battle Creek. So many people shared that this was their first time on a water walk and their first time visiting Battle Creek. That means a lot to us and the work we’re doing together with the community.”

—Marlena Myles



Minneapolis Parks: Stephanie Lindquist

- Conversations with the community to better understand how locals connect and want to connect the park
- Plant walks series led by four herbalists
- Discovery of the powers of everyday plants
- Educational opportunities to learn about the land and its history



Dakota County: Ifrah Mansour

- Multi-site participatory public art project called *Weaving Abundance*
- Invitation into creative journey of interconnectedness with land, species, and one another
- Weaving in community to imagine abundance as enough-ness, belonging, and wholeness and explore abundance in waste, people, and ecology
- Free weaving workshops held at Thompson Park, Lebanon Hills, and at community events
- Culminating event at Spring Lake Park Reserve with music and poetry



Dakota County: Ifrah Mansour

“It’s been beautiful to have a long residency to really get to know the parks and how they are run. We were truly embedded.”

—Ifrah Mansour



MNPAiR By the Numbers

- 11 artists
- 12-month embedded residency
- Average of 20 hours/week for artists
- \$40,000 stipend
- \$14,000 material budget
- 2,000 + visitors engaged
- \$526,000 invested in MN economy
- 11 Minnesota counties
- 70+ artist events
- 15+ artworks and installations
- \$0: all programming was free to the public!



“Supporting a weaving event, watching the artist guide participants in discovering their own creative potential and process.

Watching new visitors and communities of all ages explore a new space, brought together by art that was culturally meaningful. Creating memories of a park space in a new way.”

—Park Host Site

“The impact on park visitors was both visible and powerful. Families and individuals came together to create art, make new friends, and try something new. This hands-on, place-based learning deepened the connection between creativity and nature for many attendees.

Visitors also frequently mentioned how relaxing it was to simply sit, slow down, and enjoy the parks while making art. That kind of stillness and presence is rare, and it was meaningful to see people rediscover it in these shared outdoor spaces.

Several subgroups have even continued meeting after the events—proof that the project helped forge lasting bonds.”

—MNPAIR Artist

“I have never been an artistic person. I have more of an analytical mind. The artists taught me how to view the world and my work space differently, and how to present our public spaces differently to our visitors. My hope is that my organization can take what I have learned from the artists to change how we engage with our stakeholders. Not to be so strictly governmental, but open up and interact in different ways.”

—Host Site Staff

MNPAiR Outcomes

1. This was a unique collaboration, which led to unique outcomes.
2. Art deepened visitor connection to the park.
3. MNPAiR increased public involvement.
4. MNPAiR created an environment of creativity.
5. When government and artists work together as partners, they bring exponential impact to parks and visitors.



MNPAiR Report



This park
participated in
MNPAiR!



The MN Parks
Artists in
Residence Pilot
Program



MINPAiR

A Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment Project

Discussion Questions

- What would you like to see out of the second edition of the MNPAiR program?
- In what ways do you think art is important in our regional parks?
- What themes do you think are important for artists to be considering when working in the parks and to increase feelings of welcoming and belonging across our system?





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