



ISSUE THIRTEEN : SPRING 2019
OPEN RIVERS :
RETHINKING WATER, PLACE & COMMUNITY

WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

<http://openrivers.umn.edu>

An interdisciplinary online journal rethinking the Mississippi
from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

ISSN 2471-190X

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Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community is produced by the [University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing](https://www.lib.umn.edu/) and the [University of Minnesota Institute for Advanced Study](https://www.umn.edu/advanced-study/).

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ISSN 2471-190X

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE THIRTEEN

By Laurie Moberg

I met Simi Kang early in her graduate career at the University of Minnesota. As graduate students, we were committed to our research and our projects, but Kang has always demonstrated an even greater commitment to people, to community, and to work that makes change. I was delighted when she agreed to bring her politics, perspective, and provocations into guest editing this issue of *Open Rivers*.

As the guest editor for the issue, Kang moves *Open Rivers* toward questions of environmental equity and justice, and, by extension, their opposites: environmental inequities, injustices, and racism. As pieces in this issue of the journal demonstrate, environmental justice is complicated and multifaceted; environmental injustices are layered in our social structures, institutions, geographies, and language. Yet environmental



Aerial of dock on water at Belle Isle, Detroit, United States. Photographer Aaron Burden.

justice is perhaps also one of the most important and unequivocal goals to which we must aspire together. So how do we begin to do this work, to do better, to not just attend to injustices but be allies, and to work to make change together?

In this issue, Kang brings together what she calls in her guest editor's introduction "an alarmingly beautiful set of calls to action, meditations on, and new directions toward our relationship with

injustice and water" to offer some insight into these questions. There is much to learn from the community of authors she has brought together here. The individual pieces are both inspiring and challenging; together, the collection moves *Open Rivers* in a new direction and into new conversations we look forward to continuing in the future.

Happy reading!

Recommended Citation

Moberg, Laurie. 2019. "Introduction to Issue Thirteen." *Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community*, no. 13. <http://editions.lib.umn.edu/openrivers/article/introduction-to-issue-thirteen/>.

About the Author

As a Postdoctoral Associate in the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Minnesota, Laurie Moberg works as the Research Coordinator for the River Life program and Assistant Editor for *Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community*. She graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Ph.D. in anthropology in 2018. Her doctoral research investigates recurrent episodes of flooding on rivers in Thailand and queries how the ecological, social, and cosmological entanglements between humans and nonhumans, people and the material world, are reimagined and reconfigured in the aftermath of disasters. At River Life, Laurie brings her ethnographic sensibilities, attention to story, and interest in human-nonhuman relations to questions of water and absented narratives closer to home.