



NEWS RELEASE | September 15, 2017

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Minneapolis Parks Foundation to partner with The Sioux Chef on Water Works restaurant and event venue

The Sioux Chef's Native American cuisine will bring to life the riverfront's Indigenous culture; education, healthy living, and revitalized food systems are key to The Sioux Chef mission

Minneapolis, Minn. – Today, The Sioux Chef, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation announced their intent to partner to open a riverfront restaurant and food service venue for the future public pavilion at Water Works. The Sioux Chef is a diverse, Indigenous-led team committed to revitalizing Native American Cuisine and reclaiming an important culinary tradition that has been long buried and often inaccessible. Water Works, a park development project overlooking St. Anthony Falls and the Stone Arch Bridge, will bring visitor services and recreational and cultural amenities to one of Minnesota's most highly visited areas.

The Water Works design includes a park pavilion embedded into the historic remnants of the Bassett and Columbia mills, and expands outdoor gathering spaces with a rooftop patio, outdoor seating plaza, tree-sheltered city steps, playspace for children and families, and an open lawn overlooking the river.

The pavilion will include the new restaurant as well as a public lounge, restrooms and support spaces; a flexible room for small group activities and a Park Board staff desk; and elevator to the rooftop. The restaurant will be the first year-round, full service food venue within the Minneapolis Park System, which is known for seasonal destinations such as Sea Salt. In addition to its full-service venue, The Sioux Chef will also provide casual, counter-service food options.

"Our work within the evolution of the Indigenous food systems offers many opportunities for supportive nutritional and spiritual experiences," says Dana Thompson, co-owner of The Sioux Chef. "With the removal of colonial ingredients, our plan is to drive economic wealth back into indigenous communities by sourcing food from these growers first. We look forward to sharing and enjoying these diverse and healthy foods with all communities."

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Opportunities to celebrate historic and current cultures

Water Works is within the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park, one of the most popular public spaces in the region; its estimated 2.5 million annual visits is expected to grow significantly in the coming years. Also within the regional park, St. Anthony Falls is an incredibly important landmark, as a spiritual place that has shaped culture and traditions for Indigenous people, and as the birthplace of the city's milling history.

"We are thrilled The Sioux Chef was interested in this location for their restaurant," says Tom Evers, Executive Director of the Minneapolis Parks Foundation. "Water Works will celebrate the complex history of this area, through a layered park design, as well as programming, art, play, and performance. Co-owners Sean Sherman and Dana Thompson, along with their team, are sharing powerful stories through food about the intricate relationship between people and land."

The Sioux Chef has a mission beyond serving food. The team will work with the pavilion's architects and landscape architects to create places within the park to grow native plants traditionally used for food and medicine. The Sioux Chef plans to create events and educational opportunities to help bring diverse voices into a larger dialogue about Native American cultures, the river, and food.

"We realize that the river corridor is Dakota homeland and the river remains important to many Indigenous cultures," says Jayne Miller, Superintendent of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. "Our partnership with The Sioux Chef opens up opportunities beyond what the Park Board could achieve on its own. Our goals of providing healthy, locally sourced food and meaningful recreational and economic opportunities are well-aligned with the vision of The Sioux Chef."

In addition to serving food, The Sioux Chef intends to have their restaurant support training and jobs for people interested in related fields.

"We are humbled and grateful for the opportunity to help honor the Indigenous history of Owamni Yamni (Place of Whirlpools). This location has been a sacred site of peace and well-being for the Dakota and Anishinaabe people for millennia," says Thompson. "We plan to leverage this wonderful partnership with the Minneapolis Park Board, through our aligned mission of nutritional, physical, and spiritual health for all, as well as to create food access and education about the rich history of the Native people in this beautiful area."

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Grand Opening Anticipated in 2019

The Minneapolis Park Board approved the Water Works concept in June 2017. The design team is continuing with schematic design and construction documents and will share updated plans during community engagement events this fall. Limited archaeological work and selective deconstruction of the Fuji-Ya building have begun and will continue through early 2018. Construction is expected to begin in the late summer of 2018.

Through the Parks Foundation, the majority of Mezzanine Phase funding will be provided by philanthropic investment. In 2015, the Parks Foundation launched the RiverFirst Capital Campaign, which has, to date, raised \$12.3M in philanthropic gifts and commitments.

About The Sioux Chef

The Sioux Chef is a team of Anishinaabe, Mdewakanton Dakota, Navajo, Northern Cheyenne, Oglala Lakota, Wahpeton-Sisseton Dakota and are ever growing. We are chefs, ethnobotanists, food preservationists, adventurers, foragers, caterers, event planners, artists and food lovers. The Sioux Chef was founded by Chef Sean Sherman, and is co-owned by Dana Thompson. The team is now twelve people, with the hope of expanding to all tribal areas. This fall, Sherman and Thompson co-founded a non-profit called NāTIFs.org (North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems) for the purpose of Indigenous focused education, research and food access, which we plan to leverage in order to align with the mission of the Minneapolis Park Board as well as other projects.

About the Minneapolis Parks Foundation

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation transforms human lives through parks and public spaces by aligning philanthropic investment and community vision. The Parks Foundation co-leads the RiverFirst Initiative with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and is responsible for private fundraising and implementation of the Water Works and Great Northern Greenway River Link projects. The Parks Foundation also supports innovative Minneapolis parks projects through equity funding and champions world-class design through its Next Generation of Parks™ Event Series. Learn more at MplsParksFoundation.org.

About the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is an independent, semi-autonomous body responsible for the Minneapolis park system. With 179 park properties totaling 6,804 acres of land and water, the Park Board provides places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community and the environment. Its Grand Rounds Scenic Byway, neighborhood parks, recreation centers and diversified programming have made the park system an important component of what makes Minneapolis a great place to live, play and work. More than 22 million annual visits are made to the nationally acclaimed park system, which was named the number one park system in the nation in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 by The Trust for Public Land's 2016 ParkScore® Index.

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