

NEWS RELEASE

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South Washington Watershed District
August 24, 2023

Sarah Lilja Selected as SWWD Artist-in-Residence



Woodbury, MN, August 24, 2023 – The South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) is excited to announce the selection of Sarah Lilja as its 2023-24 Artist-in Residence.

As a unanimous selection from a robust applicant pool of area photographers due to her distinctive compositions, vibrant colors and attention to unseen details, SWWD is confident that Sarah will make an excellent artistic partner over the coming year. Photography was the medium of focus for this inaugural residency cycle due to its ability to fill a critical immediate need for SWWD as it proceeds with development of a new website and promotion of its many programs and resources in the coming year. Future residency cycles will hopefully offer opportunities to explore additional artistic mediums.

Lilja intends for her photographs to inspire and expand people's experience of the natural world, reveal an unexpected point of view or highlight a new way of seeing beauty in nature. Her viewers are empowered to think differently about the out-of-doors. "I strive to provoke wonder and curiosity, hoping to inspire others to go out into the world, discover their own unique perspectives, and to see and experience nature in a new way," she explains.

Sarah has exhibited her photographs both locally nationally, garnering several awards. She was selected for the Artist at Pine Needles residency in 2021, sponsored by the St. Croix Watershed Research Station and the Science Museum of Minnesota. In early 2023, she completed an international residency at Lighthouse Arts on Nobbys-Whibayganba Headland in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia on Awabakal Country.

A local culminating exhibition of the photographs Sarah develops during her SWWD residency will be hosted in late 2024. Sarah's previous work can be found online at <http://sarahlilja.photography>.

SWWD's Artist-in-Residence program was developed as a way of celebrating and documenting the landscapes, ecosystems, natural resources, and diverse inhabitants that call southern Washington County home. SWWD is interested in discovering new ways of envisioning, connecting, and valuing its water resources, while recognizing different perspectives and ways of knowing. Through this program, SWWD hopes to incorporate unique artistic ideas and views into its programs and projects while promoting and achieving water quality improvement by providing visibility to the watershed and its natural resources.

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Sunrise on the St. Croix, © 2021, Sarah Lilja



Hiding in the Sumac, © 2022, Sarah Lilja