In 2019 LPCP completed a water feasibility study to determine the best areas to daylight the creek. Two stretches of the creek came out as most immediately possible: (1) Johnson Parkway between Maryland Avenue and Phalen Boulevard, and (2) along the Bruce Vento Regional Trail between Frank Avenue and Swede Hollow Park.

Now, LPCP is working with Capitol Region Watershed District and Ramsey-Washington Watershed District to daylight Phalen Creek at Reach 5 and Reach 7.
In Dakota culture, mní(water) is our first medicine, that ultimate life source that connects us all. These waterways we find across Minnesota are the veins of Uŋči Makha (grandmother earth), carrying stories that connect us to each other and the land.

Phalen Creek History
For countless generations, the waterways of Imnižaska (Saint Paul) have cared for and been cared for by Minnesota’s Dakota people. Historically, Phalen Creek flowed out of Lake Phalen, meandering for about four miles through what is now the East Side of St. Paul, emptying into the Wakpa Taŋka (Mississippi River).

The creek served as a cultural and spiritual corridor for Dakota people, who made their way up the chain of lakes by canoe to White Bear Lake to gather traditional foods like psaŋ (wild rice).

This waterway also nurtured newly immigrated Swedish, Italian, Polish, and Mexican communities who made their homes in Swede Hollow.

When Dakota people were exiled in the late 1800’s from their homelands and settlers expanded their presence, Phalen Creek became less and less recognizable.

By the 1930’s, the creek was driven underground and piped to promote housing and development on the East Side.

Daylighting Phalen Creek
The restoration and daylighting of this creek is the namesake and inspiration that started our organization back in 1997 and after more than 20 years, that vision is still a driving force in our work!

Community Engagement
Though the Phalen Creek corridor runs through the Payne-Phalen and Dayton’s Bluff neighborhoods, few residents are aware that they live so close to this historic waterway. We are working with neighborhood district councils to engage residents living near the creek path and ensure that these communities have access to and input on all future daylighting projects.

In the fall of 2020, we brought community artists and residents together at the southern outlet of Lake Phalen, where Phalen Creek begins, to envision and celebrate the value of daylighting Phalen Creek.