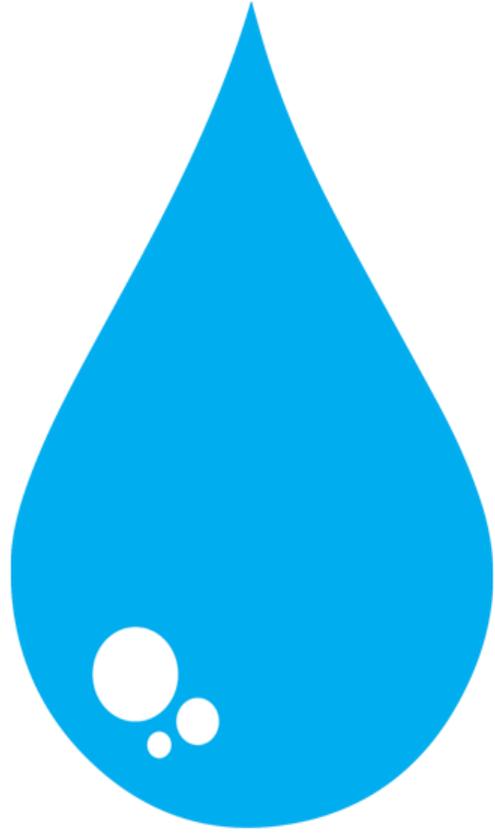


How the Humanities Can Help Us to Understand the Past and Possible Futures of Water

Rachel Havrelock | UIC Freshwater Lab



**THE
FRESHWATER
LAB**



AREAS OF EXCELLENCE

WATER CENTERS, LABS, &
FACILITIES

WATER COUNCIL & SCHOLARS

WATER OPPORTUNITIES

ISEE Research: Smart Water
DisinfectionISEE Research Stormwater &
Mosquito ControlISEE Research: Crude Oil
Pollution Treatment

THE WATER COUNCIL

In 2014-15, the Illinois Water Scholars formed an Water Council to help coordinate the group and steer communication efforts. The Council members:

KEVIN O'BRIEN (CHAIRMAN)

Director, Illinois Sustainable Technology
Center

AMY W. ANDO

Professor, Agricultural and Consumer
Economics

JIM BEST

Professor, Geology

XIMING CAI

Professor, Civil and Environmental
Engineering

DON KEEFER

Senior Hydrogeologist, Illinois State
Geological Survey

LAURA KEEFER

Geomorphologist, Illinois State Water Survey

PRAVEEN KUMAR

Professor, Civil and Environmental
Engineering

YU-FENG FORREST LIN

Hydrologist, Illinois State Geological Survey

BENITO MARIÑAS

Professor and Head, Civil and Environmental
Engineering

BRIAN MILLER

Director, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant and Illinois Water
Resources Center

STEPHEN NESBITT

Associate Professor, Atmospheric Sciences

NANDAKISHORE RAJAGOPALAN

Associate Director for Applied Research, Illinois
Sustainable Technology Center

BRUCE RHOADS

Professor, Geography and Geographic Information
Science

DANIEL SCHNEIDER

Professor, Urban and Regional Planning

ASHLYNN STILLWELL

Assistant Professor, Civil and Environmental
Engineering

ANDREW STUMPF

Associate Quaternary Geologist, Illinois State Geological
Survey

DAVID WAHL

Aquatic Biologist, Illinois Natural History Survey

Illinois Water Supply Information: Find Information on Your Drinking Water



This guide is intended to help citizens of Illinois find information about Illinois water supplies. It includes information resources from the state and federal government, news sources, and library holdings (including digital collections).

[Home](#)[Find Information on Your Drinking Water](#)[Water Sources](#)[Water Quality](#)[Water Use](#)[Legislation](#)[Agencies & Organizations](#)[Books & Reports](#)[Glossary and Quick Facts](#)[Also See...](#)

Drinking water alerts

To find boil orders and other drinking water alert information for public water supplies in your area start with your local public health department.

- [Illinois Public Health Departments \(alphabetical list by county\)](#)
- [Illinois Public Health Departments \(map\)](#)

Where does my water come from?

Illinois drinking water may come from municipal water supplies or private wells, depending on where you live. The tools below can help you identify the source of your water.

- [Source Water Assessment Program \(SWAP\) Fact Sheets](#)
- [ILWater - Illinois Water Well Internet Map Service](#)
- [Domestic Well and Other Groundwater Data \(aquifer maps\)](#)
- [Illinois Water Utilities](#)

Maps and GIS Tools

What is in my water?

Water quality information is available from a variety of sources, depending on the type of supply. The tools below can help you become informed about the quality of your water.

- [Drinking Water Watch](#)
- [Environmental Working Group Tap Water Database](#)
- [Illinois Environmental Protection Agency \(IEPA\) Annual Compliance Reports](#)
- [Notices to Public Water Supply Users of Groundwater Contamination](#)
- [Source Water Assessment Program \(SWAP\) Fact Sheets](#)
- [Water Testing](#)



Signatories of the memorandum of understanding











The Daniel P. Haerther Center
for Conservation and Research









UIC UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO RAFAEL CINTRÓN ORTIZ LATINO CULTURAL CENTER





Facts vs. Stories

Embracing the way our minds work

An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Himalayas, showing rugged terrain with snow-capped peaks and deep valleys. A dark horizontal band is superimposed across the middle of the image, containing the text "Facts are more important than ever." in white, bold, sans-serif font. The bottom portion of the image shows a gradient from light blue to dark blue, suggesting a sky or water surface.

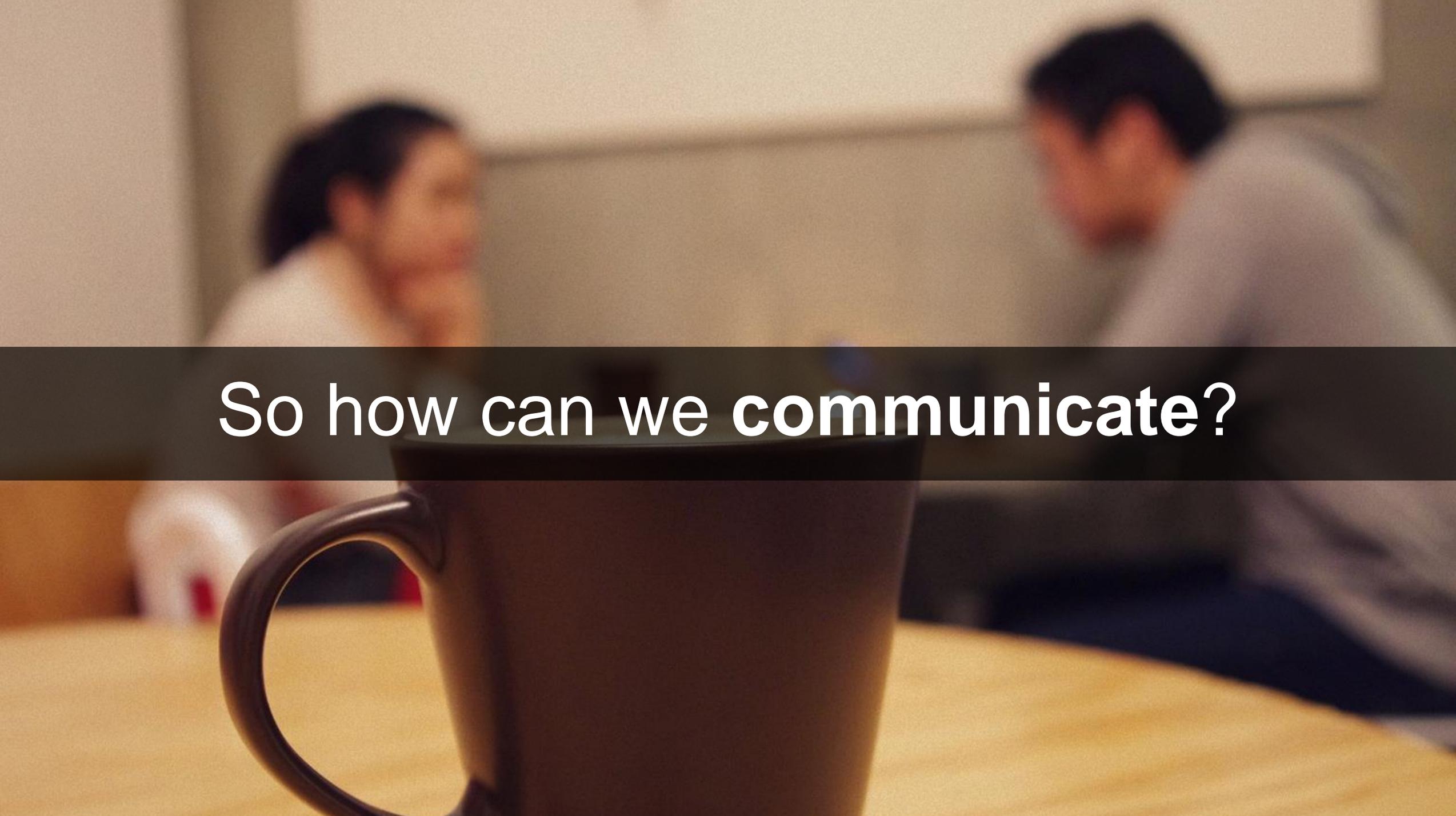
Facts are more important than ever.

A composite image featuring a night sky with the Milky Way galaxy in the upper half and a campfire scene in the lower half. The text is centered over the dark sky area.

But facts don't change our minds.
Stories do.



What you say is not what **they hear.**

A blurred background of two people sitting at a table, with a dark coffee cup in the foreground. The text "So how can we communicate?" is overlaid on a dark horizontal band across the middle of the image.

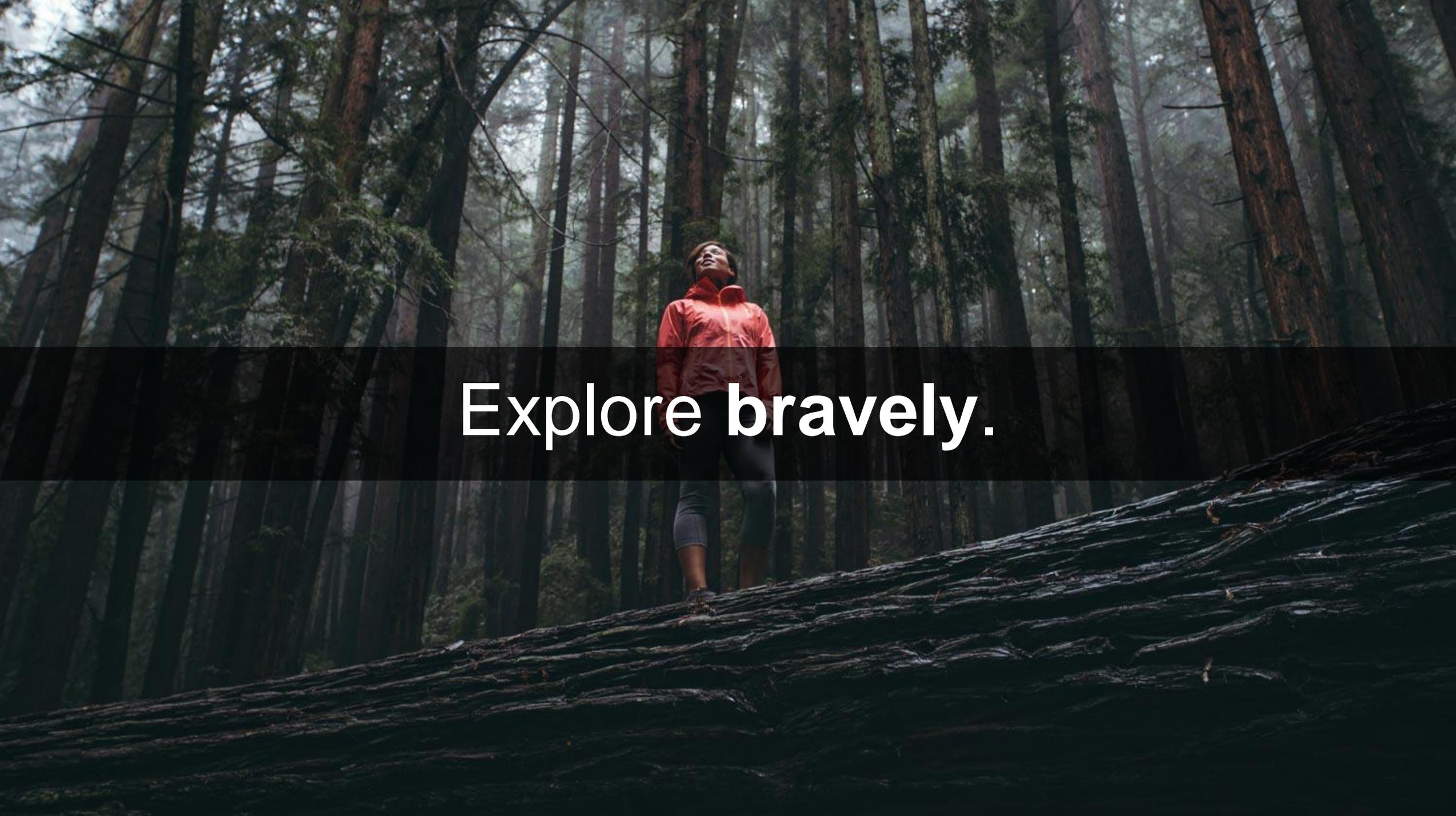
So how can we **communicate**?



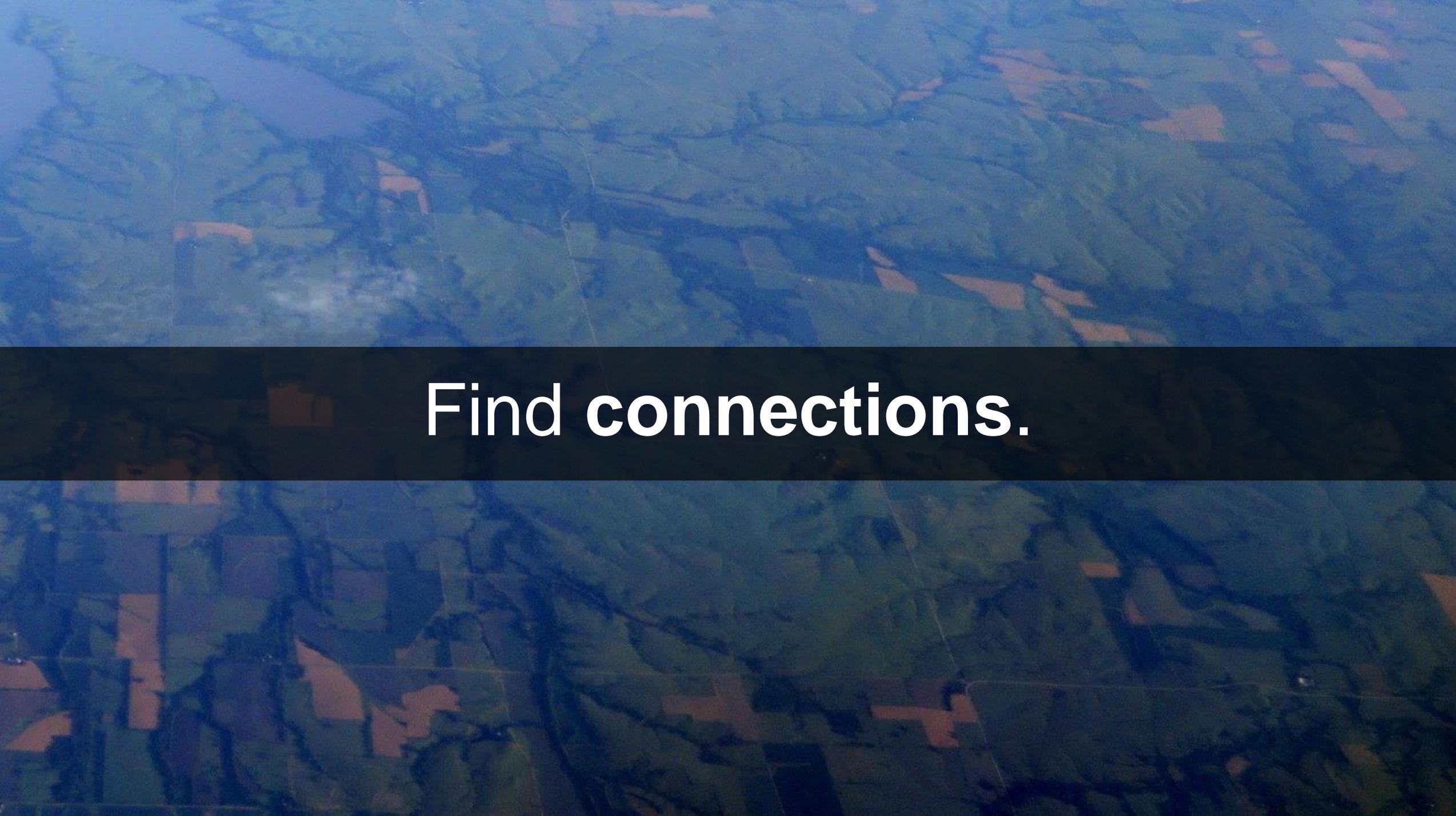
Start from shared knowledge.

A low-angle shot of a person with short brown hair, wearing a light-colored jacket, walking away from the camera in a sun-dappled forest. The person's hand is being held by another person's hand in the foreground, which has red nail polish. The background is filled with green foliage and tree trunks, with sunlight filtering through the leaves.

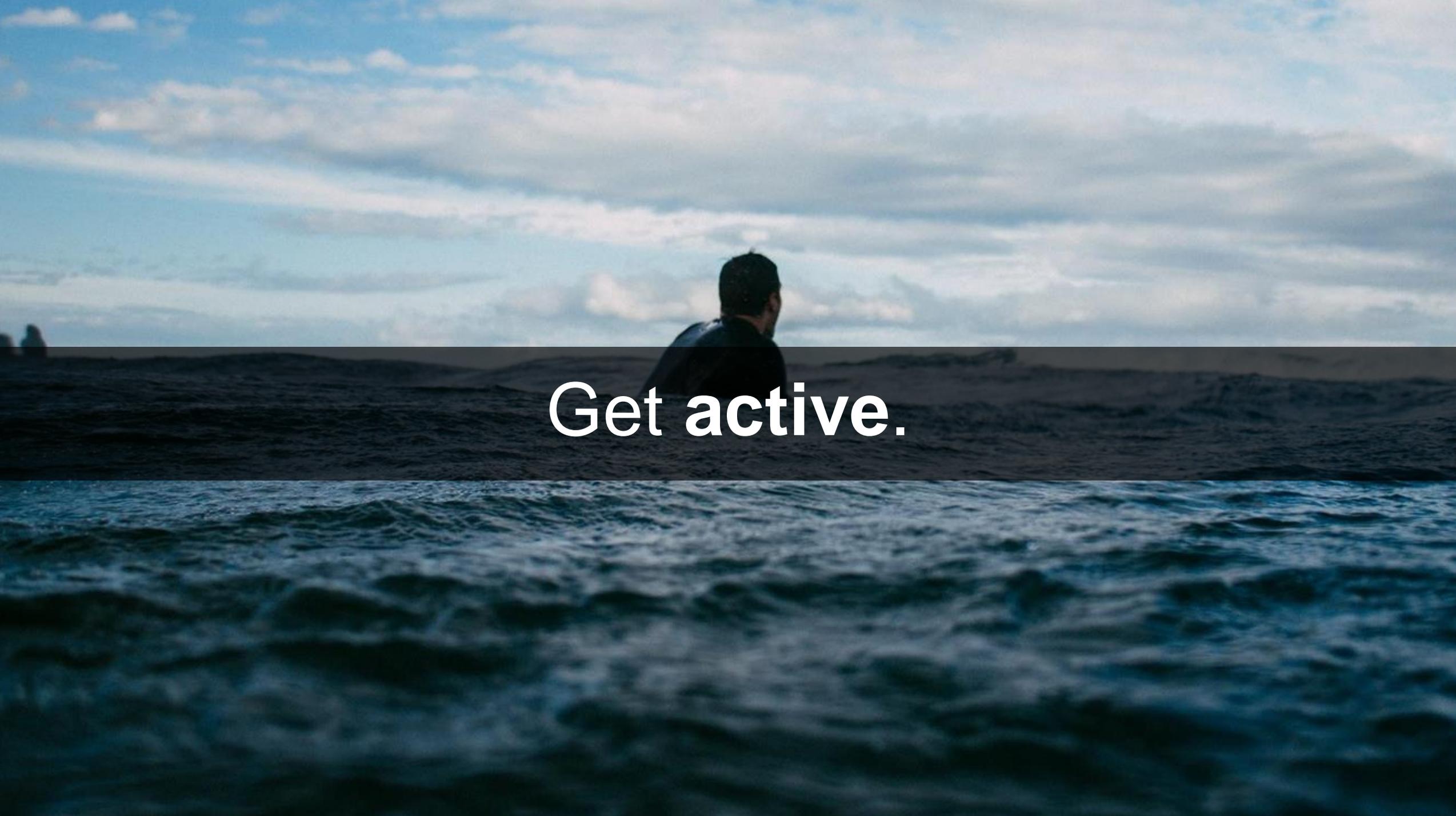
Journey into the unknown **together.**

A person wearing a bright red jacket and dark pants stands on a large, fallen tree trunk in a dense forest. The person is looking upwards, and the forest is filled with tall, thin trees. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting a misty or overcast day. The text "Explore bravely." is overlaid in white on a dark horizontal band across the middle of the image.

Explore bravely.

An aerial photograph of a landscape, likely a valley or a region with agricultural fields. The terrain is predominantly green, suggesting vegetation, with numerous irregular brown patches scattered throughout, which could be bare soil, different crop types, or small settlements. A dark, semi-transparent horizontal band runs across the center of the image, containing the text "Find connections." in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

Find connections.

A person in a dark wetsuit is seen from behind, looking out at a vast ocean under a sky filled with soft, white clouds. The water in the foreground is dark blue with gentle ripples. The overall mood is serene and adventurous.

Get active.

A person stands on a wooden deck at night, holding a flashlight that illuminates a path of stars in the dark sky. The scene is framed by silhouettes of evergreen trees and a wooden railing. The overall mood is one of wonder and exploration.

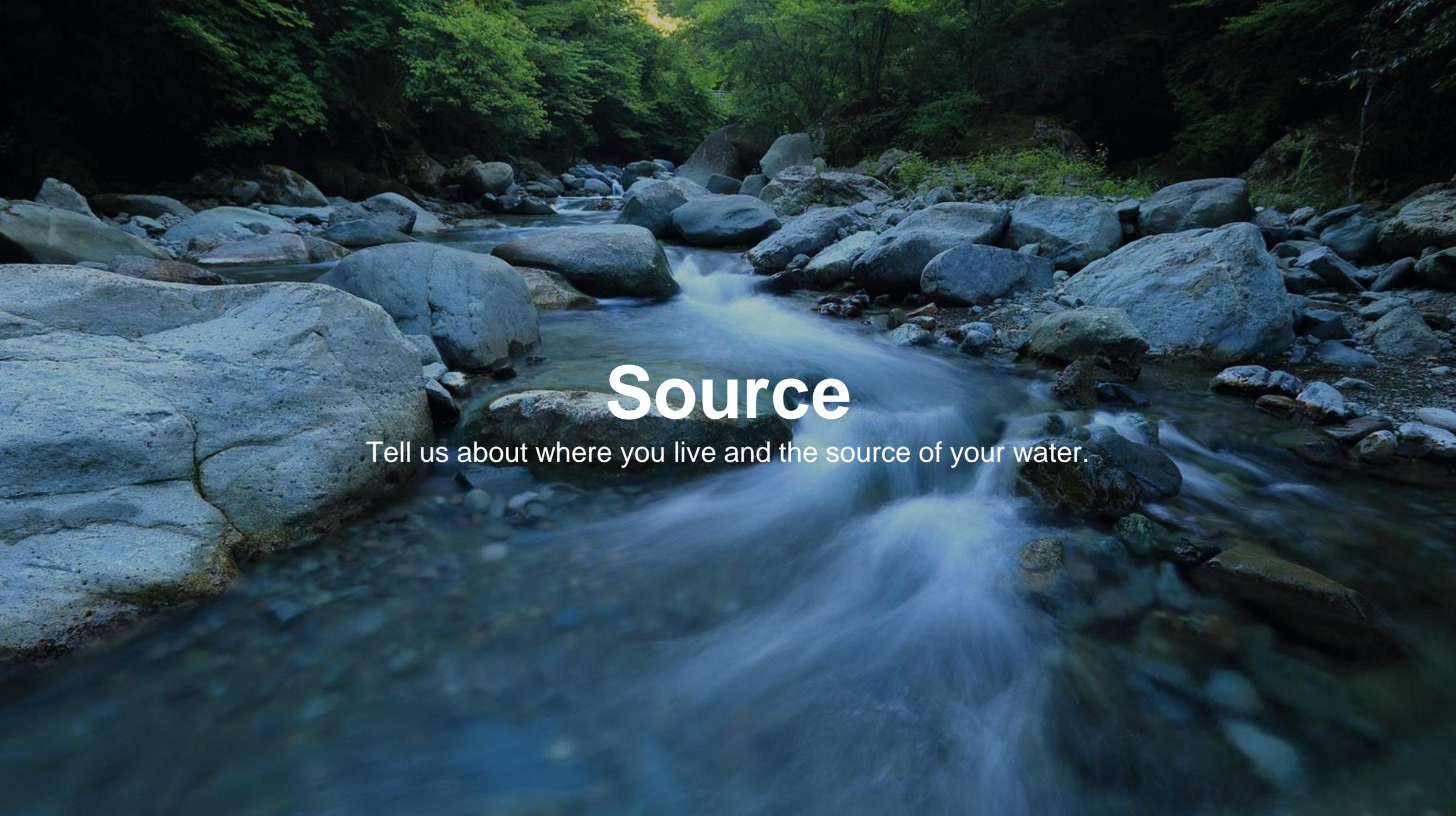
Stay curious.





Freshwater Stories Activity Guide

**Use this guide to prepare your answers,
then enter your information in the activity units below.**

A scenic view of a river flowing through a forest, surrounded by large rocks. The water is clear and appears to be moving quickly, creating a sense of motion. The rocks are large and smooth, and the forest is dense with green foliage. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Source

Tell us about where you live and the source of your water.

What is the source of drinking water for your home?

Type of water source (lake, river, reservoir, well, aquifer, etc.)

Name of water source (e.g. Lake Michigan)

If you don't know your water source and the information is not readily available, look up your water utility and see if they post a description of the water source. If not, then give the utility a call or send a message requesting the information.

Have you ever visited your water source?

If yes, great!

When was the last time you were there? What did you do?

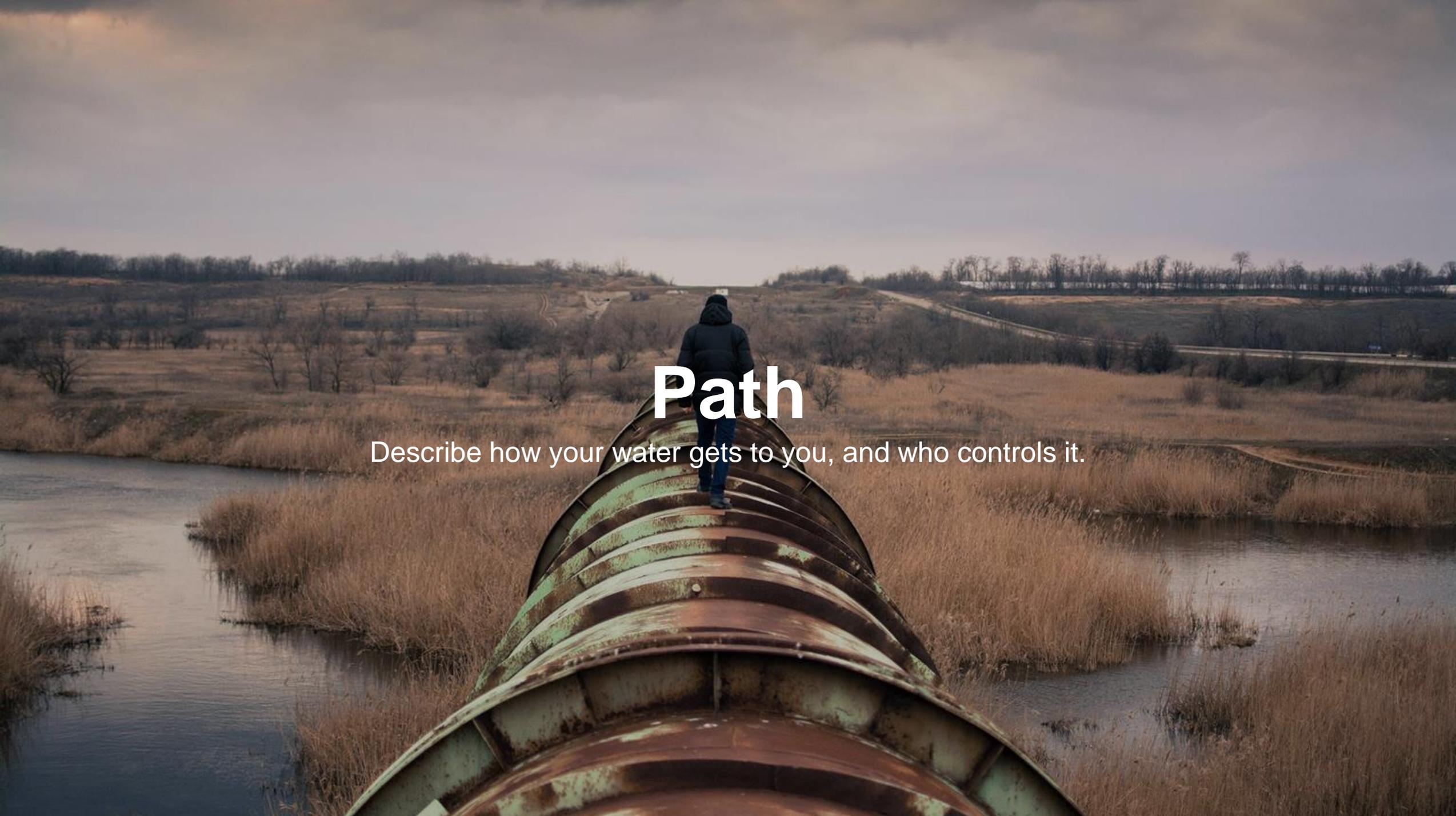
If not, why not?

Have you ever considered visiting? Is it inaccessible?

Take a picture of a glass of water from your home tap, or a photo of your water source.

Fill a glass of water from your tap and take a photo to upload at freshwaterstories.com, or share a photo of your water source.

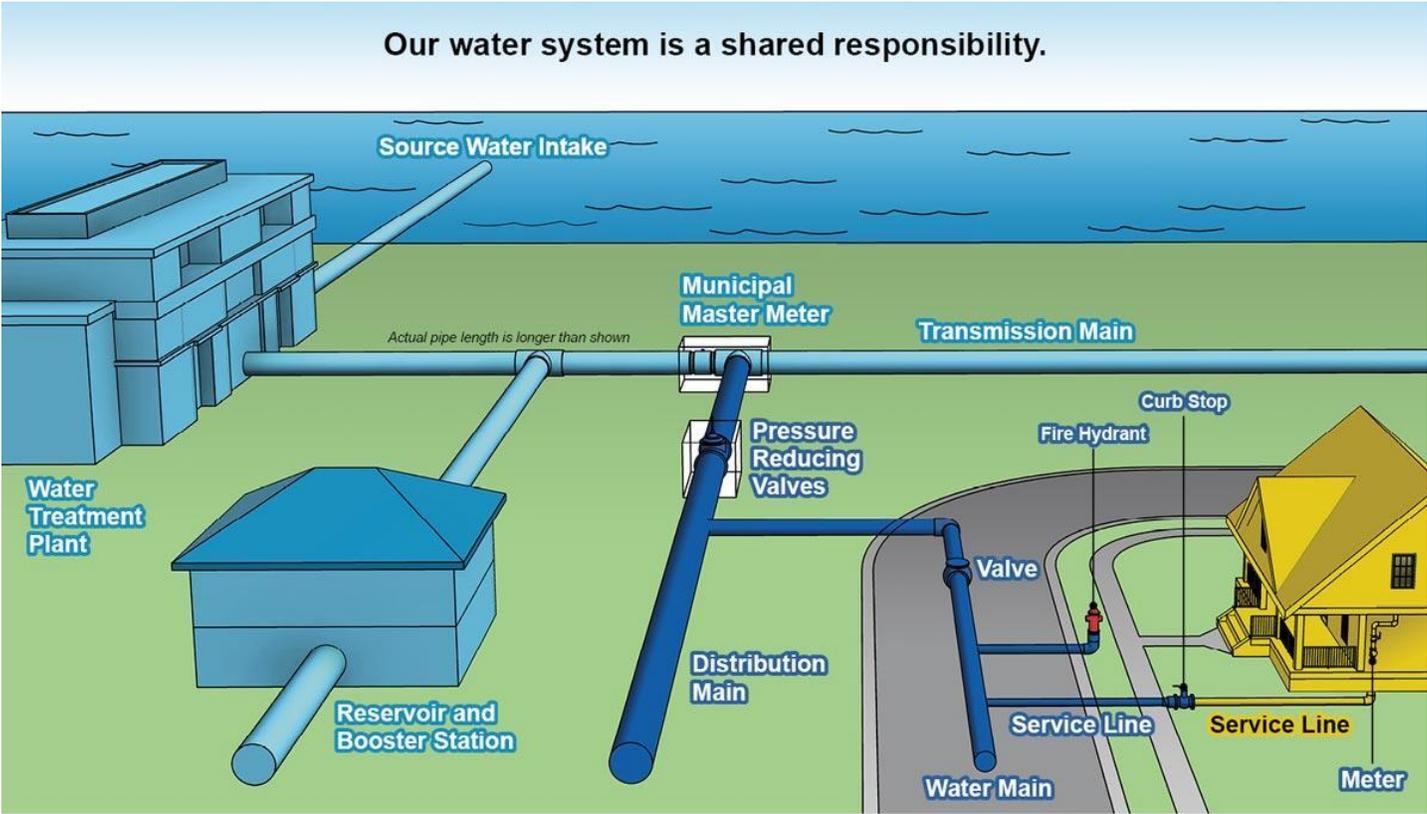
We'll use these images to create a visual collage of water across the country.

A person in a dark jacket and blue pants stands on a rusty, corrugated metal culvert that spans a river. The landscape is rural with dry grass, scattered trees, and a cloudy sky. The word "Path" is overlaid in large white text on the person.

Path

Describe how your water gets to you, and who controls it.

Beneath our feet are a welter of pipes that bring drinking water to our homes and take used water to treatment plants.



Great Lakes Water Authority Municipality Property Owner

These pipes often run alongside gas lines that convey energy. Certain lines are owned and operated by different agencies, all are accountable to you.

Shown here is an example of a typical water system where responsibility is shared among the water authority, municipalities, and property owners.

Source: Great Lakes Water Authority

Who runs the water pipes in your community?

- City Government
- County Government
- Water Utility
- Private Corporation
- I Don't Know
- Other:

In order to figure out the answer to this question, contact your utility or municipality and ask who runs your water delivery pipes. Be sure to double check if private corporations operate some part of your utility or public water system.

What is the service line that delivers water to your home made of?

- Lead
- Copper
- Steel
- Clay
- Concrete
- PVC
- I don't know

[Use this tool](#) to help you determine what your service line is made of.

What are the water mains that run along the streets made of?

- Lead
- Copper
- Steel
- Clay
- Concrete
- PVC
- I don't know

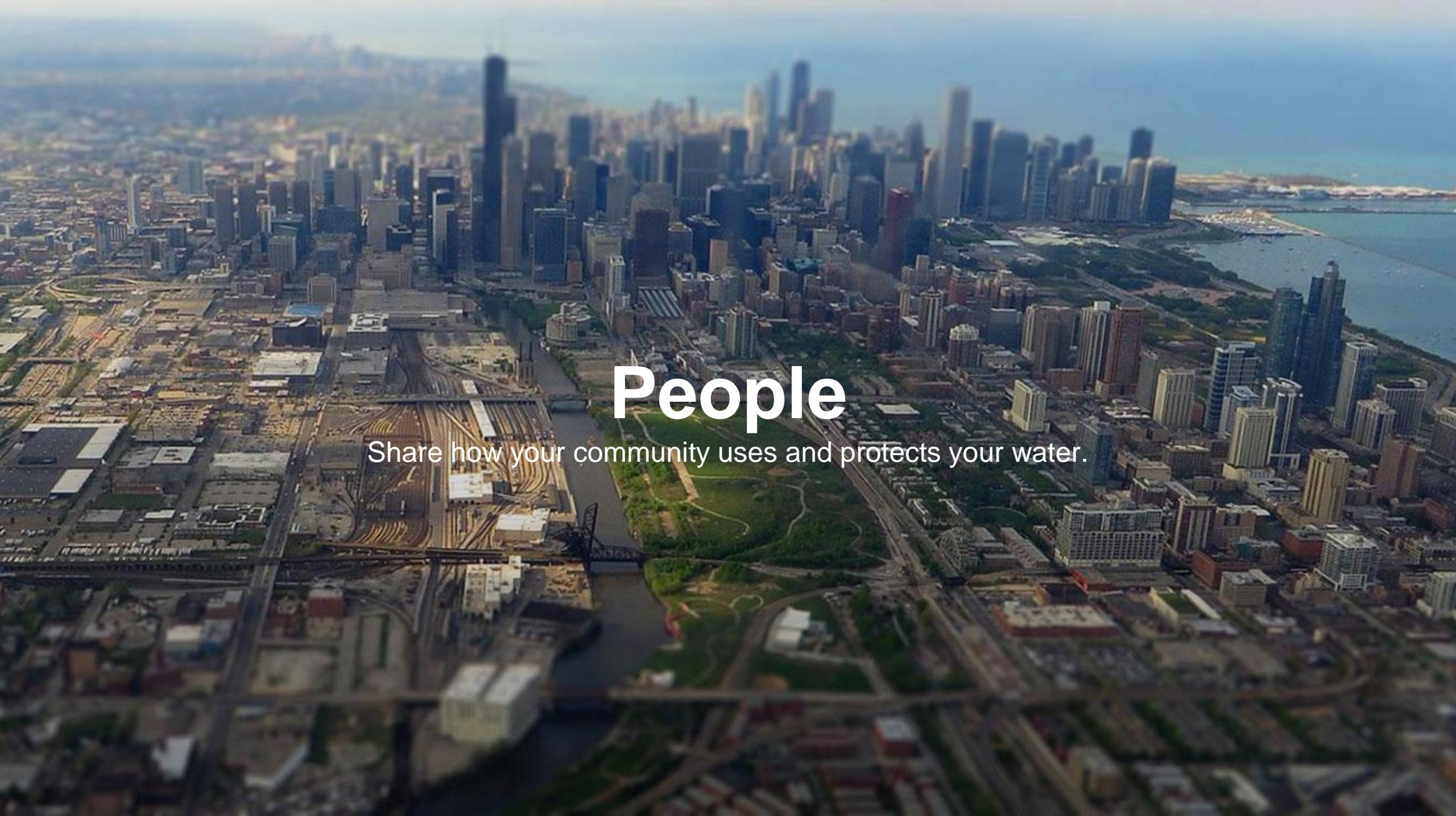
This can be difficult to determine. Cities, towns, and municipalities often lack comprehensive maps, but it's worth checking if such a map exists for the pipes where you live.

When you see road or pipe work in your neighborhood, stop and ask what is being fixed. When the roads are opened up, you can often see water mains and ask the crew about the exposed pipes. You can also call or send a message to your utility, municipality, or department of public health to ask about your water main.

Can you trace the path of the pipes from your water source to your home?

If **yes**, please draw or create a map of the path to upload at freshwaterstories.com.

If **not**, **why not?** Tell us as much as you can about what you tried and where you ran into difficulty.



People

Share how your community uses and protects your water.

How confident are you that your water is safe to drink?

Rate your confidence in your tap water safety on a scale of 1 (low confidence) to 10 (high confidence).

Have there been any recent or historical health scares related to water in your area?

Answering this question may require an online search, an inquiry to a neighbor, or checking in with your water utility or department of public health.

How was the problem addressed?

What are the greatest risks to your water system?

On Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes in general, these risks include toxic algae blooms from fertilizer and sewage runoff, industrial waste, oil pipelines and refineries, waste from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), storage of nuclear materials, etc.

The Environmental Working Group's [tap water database](#) can help you to identify some of the [risks](#) to your water system.

In what neighborhood or community are these risks most acute? Who is most affected?

You can approach this question by checking where water has been shut off due to billing or pollution. You can also track it down by investigating where water has been compromised and who lives closest to the source of contamination.

The [EJ Screen](#) tool is a good place to start.

Who in your community is working on these risks? What are they doing, and how can you help?

As we discuss in our [Environmental Justice story](#), if you're worried about an environmental or public health issue, chances are there's a group organized around it in the community most affected.

In the Great Lakes region, you can connect with our partner organizations listed below.

Congratulations!

You've reached the end of the guide.

Now **enter your answers** in the activity units below.