

TO: The Naperville Riverwalk Commission

FROM: Sharon Martina, Retired Educator, Published Poet, Member of the Haiku Society of America

RE: Haiku Path at the Naperville Riverwalk

Date: July 2, 2024

As a former educator with Naperville District 203 for close to thirty years, I'd be the first to admit I am very passionate when it comes to fostering opportunities that inspire and support personal growth for students both young and old alike. To that end, I'd like to propose establishing a Haiku Path(s) at the Naperville Riverwalk. Those paths would utilize existing Riverwalk infrastructure. A suggested completion date of April 2025 would be a great way to celebrate National Poetry Month, although I could see that celebration continuing year after year at the Riverwalk into the next generation.

While my English teacher during my junior year of high school gets credit for introducing me to haiku, it was years later, while dealing with the death of my father, that I found reading and writing haiku to be very cathartic. To capture the essence of a moment keenly perceived in seventeen syllables or less is indeed pure poetry: typically, unrhymed poetry.

ghost leaf  
my memories of you  
fading

Haiku is all about highlighting the connection between nature and human nature. What better vehicle for supporting that connection than Naperville's Crown Jewel, the Riverwalk.

dandelion fountain	sled hill	timber and trusses
where wishes	kids careening	covered bridges
glisten in the sun	into winter	fording a river of time

Alas, my proposal is not about showcasing *my* haiku. It's about showcasing the best haiku from local, national, and international poets of all ages; about encouraging an appreciation for Contemporary English-language haiku. My proposal is about encouraging Riverwalk visitors to pause and reflect, to benefit from those connections that will sustain us and this planet we call home.

I hope you will allow me the opportunity to sit down with the Riverwalk Commission and answer any questions you might have as well as discuss the particulars of my proposal, be it creating lesson plans with local language arts teachers, developing a workable time line, or discussing signage options for displaying the contest winners' haiku.

Feel free to email me with concerns or questions at [REDACTED] I can also be reached via my cell phone at [REDACTED].

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Sharon Martina

# A Haiku Path at the Naperville Riverwalk

In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks.

*John Muir*

Imagine if that walk through nature, through Naperville's Riverwalk, did indeed offer more. I'm proposing that more could be haiku. This unrhymed poetic form involving seventeen or fewer syllables is renowned for capturing the essence of a moment keenly perceived, a unique moment connecting nature and human nature. That was the intent during the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the great Japanese master Basho sparked a national obsession for this "new style" of poetry. Four centuries later, that is still the intent for haiku enthusiasts around the world, from Naperville, Illinois to Tokyo, Japan.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Create a Haiku Path(s) that encourages Riverwalk visitors to pause and reflect in the moment.
2. Provide a Riverwalk connection between nature and human nature and between cultures.
3. Increase:
  - a. an appreciation and reverence for haiku, nature, science, and literature
  - b. interest in our local, national, and global communities
  - c. visitors to the Riverwalk
4. Encourage learning via a novel approach.
5. Support the Riverwalk Commission's overall vision and goals.
6. Develop and implement:
  - a. a haiku path publicity campaign
  - b. a haiku instructional program to support grades 3-12 for District 203 and 204 students
  - c. a haiku workshop for the public at large
  - d. a haiku contest accepting local, national and international submissions
7. Secure, install and maintain signage for the haiku path.

## PROPOSED PROJECT TIMELINE

DATE	OBJECTIVES	ACTION
SUMMER 2024	#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6ab	Coordinate with district 203 & 204 superintendents and teachers to secure interest and promote educational programs to support project
FALL 2024	#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6abc	Develop and implement a project timeline and publicity campaign according to Riverwalk Commission vision and goals. Identify and finalize haiku contest specifics. Explore signage options for project, including area(s) for displaying haiku. Approve a budget for the project. Explore public interest and city-wide venues for hosting haiku workshops. Provide instructional support for Districts 203 & 204 teachers.
WINTER 2024	#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6abcd	Conduct haiku workshops. Finalize signage options for project. Publicize haiku contest locally, nationally, and internationally; begin accepting contest submissions per contest guidelines. Continue providing instructional support for Districts 203 & 204 teachers.
SPRING 2024	#1-7	Announce and publicize results of haiku contest. Install signs of winning haiku in designated area(s) of the Riverwalk. Celebrate!

## EXISTING HAIKU PATHS IN THE USA

### **Haiku Pathway at Santa Fe Community College**

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/haiku-pathway>

### **Words in Bloom, Chicago Botanical Gardens, 2016**

<https://breathhaiku.wordpress.com/tag/garden-haiku/>

Info on this year-long exhibit is via an blog

### **Located at Gualala Arts Center in Gualala, California**

<https://www.ahapoetry.com/jrART/HSP%20Whos%20Who.html>

### **Haiku Trail at the Randall Davey Audubon Society in Santa Fe**

<https://www.newmexicomagazine.org/blog/post/haiku-trail-randall-davey-audubon-center/>

### **Haiku Trail at Hueston State Park in Ohio**

<https://www.journal-news.com/what-to-do/haiku-trail-at-hueston-woods-is-first-at-a-state-park/Y2WE6X27R5CWVISROQ6SMLM3Y4/>

<http://www.haikunorthamerica.com/hueston-woods-haiku-trail.html>

### **Haiku Walk at Honey Inn, Millersburg, Ohio**

<https://www.innathoneyrun.com/open-air-art-museum/haiku-walk/>

### **Golden Haiku Poetry Contest, Washington DC**

<https://midcitydcnews.com/2024/01/22/transforming-paths-golden-haiku-returns-for-2024/>

<https://goldentriangledc.com/event/golden-haiku/>

on Facebook and Instagram [@goldentriangledc](#),



Washington DC Golden Triangle Haiku Competition, established 2013



Santa Fe Community College Haiku Path, established 2017



Words in Bloom, Chicago Botanical Gardens, culminated 2021