

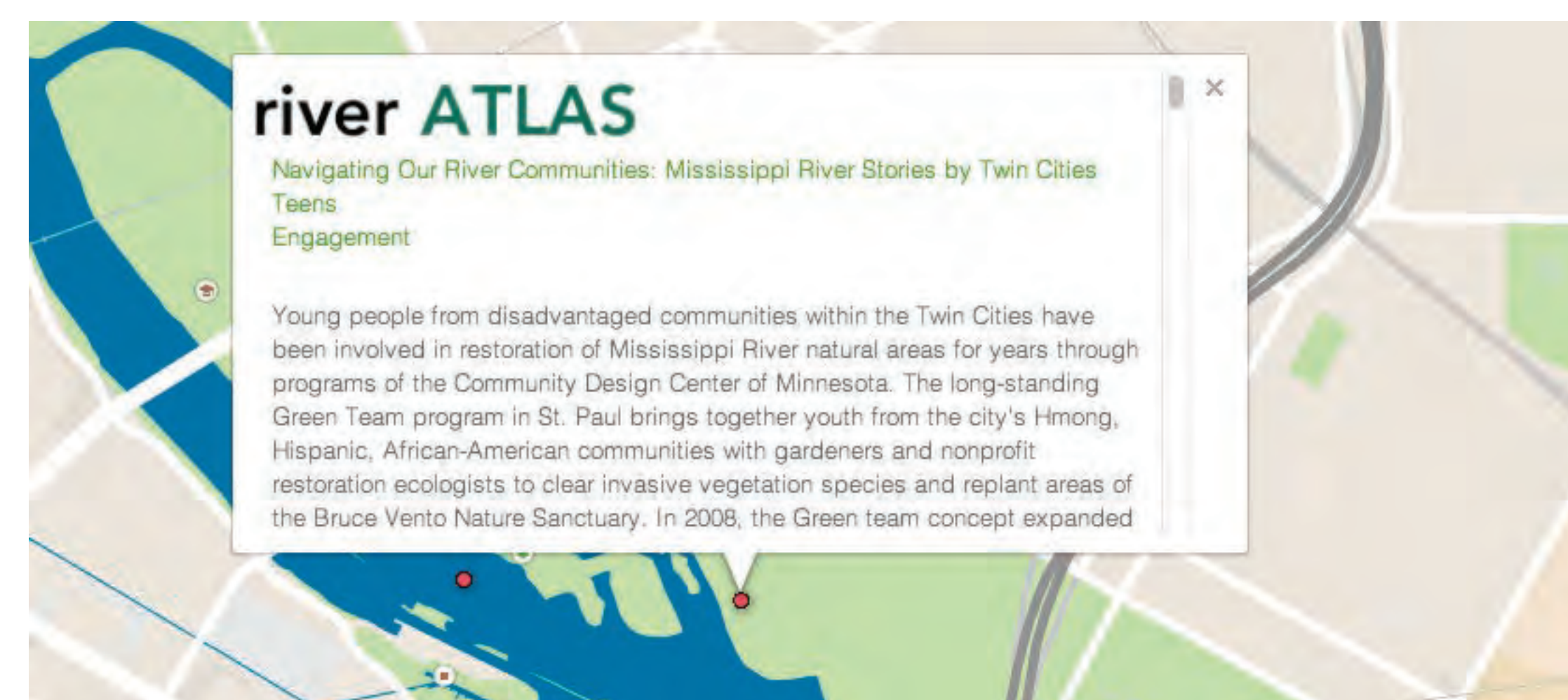
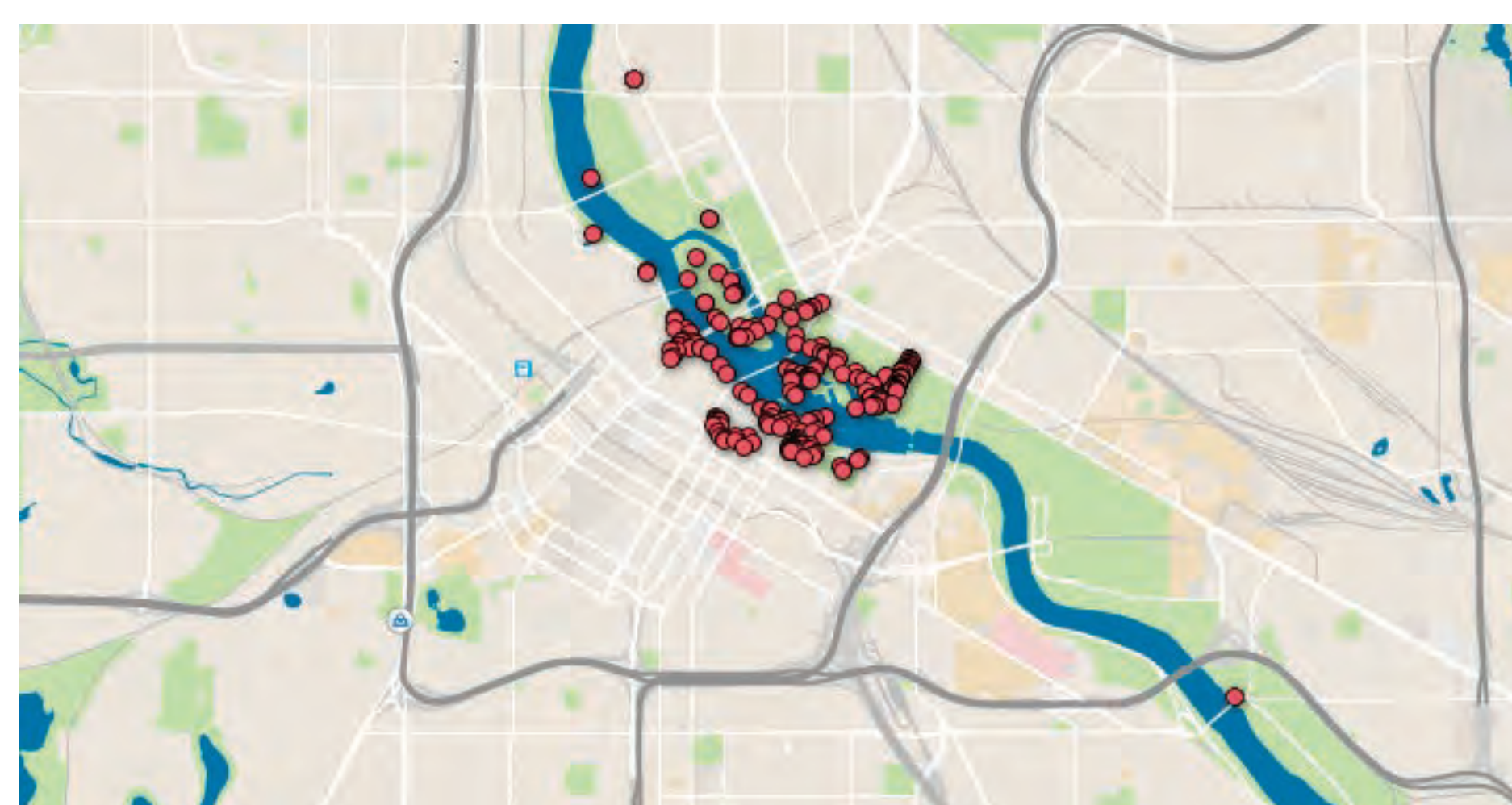
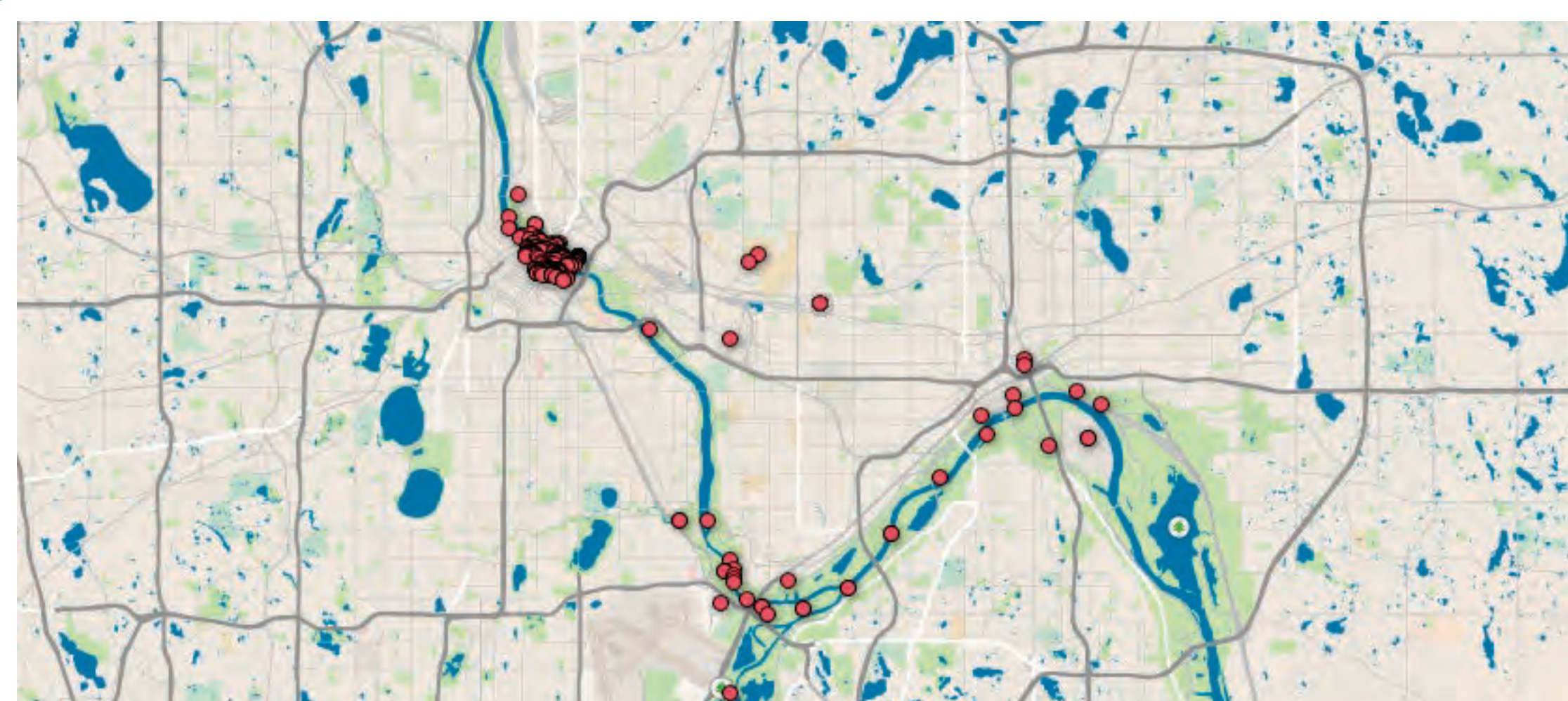
Where are you and why? Join River Life for an extraordinary exploration.

# A RIVER ATLAS MAPPING THE MISSISSIPPI AND A SENSE OF WHERE YOU ARE

<http://riverlife.umn.edu/river-atlas>

## What is the River Atlas?

Found at <http://riverlife.umn.edu/river-atlas>, the River Atlas is a searchable, curated collection of the people, places, and projects of significance on our home river and around the world.



## A Sense of Where You Are

One of the key components of people's sense of self is sense of place. A sense of where you are becomes a necessary precursor for knowing what are the right courses of action to take.

## The More Things Change, The More Things Change

Custom applications are frequently state of the art at the time of their development and are very expensive, needing continual investment or they descend rapidly into a state of technical obsolescence. This is to be avoided at all costs, because an obsolete app takes its content with it.

## Dissociation of Content and Form

Content tied too strongly to a particular technology may become irrelevant just because it's attached to a delivery platform that is no longer technically feasible, or in use. To protect the content, we keep it in a format that is highly editable, dependable, usable, reusable, and easy to use. Namely, spreadsheets.

## It's OK to Have a Broad Audience

Consequently, using free (or nearly free) tools, this project was developed using spreadsheets to make the content as usable as possible, and to make it deliverable to the maximum number of platforms possible over the longest time-frame we can imagine. It is almost infinitely exportable.

## The River Atlas Workflow : Tools and Techniques for Mapping the Mississippi

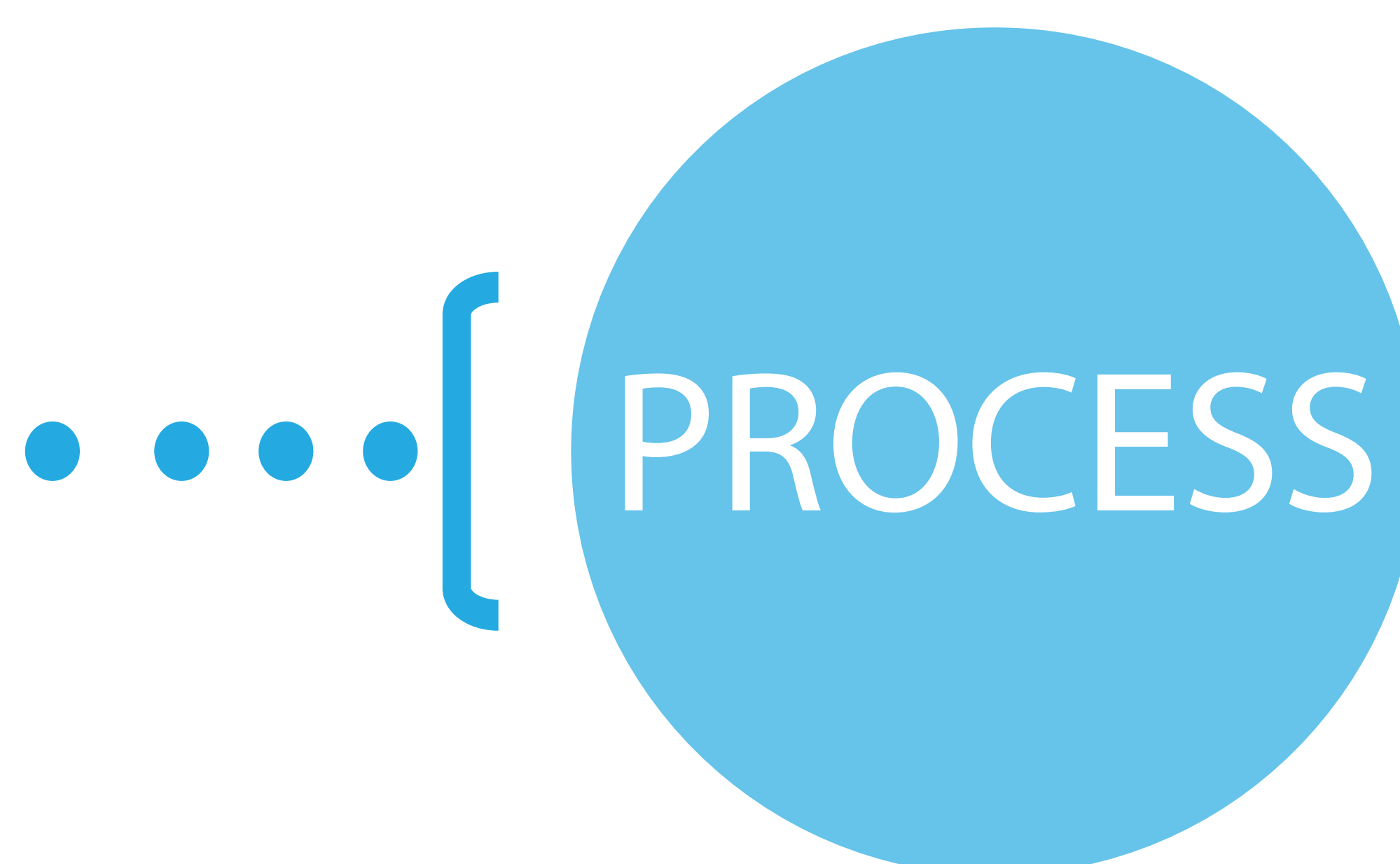


### Content Development

Content is written by contributors in the format they find most comfortable; Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Google Forms, or email.

The minimum information necessary is a location, described in latitude and longitude, and some text. Richer content has links, images, and associated media.

Contributors have a wide range of skillsets, and are free to use the tools they already own, incurring no extra costs on their behalf.

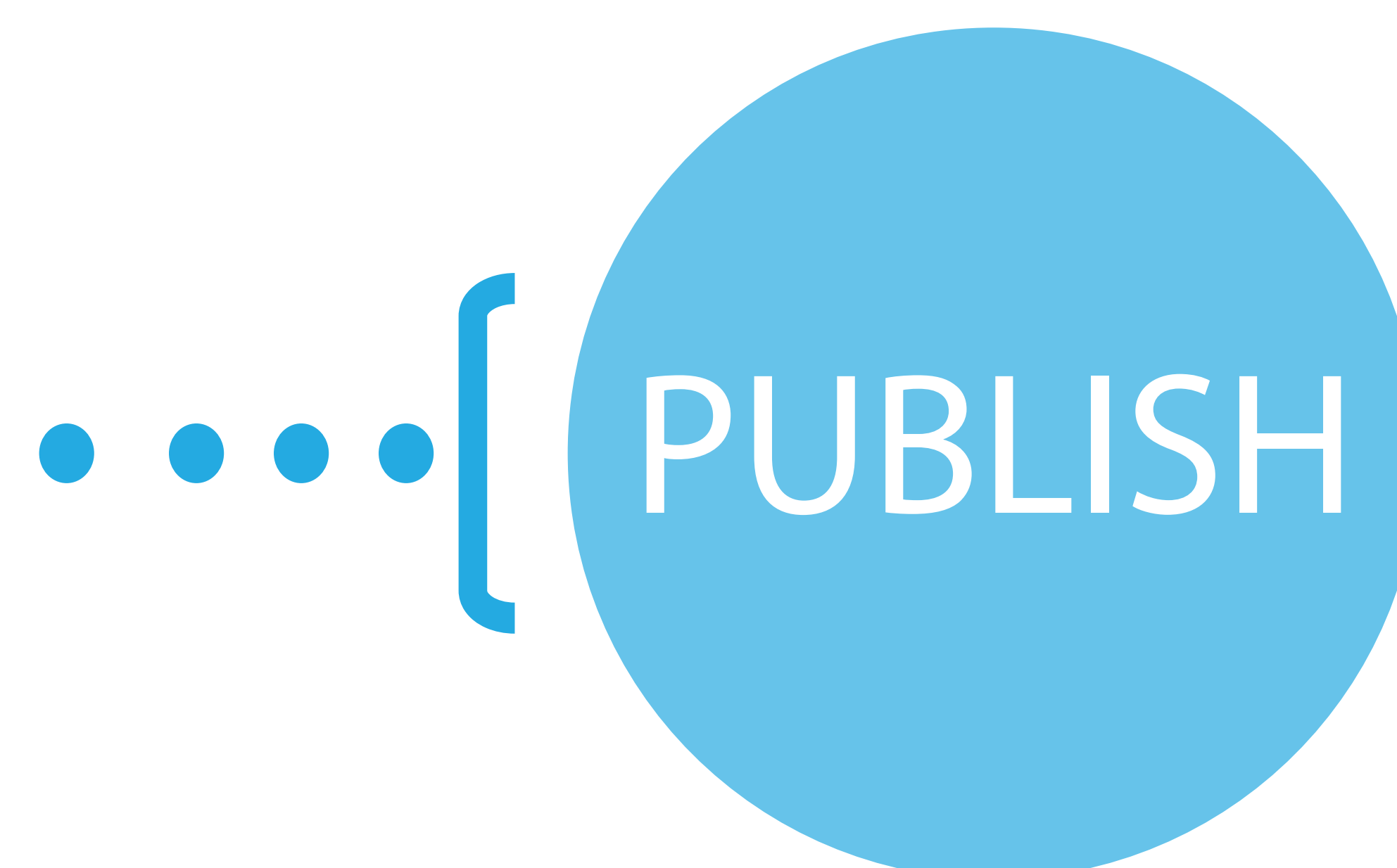


### Curation and Import

River Life curates the content and imports it into our master Google Spreadsheet.

The content is checked for accuracy, images are uploaded to a web server, and data is added to help fit content into curated areas of interest and significance. Thus, we have developed a series of collections.

This stage is done by trained technical staff, with free, or nearly free tools.



### Export and Display

The Google Spreadsheet is exported into Google Fusion Tables. The River Atlas, using the Fusion Tables' built in map view, automatically updates.

The River Atlas on the web site is displayed through WordPress, styled with Google Maps API, and has a JavaScript search function.

The River Atlas is therefore available, either through the web site or the Fusion Table on almost all widespread platforms and devices.