



The Katharine Ordway
Natural History Study Area

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ORDWAY BULLETIN
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MACALESTER
COLLEGE

located at 9550 Inver Grove Trail (Dakota County Road 77), Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

VANTAGE-POINT at ORDWAY

It has been said that almost anything looks better if we only take the right point-of-view; (the opposite is also true). At Ordway a vantage-point should be high enough to allow a widespread look at the surroundings. The highest elevation on the property is near the spot where the building stands and so one of the best "look-out" spots is from the wide windows which open to the eastward and look out toward the River.

Sometimes one gets the feeling of standing in the pilot-house of a steamboat and surveying the scene ahead. Actually the scene is not along the River but rather across it, encompassing that great curve in the River which includes Grey Cloud Island and its system of lakes and backwaters, the convex (or inner) portion where it turns eastward at Pine Bend. This broad alluvial plain tails off to the right (southward) from the limestone bluffs and with them makes up the principal source for stone, gravel and sand from which St. Paul and a good part of Minneapolis have been constructed in recent years.

Immediately before us lies the grassland, which captures so many color tones and moods through the year's cycle. Then beyond one sees the expanse of oak forest, stark and black in winter, cool and sheltering in summer, a kaleidoscope in fall. In the middle distance stretches River Lake, the floodplain water which influences the greater part of the property, accomodating the inundation of the River's highwaters and providing its denizens throughout the seasons. And on its far shore lies the peninsula, an intriguing riparian habitat which is difficult of access but very interesting even from afar.

Across the River one's eyes pick up the bluffs where the Shakopee limestone breaks forth from below and beyond them the glaciated stretches of Washington County as it disappears into the far horizon toward Prairie Island.

R. J. CHRISTMAN,
Naturalist,
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