

Macalester permanently protects open space along the Mississippi River

St. Paul, Minn. – In partnership with Dakota County, the city of Inver Grove Heights and the Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR), Macalester College has permanently protected 150 acres of the Katharine Ordway Natural History Study Area (Ordway Field Station) along the Mississippi River in Inver Grove Heights.

The project included acquisition of a conservation easement and enhanced public access by Dakota County, vacation of unnecessary streets by the city and increased funding for the Ordway Field Station.

"This is a great win-win situation for the partners and a wonderful way to mark the 45th anniversary of Macalester's purchase of the land," said Ordway director and biology professor Jerald Dosch. "It ensures preservation of Macalester's 'other campus' that is one of the largest parcels of undeveloped land left in the Pine Bend Bluffs region along the Mississippi River. It's rich in biodiversity and will continue to serve as a nexus for conservation research and education."

The Ordway Field Station comprises the northern portion of the larger 1,300-acre Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area that includes a 256-acre state scientific and natural area. The Macalester College property includes tall grass prairie, oak savanna, woodlands, permanent and seasonal ponds, springs, a large Mississippi River backwater lake and islands, over 600 species of plants and animals, and 11 plant species unique to the county,

"The easement limits industrial, commercial, and residential uses of the land, but it also encourages ongoing work that is quite consistent with the programming that now takes place at the site," said Macalester V.P. for administration and finance David Wheaton. "Macalester will continue to own and manage the land while permanently preserving the natural character of the site."

The cost of the easement was \$550,000 which included a significant land value donation by the college. Funding came from the following sources: \$275,000 from Dakota County's Farmland and Natural Areas Program; \$250,000 from the Outdoor Heritage Fund created under the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, through an appropriation by the Minnesota Legislature as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council; and \$25,000 from FMR.

The majority of the funds will be invested in the Ordway Field Station to provide an ongoing source of revenue for natural resource management, research, education and public outreach at the site.

"This is a great milestone in the effort to conserve the natural heritage of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities," said Tom Lewanski, conservation director, Friends of the Mississippi River. "The Pine Bend Bluffs



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Natural Area contains some of the most vital and diverse natural communities in the Metro Area. Through this easement, a beautiful natural area will continue to serve as a place for plants and animals and people alike for generations to come.”

“When Dakota County residents passed a bond referendum in 2002 to protect natural areas and farmland, this was one of many areas that was envisioned for protection,” said Nancy Schouweiler, Dakota County Commissioner. “We are very pleased that this partnership was successful in protecting this special place where students and many others can learn about and enjoy our natural heritage.”

The Ordway Field Station was established in 1967 as an outdoor classroom with the assistance of a major gift from Katharine Ordway. Several academic departments including biology, environmental studies, geology, and theater and dance use the facility for teaching and research. Recently, in collaboration with a new Macalester outdoor environmental education course, students from the nearby elementary school began using the property on a more regular basis as part of their curriculum.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the college’s purchasing the property and establishing the field station. As part of the agreement, the college will provide more opportunities for the public to visit the property in the future. The public can visit the property by contacting the college in advance. Read more about the Ordway Field Station: [macalester.edu/ordway/](http://www.macalester.edu/ordway/) (<http://www.macalester.edu/ordway/>)

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 1,978 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>)

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