








CSB Walking Tour – Landscape


Media			Detail			Audio
Image File	Image Title	Caption	Title	Info text	Map location	Vocal
 <p>Remberta.jpg</p>	S. Remberta Westkaemper, OSB	S. Remberta and students exploring the natural world in the 1960s.	Introduction	The Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict have maintained a close association with the land ever since they arrived in St. Joseph in 1857. Sister Remberta Westkaemper (1890-1988), botanist and fifth president of the College, is particularly remembered for her delight in exploring the fields and woods surrounding CSB. She was a close observer of the landscape, and her findings continue to inform our study of the environment we inhabit.	Main Bldg. N 45° 33.766 W 094° 19.086	<p>Welcome to our tour of the landscape at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint Benedict’s Monastery. This tour highlights some features of the landscape that reveal the natural history of our area, and indicate how people have interacted with the environment here. This tour is a rather vigorous walk of about two miles over unpaved surfaces. It stretches from one end to the other over land owned and managed by the College of Saint Benedict and Saint Benedict’s Monastery.</p> <p>Start the tour in front of St. Cecilia Hall, the Monastery wing of the Main Building, facing College Avenue.</p>

 <p>Gneiss.jpg</p>	<p>Boulder of Morton Gneiss</p>	<p>This 3.6 billion year old rock was brought to St. Joseph by S. Margaret van Kempen.</p>	<p>Morton Gneiss</p>	<p>Morton Gneiss, exposed in the Minnesota River Valley, is some of the oldest known rock in North America. Geologists date the rock to the original continental crust, about 3.6 billion years old.</p>	<p>St. Cecilia Hall N 45° 33.800 W 094° 19.057</p>	<p>Stability, and respect for creation are two Benedictine values that are represented with this ancient rock. The boulder here is from one of the oldest rock formations on the continent. Morton Gneiss is quarried in southwest Minnesota, and has been a favorite building stone because of its beautiful pink and grey swirls. This boulder was brought to Saint Ben's by Sister Margaret van Kempen, earth science professor and artist from St. Benedict's Monastery. S. Margaret was well known for her appreciation of the beauty found in the natural world.</p> <p>From the Main Building, walk south past the lawn, where you will see a sundial.</p>
	<p>Campus sundial</p>	<p>Sundials indicate the time of day based on the position of the sun and the shadows it casts.</p>	<p>Campus sundial</p>	<p>Installation date of the sundial is unknown, but it has been in this location for at least 75 years.</p>	<p>South lawn N 45° 33.757 W 094° 19.067</p>	<p>Days in a monastic community are marked by prayers said at specific hours, and sundials are often found in monastery gardens. There has been a sundial on the south lawn here since the early days of the College.</p> <p>Continue walking south past the grotto, turn west toward the flagpole, then south again between Clemens Library and Ardolf Science Center.</p>

Sundial.jpg						
 <p data-bbox="217 621 384 654">Basswood.jpg</p>	Basswood allée	The walk between Clemens Library and the Benedicta Arts Center is shaded by a line of basswood trees.	Basswood trees	Basswood, sometimes known as linden trees, are abundant in Minnesota. Basswood flowers are an important food source for honeybees, once raised at the Monastery. These cultivated basswoods were planted to enhance the campus landscape.	BAC N 45° 33.601 W 094° 19.227	<p data-bbox="2059 297 2556 597">This line of beautiful trees is just a small portion of the numerous plantings on campus. As you walk about, you will see many native and ornamental trees, including maple, oak, red pine, and ash. These basswoods shade faculty as they process for convocation at the beginning of every academic year.</p> <p data-bbox="2059 621 2556 849">Continue walking south past the Benedicta Arts Center, then turn right along the College roadway that heads west past a grassy area. Find the intersection with a gravel roadway leading to the tennis courts.</p>
 <p data-bbox="217 1312 451 1344">Horsemanship2.jpg</p>	Horsemanship Center	Former horse arena at CSB, dismantled in 1996.	Horsemanship Center	CSB offered courses in equestrian studies from 1972 to 1982. Two paddocks, indoor and outdoor arenas, stalls, and a hunting field were once located in this area of the campus. The Horsemanship Center was razed in 1996.	Gravel road to woods, near lot 7 N 45° 33.456 W 094° 19.328	The College of St. Benedict's Horsemanship Program began in 1972 with ten horses. Students who owned horses were also allowed to board their animals during the school year. Student employees cared for the animals and facilities. The program closed in 1982, and the horse barn became home to dances, social events, and recreation activities. Finally, the arena was dismantled in 1996. While it only lasted

						<p>ten years, the equestrian program built on the rural nature of the campus.</p> <p>Continue south along the gravel road, past the tennis courts, to Gate 1 at the entrance into the woods.</p>
 <p>Tallgrass2.jpg</p>	<p>Tallgrass Prairie</p>	<p>Work on restoring this eight acre prairie has been ongoing for over 20 years.</p>	<p>Prairie restoration area</p>	<p>Tallgrass prairie once covered 170 million acres in North America. Most has long been converted to farmland. Little remains except in protected areas such as these eight acres. Perennial grasses and flowers predominate. Periodic fires prevent the growth of trees, and maintain an open grassland.</p>	<p>Area 1 on Monastery map N 45° 33.399 W 094° 19.389</p>	<p>St. Benedict's Monastery owns the approximately 100 acres of woods and fields before you. For its first 50 years, the College was part of the Monastery, and even after the two organizations separately incorporated, the woods remained a popular walking destination for students.</p> <p>Just to the west of Gate 1 you will see a Tallgrass Prairie, restoration of which began in 1992. It is filled with big bluestem grass, switch grass, and other native prairie plants. In all seasons except the dead of winter, visitors can reliably see redwing blackbirds in the wetland in the center of this area.</p> <p>From Gate 1, look east to see the Oak Savannah.</p>



 <p>Oak.jpg</p>	<p>Oak Savannah</p>	<p>Oak savannah restoration began in this area in 2004.</p>	<p>Oak savannah</p>	<p>When mature, this oak savannah will have between 10% and 50% of its area in trees, with at least half the ground area open for grasses and other prairie-type plants. Because of the shade provided by the trees, many woodland plants are also found in savannahs. Acorns from the oak trees provide an important food source for many animals, including squirrels, deer, wild turkeys, grouse, and quail.</p>	<p>Area 3 on Monastery map N 45° 33.320 W 094° 19.314</p>	<p>The Sisters of Saint Benedict's Monastery have let nature take its course in their woods, doing very little active forest management. However, they have dedicated significant effort to developing and restoring unique landscape areas adjacent to the woods. The oak savannah restoration in this area is one example, following on the prairie restoration to the west. The Sisters have also acquired land beyond the southern edge of the oak savannah to provide a buffer between forest, grassland, and nearby housing developments. The oak trees planted here can be a little difficult to see, since they are quite young and blend in with the surrounding plants. Look for the tree protectors that save them from the appetites of hungry deer to begin picturing how this area will have a park-like feel of open trees in the future.</p> <p>Pause right at Gate 1 to note the Honey Locust trees.</p>
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 <p>Locust.jpg</p>	<p>Honey locust trees</p>	<p>Watch for the impressive thorns and long seed pods on these honey locust trees.</p>	<p>Honey locust trees</p>	<p>The origin of these trees is unknown. It's possible they started naturally from seeds dispersed from a cultivated tree located nearby. The name honey locust comes from the sweet pulp in the immature fruit of this tree. Wildlife and cattle consume them as a favorite food.</p>	<p>Area 2 on Monastery map N 45° 33.322 W 094° 19.327</p>	<p>Watch out if you get close to these honey locust trees. Their thorns can grow to over six inches. We do not know how these trees arrived in this area. Native populations are rare, and typically found only in southeastern Minnesota.</p> <p>The honey locust trees mark the entrance into the monastery woods. You will find here maples, basswood, and oak trees as well as various types of mushrooms and woodland plants, including trillium and bloodroot. Unfortunately, you will also find buckthorn and prickly ash, two invasive species that have been a problem throughout central Minnesota.</p> <p>Walk south through the woods toward the Sisters' Lodge. The Lodge was built as a park pavilion in 1925, and renovated in 1962 to provide sleeping accommodations. It is still a favorite retreat area for the Sisters. Just past the lodge to the northwest, join the Trillium Trail to find an old water pump.</p>
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Pump.jpg

<p>Water pump</p>	<p>This pump in the woods is a remnant of days when the area was used for animal agriculture.</p>	<p>Water pump</p>	<p>For its first 100 years, Saint Benedict's Monastery and its associated schools grew much of its own food. Farm animals included cows, pigs and turkeys. From time to time, those animals would be driven to the woods to forage for food. The turkeys in particular ate the acorns fallen from the many oak trees. This pump is a small relic of the time when this was an active farm area.</p>	<p>Area 6 on Monastery map N 45° 33.269 W 094° 19.451</p>	<p>Throughout our campus you can find indicators of how the monastery once included a working farm. This pump in the middle of the woods now serves only as a reminder of the past use of this land. In the 1930s, the Sisters began raising turkeys as a way to generate revenue during the Depression. The turkeys were also a food source for the Monastery and the College. At one time, they had over 4,000 turkeys. Turkeys were taken to the woods to fatten up on acorn mast. While the commercial turkey operation wound down in the 1940s, the Sisters continued to keep turkeys for local use through the 1960s.</p> <p>The pump is also a useful landmark for finding what we believe is the oldest tree in the woods. Just northwest from it, off the Trilium Trail, you can find an ancient swamp white oak tree.</p>
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 <p>200oak.jpg</p>	<p>200+ year swamp white oak</p>	<p>Arborists date this swamp white oak tree to the eighteenth century.</p>	<p>Swamp white oak</p>	<p>While we can't know its exact age, this oak tree is certainly quite a bit older than either the monastery or the college. Swamp white oaks can grow for up to 300 to 350 years, so this one is just middle-aged. Like white oak, swamp white oaks produce a close-grained hard wood that is useful for everything from furniture to barrels and kegs.</p>	<p>Area 7 on Monastery map N 45° 33.284 W 094° 19.477</p>	<p>This old, old tree is a destination for many visitors walking in the woods. This small forest has grown over the top layer of what was once a wetland, the type of ecosystem favored by swamp white oaks. There is an aquifer close under the ground, which is the water source for the pump nearby. The Benedictine commitment to stewardship is evident in the attention given to preserving this oak and the natural areas surrounding it.</p> <p>Return to the Trillium Trail, and continue north to connect with Sacred Heart Trail. Head west on that trail, which winds its way up Sacred Heart Hill.</p>
 <p>Shrine.jpg</p>	<p>Sacred Heart Shrine</p>	<p>A shrine has long topped this hill, the highest point in the City of Saint Joseph.</p>	<p>Sacred Heart Hill</p>	<p>Sacred Heart Hill ascends over 1,140 feet above sea level. Near its top is a small shrine and resting area. The origins of the shrine are unknown, but community members recall a shrine in this location for over fifty years.</p>	<p>Area 8 on Monastery map N 45° 33.327 W 094° 19.790</p>	<p>At over 1,140 feet above sea level, Sacred Heart Hill is the highest point in the city. Years ago it was a grassy area that Sisters and students visited for picnics and sledding. At that time it offered a sweeping view of the growing town. As the woods has grown, that view has been obscured but the sense remains that this is a special place. Elsewhere in the woods is a stone circle, also recognizing that a sense of the sacred adheres to this place.</p>

						Continue down Sacred Heart Trail until it intersects with the Prairie path. Turn left to head south-west toward Walz Prairie.
 <p>Walz.jpg</p>	Walz Prairie	Big bluestem grasses and other prairie plants can be found in this area newly acquired by Saint Benedict's Monastery.	Walz Prairie	Walz Prairie is the newest of the Monastery's land restoration project. This seven acres site sits between the woods and Interstate 94. It is in the early stages of being restored to native prairie.	Area 10 on Monastery map N 45° 33.304 W 094° 19.953	<p>Acquired in 2008, this area is being restored as tallgrass prairie. It is named in honor of George Walz, a resident of Saint Joseph. Although its location near the interstate means it will never be a wilderness area, it can still provide a habitat for many prairie species. It also assures undeveloped green space will remain at this edge of the city.</p> <p>From the Walz Prairie, reverse course and walk back north-east to the intersection with the path to Lake Sarah</p>
 <p>Lake.jpg</p>	Lake Sarah	This lake is a granite pothole about 20 feet deep. It is slowly filling with silt and turning into wetland.	Lake Sarah	A small spring seeps into a granite depression underlying this pond. Lake Sarah is home to turtles and frogs as well as intermittent populations of water birds, muskrats and beavers.	Area 9 on Monastery map N 45° 33.380 W 094° 19.943	There are many stories about Lake Sarah in the history of St. Ben's. In the early 20 th century, Sisters used the lake to soak flax stalks in preparation for turning them into linen. Some of that linen is still in use as altar cloth for the Chapel. There are tales of unfortunate cows getting stuck in the mud here, and some say the lake has been the resting place of artworks of dubious quality. A favorite tall tale involves a scuba diver who encountered the ghostly stone face of a statue sunk in the waters, and who has wandered the

						<p>woods in confused terror ever since. Now Lake Sarah is seen as a place of refuge for wildlife and people, who come to its shores for a period of rest and reflection.</p> <p>From Lake Sarah, return to the prairie path at the edge of the woods and walk east to Gate 3. At the gate, turn north down the gravel road. You will walk along a farm field, typically planted in corn, that abuts the Monastery land.</p>
 <p>Barn.jpg</p>	<p>Monastery barn</p>	<p>Built in 1910, the barn was moved to its current location in 1953. It now houses Common Ground CSA.</p>	<p>Monastery barn (1910)</p>	<p>The monastery barn was built in 1910 at a location much closer to the College. Chapter notes describe it as “a modern and unique building the like of which was not found within the whole county. The roof was an oval round which furnished much room for fodder.” The barn was moved in 1953, and the last of the dairy cows were sold in 1961. The barn now serves as the home for</p>	<p>Sisters’ barn N 45° 33.702 W 094° 19.646</p>	<p>Long before it became a slogan for sustainable living, the Sisters actively found ways to “reduce, reuse, and recycle”. This barn was built in 1910 at a cost of \$3,500 to house cows for the rapidly growing monastic community that needed a working dairy. With expectations of a growing convent and college, in 1953 the barn was moved to its current location and the pole barn was added. It hasn’t held cattle since the 1960s, but it is still home to agricultural enterprise. It is the headquarters of Common Ground, a now 20-year old community supported agriculture program founded by the Sisters. Common Ground gardens are nearby.</p>

				Common Ground, a community supported agriculture initiative with gardens nearby.		From the barn, walk east toward the Monastery. At the intersection of the monastery road and 3 rd ave., you will find the grape arbor.
 <p>Grapes.jpg</p>	Grape arbor	These grapes have been brought under cultivation for use by the Sisters to make jelly, wine, and other preserves.	Grape arbor	The Sisters of Saint Benedict's Monastery have a long tradition of growing their own fruit, from former orchards to this grape arbor, which was established in 1942. Harvested grapes are used for juice, wine, and jelly.	Near north entrance to CSB N 45° 33.747 W 094° 19.353	Community history holds that John Katzner, a monk of nearby Saint John's Abbey, found a variety of wild grapes in the woods and cross-bred it with cultivated grapes to draw on its cold-tolerance and good flavor. Fr. John gave some of his Alpha grape plants to the Sisters, who have grown it ever since. While the grape arbor languished toward the end of the 20 th century, it has recently been rejuvenated with the help of volunteers. From the grape arbor, walk east past the power house and the Monastery garage, then turn right toward the Bookstore.
	Root cellar	The large root cellar is a remnant of times when locally produced food was stored for Sisters and students.	Root cellar	This root cellar is thought to be the largest in Minnesota. Sand was dug from this spot for construction of Sacred Heart Chapel from 1911 to 1913.	Outside bookstore N 45° 33.726 W 094° 19.179	This 100 year old root cellar is another reminder of how the Monastery and College were once nearly self-sustaining. When Sacred Heart Chapel was under construction, workers dug sand from the property for use in making mortar. The ever-practical Sisters decided to turn their sand pit into a root cellar. While it is no

<p>Cellar2.jpg</p>				<p>Instead of filling in the resulting pit, the Sisters turned it into a root cellar that stored food for a community of over 1,000, including College students.</p> <p>See “By the Work of Our Hands” for more information about the history of sustainability and resource management at St. Ben’s.</p>		<p>longer in use, the root cellar once held potatoes,carrots, cabbages, and other crops that became dinner for Sisters and students over the winter months. The root cellar is an important reminder of how this place has always been closely tied to the land. The College of Saint Benedict and Saint Benedict’s Monastery continue that tradition of stewardship in their current plans for sustainable land use.</p> <p>This concludes our tour of the landscape of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint Benedict’s Monastery. For more information about the College and Monastery, please stop in the College Admissions Office in the Main Building, or the reception desk in the Gathering Place.</p>
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