



Voices for the Land: Minnesotans Write About the Places They Love

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"A place is not a thing," writes Paul Gruchow in the foreword to *Voices for the Land*, "it is a relationship. A location becomes a place only in the context of time, of history." In this extraordinary tribute to the importance of the ordinary places in our lives, fifty-two Minnesotans write about the special, sometimes secret, places that give their lives meaning. For some it is their home or cabin or lake. For others, it's a family farm or neighborhood park, a backyard garden or north woods trail: all places where we find a personal and spiritual connection to the land.

Voices for the Land explores this complex relationship by linking these personal essays with striking images captured by award-winning photographer Brian Peterson. This marriage of words, images, and landscape provides a powerful reminder of our deep and abiding connection to the land. The writers share the experience of these favorite places through their senses, from the aching tingle of a cold winter night and the sound of ice "singing" to the buzz of mosquitoes and the acrid smell of burning peat.

The *Voices for the Land* project, organized by the nonprofit group 1000 Friends of Minnesota, encouraged Minnesotans to write about the land they love and to fight for its preservation. The Minneapolis Star Tribune published a selection of these essays, paired with Brian Peterson's photos, in an award-winning series. *Voices for the Land* brings these essays and photos together in book form for the first time.

"Ordinary places," writes Paul Gruchow, "are as necessary to a good community as are ordinary people." *Voices for the Land* speaks to the power of these ordinary places and the value of preserving them for the simple reason that they are special to someone.

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