The changing landscape

Imagine the view, 200 years ago, from this rocky outcrop. You are surrounded by tallgrass prairie as you look into the valley below. A wide band of forest follows what is now known as the Kansas River. Smaller gallery forests follow tributary streams. Along with a few forest groves and isolated trees in the uplands, these small forests are among the few features breaking the expansive prairie matrix. The high ridge on the southern horizon also is mantled by tallgrass prairie.

Today, the landscape has changed. All of the native prairie—except for the remnant Rockefeller Prairie behind you—has been lost. Most of this landscape is now given to newer forest growth, home sites, agriculture and industry.

Remember: People, acting within the physical and biological constraints of this landscape, will determine its future condition and character.