Richard J. Dorer stared moodily from the highlands overlooking the great Whitewater Valley in southeastern Minnesota. "This," he said sadly, "is the country God seems to have forgotten."

Before him stretched thousands of acres of devastated land. The vast slopes of the valley were all but barren. Great open wounds testified to massive erosion. Sixteen farms on the valley perimeter had been abandoned outright. Twenty-two more were in such marginal "up-and-downhill-farming-condition" that the owners could not find a market.

*On the Valley floor, far below him, the village of Whitewater Falls lay buried under 12 feet of silt.*

The time of this "study in depression" by the great conservationist was in the late 1930's. Dorer stood there for a long time, contemplating the thousands of acres stretching as far as his practiced eye could see.
NOW SHROUDED in white, sprawling Whitewater Valley lies in December 'calm'. Readers must “reverse” mental time-clocks before turning to center spread for an autumn look.

His was no idle appraisal. To a man of Dorer’s character, the desolate scene represented a massive challenge:

He must undo the damage man had wrought.

And so he began his labors — like a general plotting battle strategy, directing, challenging; yes, even cursing hundreds of men, urging them on to greater effort, to accomplish the initial task: Halting the precipitous slide of hundreds of thousands of tons of earth.

His weapons were seedlings, millions of tree seedlings. And seed itself. Grasses and grains — even hay loft sweepings. Terracing. Contouring. Dikes, miles of dikes crisscrossing the valley floor. Men labored and struggled against the frustrations of defeat brought by drenching rains. Time and again, they saw their work torn away overnight.

But Dick Dorer would drive them into action again. He instilled in them a kind of crusader spirit. Gradually, symptoms of success began to emerge in the years-long battle. By the mid-1940’s, hardwoods and conifers began to take visible form.

The great pools — the famous “Dorer Pools” named by the Department of Conservation in his honor — stood every test, contrary to the caustic appraisal of certain highway engineers who scorned the designs of a man who had no engineering degree. Dorer simply comprehended the natural scheme of things.

Dorer’s dikes were methodically laid out, a complex, criss-crossing maze designed to divert into three primary channels, or more, the flow of the three-
pronged Whitewater so that no stream could concentrate its fury at a single escarpment along the great battle line.

The trout came back, German Brown and Brookies, plump and tempting to thousands of anglers. And the time is now — 1968.

In the spring of this year, on a single day, over 1,400 trout anglers lined a single, three-quarter mile stretch of just one fork of the famed Whitewater.

**TOURIST LURE**

Over the past summer, tourists came from as far away as Africa, South America, England and France — informed of the Whitewater via the "grapevine" during their visits to the famed Mayo Clinic. So enchanted with this great valley are these visitors that some of them have returned on consecutive years, from thousands of miles distant.

This past deer season, big throngs of hunters poured into the Whitewater seeking, and finding, white-tailed targets. And in August, the campgrounds of the Whitewater State Park segment were so jammed with campers that special arrangements for campground expansion into an open field were necessary.

Hikers, bird-watchers, canoeists, bikers, hunters, fishermen and campers, nature students and special study classes, ecologists, the famous and not-so-famous seek out the 26,000-plus acres (Game and Fish lands 25,000 acres; Forest lands and State Park lands) managed by the Minnesota Department of Conservation.

Merriam turkeys, live-trapped in Arkansas in exchange for a few Minnesota Black Bear, were not successful. But wild turkeys from Nebraska and South Dakota seem to have gained a Whitewater Valley foothold, if precarious. There is hope that these great birds will thrive on the mast in the Valley.

Owners of almost 15,000 acres of private lands, and the villages of Elba, Altura, St. Charles and points in between have prospered by a seasonal flow of tourists — this year over 250,000 tourists in three months — all eager and willing to buy sporting goods, gasoline, food, lodging, camera film and miscellaneous supplies while they visit the Valley and enjoy the magnificent vistas from the great highlands, or view waterfall and furbearers in the "Dorer Pools."

This, then, is the scene today. But only those who have known the contrast, such as the veteran businessmen who have seen the impoverished times, can appreciate the transformation.

It is understandable, of course, that these business people, the village folk, the waitresses and even the youngsters who have heard the story in their classrooms, hold a special place in their hearts for the veteran conservationist, now 79 and seemingly as vigorous as ever.

Mr. Dorer has chosen "to spend whatever time I have left in this valley . . . This is where my heart is." This past summer he made his home in an old farm home ("Very comfortable, thank you"), where he worked on

(continued to page 33)
KEY TO THE CENTER SPREAD PHOTOS
(See Pages Following)

Minnesota's famed Whitewater Valley (just above Winona) is sporting its winter coat. The 2,400-acre Red Wing Wildlife League property is sheathed in ice. And the Cannon Valley, along its sprawling, 109 miles from Waterville to Red Wing, Minn., is also in the grip of King Boreas. But we ask our readers' indulgence. And that you join us in a slightly belated trip in time for an autumn “Walk through the Whitewater,” with Minnesota's beloved and renowned conservationist — Richard J. Dorer. Then, if you will, join us also in the lower reaches of the beautiful Cannon Valley, on “A Paddle Through Pretty Red Wing.”

Here is the identification key to the pictures in the center spread montage by Department photographer Walter Wettschreck. On the LEFT side, over to the straight vertical line, the photos show, clockwise from upper left:

Mr. Ed Franey, retired outdoor writer (Minneapolis Star and Tribune) and now a national director, Izaak Walton League of America; Robert Herbst, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Conservation, and Mr. Dorer as they begin their tour on a high plateau overlooking Mr. Dorer's beloved Whitewater Valley. Next, Dick Dorer, Bob Herbst and Mr. George Meyer, game manager of the Whitewater Wildlife Management Area's 25,000 acres, admire the great green valley (note the wild sunflowers in the foreground); Meyer, Dorer and the Department's young deputy commissioner, in years less than half of Mr. Dorer's 79, inspect Mr. Meyer's recent acquisition: “A 110 foot long wayside that I just couldn't afford to pass up . . . The view from here,” the game manager said, “will thrill thousands of our Minnesota citizens . . .”

Finally, Mr. Dorer, who labored to restore the devastated lands of the Whitewater in the late 1930's and early 1940's takes an early morning stroll with his longtime friend and confidant, Mr. Franey. “I guess,” said Mr. Franey, “that you could call me Dick Dorer's Boswell. And if you had to listen to the gosh-awful puns I have had to put up with over the years, you would think I deserve some kind of a medal . . .”

All of which brought the obvious response: another smashing pun from the big man at his right, and Mr. Dorer's constant companion “Fritz,” the preposperous appearing and dedicated dachshund.

Turning to the four photos at the right side of the montage, from top: Headed by Bob Nybo, Jr., president of the Red Wing Wildlife League, a canoe flotilla begins its half-day journey through a remarkable example of “do it yourself” conservation enterprise: a tour of the 2,400 acre Red Wing Wildlife League-owned land, purchased and paid for by the League members and sympathetic industrial leaders of the Red Wing community.

Next: Roger Holmes, assistant supervisor, section of Game, Division of
CENTER SPREAD KEY

Game and Fish, Minnesota Conservation Department, joins the group for a pleasant pause at a cabin owned by Mr. Paul Reidel, President, Reidel Shoe Company, Red Wing. Present but not pictured: Dave Vesall, Supervisor, section of game, MCD.

Others from left: Bob Nybo, Jr.; Senator George Conzemius, Cannon Falls; and Richard Wettersten, director, Division of Game and Fish.

The two gentlemen paddling, with apologies for the "crutch" with a prop on the rear: Mr. Reidel and Mr. E. H. Foot, Jr., veep of Foot Tanning Company, Red Wing.

Below: Bob Nybo stands atop a mammoth, 50 yard beaver dam in the League's area, explaining how these "volunteers" had been "enlisted" by the Red Wing club to help flood a great 200 acre waterfowl production area. Arlin Albrecht, Managing editor, Red Wing Daily Republican Eagle, dutifully makes notes, while Mr. William D. Sweasy, President, Red Wing Shoe Company, observes from the foreground.

"We feel," said Bob Nybo, "that our industrial leaders have shown remarkable understanding of our dreams and goals. To say that they have been generous is a great understatement. We are proud of our League, of its members, and what we have saved for all time for living creatures — all forms of wildlife native to this habitat."

completing his next two books.

("The Ghost Tree Speaks," Mr. Dorer's first book, illustrated by Dr. Walter Breckenridge, is now in its third printing.)

ANOTHER GREAT VALLEY

One would think that the great conservationist, acknowledged "father" of the Save the Wetlands program, now international in scope, and of the Minnesota Memorial Hardwood Forest project, aside from many other conservation endeavors, would rest on his laurels.

Not so. In mid-October he stood before a large crowd at the Welch Ski Chalet, in the beautiful Valley of the Cannon River, and lectured his rapt audience on the potential of the scenic Cannon River Valley, a 109-mile meandering stream spawned in Shield's Lake near Waterville, and pursuing a course through Faribault, Northfield, Cannon Falls, Welch and Red Wing, where it flows into the Mississippi River.

Now the people of the Cannon Valley have formed the "Cannon Valley Development Association," headed by Ken Brage of rural Cannon Falls and Bob Nybo, Jr., of Red Wing.

Dorer praised the Red Wing Wildlife League for its inspiring "anchor project" at the Cannon River mouth: 2,400 acres of bottomlands habitat bordering the north edge of Red Wing, lying between highway 61 and the Mississippi river.
"Let us view the
Whitewater Valley and the
Cannon River Valley In New
Perspective . . . Parallel
and Potential . . . No
Man has the "Right" to
Bring Ruin to a River . . . A
River Belongs to All
Men . . . Ours Is the
Obligation of
Environmental Stewardship . . .

— Richard J. Dorer —

(The League acquired this acreage through its own fund-raising program, aided
by prominent Red Wing businessmen. The Cannon River meanders through the
acreage.)

Here, habitat improvement and natural assets provide haven for water-
fowl, beaver, muskrat, mink, otter, an abundant deer population, an amaz-
ing array of birdlife. Overhead, one may see bald eagles and turkey vultures if the eye is sharp and the day is right.

Any resident of Goodhue county may, for $5 annually, take out a waterfowl
and/or hunting permit on the Red Wing Wildlife League's lands (and water). Plans are emerging for capitalizing on the exciting canoe potential inherent in
the 2,400 acres. The club's ambition knows no end, and members hope to exer-
cise their option to buy another 250-plus acres, granted they receive a small
concession from a railroad owning trackage abutting the property.

CANNON VALLEY DEVELOPMENT ASSN.
In addition to president Ken Brage and vice-president Bob Nybo, Jr. (the new
found Cannon Valley Development Association is now selling memberships
from Waterville to Red Wing for $1.00) the Association's directors are

Dale Wisherd, H. M. Tuthill, Dr. Robert Molenaar, Senator George Con-
zemius, Dr. M. R. Williams, of Cannon Falls; Arlin Albrecht and George Brooks,
Red Wing; Gilbert Axelson, Clem Nelson, Glen Anderson, Welch; Jim Rohl,
Waterville. (Faribault and Northfield area directors are being named.)

"We hope to accomplish in the Cannon Valley what Mr. Dorer accomplished in the Whitewater," said Ken Brage.

"We feel it is disgraceful that a once-great fishing river should decay and deteriorate. We cannot tolerate the pollution sore spots or the eye-sores along the river's banks. We do not feel that any man has a right to corrupt and destroy a river."

In citing, during his Welch talk, the "Parallels and Potential" of the two valleys (Whitewater and Cannon), Dick Dorer pointed out that a member of the trout lily family, a species of Dwarf Adder's Tongue, is found "nowhere else in Minnesota — or on the surface of the planet Earth — other than in the lower reaches of the Cannon river."

The archeological site at the mouth of the Cannon is considered to be one of the most significant Indian culture sites in Minnesota.

"You can," said Mr. Dorer, "clean up this river. Restore its overgrazed banks, whether the eyesores are caused by cattle, or in a specific place, by hogs. Replant the exposed slopes. You can stop the polluters."

"You can restore the sport fishery and you can capitalize on the Cannon Valley's unsurpassed potential for canoeing, hiking, snowmobile trails, horseback riding, bird-watching, hunting and fishing."

"But," the conservationist warned, "you must be willing to pay the price. You cannot sit back and say: 'Let George do it' — and I don't mean Whitewater game manager George Meyer, who, in my estimation is one of the finest game managers, if not the finest, in the United States.

"We talk, talk, talk about involvement. Now is your chance. Turn the Cannon Valley around through your Association. Faribault and Northfield have already done outstanding jobs. Use the sure-fire Memorial Hardwood Forest formula, so your counties can benefit on timber sales.

"The Cannon Valley," he pointed out, "is so close to the 1.5 million metropolitan area population that you should begin immediately, by using the tools of your County Planning Commission, and by working through your County Commissioners, to get going on ABC fundamentals.

"A river," said Richard Dorer, "belongs to no man. And it belongs to every man. And no man has any right to contribute to the desecration of a river by irresponsible and abusive acts, at the expense of his neighbors and fellow American citizens, near or far removed from the stream itself.

"I am an old man," he told his Welch audience. "But I shall be pleased to do whatever I can to assist you."