



A photograph of a waterfall in winter. The water is cascading over a rocky ledge, creating a misty spray at the base. The surrounding area is covered in snow, and evergreen trees are visible in the background. The scene is captured in a long-exposure style, giving the water a soft, blurred appearance.

Touring Winter Falls Near Owen Sound

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY SANDRA J. HOWE

Except where noted

From the cliff above the waterfall, you gaze in wonder at the sculpted ice below. The thunder of falling water is audible from within the ice. Sun sparkles on the frosted trees and rocks. It is a beautiful day to explore the winter landscape.

Hoggs Falls
near Flesherton.



Just south of Owen Sound is iconic Inglis Falls, the favourite showpiece of Grey Sauble Conservation.

SNOW CRUNCHES under your boots or snowshoes. Photo opportunities are all around you.

You can breathe in the crisp air, and enjoy the sights of forest and river gorge below. Waterfalls are unique each season, ever changing.

Waterfalls abound near Owen Sound in Grey County as rivers and streams tumble over the exposed edge of the Niagara Escarpment. Inglis Falls is perhaps the most famous of these; the Sydenham River plunges 18 metres to the valley below, continuing to cascade down through Harrison Park and into Owen Sound. Jones, Weavers Creek, Walters, Eugenia, Hoggs and McGowan Falls are all

equally beautiful, and winter accessible. Visiting these lovely sights offers healthy exercise, fascinating scenery, and a chance to explore our natural and cultural heritage.

Jones Falls is located in Pottawatomi Conservation Area west of Owen Sound. Take Hwy 21 to Springmount and turn north on Hwy 6. Parking is on your right at the Tourist Information Centre. This 116-hectare area belonging to Grey Sauble Conservation features trails suitable for winter hikes or snowshoes. Snowshoe access is restricted across the bridge and along the cliff edges for public safety. The Bruce Trail crosses the Pottawatomi River just above Jones Falls, and continues north along the Escarpment

edge providing great vistas to Owen Sound and beyond.

Huge, old cedars stand sentinel along the river. Gnarly maples and delicate, white birch grow on the higher ground. On exposed rock faces, ferns and mosses add green to grey landscape. Porcupine, raccoon, and wild turkey are common here. Birds and wildlife are plentiful but elusive. Keep an eye open for tracks. Curious chickadees often chat to visitors. The winter forest has a stark beauty so different from other seasons. A thermos of tea or hot chocolate is a wonderful addition to any winter outing.

After exploring the falls and trails of Pottawatomi, head back into Owen Sound to Harrison Park. Weavers Creek is a small

watercourse cascading gently through a steep ravine. Access to Weavers Creek Falls is through the campground and behind the swimming pool. Hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are possible here. The falls itself is on private land but there is a lovely view of it from the terminus of a short boardwalk trail.

Falls of Grey County

For a full circuit of Grey County waterfalls, head south out of Owen Sound on Hwy 6/10 to Chatsworth. Follow Hwy 10 to Grey Rd. 40 going east to Walters Falls. Be sure to have a local map because this area is famously confusing to navigate. They say “All roads lead in and none lead out of Walters Falls.”



▲ Jones Falls, west of Owen Sound, appears frozen but you can hear water running behind the ice.



▲ Walters Falls is on private property but there is a viewing platform in the village of Walters Falls. PHOTO COURTESY OF VISITGREY.CA.



The fresh air at Pottawatomoni River above Jones Falls seems apparent in this photo.

◀ A Bruce Trail bridge over Pottawatomi River above Jones Falls. Grey Sauble Conservation restricts snowshoe access along the edge of the falls.

Walters Falls is a spectacular, 14-metre double plunge on a tributary of the Big Head River. The village and falls are named for John Walter who built the first sawmill on the creek in 1852. Walters Creek also powered grist and woolen mills, and today still powers one of the few remaining water-driven feedmills. Walters Falls is especially photogenic in winter with fine views of ice and gorge from the platform beside Walters Falls Inn.

From Walters Falls continue east on Grey Rd. 40, then south on Grey Rd. 7. This area is prone to wild winter weather so check road and weather conditions. You are now journeying along the west shoulder of Beaver Valley, and descending to the valley floor. Grey Rd. 7 junctions with Grey Rd. 13 and continues south. Park at the Eugenia Falls Emporium and stroll for 15 minutes to reach Grey County's highest waterfall at 30 metres.

The vista to the Cuckoo Valley far below is stunning. Eugenia Falls once supported five mills and Ontario's second hydro-electric plant. Snowshoe access to the Bruce Trail is possible here but terrain is rugged so use caution.

Hoggs Falls is tucked away on the Boyne River at the upper end of Beaver Valley. Four-wheel drive can be useful here. From Eugenia, continue south to Grey Rd. 4 and west toward Flesherton. Watch for Hoggs Falls sign to turn right on East Back Line North. Then turn right on Lower Valley Road, and watch for parking on left. Hoggs Falls is one of Grey County's hidden gems. A 10-minute walk or snowshoe along the river brings you to a breathtaking scene of ice, water and forest. Extensive trails meander through this area for exploration. It is also a wonderful setting for a winter picnic.

For the final leg of your winter waterfall tour, return to Grey Rd. 4 and head west to Flesherton and Durham. On Durham's outskirts watch for the McGowan Falls sign and turn right. Located on the Saugeen River, McGowan Falls is a natural, cascading waterfall with a dam directing above. The ice forms wonderful sculptures here, tumbling and pooling over the bedrock. Saugeen Valley Conservation owns a long stretch of property with trails suitable for snowshoes or cross-country skis. The cedar forests along the river are a snowy, winter wonderland. To return to Owen Sound, follow Grey Rd. 4 to Hwy 6 and head north, about a one-hour drive.

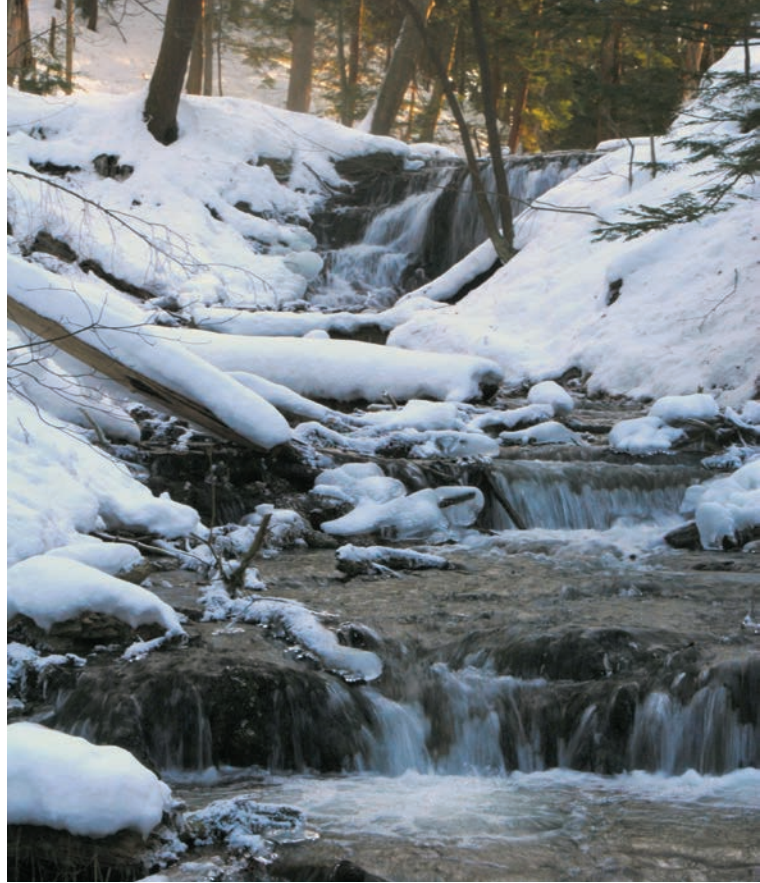
Caution!

The winter waterfalls of Grey County are truly beautiful as they change and shift throughout the season. Some cautions are in order though. Be sure you are warmly dressed,

have appropriate footwear and are equipped for weather conditions. Check your trail routes, and stay on the trails. While it may be tempting to wander on frozen rivers and climb on ice formations, it is never safe to do so. Grey Sauble Conservation says climbing on frozen waterfalls is never a permitted activity on their properties. They are concerned for public safety, and felt it was necessary to close trails at both Inglis and Indian Falls in late winter 2015 to keep people off the ice. The trails provide safe access and views for visitors to enjoy. **NEV**

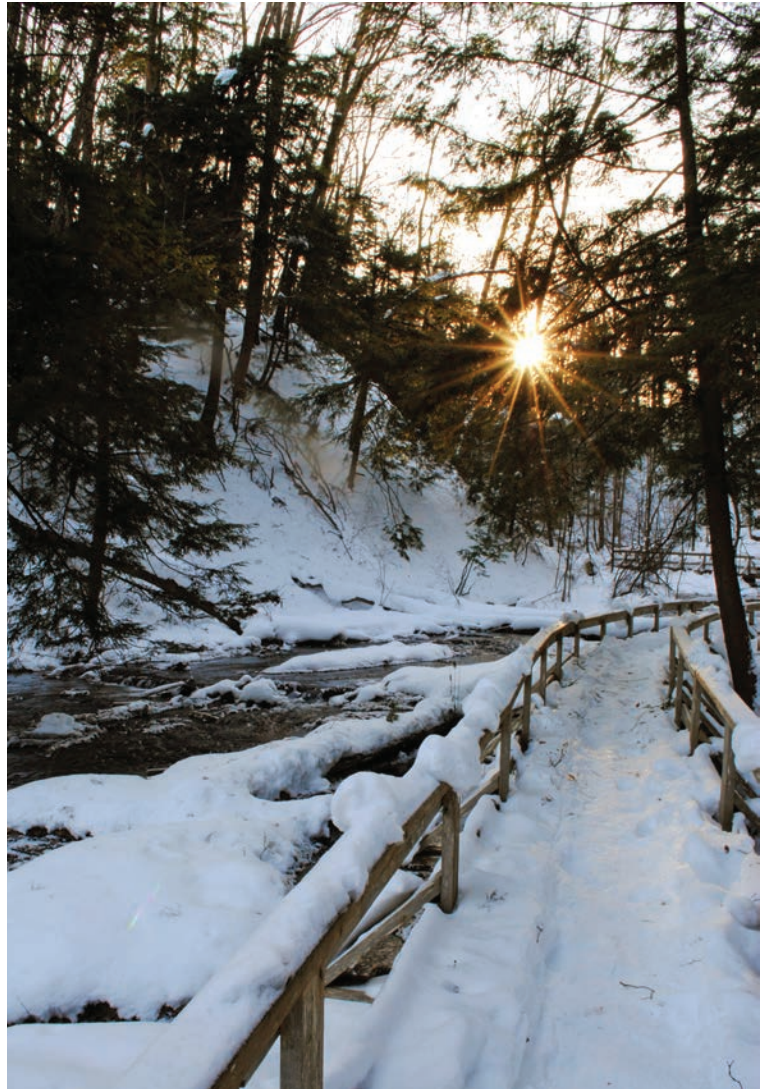
Grey County Tourism has a brochure about their waterfalls available through visitgrey.ca.

Sandra J. Howe's last feature for Niagara Escarpment Views was "Savouring the Apple Pie Trail," Autumn 2015.



▲ Weavers Creek Falls seen from Harrison Park, Owen Sound.

▼ Boardwalk along Weavers Creek toward the falls.





▲ McGowan Falls on Saugeen River at Durham, west of Niagara Escarpment. Water falls over bedrock beneath a dam. Water power was critical to early settlement in Grey County.

Inglis and Indian Falls in Winter

by Krista McKee of Grey Sauble Conservation

“Last years’ extreme winter temperatures provided many frozen waterfalls experiences for thousands of ice seekers! In March, the social media world shouted out nature’s artwork and it was shared very quickly as a ‘must-see winter destination.’ In the case of Grey Sauble’s waterfalls it became a major safety issue at Inglis and Indian Falls. People were not staying on trails. They were walking on frozen rivers, not knowing what was underneath their feet. People of all ages were walking on the top of the waterfalls, to the edge and taking selfies. Staff closed the trails to keep people safe. Our statement was ‘We remind everyone about the risks with unstable ice conditions and changes to our rivers with this warmer weather. Stay away and off waterfalls and rivers!’ We do not promote Indian Falls for snowshoeing or as a winter destination because the trail floods and is unsafe for hiking.”