

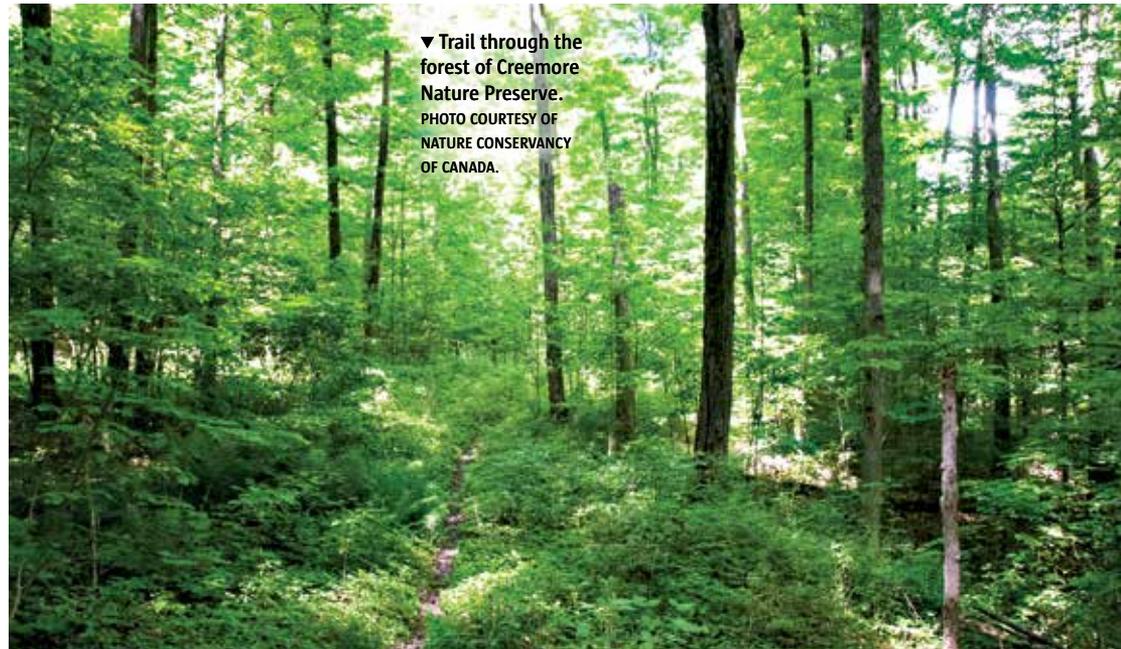
Experiencing Creemore Nature Preserve

By Aiken Scherberger

“Am I at the right place?” might be the first question you ask upon arrival at the Creemore Nature Preserve. There’s no trailhead sign but you can’t really drive any further so this must be it. Getting here is a bit of adventure. Three km west of Creemore you turn south off County Road 9 onto Concession 6 South, a steep little dirt road that immediately starts climbing the Niagara Escarpment. After only a few hundred metres up, just past the last private driveway, the road ends.

Once out of the car a sign reveals itself. Partially hidden by bush is a bronze plaque mounted on a large rock: “We don’t inherit the earth, we just borrow it from our children. THE MINGAY TRACT: This beautiful 200-acre woodland was donated by Don and Mary Mingay to Nature Conservancy Canada as a nature preserve, 31/12/96.”

Experiencing the Preserve is like entering a movie set of nature in miniature. Only the elves are missing. Within minutes you’re walking through



▼ Trail through the forest of Creemore Nature Preserve. PHOTO COURTESY OF NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA.

a lush tiny valley formed by sharp rolling hills. There’s a sturdy little stream complete with miniature rapids and 180-degree bends. The water is crystal clear. The elves have been busy; four perfect little bridges cross over the stream. Even time is miniaturized. What felt like half a day on the trails turns out to be less than an hour.

But the experience is not quite over yet. The Creemore Nature Preserve is exactly

four km from the front door of Creemore Springs Brewery on the main street of Creemore. When you go into the retail store and have a free sample or two, you’re actually drinking part of what you just experienced.

The water used for brewing Creemore Springs beer comes from a natural spring on the north end of the Nature Preserve right beside County Road 9. When the brewery

started up 30 years ago, the key financial partner suggested they source the water from a spring on his land. That’s also where the brewery got its name.

That financial partner was Don Mingay, the same man whose name is on the bronze plaque. Twenty years ago he and his wife Mary donated the land to the Nature Conservancy of Canada with the sole purpose of “returning it to our children.” Thank you, Don and Mary.

Grey Highlands in Summer

Markdale and Flesherton are entry points to the west side of the Niagara Escarpment, and may be a little less known than busier towns on the east side. This is the best route to Beaver Valley and the magnificent outlook Old Baldy, so profoundly treasured that a wedding party in full formal wear has been seen there taking photographs!

The Bruce Trail is accessible here as it continues all along the Niagara Escarpment. Bikes, canoes and kayaks are other ways to get around this challenging, spectacular countryside, especially on Beaver River and Lake Eugenia. There are nine falls on Grey County's waterfall tour to explore, including Eugenia Falls, Hogg's Falls and Inglis Falls. Swimming and fishing is offered at Eugenia Lake, Flesherton Pond, Markdale Pond, Wilcox Lake, Irish Lake and for better swimmers, Beaver River.

Celebrations

This summer there are plenty of celebrations and events to

attend. Osprey Old Home Weekend on June 30 to July 2 has parades, breakfast parties, tractor rides, musical performances, theatre and more. There is a Canada Day weekend art fair, classic car show, heritage exhibition and the traditional fireworks. Eugenia Gold Rush Day on July 8 commemorates the fascinating, rumour-driven, short-lived gold rush excitement that took place here in 1853, when pyrite was found instead. The annual Markdale Rotary Mountain Top Jamboree, with live entertainment and weekend camping, will happen Aug. 11 to 13. Visitors are welcome at all these events.

Shoppers can enjoy the hunt for treasures. There are crafts and art work in all media to select in the towns' small galleries or the countryside's home studios. Delicious local

food includes apples, cider, honey and garden and farm produce, available to take home or savour in the area's many fine restaurants.

Accommodations

For those staying overnight, the choices range from camping to cottage rentals, friendly B&Bs to luxurious inns, chalets to motels. Some

hosts are so dedicated to guests' enjoyment that they can create a schedule for every type of interest, customizing a route and memorable stops along the way, as well as providing a picnic lunch.

Grey Highlands residents are eager to welcome visitors to their impressive stretch of the Niagara Escarpment, on the west.



▲ Road to Old Baldy. PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS.

Canada Blooms' Most Imaginative Garden Design

At Canada Blooms this year, the winner of the Most Imaginative Garden Design Award, sponsored by *Niagara Escarpment Views*, was the display entitled "Celebrating Ontario's North," designed by Elite Environments, of Mono, and built by Landscape by Evergreen, of Brampton.

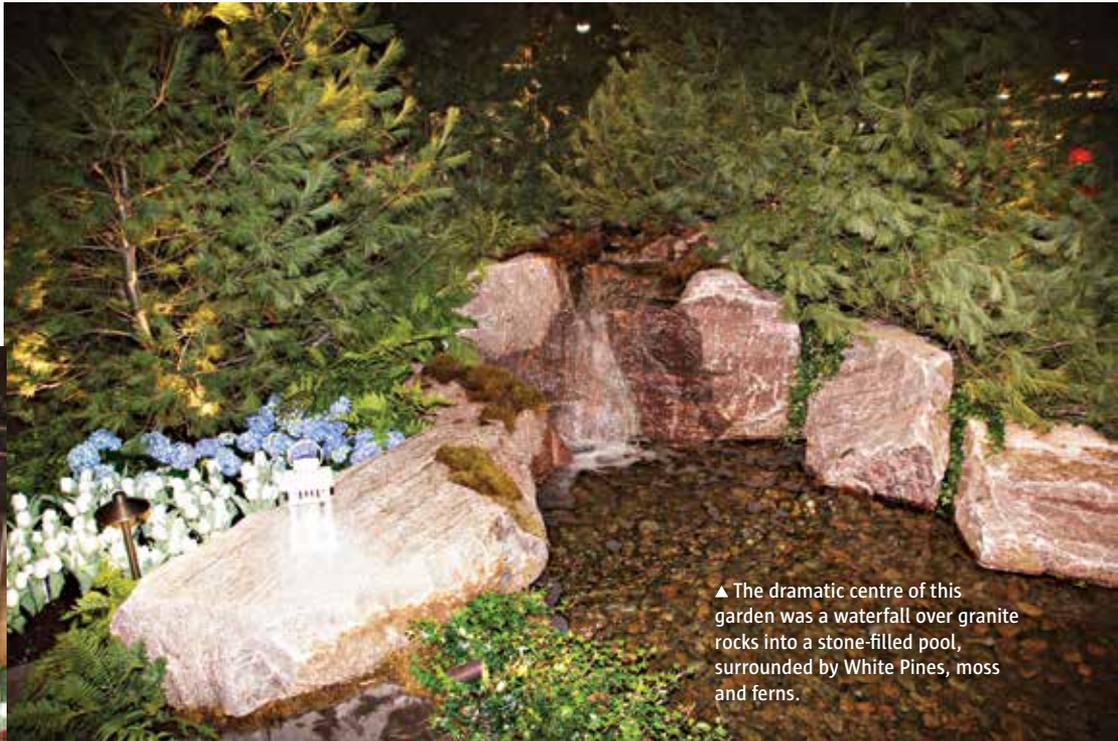


◀ An external corner of the garden was the Canada 150 planting, with mini red roses and white azaleas. The tree is a Redmond Linden, *tilia americana*.



▲ Lou Savoia, of Landscape by Evergreen, has a waterfall at his residence and says "The water is not too loud. It's nice to come home to at night. I enjoy sitting outside in my backyard."

◀ Blue Hyacinths wafted spring fragrance out from under White Pines.



▲ The dramatic centre of this garden was a waterfall over granite rocks into a stone-filled pool, surrounded by White Pines, moss and ferns.