

Great Family Hikes IN GREY COUNTY

Whether you're hiking the Bruce Trail or visiting our local Conservation Areas, getting your kids on the trails is a great way to spend a summer day. We've chosen a few of our favourite family-friendly hikes to help you plan your excursions. Remember—when hiking with kids be sure to research your hike first for distance and difficulty, wear sturdy footwear, pack plenty of water and snacks (those homemade cookies may be the only thing that gets your crew over the next big hill) and bring along a map, a GPS or download the Bruce Trail app on your phone.



SILENT VALLEY NATURE RESERVE

LAT 44.555691, LON -80.750767

This recently acquired section of the Bruce Trail has it all—the story of a mysterious plane crash, a selection of great fossils and the remains of an early homestead, complete with an abandoned well. To begin your Silent Valley adventure, park at the North end of the 2nd Concession South near Bognor. From here, you will take the Silent Valley Side Trail. Depending on the length of hike you're after, you can take the longer Avalanche Side Pass or the shorter Wilson Homestead Side Trail. If you choose the Avalanche Side Pass you will see where glaciers made their way along the Niagara Escarpment, depositing giant boulders along the edge of the cliff face. If you take the Wilson Homestead Side Trail, you'll be visiting the ruins of an early settler's homestead, complete with a hand-dug well. Just past the homestead, you'll find the wreckage of a 1970's plane crash. Educational signage gives some history of the accident but be prepared for lots of questions from your little ones.



LOREE FOREST – Len Gertler Side Trail

LAT 44.513018, LON -80.375174

If you're in the Blue Mountains area, Loree Forest is a great family-friendly hike. Located off Sideroad 21, hike in on the dirt trail from the road to the Len Gertler Side Trail. The side trail takes you through a hardwood bush, with rocks and roots, before emerging at the top of the Georgian Peaks Ski Club. There is a deck here that makes a beautiful picnic spot overlooking Georgian Bay. Continue on the 5.5 kilometre loop, returning to your car on the same gravel path you came in on. Head to the nearby Ravenna Country Market to refuel with buttertarts and a Meredith's Ginger slushie.



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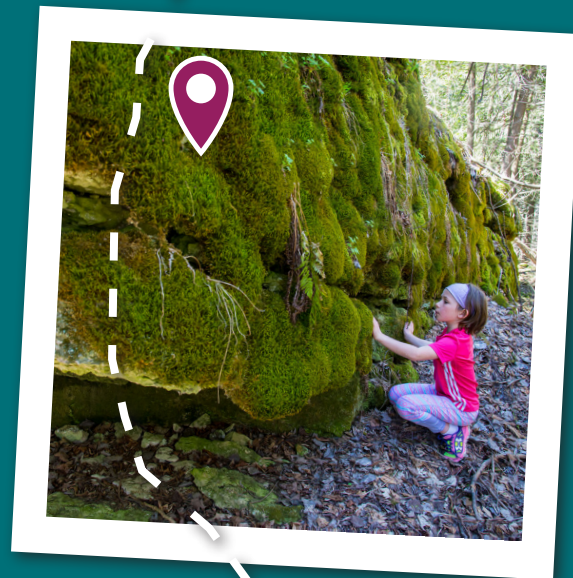


FOSSIL GLEN NATURE RESERVE

LAT 44.649464, LON -80.964433

For an epic adventure just outside Owen Sound, visit Fossil Glen. You'll see fossils that are over 430 million years old, an impressive variety of ferns and a coldwater, groundwater spring that empties in to a pond that is home to waterfowl and amphibians. This unique Bruce Trail section is about 6 kilometres north of Owen Sound, past Balmy Beach. Turn left on the East Linton Side Road and follow that to a sharp bend. Fossil Glen will be on your left. From the parking area, you can explore the area via the 3.1 kilometre Ron Savage Side Trail, the Glen Side Trail, the Gap Side Trail, the Lindenwood Side Trail or the Alvar Side Trail.

Fossil Glen's moss and fern covered dolostone ridge is home to an incredible array of fossils. Photograph the fossils and bring home the pictures to compare with Internet findings later or hit the library for a book on fossils that will help you unlock the mystery of the species that once lived here. The Glen is also home to an impressive variety of ferns. Photograph as many varieties as you can and see if you can identify them later.



BOGNOR MARSH

LAT 44.53833, LON -80.7819

One of the largest marsh systems in Grey County, if you haven't visited the Bognor Marsh yet, put it on your summer must-see list. Managed by Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, this area includes 668 hectares of escarpment upland forests, three major marshes, a Ducks Unlimited dam, Bruce Trail access, reforested areas and several small springs.

While there are 11.9 kilometres of trails, you can take even young children on an easy hike through the marsh along the boardwalks and up the observation tower for a great view of the entire marsh. Take time to read the interpretive plaques along the way, and be sure to pack your binoculars to see how many bird species you can spot along the way. You can see numerous duck species and pied-billed grebes. Watch for kingfishers in the dead trees, red-tailed hawks, ruffed grouse and great egrets. With washrooms and a picnic shelter on site, this is a great place to bring a group of kids. Pack a lunch and stay for the afternoon.

