

Fall color tour in Halton

by Roy Downs

Would you enjoy a scenic Sunday drive through some of southern Ontario's prettiest countryside, lush with colorful autumn foliage and resplendent in the beauty of its escarpments, quiet rural roads and pretty ponds?

You can do it this weekend (or anytime in October) on a 39-mile color tour especially designed for readers of Real Estate Marketplace—and it's right here at home in north Halton. You won't have to wander far from your own back yard!

This tour is primarily a trip through the north-west section of the Halton Region Conservation Authority's watershed—in the headwaters of the Sixteen Mile Creek. During the next two weeks autumn's colors should be at their peak and you'll see the wondrous colors of fall as you follow our scenic trail west and north of Milton.

Highlights

Highlights of the drive include visits to the Esquesing Conservation Area, Kelso Conservation Area, a section of the Bruce

Trail project, the Niagara Escarpment overlooking Milton, Rattlesnake Point Park, ponds in the Campbellville area, the Hilton Falls Dam, the beaver dam area on Sixth Line, the escarpment at Speyside, Scotch Block Dam and Reservoir and many other local stopping-points of beauty.

If you're inclined to take such a tour at a 50-mile-per-hour clip just to say you've been there, an hour will cover the distance. But if you're interested in stopping the car and investigating, or if you

want to pack a picnic lunch and eat it at one of the many excellent stopping places along the route, figure on spending anywhere from three hours to an entire day on the trip.

Don't forget to pack your camera and lots of color film.

Follow mileages

The following are approximate mileages between the points of interest. Follow them closely if you don't know the area, and you won't get lost.

Our tour starts in downtown Milton, at the Post Office corner. Head north 2.8 miles on Martin St. and Highway 25 past the scenic mill pond, Steeles Ave. and Highway 401 to Five Sideroad, also called Campbellville Sideroad.

Turn left (west) and drive .9 miles and turn right on the First Line at the Dufferin Quarry sign.

Follow First Line north for .9 miles and just past the quarry entrance on your left you'll see a laneway into Esquesing Conservation Area. Walk in the laneway and about 100 yards inside you'll find another laneway jutting off to the right. This property is a 37-acre bush with many trees over a century old. A man-made pond about 100 yards north of the laneway is a "must" for your trip. Take a walk through the bush if you have the time, it's a lovely spot full of autumn color. Signs on some of the trees show you their names.

Up the trail

Leaving the conservation area continue north on First Line and drive .5 miles to the entrance to Green Hills farm. Keep to the roadway's extension and pass the farm laneway where you can park your car.

Not highly recommended for people with bad hearts or weak legs, but a worthwhile trip for ardent hikers, is a trail leading straight up the side of the escarpment just north of this point. It winds through the edge of the bush

overlooking the picturesque horse farm, right up to the brow of the mountain, where a white sign at a "Y" in the trail indicated you have reached the Bruce Trail.

The Bruce Trail is a 280-mile nature trail through Ontario's most scenic countryside, beginning at Niagara Falls and heading north to Tobermory. One popular, scenic section stretches from Kelso Dam to Terra Cotta and this is one way (certainly not the easiest) to find it. Where the trail take a "Y" here, the path to the left takes you down to Kelso while a right turn leads you off toward Speyside.

Private

White blazes and arrows painted on the trees will help you keep on the route. The Bruce Trail people sincerely ask that you respect the private property over which the trail passes.

Leaving the parking area at the end of the First Line, head south for 1.4 miles back to Five Sideroad. Turn right (west) and go .5 miles, then turn left (south) onto the Town Line between Esquesing and Nassagaweya. Head south .8 miles to the intersection at Milton Heights and turn right to visit Kelso. Just below Highway 401 you'll see construction underway at the new Ontario Agricultural Museum, slated for opening in 1976.

Just .8 miles along this road is the entrance to the Kelso Conservation Area, a 380-acre public parksite including the Kelso Dam and an 80-acre lake, a swimming pool and wading pool with changehouse, a beach swimming area, the Halton Museum, Glen Eden Ski Club on the southern escarpment, boat rentals, nature trails and picnic areas. Admission is reasonable and if you go on a weekday there is usually no admission charge.

To get back to the scenic route, leave the way you came in, heading back east on the sideroad .8 miles to Milton Heights.

Turn right at the corner and head south for 1.1 miles to Steeles Ave. Turn right again and drive 1.8 miles (west) to Appleby Line intersection. At the top of the escarpment you'll get a good aerial view of the town of Milton.

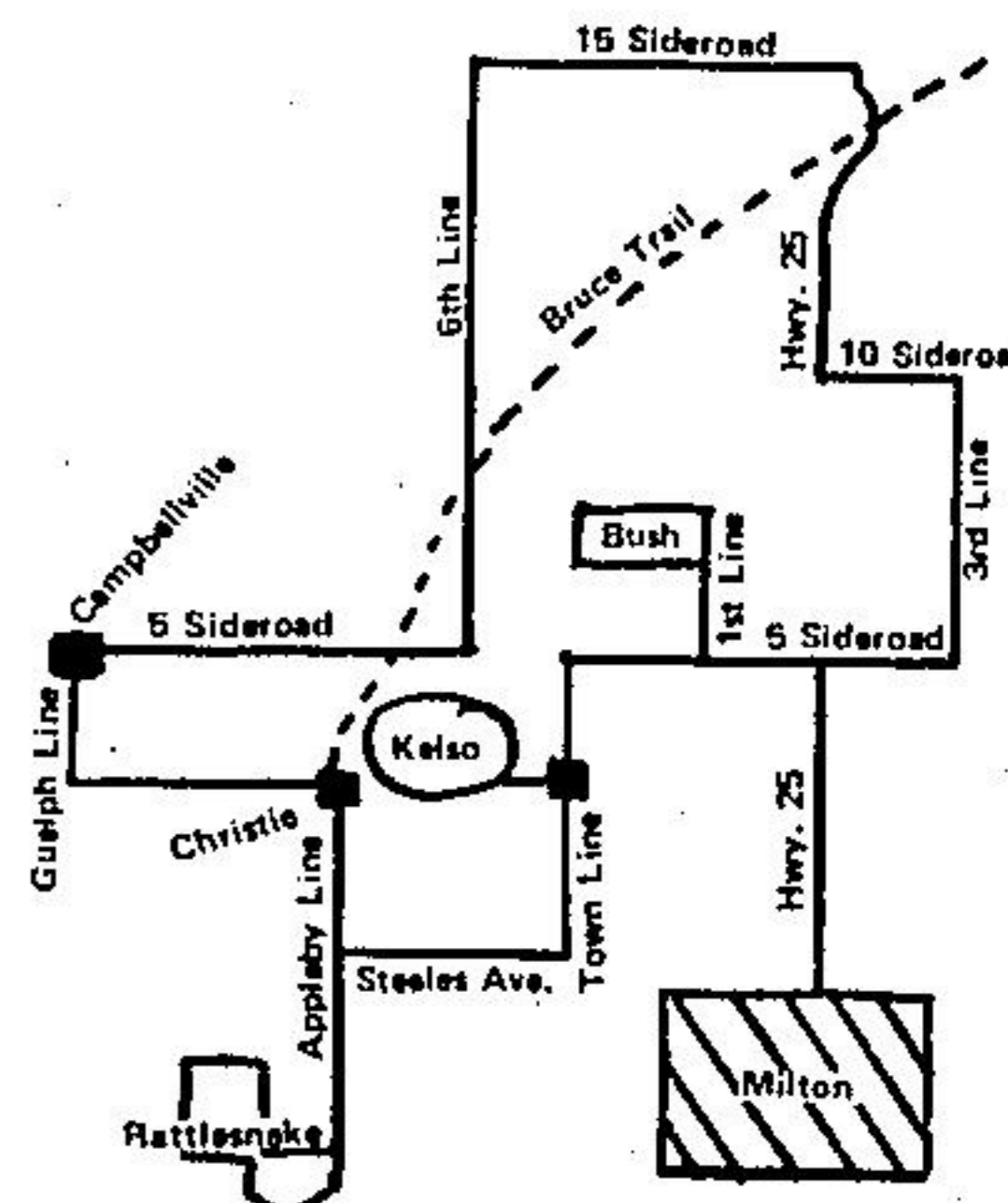
Two choices

Now you have a choice: turn left and drive south 1.5 miles to visit Rattlesnake Point Park, or turn right and drive north 1.2 miles to Christie. If you take the deviation to Rattlesnake you'll be heading back to Christie later anyway, so why not add it to the tour?

Rattlesnake (so named in the early 1800s because there were some rattlers in the area) has picnic tables and shelters, nature trails, gorgeous views from the brow of the escarpment and is adjacent to the conservation authority's game preserve. If you're lucky a walk along the brow from the lower portion of the park will afford you a view of the elk and buffalo grazing in the fields.

From Rattlesnake it's 2.7 miles back north on Appleby Line to the village of Christie, where on the right side of the road you can see the remains of the lime kilns that were once a major industry in Halton.

Turn left at Christie and drive 1.8 miles to Guelph Line, then turn right and go 1 mile north to the village of Campbellville. Here you'll find the village pond towned



Kelso Conservation Area, a central Halton beauty spot.



Sign at entrance to Hilton Falls Dam and Reservoir.



Picnic shelter is nestled in trees at Rattlesnake Park.



Winding 10 Sideroad east of 25, a beautiful road.

by HRCA), a beautiful privately-owned pond across the road from it, and some interesting shops.

Walking shoes

Turn right just past the pond at the main corner and head east along Five Sideroad for a distance of 2 miles to the Hilton Falls Conservation Area, site of a new dam and reservoir and some breathtaking nature trails. Away back in the bush is the historic Hilton Falls waterfall, site of an early lumber mill, but bring your walking shoes if you want to visit the site because you can't drive to it. The dam holds back a 1,800 acre foot reservoir. There's another section of the Bruce Trail right in the conservation area, leading to the Beaver Dam area.

Back on Five Sideroad again, drive east another 1.1 miles to the Sixth Line and turn left (north). You'll pass Halton Country Club golf course, a quarry, the beaver dam area (not visible from the roadway), some dense bush, the Sheridan College

Heavy Equipment School and Halton forest tracts. At a point 3.8 miles north of Five Sideroad, you'll reach 15 Sideroad.

Turn right, and head east 2.3 miles to Speyside corner on Highway 25. Another right turn takes you down 25 about 1.9 miles to the new Scotch Block Dam and Reservoir project. But as you round the escarpment just south of Speyside, slow down and take in the breathtaking view. On a clear day you can see the tall buildings in Toronto and the lake.

Pretty road

South .2 miles from Scotch Block Dam entrance is 10 Sideroad heading left (east). This is one of Halton's most beautiful rural roadways—the narrow, winding road is almost completely covered in trees and there are some beautiful new homes along this stretch.

Go .6 miles and turn left (north) on Third Line for .8 miles to the top end of Scotch Block lake. The lake is low at this time of year but it's a pretty sight, nevertheless.



Esquesing Conservation Area pond.