



Contact Marie LaRose
(705) 444-8230
Fax: (705) 444-8219
mlarose@sceniccaves.com

PRESS RELEASE

New Eco Adventure Tour offers excitement, adventure and education

A canopy walk through an enchanted forest, 1200-foot zip-line plunges high above the earth, and a chance to discover the secrets of the Niagara Escarpment -- it's all in a day's outing at Scenic Caves Nature Adventures

Starting this spring, you can explore the rugged forest of the Niagara Escarpment from an entirely new vantage point at Scenic Caves Nature Adventures -- the popular Blue Mountain/Collingwood-area attraction. The brand new Eco Adventure Tour offers heritage, flora, fauna, geology, and native history... all wrapped up in one hair-raising, heart-pounding package.

This is no ordinary trek through the woods. To start with, the forest canopy is a lot closer than it usually is. This is because you're walking through it rather than beneath it. And in place of firm soil and rock beneath your feet, there's a 25-centimetre wide plank. The plank is necessary, because you're 16 metres above the ground. Oh, a couple of cables also run on either side of you. You grip these to steady yourself, and you clip your safety lines to another pair of cables above you. They might feel a little, shall we say, thin -- hardly enough to support this gently swaying walkway high among the treetops -- but that may be because you're clenching them a little too tightly. Relax... the folks at Scenic Caves know what they're doing.

Guided by a pair of trained instructors who are also rope specialists, you cross a series of these narrow bridges between 200-year-old oak, maple and ash trees for a journey of more than half a kilometre.

As part of the Eco Adventure Tour, you're also invited to brave two "zip lines". Clipped to a cable, you soar from one location to the next... the longest zip-trip covering more than a third of a kilometre and dropping 48 metres from cliff top to earth.

Your tour also includes an introduction to the unique natural, geological and human history of the area. Some of these presentations are held high above the ground on platforms suspended among the treetops.

The Eco Adventure Tour is the newest addition to the adventure attractions at Scenic Caves, where you can explore ancient crevasses, discover a rich native history, and brave Ontario's longest suspension footbridge for an astounding view of Georgian Bay from high on the Niagara Escarpment.

It's the kind of attraction you'd expect to find in exotic jungle climes, and it offers thrills and experiences you can't find anywhere else in Ontario. The breathtaking zip-lines and dramatic terrain are unique to Scenic Caves.

Here's a taste of what you can expect on the two-and-a-half-hour tour.

First, you gather with your instructor and the rest of your group in a grand log cabin. Here, you're

More...

outfitted with all the gear necessary to take this extraordinary journey, including a helmet and a harness rigged with a couple of safety ropes attached to carabiners -- the clips you'll attach to the safety cables. After an introduction to the adventure ahead, you'll hike down and across Scenic Caves' suspension bridge, pausing to take in the magnificent view down Blue Mountain to Collingwood and across Georgian Bay.

At the canopy walk, a climb up a wooden stairway takes you to the first platform, a mere 4 metres above the forest floor. After clipping your safety lines to the cables, you take your first tentative steps in your trek among the trees. From here the walkway swoops and climbs, as the ground drops to six, 12 and finally 15 metres below. Every step is an adventure, as the walkway sways and dips beneath you like the deck of a boat on the rolling sea. But soon enough, you get your "tree legs", and you can relax enough to take in a unique squirrel's-eye view of the old forest -- gazing into hollows in trees high above the ground and catching glimpses of birds, such as the scarlet tanager, who rarely come down to earth.

Each airborne walkway crosses a span between two sturdy hardwoods -- 18 trees in all. When you finish crossing a span, you need to unclip one safety line and clip it to the cable on the next crossing. That's why everyone has two lines and a "buddy" to help out.

Along the way, you gather to learn the secrets of the Niagara Escarpment and the history of the Scenic Caves area. While looking down at the forest from a privileged point of view, you see the trees in an entirely new way, revealing their geometry and the hidden order of nature. Your instructors introduce you to the geological history of the area -- which is part of a UNESCO world biosphere preserve.

At the end of your 600-metre journey through the trees, you take your first zip trip from the final platform to the ground. Clipped securely to a pulley on the cable, you slide off the platform and soar through the trees to the forest floor. (For those who'd rather not zip down, there's a more sedate stairway.)

Safe on the ground once more, you tour the ancient caves and crevasses, and then clip on to one more zip line, this carrying you 380 metres from the clifftop perch of "Lover's Rest" back down to the grounds below. Exhilarated by the journey, you head back to the cabin to share your tales of the trek with your fellow adventurers.

Quick facts

Scenic Caves supplies you with the training, helmet and harness; all you need to do is make sure you wear running or hiking shoes.

The zip lines and treetop bridges were built with conservation in mind, and have been designed to harmonize with the natural environment of the area.

The Eco Adventure Tour costs \$85 for youths and seniors and \$95 for adults. You need to reserve ahead of time, which you can do by calling (705) 446-3515 or by visiting www.sceniccaves.com.

More fun at Scenic Caves.

In addition to the Eco Adventure Tour, visitors can take a self-guided tour of the historical caves; explore -- up close -- Ekarenniondi, the sacred rock which marked the route to the "Village of the Souls"

More...

in native spiritual tales; hike to scenic lookouts; and brave the longest suspension footbridge in Ontario. For those who prefer taking it easier, the landscaped grounds and trout pond provide a perfect picnic setting. And kids enjoy a few additional attractions: mini-golf and Gemstone Mining -- a chance to pan for real semi-precious gemstones.

Scenic Caves Nature Adventures is located in the Town of the Blue Mountains, at the top of Scenic Caves Road. This winding, picturesque route climbs the Niagara Escarpment just minutes from the town of Collingwood and the Village at Blue Mountain. It's about 20 minutes from Wasaga Beach, and less than two hours north of Toronto. For more information, visit www.sceniccaves.com.