

# Indulge

*Finger Lakes Wineries,  
Restaurants & Fall Attractions*



A Finger Lakes Times  
Publication - Sept. 2017





A pedestrian bridge over a waterway at Grimes Glen in Naples. Below is a gentle series of waterfalls that can be viewed along one of the Ontario Pathways trails.

# Hiking paradise

Family-friendly trails, waterfalls, autumn vistas beckon



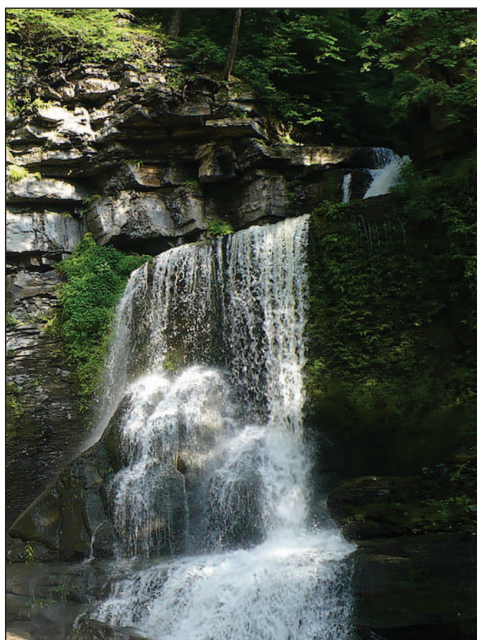
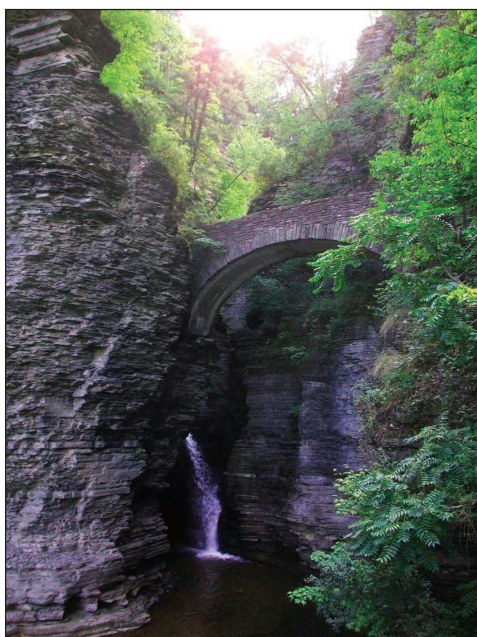
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**F**all is the perfect time to hike in the Finger Lakes. The rolling hills burst into majestic colors and the botanical terrain beckons for company.

“The great thing about the Finger Lakes region is the diversity of the landscape,” said Randi Minetor, author of more than 30 books on the outdoors, hiking and America’s national parks. A Rochester resident, she has written several books covering trails throughout Western and Central New York.





**Watkins Glen and Fillmore Glen (at left) state parks offer some of the best hiking in the Finger Lakes. Both feature several waterfalls.**

that factors such as weather and construction can impact trail status. You may want to call ahead to ensure the trail is open.

## Top picks

Watkins Glen State Park and Fillmore Glen State Park are Minetor's top picks for Finger Lakes fall hikes.

- **Watkins Glen State Park** is one of the most popular outdoor destinations in the Finger Lakes. The Gorge Trail spills over with natural beauty, taking you over and under 19 waterfalls, along spectacular rock formations and through the Cavern Cascade. Wear comfortable walking shoes and be prepared to help little ones traverse the steps.

The park is at 1009 N. Franklin St. in Watkins Glen. An entrance fee of \$8 per vehicle is collected at the main entrance from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily to November. Pets are not allowed on the Gorge Trail. Call (607) 535-4511.

- **Fillmore Glen State Park** in Moravia is named for Millard Fillmore, the 13th President of the United States, who was born in the Cayuga County village. The hiking trails offer beautiful views of five waterfalls, geological wonders and a botanically rich glen.

While you're there, stop by The Millard Fillmore Cabin, a replica of Millard Fillmore's childhood home, open daylight hours through mid-November.

The park is at 1686 Route 38 in Moravia. A \$7 vehicle entrance fee is collected from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends and holidays through mid-October. Call (315) 497-0130.

## Off the beaten path

Most locals are familiar with well-known places such as Letchworth and Taughannock Falls. But there are lesser known trails worth exploring, too.

A few miles from Watkins Glen State Park, **Havana Glen Park** in Montour Falls features the Eagle Cliff Falls trail, one of the shortest hikes in the region at a distance of less than half a mile.

"You start at the base of a creek and go up rocky stairs and all of a sudden, waterfalls start to reveal themselves," said Minetor. "There's one cascade after another until you hit the big one at the very top called Eagle Cliff Falls. It's a beautiful place to take kids and they can splash around in the creek under the watchful eye of their parents. If you want to go someplace different, this would be a good place to go."

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As summer wanes into autumn, so does the foot traffic, making most trails less busy. Another benefit of hiking this time of year? "No bugs," said Minetor. Be mindful of ticks, however, which are prevalent in the fall. Use insect repellent specifically made to ward off ticks, she recommended.

Bring water, of course, and snacks, which are essential, especially if it's hot, said Minetor. "Have something sweet and something salty. That's why trail mix is such a good thing. It keeps your electrolytes in balance," she said.

Another tip — turn off your cell phone. "Not because having your phone is intrusive but because a lot of these hikes are in places where there's no cell service so it just eats your battery," Minetor explained. "Put your phone on airplane mode or turn it off while you're hiking."

When planning a hike, keep in mind



# HIKING

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The park is at 135 Havana Glen Road in Montour Falls. Non-residents pay a \$2 per car parking fee. Call (607) 535-9476.

Labrador Hollow Unique Area encompasses more than 1,400 acres in Cortland and Onondaga counties. Its nature trail features a 2,000-foot long boardwalk that passes through a flora and fauna-filled wetland.

"It's along a hillside that just explodes into color in the fall," said Minetor. "There you are on this lovely, easy boardwalk where you can linger and look at the wetlands and see fish and birds and all kinds of things going on."

The boardwalk makes it the "ultimate kid-friendly" trail, Minetor noted and added, "Just down the road from it is another trail, not even a mile long, that leads to a beautiful waterfall. So you get a bonus feature when you visit there."

Labrador Hollow, on Labrador Road in Tully, is free and open year-round. Call (607) 674-4017.



Spencer Tulis / *Finger Lakes Times*

**Get a glimpse of the vastly different ecology in the area by hiking Ontario Pathways (above), Labrador Hollow Unique Area and Green Lake (bottom).**

## Views high and low

Set in the Bristol Mountains, **Ontario County Park** at Gannett Hill, near Naples, has more than 13 miles of multi-use trails scattered among more than 400 acres of open space and woods. A must-do is the Bristol Hills Trail walk from the west loop parking area to the overlook referred to as the "Jump Off." There you can take in one of the most spectacular views of the Bristol Valley.

The park is at 6475 Gannett Hill Park Drive in Naples. It is open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and entrance is free. Call (585) 374-6250.

A few miles from Ontario County Park, **Grimes Glen** in Naples features a trail that winds along Grimes Creek to two 60-foot waterfalls nestled among

tall evergreens and shale bluffs. Like so many of the region's waterfall hikes, it is a delight for the senses.

"The opportunity to wade up the creek is really fun. Take your walking stick because the rocks at the bottom are slippery," suggested Minetor. "The trail takes you to two beautiful waterfalls. It's just a really special place. And while it's very popular in the summer, in the fall it's a little less so. So you can go up there with your creek shoes — because the water is going to be colder — and really kind of have the place to yourself."

Grimes Glen is at 4703 Vine St. in Naples. It is open dawn to dusk with no entrance fee. Parking is free, but limited, so visitors are encouraged to park in the municipal lot on Mill Street.

Railroad, from Victor in Ontario County to Rush in Monroe County. Enjoy a leisurely walk through peaceful wooded and rural areas and over old railroad bridges and streams. To enter the trail in Victor, park at the Phillips Road Trailhead.

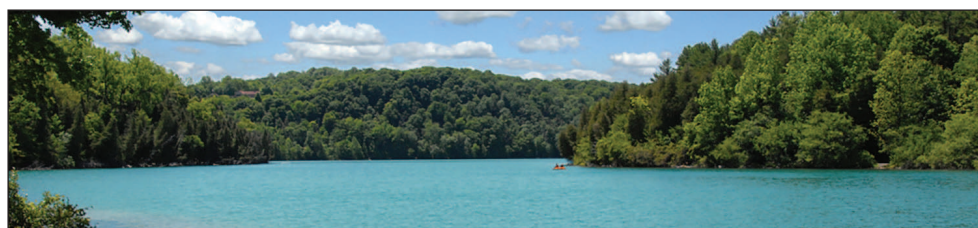
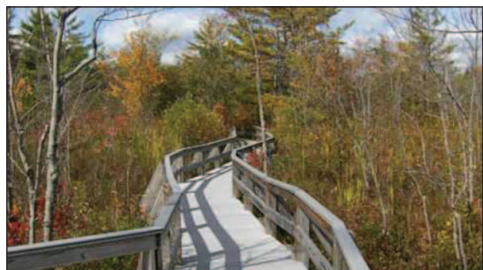
Ontario Pathways has 23 miles of multi-use trails along abandoned railroad beds in Ontario County. The main trail offers two paths of about 11.5 miles each — the "Canandaigua leg" from Canandaigua to Stanley and the "Phelps leg" from Stanley to Phelps. On the latter, there are also three short hiking-only loop trails that pass along Flint Creek.

## A different view

Green Lakes State Park in Fayetteville, just outside of Syracuse, is a case study in science and geology. Two uniquely spectacular glacial lakes are surrounded by an equally spectacular green forest. Round and Green Lakes, as they are named, are meromictic lakes, which means the layers of water do not intermix. This gives the lakes a mesmerizing blue-green hue. There are only a few such lakes in the country, making this park a must-see attraction.

"It's a really unusual place," said Minetor. "And it's an interesting place to take your kids to explore geology and learn something different."

The park is at 7900 Green Lakes Road, Fayetteville, and is open year-round from dawn to dusk. There is an \$8 vehicle entrance fee. Call (315) 637-6111.



## Great for beginners

Rail trails are great for beginning hikers or those simply looking for a more low-key adventure. A couple to check out are the Lehigh Valley Trail and Ontario Pathways, which can be explored for free year-round.

The main Lehigh Valley Trail follows a 16-mile path of the former Lehigh Valley