

Looking for a lazy afternoon canoe paddle suitable for a kid?

Try the Beaver River in Grey Bruce County.

The gentle flowing river is perfect for novice paddlers like our 22-month old daughter as well as my 60-ish folks who wanted an easy ride. Carved through a pre-glacial valley, the route offers panoramic views of the Niagara Escarpment and the surrounding countryside. The river valley provides excellent habitat for heron, great horned owl, white-tailed deer and beaver - though all we saw on our trip were a couple of blue herons.

Named by the Huron First Nations people for the numerous beaver found along its banks, the Beaver River indents the Niagara Escarpment for a distance of 40KM from Georgian Bay to Flesherton. In the mid-19th century, the river was used as a transportation route. Steep gradient in some sections, provided a source of water power for mill operations. The first stretch from Kimberley to Epping is 15km and takes about 2-3 hours. This stretch is rugged and scenic with mature trees along the banks that completely envelope river in some locations. Because of likely debris, logjams and beaver dams we skipped this section and put in at the second access point.

From Epping to Heathcote is about 10km and 2 hours. This stretch is more winding. The tree canopy opens up considerably. Area is ideal for families although swifts and fast currents may be encountered depending on water levels.

Hazel was a great passenger. She sat in front of both Aline and I during stretches and seemed to enjoy herself.