

Waterfall Wednesday Roadtrip

By Donna McCabe

We all know the change from Winter to Spring isn't the prettiest with all the mud and either snow or rain usually in the forecast. Lately, it seems all the sunny days have been in the middle of the week and the weekend having not so great weather - definitely not the kind to get out and chase waterfalls. I had been getting an itch to be out exploring and increase my numbers in the #NYSwaterfallchallenge so when a sunny & relatively warm day came along in the middle of the week, my husband and I decided to take the day off and head out. With only having one day, we had to keep the visits within a reasonable drive from home.

Recently, I had seen pictures of Wiscoy Falls which is located south of Letchworth State Park near Portageville. This one isn't in the book because it's on private land but the owners allow respectful public access. Being only 1 ½ hrs from home, I decided to make this our first stop. The view from the roadside is incredible but getting out of the car to walk around - under the bridge or up the creek bed - gets you up close to what is really a quartet of waterfalls. The first two are only a foot or so but the second two are much taller with multiple cascades. Beyond the waterfalls themselves is a dam but I only went as far as the second set of falls. I could easily have spent quite a bit of time here just enjoying the sound of the water and the sunshine.

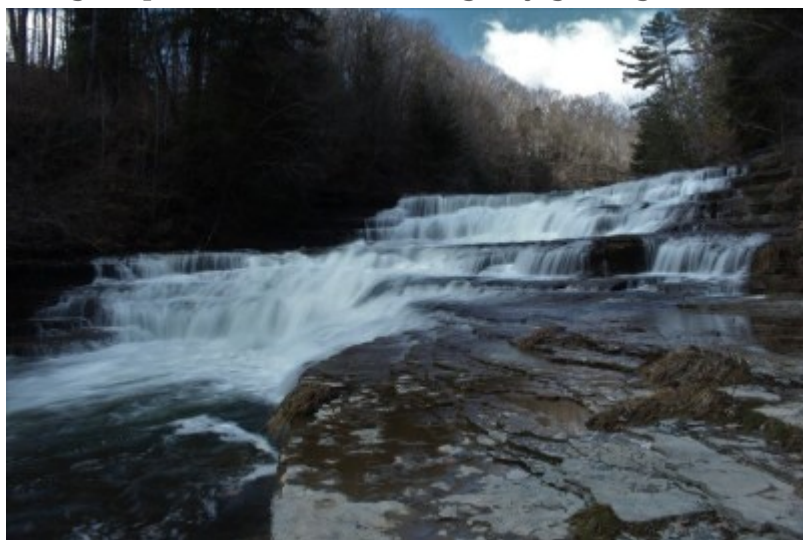


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Coming down Rt.27, the falls will be on the right-hand side just after a sharp curve. There are two small parking areas on either side of the bridge with the one on the north side having room for about three vehicles. You'll be able to see a bit of a worn trail from the parking area which will take you to the base of the first of the larger falls. Getting closer to the second of the larger one will take a bit of climbing but nothing overly difficult. There were boot prints from visitors before me and, thankfully, nothing else. Glad to see others being respectful and not leaving any garbage.



Our visit lasted about an hour or so and then it was time to head to our second spot. We headed 70 miles east towards the Finger Lakes and our second stop - the Keuka Lake Outlet Trail. I knew we had a bit of driving to get to this one but we had a perfect day for it. Our route took us through small communities and some back roads until we finally

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arrived in Penn Yan. The trail itself is just over 6 miles and stretches between the town of Dresden near Seneca Lake and Penn Yan at the top of Keuka Lake.

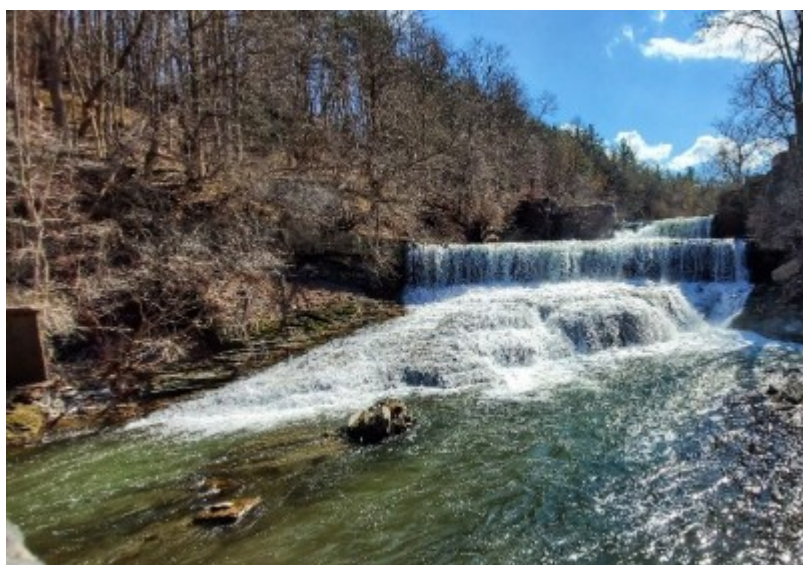
We found the small parking area near Rt.9 & Outlet Road and started walking east for less than a half-mile to find Cascade Falls. The best words I can think of to describe what you see are 'industrial archeology' ... these are the remains of one of the many mills that used to line the waterway. There is a great viewing platform with a couple of benches that overlook the falls. We ventured around what remains of the mill to get a better view and saw that graffiti decorates the insides of the buildings even though 'no trespassing' signs are there. We lingered on one of the benches to just enjoy the day and decide if we wanted to walk the trail to Seneca Mill Falls or drive. Even though it was only a mile or so away, we opted to drive since it was very windy and we would have been walking in to the wind the entire way.



A quick drive away is the parking area for Seneca Mill Falls. Once you park, you'll walk about a quarter of a mile of the trail before the trees open up and you see Seneca Mill Falls and the remains of the mill that gives it its name. The falls themselves are made up of two drops and, with the heavier water flow of spring, seemed to be almost as wide as they were

DIG THE FALLS

tall. If you take a close look you can see what's left of the dam on either side of the water. Above the falls is a great pavilion with a couple of tables and grills if you wanted to have a picnic. With all the open space, this is definitely an inviting spot to linger at. Although the wind was chilly, we wandered around for a bit then decided to drive the 3 miles into Penn Yan. We didn't go too much farther once we reached Birkett Mill. The trail here was paved and there is a beautiful new wood & steel bridge next to this still thriving mill.



The day got away from us all too fast and, given we had about a 2 ½ hr drive home, we decided to head out. We had a great time exploring these new areas and waterfalls. Maybe when it's warmer we'll head back and actually walk the trail.

As it is now, my count in the #NYSwaterfallchallenge stands at 39. Where should visit number 40 be?

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