Moores Brook Falls—Short, Sweet, & Nearby

A natural gem and short adventure within a stone's throw of New Minas.

BY PETER WALLACE

Moores Brook is a beautiful, short hike with a series of three waterfalls off Prospect Road in New Minas. The brook valley is a classic V-shape and winds through fractured and loose slate with water depth that varies according to the season and the amount of recent rain. The trail follows along this valley near the base of the brook, including fairly narrow places along a steep slope next to the stream. Trees in the valley are small (good for holding onto for balance). Further up the slope, larger conifers dominate initially but give way to deciduous trees at the end. I would rate the trail from moderate to high difficulty on account of the narrowness of the trail and the sections of steep slope. The pathway and rocks around the falls can be wet and slippery when traversing up or down. Children from about age 7 up enjoy the stream, the short walk, and climbing about the falls; younger children and elders with balance problems are advised to stay away. For those young at heart, there is a large dry tunnel under the highway to traverse as well. On hot summer days traveling in the stream under the canopy is cool and fun, but unfortunately the pools at the bottom of the falls are shallow and not swimmable.

Directions

The trail is about 3 km west of Kent Building Supplies on Prospect Road, or 1 km east of where Prospect Road junctions Highway 12. The trailhead is poorly marked as there is no bridge on Prospect Road over the brook, and the trailhead is very narrow and obscure. It is on the east side of the brook opposite the westernmost entrance to Morris Crescent. Park on Morris Crescent, out of the main traffic flow on Prospect Road, making sure you are not blocking the super mailbox access or the driveways of the nearby houses. Be extremely vigilant crossing Prospect Road, cars move fast around a bend in the road.

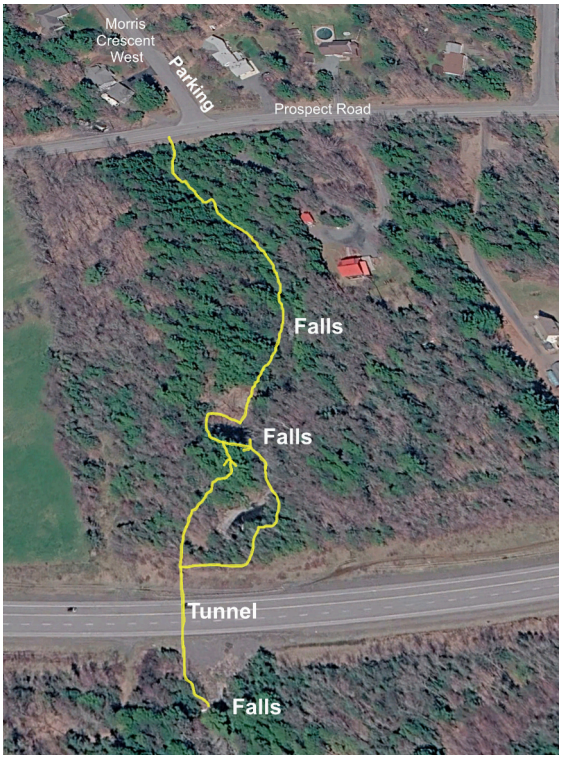
Description

It is an in-and-out trail, 450 m to the top of the last waterfall on the south side of highway 101. All of the falls have water cascading down steep slopes across the fractures perpendicular to the flow. The first waterfall, 150 m up the trail, is small with about a meter drop, and the next waterfall is a further 70 m along from there. This second waterfall is impressive, and the drop of about 3 m appears even higher. The

Left above: The waterfalls are impressive and a highlight for kids, including Emery and Izzy Warner. *Right above:* The slopes along the trail are steep in places and require steady balance. PHOTOS: ALAN WARNER.

trail goes up the left side of these falls and is quite steep, but there is a rope attached to the trees to help in getting up. I never trust unknown ropes and would not use this one except as an aid for balance—do not put your full weight on it!

The trail above the second waterfall passes by a deep-water channel in the bedrock and then around a large depressed area below the highway. Here the trail becomes obscure but look carefully to discover a vague path up and over the large culvert containing the brook. A short distance ahead from there is another smaller but walkable dry culvert which goes under the highway to the last waterfall. Much of this area looks like it was modified when highway 101 was constructed, leading me to believe that the dry second tunnel was originally the culvert put under the 101 for Moores Brook, but then it was replaced for an unknown reason. This tunnel is a perfect, mysterious, and safe way of getting to the third waterfall. Upon exiting the culvert, make your way left down the road bank and over the large boulders to the base of the last waterfall. Alternatively, go right to a farm road and then bushwhack down to the river and waterfall. The stream remains charming and attractive further upstream with an informal path along the shore for those keen to explore it.



Moores Brook trail map. SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS.

A spooky tunnel adds to the adventure. PHOTO: ALAN WARNER.

To return, after exiting the dry culvert, stay straight and find the trail to the west of the brook heading downstream. Past the second falls, descend into the valley, cross the brook, and rejoin the original trail on the east side. Do not stay on the west side of the brook all the way back to the Prospect Road above the valley because the trail ends up in a pasture with electric fencing at the road. The other option upon exiting the culvert is to return exactly as you came up the valley. Be careful of the slippery footing if descending this way.

The valley is interesting with its steep V-shape in bedrock that developed during storms in recent times. This contrasts with many of the wide valleys draining north off the South Mountain that were formed by melt water of the glacial ice that lay across central Nova Scotia during the end of the last ice age. There are lots of interesting mosses and plant life along the stream where they have found shaded, cool, and moist homes. This hike is great for older kids and youth as it is short, full of twists, turns, and possible climbs. For adults, it is a quick, beautiful, and memorable get away from the bustle of town.

Peter Wallace is a retired geologist and leads a weekly hiking group in the region.