

## NATURE RESERVES

# George G. Newton Nature Reserve

Perched upon the rolling Wyoming moraine not far inland from Lake Huron, lies the George G. Newton nature reserve. This former farm property was left to the Federation in 1982 by Elizabeth G. Osbaldeston, a descendant of the pioneering Huron County conservationist for whom the reserve is named. The roughly 32-hectare site consists of a forested ravine, cut by a stream running west toward the lake, and old farm fields that have been mostly replanted with white pine. What makes this reserve particularly interesting is the example it sets of how farmland can be restored ecologically.

The river valley and slopes are mostly covered with a native stand of White Cedar and mature forest of maple, beech, hemlock, elm, ash, butternut, and other hardwoods. Typical spring ephemerals such as trilliums and hepaticas dot the forest floor. The upland areas, however, have been replanted with pine. Thanks to the rolling topography of the site, the pine stand does not have much of a plantation feel and some hardwoods appear in breaks and along fence rows. The only remaining evidence of the old homestead is the stone foundation, some escaped garden plants, and a very old apple and pear orchard on the northwest corner of the property. Along the creek, remains of a dam mark the site of an old gristmill.

The forests and old fields of the Newton property are home to Goldfinches, Field Sparrows, Cedar Waxwings, and Eastern Wood Pewees. The Huron Fringe Field Naturalists are the official stewards of this property. Mrs. Osbaldeston made a generous donation to help with the future care of the reserve.

### *How to get there*

The reserve lies southeast of Goderich, between Hwys. 8 and 21. From the hamlet of Holmesville, take Cut Line Rd. west to Porter's Hill (marked by a red schoolhouse on a hill). Turn north on Porter's Hill Line (also called the 6th Concession) and proceed to the next intersection. The reserve is on the southeast corner of this crossroads. Turn east onto Kitchigami Rd. and park along the south side of the road; you can enter the reserve about 60 metres to the east of the intersection. A visit to this reserve makes a good side trip from the Pinery or Point Farms Provincial Park.