



WONDERS OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR REVEALED

After 78 nominations were submitted and more than 6,000 votes were cast online, the voting public has determined *Downhome's* 7 Wonders of Newfoundland & Labrador. Since April, when we launched our 7 Wonders campaign looking for your favourite singular natural landmarks, we've learned of our readers' personal connections to some of the province's most beloved attractions, and discovered many spectacular sites that are relatively unknown, even to locals. On the following pages, we reveal the 7 Wonders of Newfoundland & Labrador, accompanied by our readers' most breathtaking photos of each. And while a picture might be worth a thousand words, nothing beats being there in person. So if you haven't yet experienced all 7 wonders first-hand, consider adding them to your summer vacation plans.



Chad Peddle photo

The Tablelands

The barren, brown Tablelands stand out amid the lush greenery of Gros Morne National Park. The area owes its unique appearance to a material originating in the earth's mantle, forced to the surface during plate collision millions of years ago. The Tablelands Interpretive Trail, an easy 4-km (return) path, takes hikers straight into the heart of this geological wonder. During the summer months, visitors may opt to join a guided walk while learning about the fascinating landscape. Or, for those who like to step off the beaten path, there is a special off-trail guided hike that takes adventurers to the top of the Tablelands to enjoy an incredible view relatively few venture to see.



Aiden Mahoney photo

The Dungeon

Many years ago, the land above two side-by-side sea caves collapsed near the tip of the Bonavista Peninsula, forming the attraction ominously named "The Dungeon." Seawater rushing through the two channels is a sight to behold, making this a cherished landmark for residents of and visitors to Bonavista for many years.

"My mother, Margaret Russell, now 83 years old and residing in Bonavista, recalls her childhood living in nearby Lance Cove. They would frequently sail in and out of the two caves on Sunday excursions with her father and siblings. She remembers it distinctly, sculling in and out each

one, shouting out inside the caves and listening to their voices echo loudly," wrote Fred Russell in his nomination statement.

Today a gravel road leads to this natural wonder, part of a provincial day use park located at Cape Bonavista – also an excellent place for viewing whales, puffins and icebergs in season.



Linda Dowswell photo



Erik Mclean photo

Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve

Perched on the southwestern tip of the Avalon Peninsula, Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve is home to approximately 70,000 seabirds including Northern gannet, black-legged kittiwake, common and thick-billed murre, razorbill, black guillemot and cormorant. Many Northern gannet, in particular, nest on "Bird Rock," a sea stack mere metres from shore, making for some of the best close-up views of seabirds in the province. A 1-km footpath leads visitors to the cliff edge overlooking the spectacle, and an on-site interpretive centre is open from May through October, with staff offering guided tours.



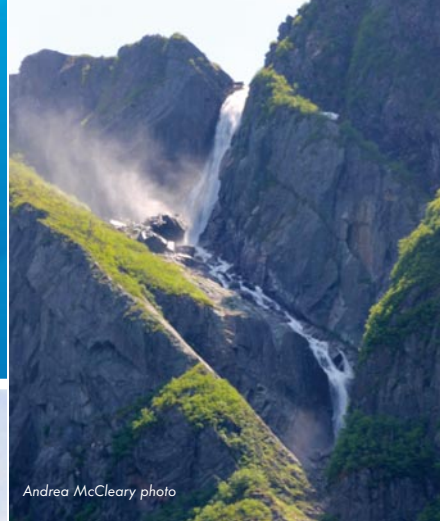
Hilda Bradbury photo



Glenda Quinn photo

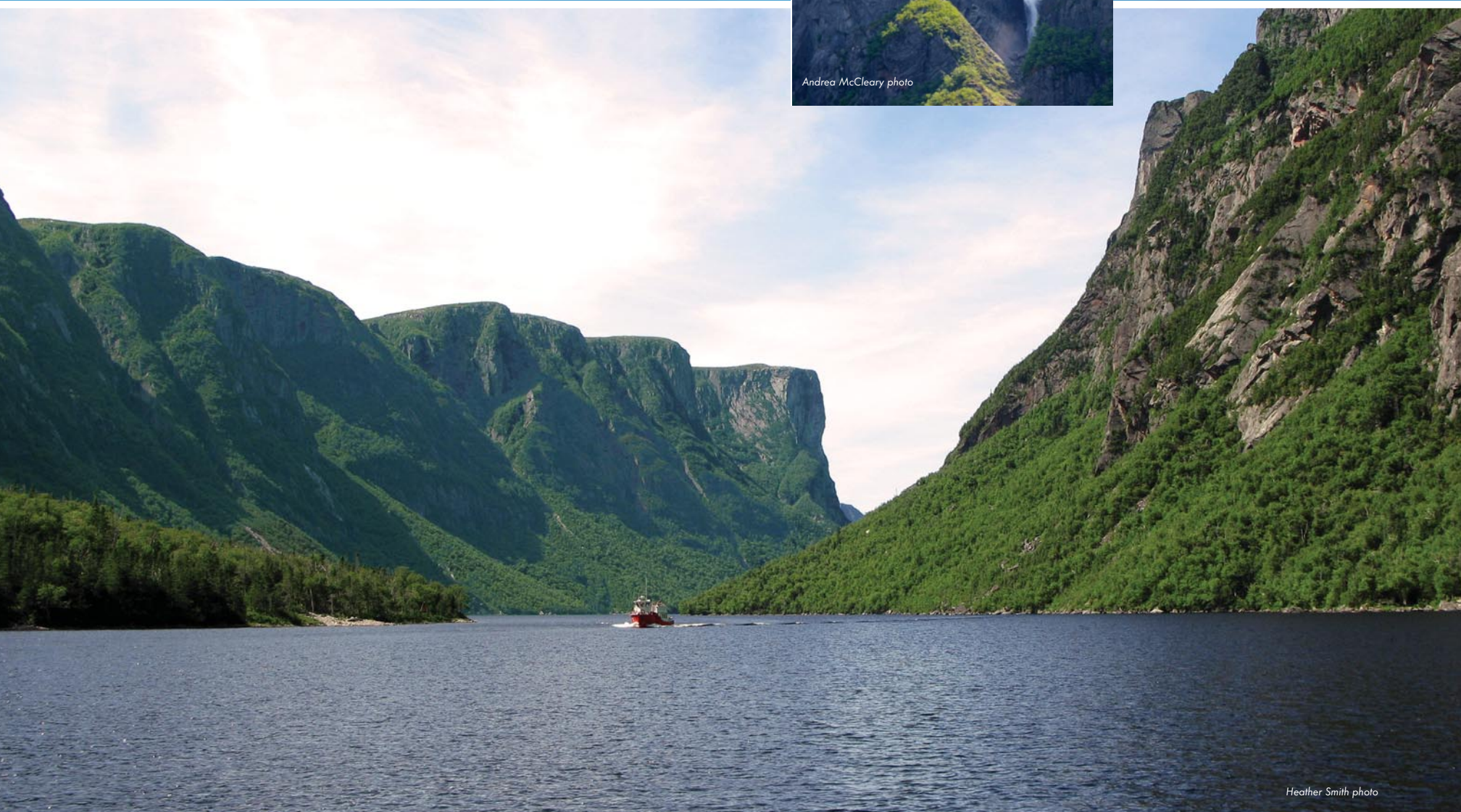
Western Brook Pond

In the heart of Gros Morne National Park is Western Brook Pond, a land-locked freshwater fiord carved out by glaciers thousands of years ago. A 45-minute hike leads to a dock where local tour company BonTours offers interpretive boat tours of the 16-km body of water, where stunning waterfalls can be seen cascading over 600-metre cliffs. Seasoned hikers have



Andrea McCleary photo

the opportunity to see Western Brook Pond from above by taking a day-long hike to the top of the gorge and back with Clem's Trekking Adventures (in partnership with BonTours).



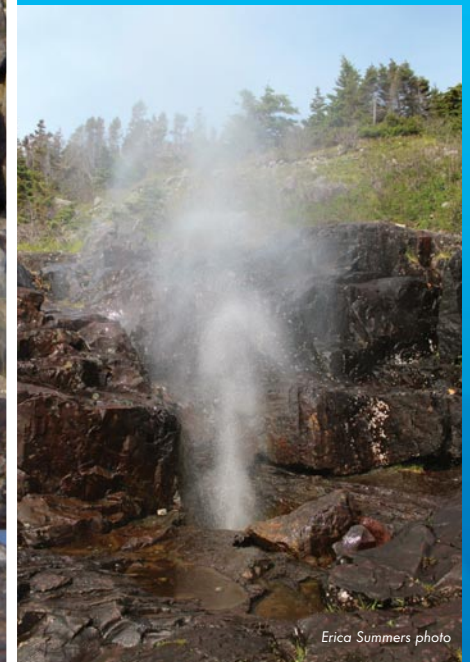
Heather Smith photo



Larry Mills photo

The Spout

Located along the coast between the Goulds and Bay Bulls on the Avalon Peninsula, the spout is an incredible wave-powered geyser that shoots water high into the air – a spectacle that can be sighted from a distance. The natural phenomenon is located near the halfway point of The Spout Path, a section of the East Coast Trail that also takes in dramatic sea cliffs, sea stacks and waterfalls. The strenuous trek takes a full day and is recommended for experienced hikers only.



Erica Summers photo



The Wonderstrand

North of Cartwright, Labrador lies the magnificent Wonderstrand (also known as Porcupine Strand), a stretch of sandy coastline so vast it looks like it belongs in some sunny southern clime. Measuring more than 50 km in length, relatively few have walked along this remote, uninhabited sandy beach. Local tour operator Experience Labrador takes tourists by boat to this hidden gem for an unforgettable hiking experience that often includes seabird and wildlife sightings. But The Wonderstrand isn't just a

pretty place – it's an historic one, too. Archaeologists have long been drawn to the area, occupied by ancient cultures as early as 9,000 years ago – and some believe this coastal oasis is referred to in the Viking sagas.



Dennis Flynn photo



Tanya Northcott photo

The Arches

Located on Newfoundland's west coast just north of Gros Morne National Park, The Arches are made up of three massive, natural rock archways carved over the ages by tidal action and pounding surf. The attraction is the focal point of a provincial day use park that includes a picnic area. In her nomination statement, Doris Hugh recalled a surprising experience she had at The Arches several years ago.

"We were to head north on the west coast after spending a couple nights in a very comfortable B&B, sort of harbouring from the tail end of a hurricane. On the highway we saw The Arches...there was a beautiful rocky beach with the stunning arches for decoration, and best of all the splashy water pictured in each arch," wrote Doris. "We got out of the car and headed to the tumbled rocky beach in the chilly wind and found the beach held more than rocks – dead fish littered the beach, we presumed tossed out of the water by the stiff wind of the day before."



Robert Carter photo



HONOURABLE MENTIONS



Paul Taverner photo

Twin Mountains, Cape Ray

“This is a favourite tourist stop for [travellers] as they arrive on the Marine Atlantic Ferry from the mainland...The mountains are separated from the Table Mountains and you have to pass through them on the TCH...[They are] also known by the local people as ‘Dolly Parton’s Boobs’! Now these mountains are going to be defaced because the Muskrat Falls towers are going to be erected there. Note the clearing for the towers on the picture.” – Nominated by Paul Taverner



Charmaine Freake photo

Brimstone Head, Fogo Island

“Brimstone Head is known as one of the four corners of the earth and is very important to me! My mom was from Fogo and as a kid I used to go there every summer to visit my grandparents...I remember going on long walks around and up Brimstone Head before there was ever a path or steps, and the stories my pop would tell me about the area...I asked my wife to marry me at the very top with our Labradoodle at our side!” – Nominated by Steve Mahaney



Wayne Osmond photo

Lomond Sinkhole, Great Northern Peninsula

“Once only known to locals, this amazing natural wonder can be found near Wiltondale on our Great Northern Peninsula. This cavernous hole was formed when the limestone rock gradually dissolved and collapsed with water erosion. The sinkhole is about 45 m in diameter and maybe 30 m or more deep. The cascading waterfalls really set it off, and the climb down with the aid of a few ropes placed there makes you think you’re going to some prehistoric world.” – Nominated by Wayne Osmond

Editor’s note: Visit Downhomelife.com/magazine to watch a video taken inside the Lomond Sinkhole.



Edna Ezekiel photo

The Tide, Harbour Main

“The Tide is a local swimming hole in Harbour Main and has been there forever, continuously flowing freshwater from Harbour Main Pond, miles in the country...I live directly above it, so I had ample opportunity to grow on that beach, which is bordered by the saltwater of the Atlantic, where we used to dip in the saltwater and race to the freshwater for a sauna-like effect...”

– Nominated by Edna Ezekiel



Man in the Mountain, near Corner Brook

“When I was a child my family would drive from Badger, my mom’s hometown and where we lived, to Corner Brook, my dad’s hometown. On the way, every time, my dad would pull over to the side of the road and take me out of the car and show me the Man in the Mountain. He would patiently wait for me to find it... It is truly amazing!” – Anonymous nomination



Arch Rock, Little Catalina

“Arch Rock is a unique geological formation. Not only does it contain an Ediacaran fossil, it is also a composite sea arch. It has three distinct arches, two at right angles to each other, making it an extremely rare and beautiful natural formation...Arch Rock is a 10-15 minute walk from the main wharf in Little Catalina...As teenagers we would walk right out to Arch Rock and climb on top. (It is accessible at low tide.) I often take my kids there for a hike and to play on the beach nearby.”

– Anonymous nomination

Editor’s note: Visit DownhomeLife.com/magazine to watch a drone video of Arch Rock.



The Friar, Francois

“At approximately 680 feet, The Friar overlooks the isolated community of Francois (Frans-way) on the southwest coast. The Friar itself is beautiful and rugged...the hike around the Friar is not an easy one but takes you across waterfalls, around ponds and down to the shoreline for a good two- to three-hour hike (with lots of stops for pictures).” – Anonymous nomination