

Sports/recreation

Go camping near your home

By **ROCKY GRIMMER**
Times staff writer

Avid campers will travel hundreds of miles to get away from it all. But for Mississauga campers who don't want to travel that far, there are a number of sites close to home yet far enough off the beaten track to provide a natural setting.

One of the nearest camping sites is Terra Cotta Conservation Area.

Located on the Niagara Escarpment, Terra Cotta is approximately 30 minutes away from Erin Mills Parkway and Dundas Street. It's less than an hour's drive from most parts of Mississauga.

Terra Cotta boasts 137 campsites for tents, hard-top trailers and large trailers, in 40 acres of varied terrain. The campsites are located in secluded forested areas by the watershed of the Credit River.

Despite Terra Cotta's closeness, Mississauga campers do not patronize the area in great numbers, says head gateman Garth Gourlay.

"We get campers mainly from Bramalea and Brampton, some from Georgetown, the United States and even Germany," says Gourlay, who travels from Clarkson to work at Terra Cotta. "I know a lot of people who drive up from Mississauga for a drive in the country and are surprised to find out about the place."

Terra Cotta is not exactly wilderness camping, but it does offer a balance between civilized comforts and nature.

In the flat and open part of Terra Cotta, there are the modern conveniences of showers, flush toilets and a fast-food outlet. Firewood is available for those who prefer campfire cooking. There is no restriction on the time liquor can be consumed, although it must be kept at the campsite.

On the more natural side of Terra Cotta, there are five ponds fed by spring water and two small streams. These ponds offer anglers some trout fishing. And for those inclined towards bird-watching, the marshy land beside the ponds has herons, bitterns, ducks and a few Canada geese among its frequent visitors.

Wildlife abounds at Terra Cotta. Muskrats, turtles, deer and groundhogs wander about oblivious to the campers.

There is no boating allowed and swimming is restricted to a 1.2-acre swimming pool.

For campers who want to take a peaceful walk, the Bruce Trail, which runs through the area, offers solitude.

Campers can enter at any time and pay for the nights they stay. The charge is \$3 per night for the campsite and \$3 per vehicle. Terra Cotta offers a group rate of \$10 for 20 people plus \$3 per vehicle. There are no hook-ups for water or electricity.

Campsites can be reserved from one night to 30 nights after which a renewal is needed. The 30-day fee is \$60. Reservations can be made by calling the Credit Valley Conservation Authority at 451-1615.

There are usually more than enough unreserved sites available during the week and on the weekends but on long weekends, when business is brisk, it's best to get there early.

Like other conservation areas in the Peel-Halton region, Terra Cotta is designed for families and community groups. When it comes to campers who do not fit into any of these categories, it is up to the gateman to decide who can get in.

This restriction is designed to keep rowdies out and allow good peaceful camping for the patrons.

Terra Cotta Conservation Area is



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Jason Scott, of Brampton, cools off sisters Jennifer and Julie

located on the Sixth Line, north of Highway 7 in the village of Terra Cotta. To get there go north on

Winston Churchill Boulevard, or up Mississauga Road, head west at Victoria Sideroad, go into the village

until the Sixth Line. For further information call 451-1615 or Terra Cotta at 1-877-9650.



MORRIS LAMONT/THE TIMES

Gerry Vanderende enjoys the great outdoors with daughter Bethanie and wife Geraldine

Where to camp

You don't have to travel a long distance to enjoy a good weekend of camping.

There are several campsites within an hour's drive of Mississauga. Following is a list of those campsites.

Albion Hills: Highway 50, 3 miles north of Bolton. \$5 per night. 151 un-serviced, family campsites on 20 acres. Showers, flush toilets available. Call 1-594-4921.

Coral Park Camp Grounds: 7620 McNiven Rd., Milton. Privately-owned. \$8 for unserviced site, \$9 with hydro. Weekend rates \$18 and \$20. Snack bar, washrooms available. Flat-bottomed boating allowed on the manmade lake. Mainly for families. Call 1-878-1484.

Milton Heights: North of 401, 1 1/2 miles west of Highway 25 on Tremaine Road. Privately owned. \$7 per unserviced site for two, \$1 for every extra person over 12, \$1 extra for hydro. 100 sites. Laundromat, swimming pool, snack bar, movies.

Waterfalls Park and Lodge: On Lake Black River on Sixth Line near Georgetown. Privately owned. \$6 per unserviced site for family of four, \$7 with hydro. Weekend rates \$14 and \$16. Swimming permitted in the lake. Small snack bar on site. Call 1-877-6412.

Rockwood Conservation Area: 7 miles east of Guelph on Highway 7 at Eramosa River. \$3.50 per night and \$3.50 per vehicle. \$1.50 for hydro. Canoeing, swimming, hiking, washrooms, snack bar. Call 519-927-5338.

Kelso Conservation Area: Exit

from 401 at Highway 25, south to Steeles Avenue West. \$7.50 per night for one to five people. \$3.50 for each additional car. Swimming, sailing, canoeing, hiking, washrooms, snack bars. Halton County museum is also on the site. Campfires not allowed. Call 1-878-4131 for reservations.

Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area: On Appleby Line near Milton. Same price structure as Kelso. Mainly for picnics and hikes. Call Halton Region Conservation Authority at 1-878-4131.

Monora Conservation Area: Just north of Orangeville off Highway 10. \$6 per night for up to six people. Washrooms without showers. No snack bar.

Summer Place Park: 4 miles north of Grand Valley on Highway 25. Privately owned. Mostly seasonal camping. Some unreserved sites available. \$6 per night, \$7 with hydro and water, \$8 with sewer hookup. Call 1-928-5408.

Rock Hill Park: Highway 10 to 89, then 5 miles east to RR 4 near Shelbourne. Privately owned. Most sites taken by seasonal campers. \$5 per night, \$7 with hydro and water. \$325 per season. Call 1-925-2211.

Terra Cotta Gardens: Off 27 Sideroad, 1 mile south of Terra Cotta Conservation Area. Privately owned. Seasonal rates only, starting at \$270. Call Ken Heltcher at 1-877-7735.

Gulliver's Lake Park: On 7th Concession in Freelon. Seasonal rates only. \$40 per site. Mainly for trailers. Call 1-659-7300.