



Geology on “The Rock” Newfoundland’s Johnson Geo Centre

No matter where you go in Canada, outstanding geo-logical features provide fascinating attractions. In many cases, curious sightseers are on their own interpreting the wonders before their eyes. In others, marvellous interpretive centres go above and beyond in their efforts to explain the nature and secrets of our land.

One such centre is the Johnson Geo Centre in St. John’s, Newfoundland. Constructed in 2002 next to Signal Hill National Historic Park, it ranks as one of the most distinctive buildings in the province. The Geo Centre shows the amazing story of our planet through the geology of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Like the facets of a crystal protruding from the earth, the centre’s glass-encased entry entices you to explore for the rest of the promised gem. To do that, you descend to the depths to explore the building’s 2,970 sq. m. of underground floor space. But first, your gaze is captured by the impressive display of our solar system suspended in the grand hall.

Below ground level, theatre presentations and interesting displays reveal the secrets of the creation of lands and seas, mountains and rivers, and the causes of earthquakes, volcanoes, tidal waves, and the ice ages. Special exhibits teach about icebergs and the Titanic, as well as gas and oil exploration.

Some of the walls inside the building’s perimeter are exposed 550 million-year-old natural rock, highlighting the characteristics of Signal Hill’s geology. On days of heavy rain or snowmelt the walls become wet as water seeps through the cracks and fissures. Visitors can use conveniently placed water bottles to spray the natural rock surface to see how the “look” of the wall changes when wet.

The Geo Centre uses a highly efficient, environ-mentally friendly source of energy—geothermal heat. Six geothermal wells, drilled 152 m. deep, conduct heat into liquid-filled plastic piping. The piping loops back up to heat exchangers that feed the heated solution to pipes around the building.

Outside the centre entrance, a giant “rock garden” of Newfoundland and Labrador’s most significant rocks and minerals provides a place to marvel, stroll, and plan the next stage of your trip. For more information about the Johnson Geo Centre, go to www.geocentre.ca.