BMN HIKE REPORT

Burke South Summit and Pika Peak (August 26, 2017)

by Terry Puls

View from the summit of Pika Peak, looking southeast toward distant Mt. Baker. Golden Ears Mountain is in the left middle ground. *Terry Puls photo.*

Pika Peak has been on the BMN list of hikes for a few years now, and in previous years the weather was too unfavourable to warrant a visit to this summit in Pinecone Burke Provincial Park. This year, given the forecast of a warm and sunny day, most in the group that showed up for the hike seemed determined that this was going to be the season that the BMN hikers summited Pika Peak.

Six of us met at the gate on Harper Road under clear skies and with the prospect of comfortable hiking temperatures, and headed off using a variety of trails: Lower Elevator, the Coquitlam Lake View Trail, and Bean. Once we reached the top of Bean, we decided that it would be best to split into two groups, one of which would summit Pika Peak and one that would settle for the south summit of Burke.

The four of us with our sights on Pika Peak headed off at a faster pace up the South Slope Trail. We noticed the effects of our long and dry summer in that Pritchett Creek was just a trickle this day. Soon we reached the old bulldozer, abandoned now for many years, and then continued to climb, all the while enjoying the blueberries along the way. Another result

of our warm, dry summer was the lack of mud on the section of trail just prior to Sweat Team Falls. This section of trail can traditionally be a bit muddy.

Once across Coho Creek we continued to gain elevation, now in the old-growth forests on Burke Mountain. When the trail began to level off just before reaching Lily Pad Lake, the lead hikers startled—and were startled themselves—by several grouse which flew off as we passed through the area. We continued through the lake district and made a brief stop at the next lake, Hourglass Lake. After a drink and a few blueberries, we continued on. Shortly after passing Ted Kay Lake, we came to a great view of Coquitlam Mountain; here we paused again for another drink and a few photos.
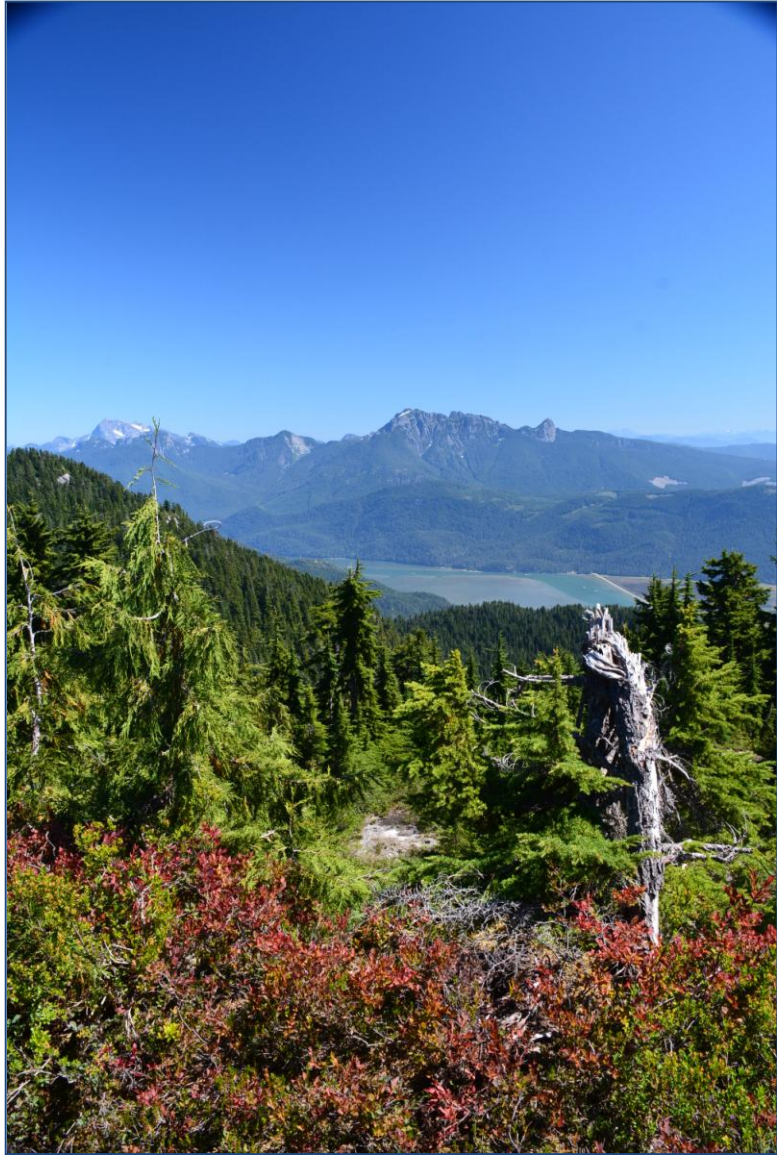

Lunch at the viewpoint just past Burke South Summit. Coquitlam Mountain looms behind.
Terry Puls photo.

We decided we would push on and have lunch at a viewpoint just past the south summit. We continued onwards along the Burke Ridge Trail, admiring the mountains to the west and the small tarns that dot the ridge. Once we reached the junction to the south summit, we made for a rocky outcrop just a bit past and below the actual summit and had our lunch. As we ate we could see Pika Peak ahead.

After lunch and enjoying the views, we pushed on, dropping down from the south summit to a picturesque meadow which had a few wildflowers still in bloom. From here we started our ascent to Pika Peak. The trail goes around the east side of the peak and up a draw. Finally, we reached the point where we would have to leave the trail and make our own way up to the summit. The ground being very dry, it was extremely slippery, and great care had to be taken in pulling ourselves up aided by blueberry bushes and trees. Just before reaching the summit, I noticed a turkey vulture sitting near the summit cairn. Unfortunately, by the time the rest of the group made it to this location, the bird had flown off, although one other person saw it take flight.

View from the summit of Pika Peak, looking east across Pitt Lake to Golden Ears Mountain. Robie Reid is visible at the left edge of the picture.
Terry Puls photo.

Once all four of us had summited the peak, we enjoyed taking in the 360-degree view. After spending an hour in the warm sun at the summit, we reluctantly headed back, happy that we were able to spend a perfect August day on this peak.

On the way back we could see the trail work that had been done by those we had left behind, and we met up with them shortly before reaching Ted Kay Lake. Two in our reunited party stopped for a swim at Hourglass Lake, and the rest of the group proceeded back to the trailhead on Harper Drive.