

# BMN TRIP REPORT

## Burke Ridge (October 20, 2007)

### *Suggestion for a Rainy Day: Climb Burke Mountain*

**Mark Johnston**

On Saturday, October 20, the BMN Hikers re-climbed Burke as far as the Ted Kay Lake/Dennett Lake Connector. We put together this trip, which was not part of our original schedule of hikes, at the last moment in order to accommodate author Jack Bryceland, who is planning to include Burke Ridge/Summit in *103 Hikes*' 6<sup>th</sup> edition. (It does not appear in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition). Altogether there were seven of us—plus Glen's dog Mandy.

Whereas we'd made our first trip to the ridge top on a beautifully clear late summer day, we weren't so fortunate on our second climb. In fact, the contrast in weather couldn't have been greater. In a word, it was wet! We had to contend with lots of water falling from the sky: everything from fine rain to heavier rain to wet snow—not to mention the water dripping down from tree boughs. We also had to deal with considerable water on the ground. We began on logging roads that had become running streams; whenever we hiked level sections, we faced puddles the size of small ponds; and then as we reached higher elevations, we got into wet snow that made for very slippery and even treacherous footing. We kept thinking, "Once we leave the logging roads . . .," "Once we get beyond the clear cuts . . .," "Once we get into the old growth . . . our route will be drier"—but, as it turned out, it never was.

And then there were the creek crossings! When we came to Pritchett, we found it a raging torrent, impossible to cross. But we noticed just downstream—a short bushwhack from the trail—a log bridging the creek, and made our way down to it. The log was slippery as ice, but, by sitting on it and straddling it with our legs, we were able to scoot across. Later, we stood on the bank of a voluminous Coho Creek. The usual crossing at the waterfall was out of the question. Our "high-water" crossing, also, was less than inspiring, but we found that by launching ourselves from a large rock, we could get most of the way across and land in six to eight inches of water near the opposite bank. After these crossings, our crossing of Hourglass Lake's outlet—though it, too, had little margin for error—seemed downright easy!

As we continued to ascend, we found ourselves in deepening snow, making our climb up to Ted Kay Lake and then the ridge top a challenge—both in terms of route-finding and footing. Although we had intended to go on to the summit, we decided that just reaching the ridgeline would be destination enough. When we reached the Dennett Lake Connector, we were standing in foot-deep snow, the trees heavily flopped, with a few fat, wet flakes falling.

Having achieved the ridge top, we dropped our packs and took a few minutes to adjust clothing and gulp a few bites of food. But no one seemed interested in lingering, and before long our party began to move out. I was the last to pack up and go. Just before I left, a sizeable flock of small birds alighted way up at the tops of the evergreen trees, but I could not identify the species. I waited a little longer to see if they would take to flight, but, unlike us, they seemed happy stay awhile.

We headed back by the way we had come as far as the connecting road that runs between the Coquitlam Lake View Trail and the main road. When we reached this point, we turned left toward the main road, judging that it would provide drier footing. But to reach it, we had to cross Pritchett Creek again, although considerably upstream from our earlier crossing. Again, it was impossible to cross it on the trail, but just to the right a couple of remnant logs—slightly separated and very slippery—provided a bridge immediately above where the swollen creek plunged in a cataract, before continuing to churn and race along downhill. I found this crossing—again made by scooting across—the most thrilling of all as one couldn't help but look down between the logs at all that white water falling away below! As I neared the other side, I noticed Glen, who had crossed ahead of me, and Ian, who had yet to cross, both racing downstream along opposite banks. Then I saw what they were after: there was Glen's dog Mandy standing frozen midstream, some distance down the creek. Apparently, Mandy had tried to wade across at the trail, been overwhelmed by the force of the flow, and been carried downstream!

After all of us were safely across—Mandy seeming none the worse for her unexpected “swim”—we continued out to the main road. Glad to be at last on the homeward stretch, we picked up the pace as we hiked down the road and back to our cars.

In retrospect, while I think all of us would say we were glad to have been out, we would also admit that it was quite okay to have cut the hike a bit short! Now, let's see, what else might we have done on such a rainy day?

*(Note: A photo of this hike may be found in the now published 103 Hikes in Southwestern British Columbia, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., on p. 103. The photo, snapped on our return, shows Ian re-crossing Coho Creek. Mark, standing on the opposite bank, offers a helping hand.)*