

BMN HIKE REPORT

Lakeview Trail (April 13, 2019)

By Mark Johnston



Two hikers at the Lakeview Trail's lone viewpoint. *Ian McArthur photo.*

The guidebook *105 Hikes In and Around Southwestern British Columbia* says of Buntzen Lake's Lakeview Trail: "Save for a rainy day." Of course, when we had planned the hike, we couldn't have known what the weather would be. But as fate would have it, we had a very wet day. Meanwhile, any of us who would still have preferred dry weather could take some comfort in knowing that *105 Hikes* flagged our outing as especially appropriate for a wet day.

We had originally scheduled this hike for March 9, but due to icy trail conditions, decided to postpone it until April 13. When we rescheduled the hike, we didn't realize that our choice of date coincided with that of the Diez Vista 50K Trail Run. Though the annual run has its start and finish at White Pine Beach on Sasamat Lake, the course includes much of the Buntzen Lake trail system. Thus, as we hiked along

Pumphouse Road, we met runners heading oppositely. And later, when we returned along the east side of Buntzen Lake, we encountered more runners, including our club's own John Reynolds and Steve Chapman!

We began our hike on the portion of the interpretive Energy Trail that traces Buntzen Lake's south arm. Peering through a screen of conifers, we spotted five common mergansers out on the water, two males and three females.

After crossing the floating bridge across the arm, we continued north along Pumphouse Road to the start of the featured Lakeview Trail. Leaving the runners behind for the time being, we had the trail mostly to ourselves. Right away, one of our party pointed out a moss-covered rock. I recognized the dark green moss as *Polytrichum*, which is fairly common in the Buntzen area and seems to do well on rock surfaces. When we had finished examining the moss, we began climbing via a series of switchbacks through a ground cover of yellow-green step moss, the contrast between the brown-needle-covered path and its borders of florescent green quite striking.

The Lakeview Trail undulates along the east side of Buntzen Ridge. On occasion it rises toward the top of the ridge, while at other times it dips to touch the lakeside trail. As we made our way along it, the rain eased a bit, maybe even stopped for a while. At the top of a rise, beneath the west-side power line, we had a view of cloud- and mist-shrouded Eagle Ridge. Then we headed down into thick forest where the occasional giant still stands, altogether a handful of trees that for some reason or another were never cut down. Here, and at many places along the trail, we heard both the Pacific wren's bubbling warbles and the dark-eyed junco's "looser" trill.

We crossed a number of creeks via bridges, some of the structures having been recently rebuilt. We crossed in turn Valentine, Umbrellawort, Twin Flower, and Sitka Creeks, all of them having strong flows. After crossing to its north side, we followed upper Sitka Creek for some time. When we left the creek, and after climbing one more rise, we came to the trail's lone viewpoint. Although the rain was picking up again, we had nice prospects of North Beach and the long ribbon of Swan Falls. We could also see many runners along Powerhouse Road.

Thinking it might be nice to have lunch at North Beach, we left the viewpoint and descended via another series of switchbacks to the lakeshore. But when we crossed the swinging bridge and walked out onto the beach, we were met by a bitterly cold breeze blowing off the lake. Although a raven that was perched on a branch overhead seemed unperturbed by the weather, we, finding it too windy and wet for our liking, decided to press on. We walked along Powerhouse Road to the new staircase that gives access to the east-side Buntzen Lake Trail. Then, proceeding along this trail a ways, we were able to find a sheltering rock that provided a relatively dry place to have our lunch. There were a few mosquitoes about, but, thankfully, they weren't biting. Many of the runners passing by complimented us on our choice of shelter. As they continued to battle the elements, I imagine they were a bit envious of our more comfortable situation.

After lunch we kept up a steady pace all the way back to the parking area. Along the way we tried to encourage the runners coming toward us; took note of the many east-side creeks, a number of which also had very strong flows; and completed our bird list for the day, observing another female merganser, a Canada goose or two, and a great blue heron.

Save for a rainy day? Well, I would say the Lakeview Trail is worthwhile in any weather, and that means it is fine for a wet day, too!