

BMN Hike Report

Lindsay Lake (Saturday, September 7, 2013)

By Mark Johnston



Demelza Lake – one of the many small lakes that make up the “lake district” on Eagle Ridge.
Ian McArthur photo.

With the forecast calling for morning showers and afternoon cloud, we decided to forego our planned trip to the Harrison area and instead stay closer to home. We settled on a hike to Lindsay Lake, a hike having similar statistics to the one we had planned (Bear Mountain), though arguably more challenging.

Under heavy, grey skies and with rain in the air, five of us piled into Ian’s Civic and drove the short distance to Buntzen Lake. By the time we arrived at the lake, it had begun to rain lightly. We weren’t sure what to expect but remained hopeful the prediction of some late afternoon clearing would prove to be correct.

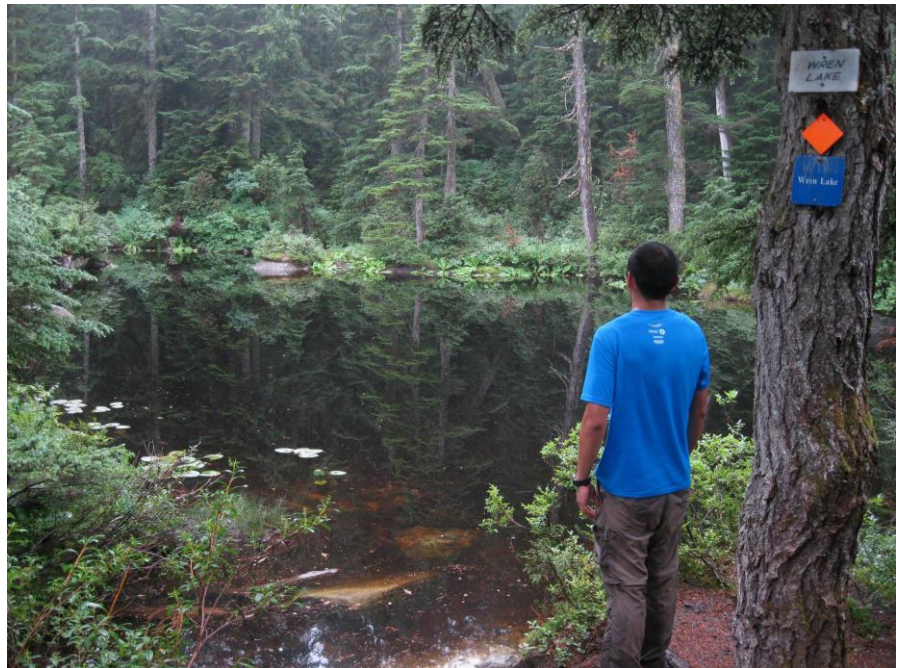
After adjusting our gear, we started up the trail, embarking on the steep switchbacks to Polytrichum Lookout. We climbed at a measured pace, happy to stop a couple of times en route. As we climbed through the densely-treed second-growth forest, we no longer noticed the precipitation, and indeed we completed the rest of the hike without any significant rainfall. However, the air remained humid and the bush mostly wet.

At the lookout, while the rain had begun to abate, the clouds had not, and our views were extremely limited. At times we could make out the top of Buntzen Ridge and the lower slopes of Mt. Seymour beyond, but at other times we could barely see the foreground conifers. So, when continuing on we reached the well-signed junction known as El Paso and the loop portion of the hike, we opted to head for the lake district first, hoping that by the time we circled around to the viewpoints the clouds would have lifted enough to reveal what lay below them. It seemed a good plan, the only drawback being that the trail to the lakes is becoming overgrown and we had to push through the encroaching bush, especially black huckleberry and blueberry, while the leaves were still laden with water. Shades of our previous outing on the Perimeter Trail, but this time we were better prepared!

We passed Foy Falls, reduced to a trickle; paused at mirror-like Wren Lake; then chose to depart from the Main Trail for the lake district's East Loop.

A BMN hiker gazes over Wren Lake.
Ian McArthur photo.

We found this loop particularly overgrown, but hiking it allowed us to spend time on the shores of secluded Robin and Demelza lakes while still getting a glimpse of beautiful Chickadee Lake, better seen from the well-travelled Main Trail. We heard and saw a surprising number of birds. We heard the flicker's loud *klee-yer* and the Steller's jay's repeated *shack-shack-shack*. We also saw small flocks of unidentified songbirds.



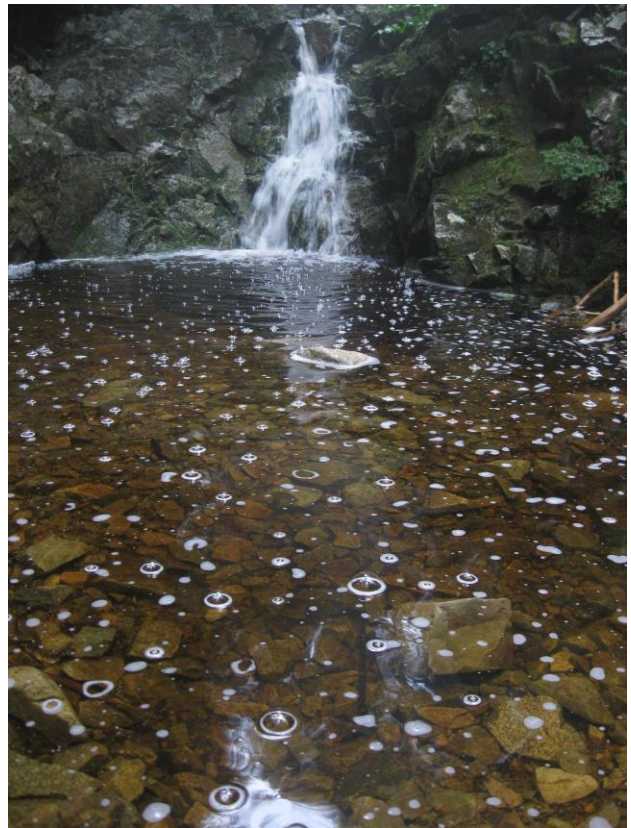
On the approach to Demelza Lake, the clouds were brightening and we began to see a bit of blue sky. We looked for a place where we might rest for a few moments, and finally found a suitable spot in the woods on the far side of the lake. As we sat on logs or on the ground just off the trail, the sun streamed through, backlighting the dripping foliage to fine effect.

From Demelza to our turnaround point at Lindsay Lake, we enjoyed increasing sunshine. We paused a couple of times to admire the circumscribed beauty of Nancy Catch Creek canyon and its upstream basin. We took a longer break at Lindsay Lake, the deepest of the dozen or so ridgetop lakelets and ponds. We might well have had lunch at the lake but, ever hopeful of views, decided to push on to the lookout known as The Pulpit, surely one of the best of our local mountains' numerous viewpoints.

Alas, as we descended the short distance to The Pulpit, we re-entered the clouds and had no views. Keeping faith, we sat down to have our lunch and wait. From time to time the clouds would brighten and we were able to see the disc of the sun. Occasionally, the sun would break through. Once, for a few fleeting seconds, we saw the tops of distant mountain peaks. But, unfortunately, the clouds never dissipated. And, as it was at The Pulpit, so it would be at the other viewpoints. The forest was shrouded in fog—exquisitely beautiful in its own way—and at the lookouts one could see only a wall of cloud.

From the last of the upper viewpoints, Barton Point, down to El Paso, the trail is quite steep, with many roots and rocks to negotiate. The old-growth forest is also quite remarkable. We saw one trailside yellow cedar that was approximately 2.3 m in diameter, and another cedar only a little smaller in size.

Just before El Paso, the trail crosses Buntzen Creek. We decided to rest by the creek for a few moments. Here the creek plunges over a short rock step and forms a small pool. Bubbles ringed with foam drifted with the current and showed a curious resiliency to bursting as they touched partially submerged stones or slipped over a logjam as though they might carry on downstream.



**Buntzen Creek waterfall
and enduring bubbles.
*Ian McArthur photo.***

When we regained Polytrichum Lookout, the sun was now prevailing and we finally had our distant views. We could see Buntzen Lake below, the ridge on the other side, and Seymour and Elsay more fully than before. And departing from the viewpoint, we enjoyed sunlit forest all the way back to our vehicle.

While it would have been nice to do our planned hike up Bear Mountain, our excursion on Eagle Ridge was a good reminder that we have an abundance of riches in our own backyard. Even though it's nice to get out and explore other places, we really don't need to travel very far to experience nature's bounty.