

BMN TRIP REPORT

Munro Lake Viewpoint and Dennett Lake (August 30, 2009)

by Mark Johnston



Resting by Dennett Lake on Burke Mountain. Photo by Ian McArthur

A BMN trip to Munro Lake viewpoint is becoming an almost annual affair. Since this lookout, with its commanding view of Munro Lake, the Golden Ears group and much of the eastern Fraser Valley, was rediscovered and a route blazed out to it, the Hikers have returned to it with some regularity. In October 2006, a work party visited the viewpoint; in July 2007, our group returned to the lookout; and then, to make up for having cancelled last year's scheduled trip, we visited the viewpoint for the third time this year.

Whereas in July 2007 we had six participants, this time we had seven: some of the same people and a couple who had never been to the viewpoint before. Given that it was a warm day, we soon settled into a measured pace, stopping at all of the lesser viewpoints along the way. The uppermost of these viewpoints is just off the established route and now has its own little semi-loop trail and is likely receiving much more attention. It looks down on Minnekhada's knolls and marshes, the Pitt River and out to the eastern valley.

Upon reaching the top of the switchbacks, we were pleased to be able to try out the new trail to Munro Lake. The standard route is notoriously rocky and wet, and often a running stream. The new trail apparently retraces an earlier but long-abandoned alignment and parallels the standard route, but has a softer footbed and remains on dry ground. Undoubtedly, this will become the favoured route.

We circled around Munro's southernmost body of water which has been long isolated from its larger, northern lobes, and resumed climbing, now toward Dennett Lake. We had to push through some deadfall, and higher up—even in this driest of summers—negotiate a number of muddy stretches. Arriving at the viewpoint junction, we turned off the main trail and doubled back to the lookout. The trail to the viewpoint is still rudimentary, but well-marked.

We had a long, leisurely lunch atop the rocky lookout. (After lunch, a few of us even lay down, heads resting on packs, and dozed off a bit.) The air wasn't as clear as we would have liked; nonetheless, we were able to enjoy our bird's-eye view of Munro Lake. Apparently, our feathered friends like the view as well. At one point, a small hawk—Cooper's or sharp-shinned?—circled just overhead; a little later, a red-tailed hawk appeared off to our left; and later still, a raven wheeled only a few metres above us.

Eventually, we tore ourselves away from our aerial perch and headed on to Dennett Lake. It is always nice to while away some time by this lake's placid waters and this day was no exception; but it was disheartening to see what some thoughtless campers had left behind: a liquor bottle, an empty tin, a hatchet, a canvas sheath. Still, one of our party who was visiting Dennett for the first time was so moved by its beauty as to remark that he plans to return to the lake as often as he can.



Sundew plants by Dennett Lake. These carnivorous plants are easy to miss because of their small size. Photo by Ian McArthur

Although one of our members decided to hike back directly, the rest of us opted to make a side-trip to see Munro's larger bodies of water and the breached dam. Again, it was discouraging to see what some had left behind: a tarp, a sleeping bag, a lawn chair. Maybe we need to organize a clean-up party?

Back on the main trail, we descended fairly quickly. Lower down, the forest has become increasingly open, affording views of the Pitt River lowlands. We got back to our cars considerably after our publicized time but no one was complaining. It had been a nice, sauntering kind of day, and any cares had long since dropped away.