

BMN Trip Report

Chineside Traverse (Sunday, May 3, 2009)

by Mark Johnston

After Ian moved to a neighbourhood above the Coquitlam/Port Moody Chines, he began to explore the many trails, streets and roads that crisscross that prominent escarpment. In time, he got the idea for an east-west “Chineside traverse.” Last September, three of us walked the greater part of the proposed route, east to west, and identified a couple of trouble spots. Then, on November 23, Ian led a club hike along the new route, this time from west to east. There were ten participants.

Given the interest in our inaugural Chineside traverse, we decided to reprise the hike as a springtime stroll. For this second go-round -- on Sunday, May 3 -- nine of us rendezvoused at Miller Park Community School. Except for our leader Ian, none of the other participants had taken part in the first Chines hike.

The Naturalists’ hiking group admires two large Douglas-fir trees in Pinnacle Creek Ravine Park. Photo by Ian McArthur

Under generally sunny skies, we started down Miller Ravine, but soon left the ravine and followed surface streets to Blue Mountain Street. From the end of Blue Mountain, we continued our descent, now via the ridgetop trail between Schoolhouse and Noble creeks to Port Moody Secondary School. Then, upon reaching the secondary school, we began to work our way laterally across the Chines. Although occasionally using residential streets, we



kept for the most part to trails. We meandered up and down through mature second-growth forest and crossed the many creeks that have cut deep north-south ravines in the escarpment. As we walked, we took note of the plentiful birdlife. In the early going, we identified flicker, song sparrow, towhee, robin, and chickadee. Between Orrley and Axeford creeks, we stopped to enjoy an orange-crowned warbler's telltale trill. And we were happy to botanize as well, keeping an eye out for trilliums. We saw many having flowers that were freshly white; others, flowers that were a light pink; still others, flowers that were deeply pink verging on purple. It was remarked that colour is an indicator of age, the white flower being youngest.

After crossing Gatensbury Road, we came to Goulet Creek. We were now entering Chineside and James Parks. We took a break, enjoying the sun's rays streaming down through the forest canopy. When we resumed walking, we passed through another lengthy stretch of second-growth forest.

We emerged from the woods on Brookmount Drive. Walking along Brookmount and also utilizing Viewmount Drive/Place, we reached Baker Elementary School, where we ate our lunch. On this section of the traverse, we were more on surface streets than in the forest, but, as compensation, we did have -- as some of the street names imply -- good views of the mountains.

Perhaps a highlight of our hike was negotiating the somewhat steeper terrain of Pinnacle Creek Ravine Park. Here are a number of mature Douglas-fir trees; in one location along a ridgecrest, there are four very large trees, any one of which provides good reason to stop and admire.

Upon leaving Pinnacle Creek Park at Cedarbrook Elementary School, much of the rest of the traverse was via residential streets. We crossed a powerline and followed Windward Drive to Mariner Way. Four of our party, desiring a shorter day, headed down Mariner; the rest of us made our way along a number of other harbour-themed streets to the intersection of Spuraway Avenue and Fleet Street. From the intersection we dropped down the gas pipeline right-of-way to Como Lake Avenue/Sharpe Street, and then walked north parallel to the Loughheed Highway to the bus loop. A most enjoyable day!

(Other species of birds seen and/or heard included eagle, crow, nuthatch, winter wren, varied thrush. Leaving my companions at the bus loop, I walked home, heading north along Hoy Creek, and recorded these additional species: downy [or possibly hairy] woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, white-crowned sparrow, pine siskin.)