

BMN HIKE REPORT

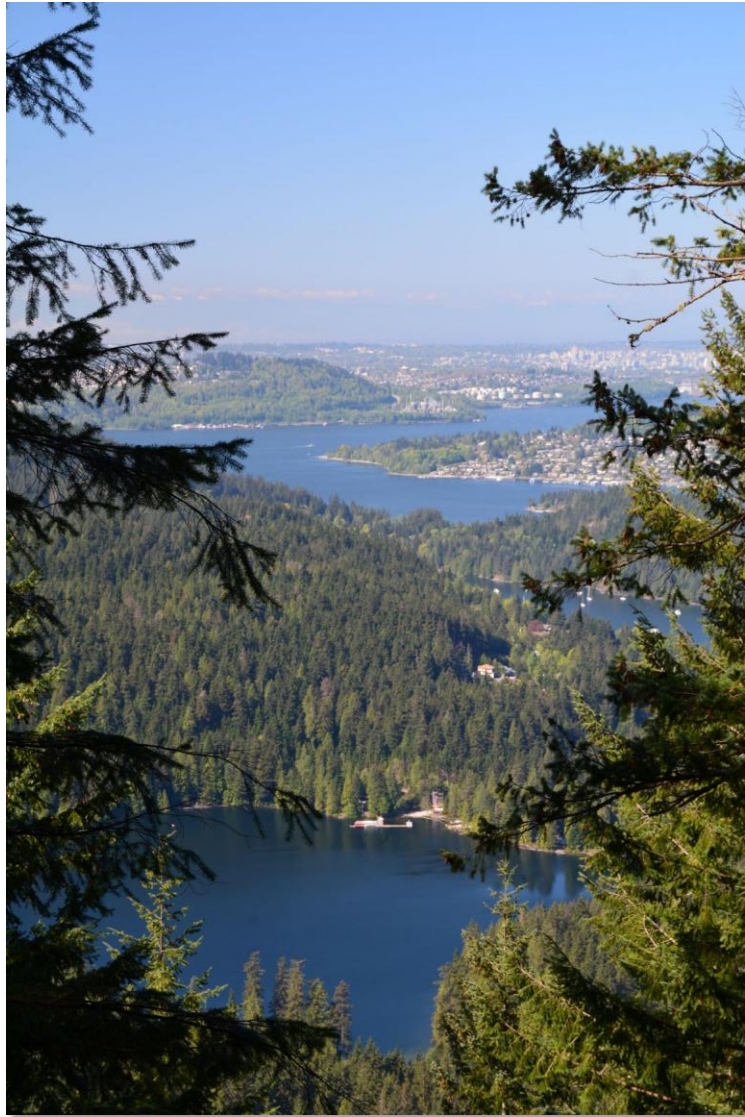
Sugar Mountain and Sasamat Lake (May 5, 2018)

by Mark Johnston

On a sunny spring morning thirteen of us turned out to hike up Sugar Mountain. Sugar Mountain is a high point (388 m) at the southern end of Buntzen Ridge. It is not so much a standalone mountain as it is a part of the ridgeline that reaches its summit (559 m) some distance to the north. On previous hikes we had hiked along both the lower east and west slopes of Sugar Mountain, but we had never chosen a route that would take us to the top.

We began at the White Pine Beach parking area and hiked via Buntzen Ridge Trail to Sugar Mountain Trail. The former trail crosses under a north-south power line and climbs at an easy grade to the latter, which is an old road. On the road, we continued our climb, and in doing so had to negotiate some steep rocky sections. At a place where the grade lessens, we emerged from the trees and obtained good views to the west. We paused here for a spell and, while enjoying the distant views, had something to eat and drink.

Next, we came alongside the margin of the power line right-of-way and followed it round to the saddle between Cima Amanecer (Buntzen Ridge's high point) and Sugar Mountain. Just before reaching the Diez Vistas Trail, we turned back south on Sugar Mountain Ridge Trail. This trail trends upward over a



View from Sugar Mountain, looking across Sasamat Lake toward the confluence of Burrard Inlet and Indian Arm, and beyond to the cities of Burnaby and Vancouver.

Terry Puls photo.

couple of false summits until it reaches its highest point. It is a pleasant ridge walk, although the thick forest limits views east and west. Still, from an initial high point our sight line was such that we had a peekaboo view of Jug Island in Indian Arm. At another false summit we could see the tops of Mount Seymour and the peaks north of it. But the main summit provided the best view. We dropped down to an open bluff and could look across Sasamat Lake toward the confluence of Burrard Inlet and Indian Arm, and beyond the waterways to the cities of Burnaby and Vancouver. It seems that a rogue sawyer has improved the view here by cutting down three large trees. One wonders why. Buntzen Ridge has an abundance of good viewpoints already. Was it really necessary to cut down fully grown trees to try to create another? While we took in the view and had a snack, we had probably our best wildlife sighting of the day: An adult bald eagle flew by at or a little below eye level. It is always a thrill to see this magnificent bird at close range, and even more so when it is in full flight.

After we had had enough of views and snacks, we continued along the ridge trail to return to Sugar Mountain Trail. We rejoined the latter trail near where it makes a ninety-degree turn and runs along an east-west power line right-of-way. We passed an ephemeral pond, which, judging by the sound emanating from it, seemed well-populated with frogs. We were now out in the sun and the day had warmed considerably. We began to dream of having lunch on the floating bridge, which spans the southern extremity of Sasamat Lake, where we would be able to enjoy sun, water, and a view of the mountains. Unfortunately, when we got to bridge, we found that sunbathers and fisher folk had already claimed most of its square footage, with their portable radios blaring, so most of us settled for eating on the other side of the bridge, on a log in the shade.



View from the floating bridge, looking northwest toward White Pine Beach and Buntzen Ridge.
Terry Puls photo.

Two had left our party early to return via the east side of Sasamat Lake, so we were now eleven as we made a clockwise circuit of the lake. This is an easy loop, and as we walked we were occupied with the changing perspectives of lake and mountains. We paused at the north end of the lake and joined the growing numbers of people in basking in the spring sun.

After our first hike in early March, we had missed hiking in April. We were very happy to get back on track with this varied and thoroughly enjoyable outing.