

# **BMN HIKE REPORT**

## **Grouse Mountain (July 10, 2022)**

**By Chris Wright**



**The view from the lookout on this day.... *Terry Puls photo.***

Under overcast and slightly cool conditions for July, we met for the “free” hike to Grouse Mountain. Free in that we didn’t take the gondola up; not free in the sense that you have to hike the 549 m (1800 ft) elevation gain. The trail we had selected is the Lower Grouse Mountain Highway (LGMH) trail starting at the top of Skyline Drive, located a few kilometres to the east of the popular Grouse Grind and BCMC trails, and just slightly away from the Skyline trail.

The three of us set off, first following a bit of the gated Skyline Drive and a house-access road, before entering the woods and following an old forestry road. The climb for the first few kilometres is fairly steep as it ascends rapidly up the west side of Mosquito Creek through second-growth forest. As we ascended the old corduroy road, we had the trail all to ourselves, with the only sounds being the creek, a few birds calling, and our breathing. After a while of following the steep road, the



**F86 Memorial Site. Terry Puls photo.**



**Deer and fawn at the Peak Chalet. Terry Puls photo.**

trail heads off to the west through forest, though with more understory than on our initial ascent. We quickly reached the point where the LGMH trail meets the Skyline trail. Here the group decided to take a side detour of a few hundred metres to a memorial for the US pilot killed in 1956 when his F86 fighter jet, in bad weather, crashed at this location.

After some thoughtful reflections at the memorial, we reascended and met up with the Skytrail trail for the final push to the bottom of the ski run known as The Cut. Here is located an old chalet and the Screaming Eagle chairlift, which we utilized for a padded luxury break spot, while enjoying the views of the flowering foxglove. It was at this point that we met the low-hanging clouds, and hoped that we wouldn't encounter rain. We then continued westward towards the Grouse Mountain Peak Chalet and Gondola, shortly joining the final bit of the BCMC trail and then the top of the Grouse Grind trail. On reaching the Peak Chalet, we were pleasantly surprised to see a deer and her fawn. It seemed to be the star attraction for the hikers, runners, and sightseers.

We had one final ascent to make it to the top of the actual Grouse Mountain peak, reached along a ski run/access road. Off we headed, stopping briefly to watch the grizzly bears Coola and Grinder, before ascending up the access road/ski run, firstly to the Eye of the Wind wind turbine and viewing platform. We noted, as we had on previous trips, that the turbine was not turning, though it was intended to generate up to 25% of Grouse Mountain's power



needs. Leaving the wind turbine behind, we made the final push to the top of the Grouse Mountain peak and the Peak and Olympic chairlifts. The views here are normally very extensive looking out



**Eye of the Wind turbine. *Terry Puls photo.***

over Metro Vancouver, the harbour, and beyond. However the low-hanging cloud only allowed a few glimpses of the North Shore and harbour. We took an extended break here, eating an early lunch, and enjoying what views were available. We also had the peak to ourselves, not counting the numerous flies of course!

Our descent was pretty much via the same route, though we veered more towards the east, bypassing the Peak Chalet by following some access roads and ski runs, before emerging at the bottom of The Cut and the Screaming Eagle chairlift. Another snack break and padded seat on the chairlift awaited us here. We again had the LGMH trail to ourselves, though we did spot a Douglas squirrel stripping the bark off of a fallen western redcedar. We were able to get fairly close and watch the industrious action. After a few more tugs the squirrel headed off uphill with a bundle of bark in its mouth.

We finished up at the cars after about six hours, having avoided the rain and all agreeing that it was a beautiful hike.