



Pond on top of Burke (photo by David Mounteney)

BMN TRIP REPORT

Burke Summit (August 30, 2008)

by Mark Johnston

This year we chose Saturday, August 30, as the date of our nearly annual hike to Burke Summit with this time, the further possibility of spending the long weekend doing necessary maintenance on the South Slope Trail. On hike day, six came out, but with four—Don, Ian, Linda, and Glen—content to focus on maintenance, only two of us—Dave and I—headed more immediately toward the summit and beyond.

While those focusing on maintenance took a vehicle up to higher ground, Dave and I started from the bottom on foot. We caught up to the others in the vicinity of Pritchett Creek Canyon, where they had stopped to saw through a small tree that had fallen across the trail. We paused to lend a hand. None of us was prepared for the project being as big as it turned out to be. Various combinations of us laboured

vigorously for a good 20 minutes or more before the stubborn trunk yielded to all of our sawing, pushing, and pulling!

While my wife and daughter who were gardening at Colony Farm, enjoyed sunshine all day, those of us hiking and/or labouring on Burke Ridge did so in cloud and fog, and a few scattered showers as well. Although the bush was wet and water pooled on the trail, the two of us hiking shunned wearing rain pants or gaiters, thinking that the sun would eventually break through and dry us out. We shouldn't have been so optimistic. Our wet pants began to cling to our legs and our boots became waterlogged. I don't think my boots have ever been wetter! On the other hand, given this year's late-lying snow and the recent August rains, the ridge never looked better. The berry bushes and heather were freshly green, and the lakes and ponds full to the brim.

The ridge top was cool, and whenever we stopped, the bugs attacked us voraciously. We ate a hurried lunch just below Burke Summit. Afterwards, we visited the high point and signed the register and, since we were still in good time, decided to press on for "Pika Mountain" and Bennie Lake. As we worked our way up and around Pika Mountain, we were slowed by having to make our way under, over, or around numerous windfall. The weather closed in even more and it began to rain. We got to a point where we could glimpse Bennie Lake a hundred or more metres below us and then turned back.

We eventually met up with the maintenance group just below Hourglass Lake. Three of the four had reached the lake and were now heading back (one had turned around earlier). We spent a few moments exchanging notes; then, Dave and I, joined by Linda, continued down. Don and Ian planned on spending two nights on the mountain, so they kept working. Although we were a little disappointed not to have gotten down to the shore of Bennie Lake, all things considered, we had had a good day, and look forward to a return visit.