

## **BMN Hike Report**

### **Coquitlam Lake View Trail (November 13, 2010)**

by Mark Johnston



**A snowy view from the Coquitlam Lake View lookout.  
Photo by David Mounteney**

For our last scheduled hike of the year, we returned to Burke Mountain. Initially, we walked a couple of the trails we'd come down on September's Quarry-to-Harper Road traverse. But at the dividing point of the Coquitlam Lake View and South Slope trails, we departed from our previous route, bearing left on the former for the viewpoint.

There were seven of us (and one very well behaved golden retriever), a surprising number given the less than ideal weather conditions. We faced intermittent light rain and drizzle (although being somewhat protected by the forest canopy). In addition, we had to

negotiate many sections of trail that were wet and slick. But, felicitously, we found the creeks relatively easy to cross.

Fifteen minutes from the junction, we came to Coho Creek. There's no problem crossing here because the creek flows under the trail/roadway. We paused for a snack and to photograph the creek's cascading falls. While happy to take a breather, we didn't stay long. It was cold and the rain was beginning to pick up.

After a brief stretch on level ground, we started up the notoriously steep, rocky, slippery section of the Lake View Trail. But thanks to the efforts of our club's trail builders, there's no longer any need to stay with this rocky route all the way. Several meters up the trail, we came upon the relatively newly constructed bypass route which heads left into the forest and only rejoins the original route as the latter begins to level off again. We found the new route a delight. While equally steep, it is rock-free, and accesses a number of interesting features. At one point we came to a trio of large stumps with a fourth lying uprooted; at another, the trail squeezes between a felled giant and its 2+ m-diameter stump. Toward the top of our climb, we began to see patches of snow, and by the time we rejoined the original trail we were walking in a couple of centimetres of snow. As we made our way along the gently graded path toward the viewpoint, we were thrilled to have been suddenly transported to a winter wonderland: fresh snow underfoot, the trees beautifully flocked.

**BMN hikers at  
Coquitlam Lake  
View lookout.  
Photo by David  
Mounteney**



Although given the day there was little point in pushing on to the viewpoint, since we'd come as far as we had, we carried on to the end. As we suspected, there were no distant views - certainly no lake view - but, in some ways, the wintery beauty close at hand made up for it. We spent a few minutes on the snow-covered bluff, snacking, photographing, revelling in our first taste of the new season.

As it was still a little early for lunch, we decided to retrace our steps halfway down the bypass route and eat under forest cover next to the trickling stream we had noted on our



way up. If ascending via the bypass route had been a delight, descending by way of it was heavenly. We practically floated down, the footbed being soft and springy!

After lunch, and upon reaching the original trail once again, we decided to see whether we could find a route that might allow one to avoid the first part of the old, rocky path as well. Crossing the trail, we fanned out a bit and bushwhacked down toward Coho Creek. We found it to be pretty easy going. Maybe by the time we lead another group up the Lake View Trail, our trail builders will have engineered a bypass route for this lower part too.

When we'd planned the hike, we thought that if the weather were unfavourable, we might forego the lake view and visit some of the waterfalls lower down the mountain. As it turned out, we visited both the viewpoint and a number of the falls. Turning off the Lake View Trail, we followed the twisting, turning Saw Blade (mountain bike) Trail down to the old logging road that's just downstream from "Saw Blade Falls." A few of us had seen this spectacular falls before; for the rest it was a revelation. We took a brief timeout from our quest to see waterfalls to visit the bluff viewpoint above the Woodland Walk trail. At this lower elevation we were treated to some of the view that we'd been denied above. We could see a portion of Coquitlam Lake and, to the south, high rises in Burnaby.

**"Saw Blade Falls."  
Photo by David Mounteney**

Back on the old road, we walked laterally for some distance before descending via a second bike trail, Nescafe, back and forth across a tributary of Pritchett Creek, and then beside the main stem of the creek all the way to where the Woodland Walk crosses it. As we descended the main stem, some of us noticed a mountain biker racing down along the opposite bank. It's remarkable how many roads, trails, and routes there are on the lower mountain: one can design a trip of almost any length and duration.

We hadn't noticed much wildlife all day - hearing just a chirp or two. Ironically, as



we finished up, we encountered a couple of birds in plain view. Toward the end of the Woodland Walk, I spotted a varied thrush as it moved silently from branch to branch. Then, near the bottom of the so-called Garbage Trail (actually quite a pretty trail with a stream and developing understory), we heard and then saw a red-breasted sapsucker drilling holes in a young hemlock.

Although the BMN Hikers have walked the Woodland Walk, traversed Burke Mountain and hiked to the Coquitlam Lake View before, this year's excursions have revealed new features and suggested further possibilities. "Between every two [trees]," says the Scottish-American naturalist John Muir, "is a doorway to a new world."