

BMN Hike: Diez Vistas – July 16, 2011

By Christina Saremba

Seven ambitious hikers met at 8:00am in the parking lot at Buntzen Lake in Anmore. The skies were gray and showers descended upon us as we put on hiking boots and donned backpacks. We commenced our hike following the 1km Energy trail located at the south end of the lake. This short trail took us to the floating bridge which we crossed to get to the west side of the lake where the Diez Vistas trailhead is located. We began our ascent in to the forest in order to reach the Diez Vistas (Spanish for “10 Views”) at the top. The trail was well-groomed and wide enough so that our group travelled in single file.

After about one hour, we reached a power line clearing (and site of an old pipeline). The clearing provided a perfect environment for a variety of plants to grow. There were large patches of Foxgloves blooming, Salmonberry bushes were weighed down with extra-large orange and red berries, and Huckleberry bushes were laden with some of the largest berries many of us have ever seen. It seemed that the wet weather had provided the plants with the moisture they needed to produce abundant growth. As we were munching on the berries, the rain shower had now become big rain



Figure 2: Foxgloves along the way.
photo: T. Puls

drops! Some of the members of our group optimistically forecasted that the rain would most likely let up soon. After a brief stop to admire the foliage and adjust our rain gear, we continued on along the trail through a series of switchbacks in the forest. Along the way, we could hear the calls of the Pacific Wren, Pacific Flycatcher, Steller’s Jay, American Robin, and Swainson’s Thrush. Having had many recent days of damp weather, the forest was green and lush. Salal bushes were thriving with plenty of new growth, a variety of

fungi flourished, and delicate Twinflowers and Rattlesnake plantain edged the trail.



Figure 1: Group at the clearing. photo: T. Puls

After about ninety minutes, we came to the first viewpoint. Unfortunately, because of the dense cloud cover, we were not able to see any of the surrounding area below us. Typically, on a clear day, a hiker is rewarded with spectacular views of Deep Cove, Indian Arm, the North Shore mountains, the city and, Vancouver Island in the distance. Undaunted, we continued on up the trail and then followed the ridgeline. We stopped at some of the other viewpoints to see if we might be able to get a glimpse of a distant view. At one of the viewpoints, the clouds parted enough for us to see a portion of Buntzen Lake below us.

After three hours on the trail, we stopped to take a lunch break under the cover of large trees to give us some shelter from the rain. Someone in the group commented how lucky we were that we didn’t need to be concerned with applying sunscreen or insect repellent being that it was too wet for the sun or the bugs to make an appearance. After lunch, we began our descent towards the north end of Buntzen Lake. Not surprisingly, due to the wet weather, we had not met up with any other hikers on the trail. We did, however, come across a blue grouse and her chicks wandering along the trail

through a small clearing. Neither the rain, or our appearance, seemed to bother them too much.

Until this point, we had found the trail to be well-marked and easy to follow. However, as we got closer to the lake's edge, the dense foliage, and lack of signage made it difficult to determine which direction to go. Deciding to take a path that most closely

paralleled the lake, we pushed our way through the salmonberries and shrubs to follow a small creek until we eventually found the main trail. We were cautious not to step on the many slugs, including a large Banana slug, along the way. The loud warning call of a Douglas squirrel informed us that we were impeding on his territory.

As we neared the north beach, we finally came across a few people who were either out for a run or to exercise their dogs. The trail took us across the suspension bridge to the beach area. Last year, this area was underwater as BC Hydro was repairing the powerhouse for the Buntzen lake reservoir. The work had been completed this year and the water appeared to be back to

normal levels. There were a few amenities at this end of the lake, including picnic tables and pit toilets, so we decided to take a brief rest

break. It was eerily quiet for a mid-July summer day. On a typical sunny day, this would have been a good spot for a cool, refreshing dip in the lake, especially after hiking for five hours. However, we were already very wet and cool even without having to put on our

swimwear and go in the lake.

From the north beach, we took the Buntzen Lake trail that parallels the east side of the lake. The trail travels through the forest and provides several viewpoints of the lake. After 6.5 hours, we arrived back at the south end of the lake just in time for the rain to stop. We all made a beeline to our vehicles where we quickly changed into dry gear. Some of us planned to go directly to the nearest coffee shop for a hot beverage in order to warm up. We said our good-byes, congratulated ourselves for having gotten out in the fresh air for a good workout, and looked forward to our next hiking adventure.



Figure 3: View of Indian Arm. photo: T. Puls