

BMN TRIP REPORT

Eagle Ridge/Anmore Loop (Saturday, April 10)

Mark Johnston



Looking northwest from Eagle Bluff toward Buntzen Lake and Ridge, and Mounts Seymour, Elsay, and Bishop (photo by I. McArthur)

For our second hike of the year, we returned to the lower slopes of Eagle Ridge, reaching a high point some 120 m higher than on our inaugural walk in March. This time, we started from Panorama Drive, headed north to Eagle Bluff, and reached our highest point at a braided cascade on Noons Creek. But this trip, unlike the previous one, was not a straightforward ascent from A to B; it involved a series of climbs and descents such that we gained twice the necessary elevation. Still, the day was so picture-perfect—crystal clear, sunny but with a breezy coolness—and the route so varied and full of interest that no one complained too much.

There were nine of us, one of our more diverse groups ever. Not only were we pretty evenly divided between males and females, we had two 12-year-olds, one 80-year-old, and people of various ages in between. Additionally, two or three people had historical knowledge of the area. Thus, on the portion of the hike that took us through Anmore, Janice, having grown up there, was able to enhance our experience by commenting on the way things had been and how they had changed.

Terry, who lives on Panorama, was our leader. He led us on a recently constructed gravel path up the left side of West Noons Creek and then onto pre-existing trails that

took us high above the new housing developments. We climbed via a few switchbacks to the prominent communications tower that is situated on the main power line right-of-way. Here there's a rock bluff with a commanding, though wire-filtered, view of much of the Fraser delta. To the south, we could see as far as the Olympic Mountains; to the east, we were able to pick out a number of Cascade peaks, including Slesse, Shuksan, Baker, and Sisters.

Leaving our first viewpoint, we began to walk the north-south power line, but soon turned off it to follow the east-west line toward Anmore. We now lost whatever elevation we had gained, but, as compensation, had good views looking down into the heart of Anmore. After a somewhat bushy, rocky, wet descent, we found ourselves on Spence Way amid multimillion-dollar homes. Janice recalled that she had known the Spence boys, and identified a now somewhat modified rock bluff, on which sits an "entry-level castle," as having been part of her woodsy playground.

We walked down Spence Way to Sunnyside Road, and then turned up Sunnyside toward Buntzen Lake. Opposite the Anmore Grocery, we picked up the Academy Trail, and, shortly thereafter, the trail to Eagle Bluff. Right away, we found ourselves among runners taking part in a gruelling 50-km cross-country race. Some runners were coming up behind us; others heading down toward us—this part of their course being out-and-back.

The trail to Eagle Bluff switchbacks upward through a mature forest. As we ascended, we marvelled at the stately firs, hemlocks, and cedars, and took note of the luxurious understory of sword fern, salal, and Oregon-grape. When we came to the place where the trail forks—either branch offering a possible route to the bluff—we sat down to rest awhile and further enjoy the forest's verdant growth. Here Anmore Creek flows beneath "Bucktoe Bridge" into "Bailey's Pool." The waters of the creek were perfectly transparent. Although the water appeared potable, we played it safe and drank from our plastic bottles.

We found it hard to tear ourselves away from the sylvan beauty of Anmore Creek, but, having decided to make the airy heights of Eagle Bluff our lunch stop, we shouldered our packs and made our way up the more northerly branch of trail. Reaching the bluff, we saw two eagles soaring overhead—testimony to the aptness of the cliff's name. We found places to sit on outcrops of rock and, while eating our lunch, enjoyed the panoramic view. While we could still look back in the direction of the delta, we tended to focus on the new prospects of Buntzen Lake and Ridge, and, farther west, Mts. Seymour, Elsay, and Bishop. To the north, we could see a little of the upper reach of Indian Arm, and at its head a snowy peak which we took to be Meslilloet Mountain.

After lunch we walked back along the north-south power line to the communications tower. En route we crossed both Anmore and Mossom creeks, and, at one point, had a splendid view looking toward downtown Vancouver.

Upon reaching the tower, some in our group thought they might like to take the most direct route back, but, after weighing our options—including splitting into two parties—we decided to stay together and loop past the aforementioned cascade. So, leaving the power line right-of-way at West Noons Creek, we hiked up through dense second growth to the main stem of the creek to view its cascade. To return, we then hiked down the other side of the creek as far as the gas pipeline, and, once on the pipeline, used the right-of-way to continue our descent. Staying on the pipeline right-of-way meant having to cross Noons Creek without the benefit of a bridge, but Terry assured us that a nylon rope strung between trees on opposite banks would allow us safe passage. He was right, although our crossing was not without excitement. We had to step on very slippery rocks, and the rope had considerable play!

After our successful crossing of Noons Creek, we continued to follow the pipeline downward until we reached the leading edge of urban development. Then we deviated from the right-of-way to make contact with the creek one last time. We finally came out on Diamond Crescent, which we walked to Stoneridge Lane and so back to our cars.