

Hermann's Hike Harrison Lake Fire Tower Lookout

03 Aug 2011

Today's Hike was one of the best we have done in a long while, perfect weather, outstanding scenery, and a challenging hike with a great bunch of people.

Harrison Lake Fire Tower Lookout is a left over from BC's recent past. At one time, BC's vast forest lands were being surveyed from fire lookout towers built on mountain tops in strategic locations around the Province. Their purpose was to report forest fires, most of which are created by lightning strikes.

Then helicopters and light airplanes took over and one by one the fire towers became modern dinosaurs, so to find a fire lookout tower pretty much intact close to Harrison is history in the making.

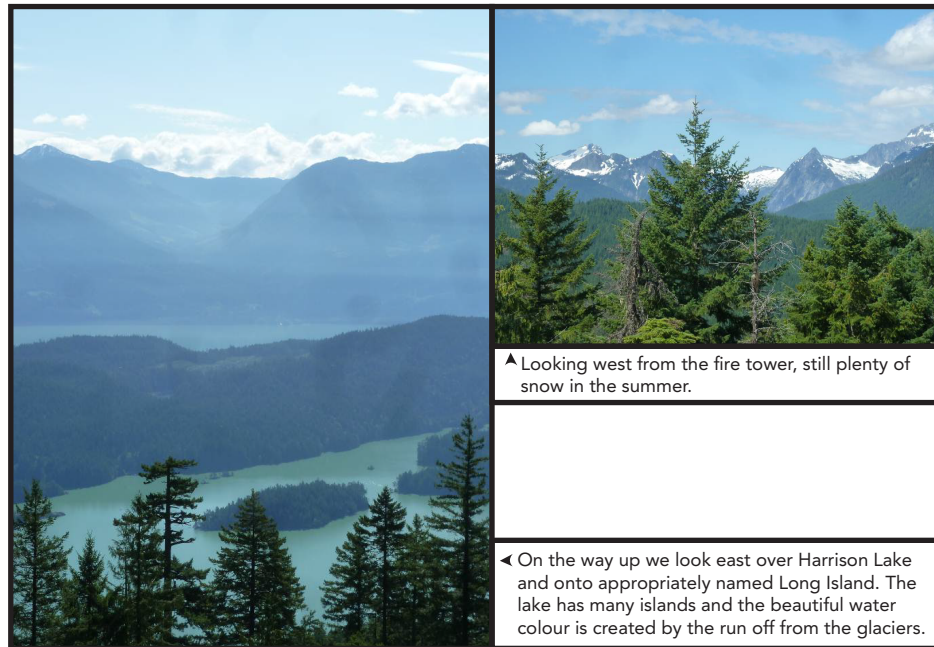
On Schedule we left Agassiz Rec. Centre at 8:00 am and after a 1:30 hour drive and a senior's moment, when Ken thought he had lost the way, we arrived at the trail head. Last year we had a problem finding the trail head but today we knew exactly where to look and commenced the climb to the top of this mini mountain.

Initially the trail winds its way up what appears to be a dried up streambed and then you see a couple of signs nailed to trees indicating foot path only. This is kind of reassuring to know you are heading in the right direction. The climb is quite steep and then it levels out a little before we find the first major obstacle which is a series of logs used to traverse a small canyon.

We then "bushwack" up a steep slope and then approach the second natural log bridge over another canyon. These bridges can be a little intimidating, some of us "walk the plank" on top of the logs while others decide to find a safer way through. Of course our four legged friends show no sign of fear and with perfect balance are happy to cross over the log bridges.

The second "bushwacking" section is the next obstacle and luckily we remember the general direction of the trail and navigate through the dense bush. Finally we are on a rocky ledge and then upwards through open forest just before the final climb to the fire tower sitting peacefully on a rock outcrop on the mountaintop.

It had taken 2 hours to make the short but in some places steep climb to the top of this pinnacle and the view from the tower's balcony is simply outstanding. To the north we see Mount Brekenridge with its all year round glacier lit up brightly by the sunshine. To the east we look over Harrison Lake onto more snow-capped peaks. Yes, the scenery is spectacular, it is definitely worth the effort to make this climb.



▲ Looking west from the fire tower, still plenty of snow in the summer.

◀ On the way up we look east over Harrison Lake and onto appropriately named Long Island. The lake has many islands and the beautiful water colour is created by the run off from the glaciers.

We take lunch in the shade of the fire tower and provide the dogs with much needed water, a perfect place to relax on a hot summer's day.

We start the descent and retrace our footsteps down the slopes over the canyons and through the bush. As the forest opens up we have great views over to Long Island in the middle of Harrison Lake and even see the mini lake in the centre of this island surrounded by some of the clear cuts. One hour later we exit the forest and find our vehicles.

On the return journey down the west side of Harrison Lake we stop at the small Woods Lake which has 20 or more natural campsites dotted around its shoreline. The dogs just love the refreshing swim in the cool lake water.

We dodge the logging trucks and make our way to the social at the Harrison Mills golf course and the Riverside Restaurant, a perfect way to finish a wonderful hike. Welcome new hiker Steve, and regular hikers, Sue, Helle, Shelley, Linda, Kitty and Roberto for your hospitality, it is just too much fun to hike with you all.

Distance 4Km Elevation 400M. Pictures courtesy of Roberto and Ken.

Hasta la Vista, Senior Ken.