



Lake Trail Guesthouse In Winter

Photo by Bonnie Temmler

LAKE TRAIL GUESTHOUSE ON THE PEACE GRID



By David Morrison

In respect of the access it offers to the numerous attractions in its vicinity, it is difficult to picture a more conveniently located Comox Valley accommodation. As if this is not enough, however, when regarding the land it occupies from a historical perspective, one would be hard pressed to find somewhere to stay that can claim such a fascinating background. Welcome to Lake Trail Guesthouse.

Situated on Lake Trail Road, a few clicks southwest of downtown Courtenay, this accommodation is literally in the thick of it. Firstly, its backyard is the Puntledge River Recreation Area. Seriously, all that guests need to do in order to begin exploring the beautiful trail system of the Puntledge River Corridor is step out of the guesthouse and straight into the lush forest fringing the river. More about this later, but also within easy reach of Lake Trail Guesthouse are Cumberland, Strathcona Provincial Park/Forbidden Plateau, Stotan Falls, Comox Lake Dam Picnic Area, and the gorgeous Nymph Falls Regional Park. That's just for starters, and that the base of Mt. Washington is just a handy 15-minute drive from the accommodation also obviously makes this an ideal, and economical, off-hill skiing lodgings.

Lake Trail Guesthouse is owned and run by Bonnie Temmler. Originally from Toronto, with a professional background of advertising, marketing and television, Temmler fell into the hospitality business completely by accident. "My father came out here when he retired, and



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Photo by Amy Ferguson

View From The Summit Of Mt. Washington At The Top Of Eagle Chairlift

bought this place,” she begins. “Sometime during his ‘retirement’ he started a hostel, and then when he passed away in ’93 I came out just to clean it up...and I’ve never left! When you’re a host to so many people from around the world it becomes addictive, so I just stayed here!”

Temmler goes on to explain that the cluster of buildings comprising Lake Trail Guesthouse (including her own home) stand on historically significant ground. “It’s part of the old townsite of Bevan, which was a coalmining community with about 175 houses, stores, a train station. The farm next door is built on the foundation of the old Bevan hotel, and we have a running joke between us about who’s going to be the mayor this week!”

Named in honour of Robert Beavan (1836-1920), who was briefly BC premier (June 13, 1882 - January 29, 1883), the (presumably intentionally misspelled) town of Bevan existed from 1907 until 1958, when it was flattened following the 1953 closure of the mine for which it was built.

It makes for a curious feeling wandering around the grounds of Temmler’s property and the surrounding woods, knowing that a thriving, fully functioning small town once stood here. It is long gone, of course, but there are a few remaining traces visible if one knows where to look for them. River Trail West and the Bevan Trail are two of the seven hiking, mountain-biking or



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multi-use trails in the Puntledge River Recreation Area. For local or mining history enthusiasts, it is along these two trails in particular where the more visible ruins can be found. Temmler is happy to advise guests further in this respect, also encouraging absorption of the printed historical materials she has gathered together in a binder, which is found in the communal guesthouse lounge.

For guests not remotely bothered by the historical aspect of Lake Trail Guesthouse's site and surroundings, this is still an area of considerable interest and beauty, accessible to serious hikers and leisurely walkers alike just yards from this year-round accommodation's doorstep. The trails wind through gorgeous forest, providing frequent scenic views of the river and the opportunity to commune with local wildlife, while the mountain-biking trails test every level of fitness and experience.

Back at the ranch, as it were, Temmler points out that there is a very good reason she recently changed her accommodation's name from Comox Lake Hostel to Lake Trail Guesthouse after eighteen years. "This is not really a hostel anymore," she says. "What we are now is really a guesthouse. We want people to come here and feel this is their home, that they are part of my family. People were saying we are far more than a hostel, and totally different. These days hostels have become quite large and impersonal, and we want to bring back something a bit more personal to a vacation."

Besides the comfort, personal touch and attention Temmler provides and guarantees, there are two interesting features at Lake Trail Guesthouse, immediately visible upon arrival, adjacent to each other to the left of the entrance. First and most obviously, there is a small wooden pyramid! "It's a meditation pyramid," Temmler explains. "My father was big into meditation and saw it in California, so put that up and tried to get people in there to meditate with him...but usually kids jump up and down it!"

Secondly, there is a Peace Pole. I had heard of these, but never before seen one. "It was put up by a group of Japanese people who were doing a grid for peace around the world," Temmler recalls. "They put one here because I guess it was on their grid! There's a time capsule under it! Everybody that was staying here at the time got together, and we all wrote something about our life and

what we wanted for the world, and that all went into the time capsule."

Peace Poles do indeed originate in Japan. They were introduced to the world in 1955 by the World Peace Prayer Society founder, Masahisa Goi (1916-1980), in reaction to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Each four-sided pole bears the message "May Peace Prevail On Earth" in Japanese, and languages relevant to the location. The Lake Trail Guesthouse Peace Pole therefore also displays the legend in English, French and Squamish. It is one of over 200,000 such poles so far erected in more than 200 countries, where they can be found in locations both ordinary and extraordinary. They can appear in parks, schools or places of worship - anywhere, really - the rationale behind their positioning being that they are sited "where the spirit of Peace is embraced by people of good will." There are Peace Poles at Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the pyramids of El Giza in Egypt, and even at Canada's Magnetic North Pole, so the Peace Pole at Lake Trail Guesthouse has some lofty company. Wherever they are, though, it is with very good reason.

One good reason I can offer is that the site of the ghost town of Bevan is a truly special place. It is a peaceful location possessed of a tangible spirituality understandably amplified by the beautiful natural surroundings. It's a place that promotes a sense of awe, wonder and well-being, so all this considered, even on the surface it is perhaps no real surprise that Goi's people elected to place a Peace Pole in this location.

And Temmler knows all too well how lucky she is to live here, hosting adventurers and families from near and far at her cozy Lake Trail Guesthouse. "I love it out here!" she states with conviction. "It's magical, so glorious...how could I ever go back to Toronto?" ■

For further information about Lake Trail Guesthouse please visit <http://laketrailguesthouse.com>. For rates and availability please contact Bonnie Temmler on (250) 338-1914 or by email at stay@laketrailguesthouse.com.



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