

COQUITLAM RiverWatch

940 Stanton Ave. Coquitlam, B.C., V3J 4V2
imcart@telus.net



JULY 2012

NEWSLETTER

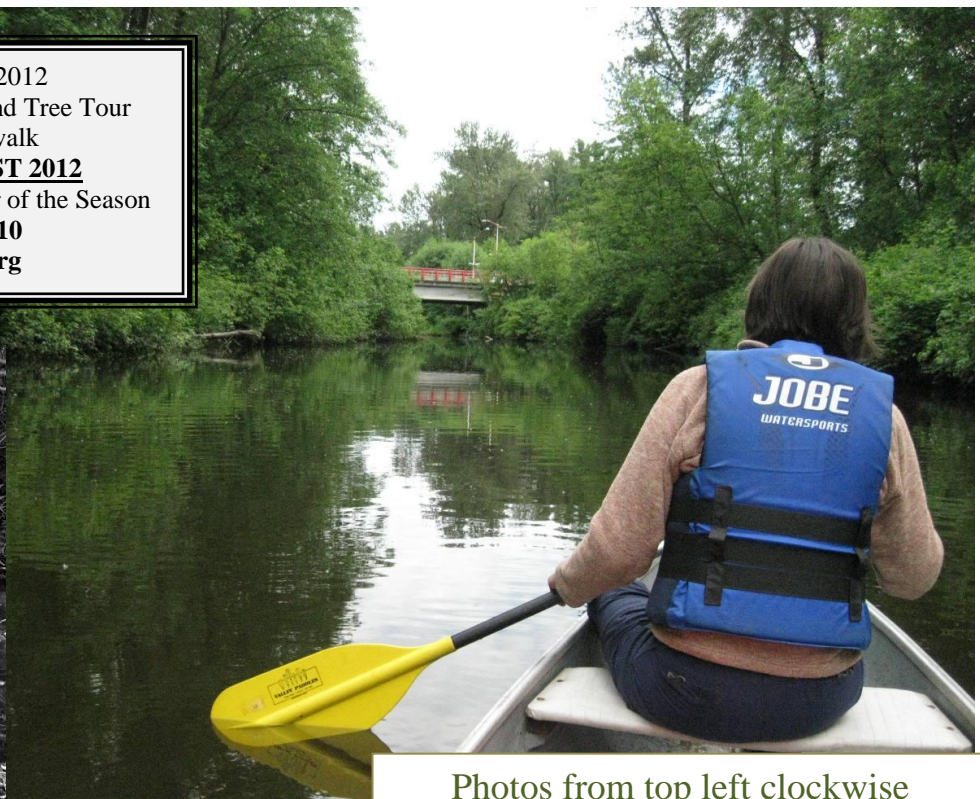
NUMBER 166



Riverview Hospital Public Tree Tours 2012

- Sunday, **August 12** 1 pm, Catalpa North end Tree Tour
Sunday, **August 19** 1 pm, BMN Heritage walk
Saturday, **Sept. 15** 11am-4pm, **TREEFEST 2012**
Sunday, **October 14** 1 pm, Last Public Tour of the Season

For further info phone 604-290-9910
Check out the website www.rhcs.org



Photos from top left clockwise
Travel trailer dumped on Pipeline Rd. by Ian
Wood pallets for firewood in W-2 by Ian
Canoeing north of the Red Bridge by Ian
Start of a new beaver dam in E-4 by Susan

Newsletter editor
Ian McArthur (604-939-4039)
Email: imcart@telus.net

JUNE RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Ian (W-1) June 27

3 cars were parked near the party area, but I did not see anyone. Someone dumped some garden waste by the road and it had invasive English ivy in it. The River was clear and the level was low to normal. Slade Creek was clear and flowing. The only wildlife I saw or heard was the Swainson's Thrush. Salmonberries were ripe and delicious. Pacific ninebark, foxglove, and thimbleberry were all flowering.

Ian (W-2) June 27

I talked to a local resident who was going out for an evening walk to eat salmonberries. Wood pallets have been left by the River for firewood. I guess this is better than cutting trees down. I find it very disgusting that someone would have the nerve to leave a falling apart travel trailer on the side of Pipeline Road. There appeared to be some items in the trailer that could have been reused. Who did they think would clean it up? The River was clear and at a low to normal level above and below the gravel operations. The water level at the Galette gauge was .610 metres. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was clear & flowing. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and flowing. Partridge Creek was clear and flowing. Marquart Creek was almost clear and flowing well. Goodyear Creek (#11) was clear and flowing. The Upper Coquitlam River Park Pond was very low. Birds included Swainson's Thrush, Female Common Merganser with 1 young, Barn Swallows, Spotted Towhees, and robins. I saw fry in one of the UCRP side channels. Goat's beard, starflower, and foxglove were flowering.

Dave (W-3) June 14

The poor weather has made the trails wet and muddy, but in good condition except for the tree roots. The rain has kept people away from the parks and trails and the litter is down. Doggy bags were on the trail between Galette and McTavish Parks. The river level was at a surprisingly normal level considering all the rain. It was very clear and looked good. Wildlife included towhees, White-crowned Sparrows, vireo and fingerlings at the south end of Hockaday. I was surprised at the lack of chickadees this year. I also saw an Eastern grey squirrel and a Douglas squirrel (first I had seen for some time). All the rain has done the vegetation good.

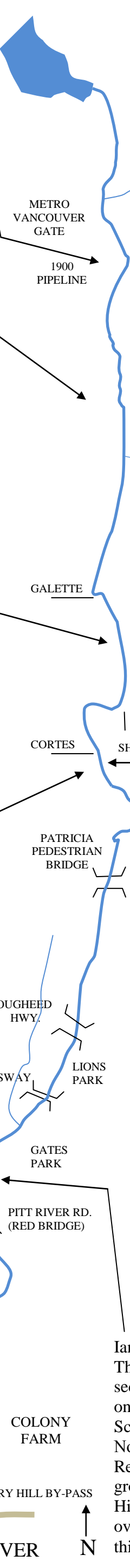
Mallee (W-4) June 10

Two hikers arrived at the Cortez end of the trail with two dogs on leash and as soon as they were on the trail, unleashed their dogs. The River at several vantage points closer to the Cortez end was a weird tainted brown colour particularly down the middle of the stream. At the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge, this was far less noticeable. It appeared that the stones on the bottom were more this colour than the water. I heard endless birds but only spotted a wren, four robins and a crow; perhaps because several dog owners on the opposite bank had their dogs chasing sticks in the river, and barking with gusto. Loads of the usual wild flowers blooming and salmonberries will soon be tempting the bears as they ripen.

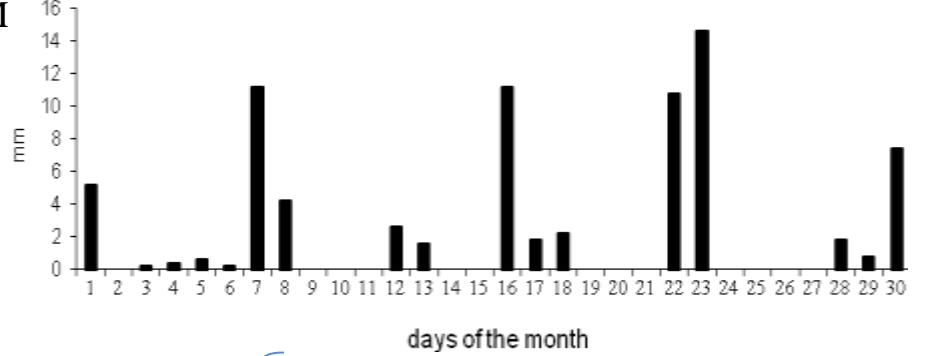
Charlene & Roger (W-9) June 25

It was sunny on this day, clear and warm. A perfect day. Yesterday (24th) was Midsummer fete and not as nice. There were six dogs on leash and only 2 off leash. The River was absolutely huge! Biggest I've seen I think. On the Fraser River side of the mouth where there is often a big beach and/or sandbars, there was no beach at all. In fact, the water was up in the bush covering some of the pathway. On the Coquitlam River side of the mouth, where there is often about a 4-5ft drop, there was no drop at all. Someone would get a real shock if they attempted to wade in. Bird activity included sparrows, swallows, geese, Mallard, and a group of about 50 Rock Pigeons. We also saw two snakes! Vegetation at the mouth section was completely grown over and in need of some trail maintenance. It looked like the trail from the mouth to Maquabeak Park may have reopened. All the orange tape and "trail closed" signs have been removed.

COQUITLAM LAKE



JUNE RAINFALL



Murray (E-3 north) June 20

It was fairly quiet along this portion of the Reach despite a lovely sunny morning. The garbage was basically non-existent along this portion of the Reach. Not even any poop bags. Either traffic is down due to the poor weather or people are being more conscious of picking up after themselves. The River was clear and higher than normal. Initially I didn't take much note of it as it always seems a little higher and faster in the upper portion of the Reach as more rapids, etc and thought it was simply spring run-off from previous rainy days. However, I found out the next day that Hydro had let a lot of water out of the dam. The River looked really good. Oxbow Side Channel had a nice flow to it.

Murray (E-3 south) June 21

There were not many along this portion of the trail despite a lovely morning. Again very little garbage. Between the north and south portion of this reach, I was lucky to have picked up a ¼ bag of garbage. No poop bags again. Good news all around. The River was clear and at a high level. The same condition as the previous day. River looked great.

Susan (E-3) June 27

It is that time of year as I saw 2 boys jumping off a rope swing into the river. The River was clear and at a normal level. Birds included Black-capped Chickadees, robins, Swainson's Thrushes, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creepers (immature), kingfisher female Common Mergansers, and crows. The baby Brown Creepers I saw are much lighter than the adults. I think I saw these same 5 a couple weeks ago, huddled together on a fir tree, very camouflaged but noisy. They would take turns going up the trunk or over to another tree, then coming back and feeding their siblings. Today they were still in the same vicinity, but all feeding themselves. I also saw a Swainson's Thrush having a splash-bath in the shallows of a little sandy beach in the river.

Susan (E-4) June 27 **Oxbow Side Channels**

I came upon a recently flooded section of the path, and looking around found the beginnings of a new beaver dam by the bridge just up from the most southerly pond. Huckleberries are ripe for eating now and are particularly large and profuse from all the rain. The River was clear and at a normal level. Birds on this day include Mallard, Black-capped Chickadee, Song Sparrow, robins; crow, Swainson's Thrushes, Great Blue Heron, Downy Woodpecker (immature), and a Pacific wren. Birds I also saw in this reach in June include Anna's Hummingbirds, Rufous Hummingbirds, Purple Finches, goldfinches, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Hairy Woodpeckers, Barred Owl, junco, siskin, Black-headed Grosbeaks, flickers, kingfishers, Black Swifts, Tree Swallows, & Wood Ducks. I've seen the young of many of these also Rufous Hummingbirds, towhees, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, & Black-headed Grosbeak. Bats are out most evenings. I recently saw 2 otters in the lower pond, possibly inhabiting the old beaver lodge and two turtles sunning on a log.

Ian (E-7) June 28

The River was clear and the level was low to normal in the upper section of the reach, but at the Red Bridge it was high due to the freshet on the Fraser River. There was hardly a current flowing. Maple and Scott Creeks were clear. Birds included Cedar Waxwing, Wood Duck, Northern Flicker, and Swainson's Thrushes. The number of birds on Reeve Slough seems to be down and there seems to be more vegetation growing in the slough. Thimbleberries are forming. Hardhack and Himalayan blackberry are flowering. Someone has been cutting the overhanging vegetation on the river trail. A big thank you goes out to this person.

JUNE RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Jeff (W-4) June 14

The river was low, as it had been most of the past two weeks, and clear. The outfall at the north end of Gabriola contained soap bubbles and some foamy scum, as it has almost continuously for several weeks. The outfall at Saltspring was running clear as were the Maple Creek well and the Grist Creek pipe. Fry were in the Gabriola outfall – somehow they put up with the poor water there. The highlight of the walk was spotting a Barred Owl. A crow was making aggressive noises, which drew my attention to a shape in a tree, which turned out to be an owl! The owl made occasional feints toward the crow, which drew back each time. Then they both flew a short distance, after which a second crow, then two more crows joined in and finally they all flew off. Litter pickup was on Friday June 29. The trail was in good shape, a reflection of local residents and trail users who keep an eye on it. Partiers use pallets for firewood at the drinking spots. 6 pallets had washed away from the beaches and were stuck in the river.

Murray (W-6) June 24

While no sign of homeless camps to discourage people from walking, it's not the most welcoming area as is the case on the other side of the River. This Reach has the potential for a nice walk for families. I picked up about a ¼ bag of garbage, which is pretty good for this area. The homeless camp under the Kingsway Bridge has been cleaned out again, which removes a lot of the problem. It would appear that the City crew has also cleaned up around the McAllister Pedestrian Bridge, which makes a major difference to the overall cleanliness of the Reach. The one shopping cart I saw was full of garbage and was parked along a city road access to the dike. Hopefully the city will take it away if still there when they come by next time. The City for some reason has taken away the garbage can at the corner of Burleigh and Chine where construction is going on with lots of workers on site. Questionable decision. The River was clear and at a normal level and looked really good. It was 1.75 meters at the Gordon Ave gauge. The water was stagnant at the Maple Creek dike and it had a green sludge on the surface. The level was about 1' below the high water mark.

David & Myrna (E-5) June 29

There were two police cars parked at the entrance to Lions Park - an officer went over to where two people were sitting on a picnic bench and retrieved a shopping cart that was full of material. Couldn't tell what was in the cart or whether the two people were involved. Smoke blanketed the trail near the Dog off Leash Park; there was an individual with a fire along the river at the bottom of the bank, phoned 911. On our return, there was a fire truck in the parking lot of the Dog Off Leash Park. One person can disrupt the enjoyment of many, as is the case with the person who had a fire on the river. The smoke was a problem for anyone with breathing issues and potentially a fire hazard. The River was clear and at a normal level. Birds included North-western Crow, American Robin, Spotted Towhee, White-crowned Sparrow & Swainson's Thrush. Swainson's Thrush's song filled the air throughout the riparian forest but not a bird was to be seen. Love all the sounds of early summer, especially the call of the Swainson's Thrush. Blackberry, foxglove, and Hawkweed were in flower. Thimbleberry fruit were not quite ripe.

Charlene & Roger (E-8) June 25

The River was absolutely huge! Biggest I've seen I think. The little beach that lies adjacent to the pump house was covered in water, as was most of the brush nearby. There didn't seem to be much current as there was lots of stagnant poplar floating near the river's edge. The Wilson Farm waterways were very full and the new tidally active floodgates were closed. Bird activity included Red-tailed Hawk, heron, and Barn and Tree Swallows. I was at the Metro Vancouver sponsored ceremony on this morning, celebrating the Wilson Farm habitat enhancement project. All parties presented (Kwkwetlem First Nation, Metro Vancouver, BC Environment Minister, DFO) seemed pleased with the outcomes thus far. There was a lot of hand shaking and back patting going on. They reported that four different types of juvenile salmon have been seen in the enhancement area.

