

COQUITLAM RiverWatch

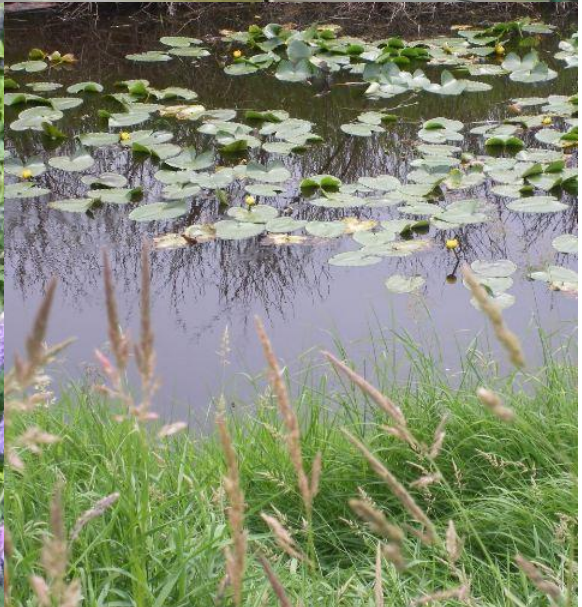
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JULY 2013

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 178



Photos on this page clockwise from top left

Thimbleberries in E-7 by Ian

These trees will be cut down for the Gabriola development along David Ave in the coming months in reach W-4 by Ian

Yellow lily pads in Colony Farm by Mallee

Woolly vetch in Colony Farm by Mallee

Photos on back page

Garbage in fire pit in reach W-2 by Ian

Logs in Coquitlam River by Mallee

Daily Water Quality Checks *by Jeff*

I managed to check the river level and water quality on 27 mornings this month. The river was low to very low all month, cloudy on 2 mornings, slightly cloudy on 1 morning, otherwise clear.

JUNE RiverWatchers' REPORTS

Ian (W-1) June 30

There was a family with chairs and an umbrella in the River by the hatchery. Another group was in the River, at the party beach, and they had a fire filling the air with smoke. Four people were getting ready to float down the River from the hatchery to Ozada Ave. The River was clear and low. Slade Creek was clear with a low flow. Birds included Swainson's Thrushes, dipper, and a robin. I normally just hear the Swainson's Thrush, but on this day I saw one. The American Dipper I saw was in the middle of the River standing on a small rock cleaning itself. 10 vehicles were parked along the road in this reach, which is the most I have seen.

Ian (W-2) June 30

I was surprised to see 2 young guys coming out of the bush on the opposite side of the River from Upper Coquitlam River Park with a machete in hand. They looked like they were trying to be early explorers. There were 12 vehicles at the remote car park where they had a sign welcoming the public to their event and there were 18 vehicles at the remote airplane park. A family was having a barbecue and picnic at Galette Park with some of the family in the River. Partiers who come to the River during the summer leave a lot of garbage behind. I don't understand how people can enjoy an area so much, but not respect it. The River was clear above and below the gravel operations. It was at a low level. The water level at the Galette gauge was .590 metres. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was clear & low flow. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and flowing. Partridge Creek was clear and flowing. Marquart Creek was a little less than silty and a high flow. Goodyear Creek (#11) was clear and a low flow. A new fence has been put up where Mantle Creek comes from the Lafarge gravel operation. Birds included Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, chickadees, crows, and robins. I saw salmon fry in the Archery Pond and in the River. The ones in the Archery Pond were not even hiding as they were in the sun and jumping out of the water. The forest was alive with bird songs. Huckleberries were ripe and delicious. Salmonberries were still ripe. Thimbleberries were out, but not ripe. Hardhack and Himalayan blackberry were flowering.

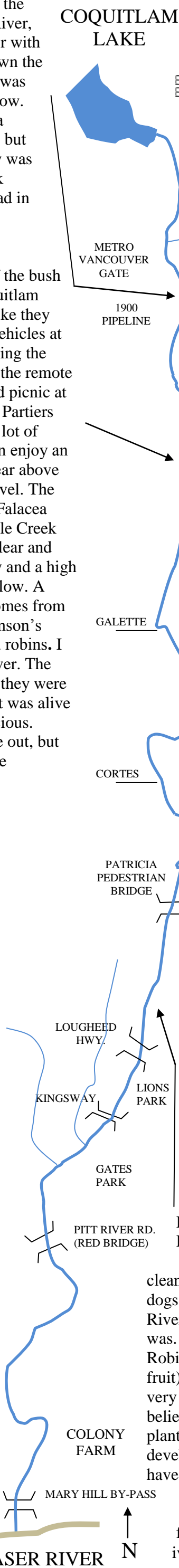
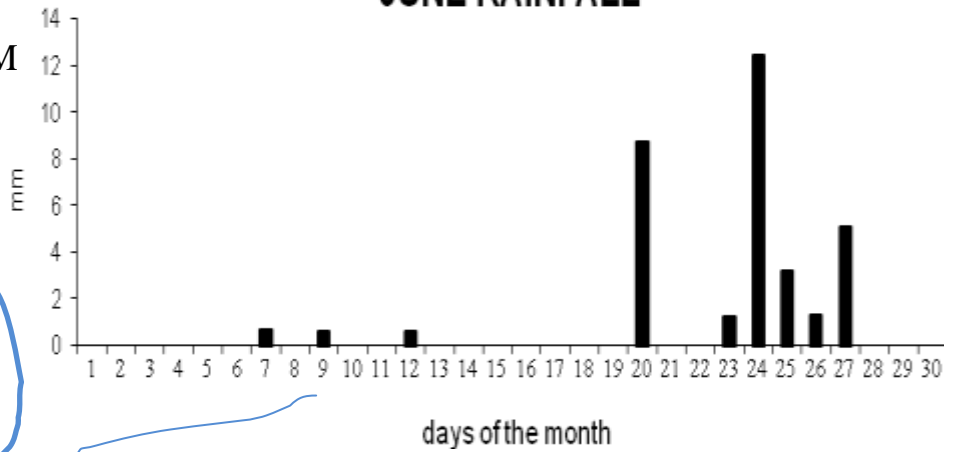


Fenced area by Mantle Creek in W-2 by Ian

Charlene & Roger (W-9) June 30

The Community Gardens were devoid of activity, too hot to work in the sun. One of the cyclists was an 80 year old man who told us that this was the first bike ride he has taken in 50 years. He was very proud and loved having the flat, off-road reaches to ride along. Lots of paper products under the Mary Hill Bypass. The River was very high and rather murky. Bird activity included sparrows, swallows, two eagles, chickadees, and gulls. We didn't see much bird activity but we could certainly hear lots of bird song. We also saw, albeit briefly, two snakes wiggling through the grass. The reach was very quiet but so were the roads getting here and everywhere we went. Presumably it is because many people are out of town for the long weekend but also think that many folks stayed inside as the temperature was very high. We took advantage and took our (very hot dogs) for a dip in the river at the mouth.

JUNE RAINFALL



Susan (E-4) June 21 **Oxbow Side Channel**

One young woman was walking 3 dogs off-leash, one of which was a pit bull that came bounding right up to me. It really terrified me! When I told her that dogs are supposed to be leashed, she became very rude saying, "I NEVER leash my dogs." The side channels were clear and at a normal level. Birds I saw on this day included crows, raven, Black-capped Chickadees (with young), Golden-crowned Kinglets, Mallards (with young), robins, towhees, Song Sparrows, goldfinches (with young), Swainson's Thrushes, Steller's Jays, Great Blue Heron, kingfisher, Downy Woodpeckers (with young); flickers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Anna's Hummingbird, and Rufous Hummingbirds. I also saw a Douglas squirrel, a turtle, and a garter snake. My sight of the day was a mother Mallard sitting watch on a log across the pond, while her babies slept cuddled up to her. Huckleberries are ripe now and especially profuse this year. Many foxgloves in bloom. Other birds seen in June along this reach include Hairy Woodpeckers, nuthatches, Purple Finches, and Pine Siskins.



Huckleberries by Susan

Murray (E-3 north) June 30

It was a beautiful morning and scads of people were walking their dogs. Most were off leash as usual. A few families were preparing to spend a few hours on the River with their kids. I picked up a half bag of garbage, which I do as part of my Adopt a Trail involvement. Most of the garbage was contained to two areas - beer or pop cans and some paper which can be expected from here on in as young people gather along the river on Friday and Saturday nights. Otherwise the Reach was very clean and found only a few poop bags despite the fact that it's been well over a month since I was last down there. The River looked great - nice flow and clear.

Susan (E-3) June 21

The River was clear and at a low level. Birds included Black-capped Chickadees, robins, Swainson's Thrushes, Pacific Wren, and towhees. The forest was really full of Swainson's thrush songs, such beautiful melodies to listen to while walking along the river.

David (E-5) June 18

Dog off leash park was busy. A mother and her son were enjoying throwing sticks into the River for their dog to fetch. The trail was very clean as usual. I'm surprised, not really, that we still see as many off leash dogs even though there is a Dog Off Leash Park along this section of the River. The River was clear and low. I was surprised how low the water was. Birds included North-western Crow, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin and a warbler (not sure what species). Indian Plum (with very ripe fruit), Thimbleberry & Salmonberry all had fruit and Pacific Ninebark was very obvious as it was in flower. There was also quite a bit of what I believe to be a type of hawksbeard in flower (an invasive, introduced plant), looks like a taller, thinner, raggedy dandelion. Even with all the development pressures one can see how plentiful food resources would have been for the aboriginal peoples of this area. Lots of berries! I know for a lot of invasives it is too late to do anything but try and control them but it is unfortunate that this watershed is so heavily impacted, from weedy flowers like hawksbeard to Japanese knotweed, lamium & ivy, they seem to be everywhere.

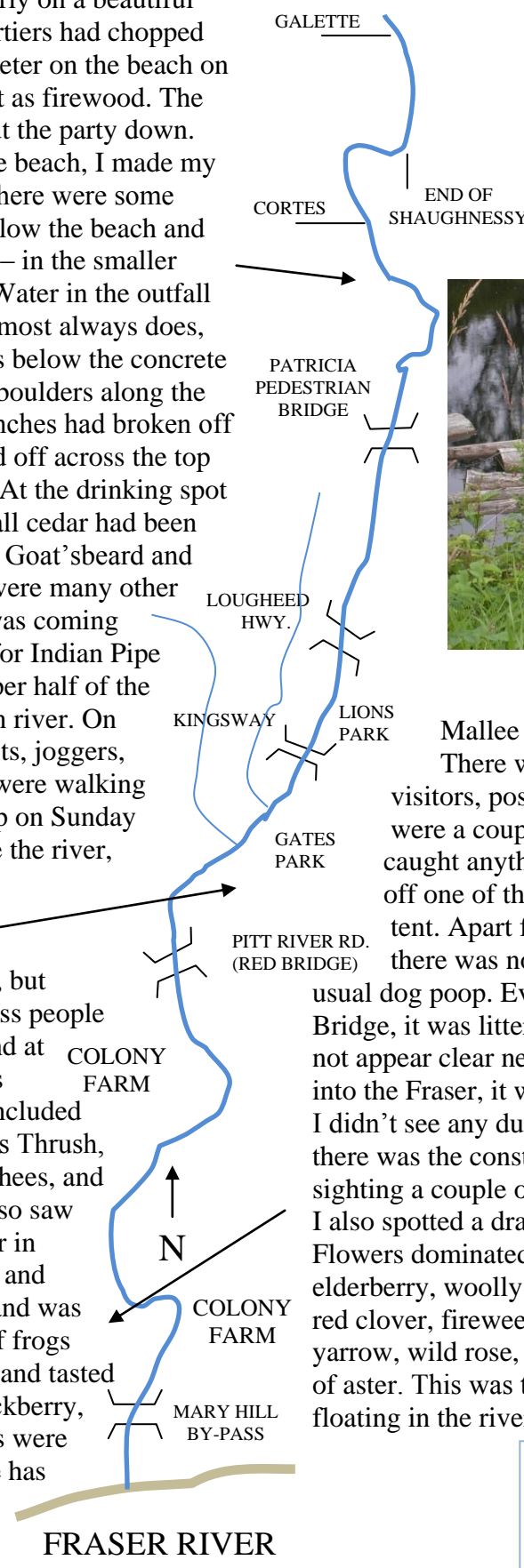
JUNE RiverWatches' REPORTS

Jeff (W-4) June 15

The river was very low and clear early on a beautiful sunny Saturday morning. Friday partiers had chopped down a tree roughly 10 inches diameter on the beach on the Cooper property hoping to use it as firewood. The RCMP and the Fire Department shut the party down. After cleaning up the garbage on the beach, I made my way down along the river's edge. There were some coho fry in the side channel pool below the beach and many fry in the storm sewer outfall – in the smaller outfall pipe, and close to the river. Water in the outfall had a strong soapy cast to it, as it almost always does, with scummy foam among the pipes below the concrete barrier. More fry were seen among boulders along the river's edge. Many cottonwood branches had broken off and a large cottonwood had snapped off across the top of the side channel below Dunkirk. At the drinking spot below the lower Grist Bridge, a small cedar had been sawed down and used for firewood. Goat'sbeard and Pacific ninebark were in bloom as were many other plants and shrubs and Indian Pipe was coming up. It looks like another good year for Indian Pipe with many being seen, all in the upper half of the reach. I saw no one on the trip down river. On my return from Patricia I saw cyclists, joggers, walkers and a dog off leash. Many were walking on the east bank. I did a litter pickup on Sunday June 2. Most of the litter was beside the river, while the trail was quite clean.

Ian (E-7) June 30

There was more garbage than usual, but summer time brings more thoughtless people to the River. The River was clear and at a low level. Scott and Maple Creeks appeared clear and flowing. Birds included Black-headed Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Common Mergansers, Spotted Towhees, and many robins feeding on worms. I also saw bear scat. I quietly watched a beaver in Reeve Slough feeding on root wads and when it saw me, it splashed its tail and was gone. Reeve Slough was a chorus of frogs croaking. Thimbleberries were ripe and tasted like jam. Hardhack, Himalayan blackberry, avens, touch me nots, and foxgloves were flowering. Another cottonwood tree has fallen across the River. I pruned back the blackberries on the trail to the sandy beach.



Mallee (W-8 & W-9) June 23

There was not the usual number of visitors, possibly due to the overcast. There were a couple of people fishing who hadn't caught anything along with a homeless person off one of the nearby paths who had pitched a tent. Apart from a couple of cigarette butts, there was no garbage other than more than the usual dog poop. Even under the Mary Hill Bypass Bridge, it was litter free. The River was high and did not appear clear near the bridge, but at its entrance into the Fraser, it was pristine. This is the first time I didn't see any ducks in the side channels although there was the constant sound of birds. While only sighting a couple of robins, a crow and a chickadee, I also spotted a dragonfly and a couple of butterflies. Flowers dominated the walk: mock-orange, red elderberry, woolly vetch, yellow lily pads, lupines, red clover, fireweed, foxglove, field bindweed, yarrow, wild rose, buttercup, dandelions, and a type of aster. This was the first time I'd spotted logs floating in the river.

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