

COQUITLAM RiverWatch

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MARCH 2013

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 174

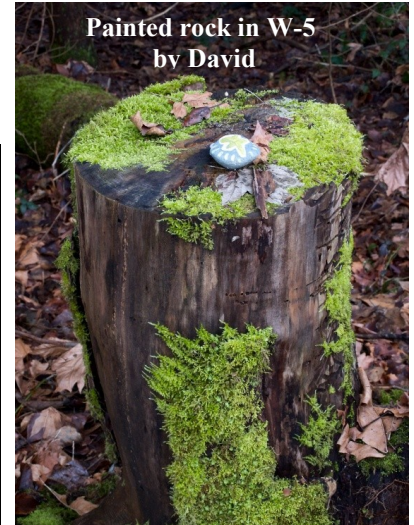
RIVERVIEW WALKS & TREE TOURS 2013

Riverview Hospital 2601 Lougheed Highway, Coquitlam

Meet for walks at Henry Esson Young (HEY) Building

For more info, phone 604-290-9910, or visit website at www.rhcs.org

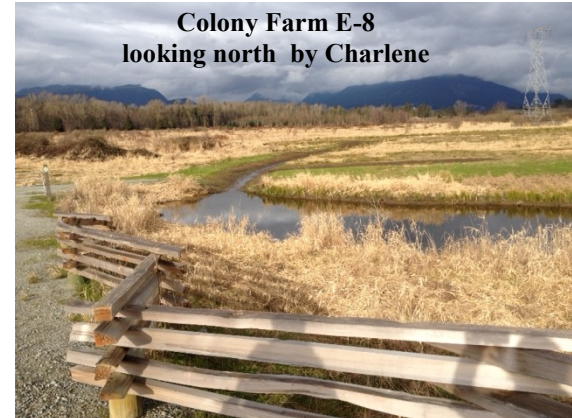
April 21 Sunday 1 pm	Heritage Walk - hosts RHCS & BMN <i>West Lawn Building is 100 years old in April</i>
April 28 Sunday 1 pm	Magnolia Tree Tour
May 5 Sunday 1 pm	Backyard Walk - hosts RHCS & BMN
May 12 Sunday 1 pm	Blossom Time Tree Tour - Mother's day
June 9 Sunday 1 pm	Early Summer Tree Tour
July 7 Sunday 1 pm	Linden Tree Tour & Tea (1)
July 11 Thursday 7:30 pm	Linden Tree Tour & Tea (2)
August 11 Sunday 1 pm	Catalpa & North-end Tree Tour
September 14 Saturday 11am - 4pm	TREEFEST 2013 - 20th Annual
October 6 Sunday 1 pm	Heritage Walk - hosts RHCS & BMN



ADDITIONAL RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Shuwen, Uma, and Ian (W-8) Feb. 11

It was a cloudy, cool and rainy Monday afternoon for the RiverWatch. Fewer people were walking along the river except a large group of 15 with 5 dogs, with 3 of them off leash. These off leash dogs might damage the nest of the birds and animals along the river. We should let more people know that we have to follow the rule about all dogs being on leash. Maybe we need more obvious signs to let people know that dogs should be on leash. Beside the channel we found some branches that had been chewed by beavers. The river was clear and lower than usual. We could see many cans in the River when we were on the Millennium Bridge. Birds included Mallards, Buffleheads, and a goldeneye.



Susan (E-4) Feb. 28 The River was clear and the level was normal. Wildlife included Golden-crowned Kinglets, Mallards, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, Wood Ducks, Common Golden-eye, gull, Great Blue Herons, Varied Thrush, Brown Creepers, and an

Eastern grey squirrel. Other birds seen in February along this reach included Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Downy Woodpeckers, Hairy Woodpeckers, nuthatches, Anna's Hummingbirds, flickers, Pine Siskins, Bald Eagles, Double-crested Cormorant, Gadwalls, kingfishers, and a Merlin.

David & Myrna (E-5) Feb. 25

It was very windy, trees swaying & lots of windfall, not sure what we were doing out there, almost nobody else was but it was exhilarating. Half a dozen people and dogs were in the Dog Off Leash Park, amazing. The trail was very clean. The River was silty and slightly high. Indian plum was ready to burst forth and the hazelnut trees were covered with catkins. Spring is just around the corner!

FEBRUARY RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Ian (W-1) Feb. 17

Someone has dumped some lumber along Pipeline Road near the entrance to the party beach. It will probably be used as firewood, which is better than cutting down trees. In the same area, someone has left a pile of English ivy, which is very invasive. The River was clear and at a normal level. Slade Creek was clear and flowing. The only bird I saw was an American Dipper and it was singing.

Ian (W-2) Feb. 17

The River was clear above and below the gravel operations. It was at a normal level. The water level at the Galette gauge was .670 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. Goodyear Creek (#11) was clear and flowing. Last month, I phoned the City of Coquitlam Engineering and Public Works Customer Service line to report Goodyear Creek being a mudflow. I finally got a phone call back on February 27 after it was in the newsletter. The City sent someone out on the same evening I reported it, but it was too dark to do anything. Another visit was made to the site in the morning and recorded that the turbidity level was high and they were continuing to monitor it. It is good to see the newsletter is making it to the people able to do something. Birds included an American Dipper and a couple of ducks flying.

Dave (W-3) Feb. 28

One fly fisherman was on shore at McTavish Park. He was dressed to fish but was more of an observer than an active participant. Fast food containers and empty cigarette packages were at the south of Hockaday Street. Galette and McTavish Parks were litter free. It was very rainy and the River was running high, fast and very silty. Continual erosion of gravel and silt island behind McTavish Park. I did not see any wildlife as everything was hiding from the downpour. I did not walk the trail close to the River because of the high and fast water, but I did spot checks. The River was fascinating because of its power and risk. It was higher than I have seen it for several years.

Carole & Lyn (W-4) Feb.14

The trail was very clean. We saw no litter other than the bag of dog poo which had been left almost within sight of the garbage bin near the pedestrian bridge. The trail was very quiet....not many people out and about today despite the conditions being very pleasant for a walk. The River was clear and at a normal level. The only wildlife we saw was a Douglas squirrel.

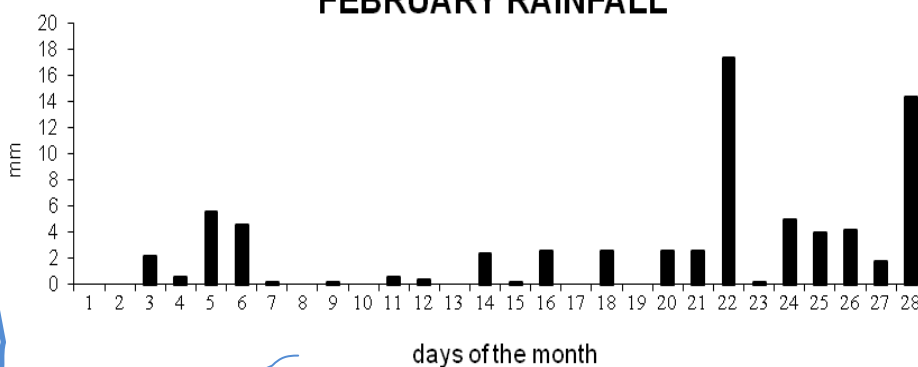
Jeff (W-4) Feb. 10

Sunday morning was clear and cold with frost on cars and roofs. "Frost flowers", filamentary ice structures, had formed on sticks at several points along the river. The river was low and clear. The outfall at the north end of Gabriola was clear which is not common as there is almost always some soapy material or bubbles coming out of the outfall and collecting below. I walked down the river edge and returned along the trail. There was only a small amount of litter on the trail, as usual, and the river edge was reasonably clean. Part of a fish carcass and many fresh eggs were on a boulder in the river by the Grist Channel outflow. Raccoon tracks were present by the outfall at the north end of Gabriola and near the fishing spot below Dunkirk. The trail was well used with 28 walkers, 5 joggers and 8 cyclists.

Charlene & Roger (W-9) Feb. 17

The break in weather brought more people out than I have seen in awhile. Good to see the bird activity as well. Animal tracks were very evident in the bushy area at the mouth, along with coyote scat along the dyke. The River was rather low and clear. Bird activity included Buffleheads, geese, gulls, Mallards, heron, sparrow, towhee and Northern Flicker.

FEBRUARY RAINFALL



COQUITLAM LAKE

METRO VANCOUVER GATE

1900 PIPELINE

GALETTE

CORTES

PATRICIA PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

LOUGHEED HWY.

KINGSWAY

GATES PARK

PITT RIVER RD. (RED BRIDGE)

COLONY FARM

MARY HILL BY-PASS

FRASER RIVER



Gord (E-0) Feb. 1

Gotta stop and listen to the song of the dipper whose lovely notes started just as I entered the river upstream of the Ozone Plant in the Metro Watershed. The River was clear and at a normal level. Birds included dippers, Bald Eagle, and Common Merganser. 6 live alders had fallen in a bunch across the main stem from the east bank just below the armored toe of a slide and I wanted to have a look. The root wads were intact and water filled the divots. These trees may live until the next 'big' release from the dam pulls them along. Presently the target rate is 2.9cms, reduced from 5.9cms Jan 16 as part of the release regime 2. Pre 2008/9, the flows were 1cms (regime 1). A long side channel rejoins the main stem where the alders have fallen. As I walked beside the widened mouth, I was delighted to note the predominance of gravel substrate. Just upstream, there are many cobble sized rocks piling up behind the armored berm from an active section of the slide. Hmm, hopefully some will find the flow in the next few years. As I moved further up the channel to the forking off of the lesser side channel, I saw the extent of channel widening and substrate flushing throughout —beautiful! But what a glorious mess of wood and braided channeling marks the fork! At least 40 stems lay perpendicular to the flow in 5 or 6 little jams. No wonder productivity has jumped in this reach despite the intensive disturbance from seismic upgrade completion. Back to the main stem I found that the only dry gravel bed of this reach has stranded redds from the previous release. Win some, lose some? The largest pool of this reach lies downstream of the stranded redds. The morphology of the pool has changed as well. At the pool head, the lesser side channel cascades down a steep meter decline and just downstream was the pool's deepest lie. Now, I had no difficulty wading through it, but almost filled my chest waders almost 2/3rds of the pool's length later. The sun finally broke through as I stood stock still at the tail of the pool, book out, pencil poised. A lone female Common Merganser had surfed the riffle into the pool and I watched as she floated toward me. Maybe if I didn't twitch, the merganser won't have notice me...."Dream on", she waved her tufted butt, heading back the way she came. Oh well, time to get back to work....

Susan (E-3) Feb. 28

The River was clear and at a normal level. Pouring rain and very little human or bird activity. Signs of spring are beginning. Indian plum leaves are unfolding and the flower buds emerging. Alder catkins are soft and ready to release their pollen if it ever dries up. Birds included Golden-crowned Kinglets and Black-capped Chickadees.

David (E-6) Feb. 18

Even on a rainy morning, this walk sees its share of people, as it is very urban. Everybody seemed friendly in spite of the rain. Lions Park was quiet except for two city works vehicles, playground and skateboard park were empty. Downtown Dog Off leash Park - no dogs but a city works crew was filling a low wet area with fill. Gates Park had it usual dog walkers and a senior men's soccer game. People still get out and enjoy the river corridor even when it rains. Some still have little appreciation for the river as evidenced by the amount of litter in this reach, shopping carts in the water, cans, plastic, etc. The River was clear and the level was normal. Birds included chickadees, gull, crow, Mallards, robins, Golden-eye ducks, Common mergansers & Northern Flicker. Considering how urban this reach is it always amazes me with the amount of bird life. Lots of buds coming on most of the trees and shrubs.

Charlene & Roger (E-8) Feb. 17

The River was rather low and clear. Bird activity included eagle, three hawks soaring together and making lots of screeches, Pileated Woodpecker, Mallard and chickadees. Lots of people!! We noticed that many folks access this reach by way of Shaughnessy Street and do the loop around the Wilson Farm. Great sightings included an otter sunbathing and a very healthy confident-looking coyote. It had a fair amount of red colour in its coat. Coyote scat very prominent along this reach.

FEBRUARY RiverWatcher's REPORTS

David (W-5) Feb. 8

Not my usual reach but was not surprised that it was very quiet. Somebody though is trying to brighten the lives of others as there were painted rocks placed on and throughout one stretch of forest just before the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge. They certainly brought a smile to my face and talking to a passerby, she indicated that new ones were placed each year for about the last three years. The River was clear and at a low level. It's unfortunate that the trail, from Lougheed Highway along the back of the Ford dealership, has such a small natural buffer.

Murray (W-6) Feb. 26

Fairly quiet morning as it was damp, cool and mid week. There remains one active homeless shelter between Maple Creek and the Wilson powerline with three bikes outside a small tent. Two people were also underneath the Kingsway Bridge. Fishing was quiet – only a small steelhead run this time of year and the River was a little muddy. The activity along this Reach, although quiet this morning, is going to continue to increase with two new condominiums on Burleigh Street close to completion. How times have changed – I know I'm aging myself but I can remember when Burleigh was nothing more than a dirt road leading down to the Scott Brother's gravel pit. Slightly more garbage this time around with it being particularly bad from the McAllister Pedestrian Bridge up past the Kingsway Bridge. Mostly plastic bags and cups. The River level was normal to high with the recent heavy rains in the last 2-3 days. As mentioned earlier the water was cloudy but I've seen worse after a couple of days of rain. The River measured 2 meters at the gauge south of the Lougheed Bridge. Maple Creek was approx. 1' below the unofficial high water mark. The back water north of the culvert was clear with some flow. I saw a dozen Mallards just south of the McAllister Pedestrian Bridge in the side channel of the River. Several trees have been eaten half through by beavers north of Maple Creek and one large cottonwood has fallen down with the recent strong winds. The City likely needs to put some chicken wire up around these trees to protect them from further damage to the riparian area.

Murray (E-3 north) Feb.10

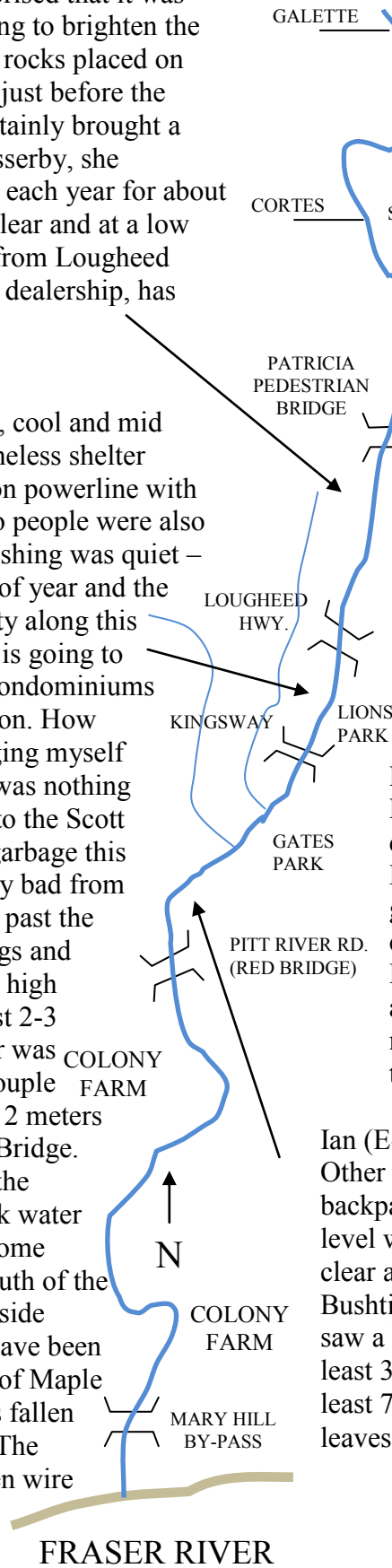
The walk was conducted on a beautiful sunny but cool morning from the David Bridge to the Big Rock. The reach was very clean despite having not covered this Reach for the past couple of months due to part-time work. Approx. 1/3 bag of garbage – mostly plastic and poop bags. The River was clear and at a normal level. The River looked good and seemed to be more water than normal going back in the River from the sand siphoning pond rather than being diverted to the Oxbow Side Channels although still a good flow through the side channel as well. Sand siphoning grate leading into the Oxbow Lake could be partially plugged as is frequently the case. Three Mallards were seen on the siphoning pond. Lovely morning for a walk along the River, which was evident by the number of people out walking with their dogs. A definite area that needs protecting.

Murray (E-3 south) Feb. 13

Most of the activity, which was relatively quiet to begin with, was around the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge. I collected about 1/3 bag of garbage mostly containing one piece of clothing and the usual plastic bags. Otherwise Reach was really clean. The River was clear and at a normal level. It looked really good – might even be a few steelhead coming up in the next couple of weeks.

Ian (E-7) Feb. 24

Other than the usual litter, I saw a blanket, backpack, and bike. The River was cloudy and the level was normal. Maple and Scott Creeks appeared clear and flowing. Birds included Wood Ducks, Bushtits, Mallards, starlings, robins, and crows. I saw a Wood Duck in the Coquitlam River and at least 30 in Reeve Slough. I also saw a flock of at least 75 Bushtits. Indian plum has started to get its leaves.



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