

COQUITLAM RiverWatch

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SEPTEMBER 2012

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 168

ENGLISH IVY REMOVAL IN REACH W-4 by Dana Slocum City of Coquitlam

On Saturday August 11th the City of Coquitlam worked with 97 volunteers from Iglesia Ni Cristo Church of Christ to remove invasive English Ivy along the Coquitlam River between Savary and the north end of Gabriola. It was a beautiful sunny day filled with laughter and excitement as the group tackled the English Ivy that has been taking over the forest along the west side of the Coquitlam River. With the help of these 97 volunteers we were able to remove approximately 600 cubic feet of English Ivy (4 large truck loads).

COQUITLAM RIVER WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE MEETING

On Saturday November 3, the Coquitlam River Watershed (CRW) Roundtable will host a public information meeting from 9:30 am - 2:30 pm (doors open at 9:00 am). Highlights of the meeting will be view the new Web site with virtual tours, hear about Roundtable initiatives such as the Watershed Cafés, learn about new funding for a watershed plan and share your ideas, and meet the new Roundtable Coordinator. The location of the meeting is The Outlet (Work Room), 2253 Leigh Square, Port Coquitlam. There is no fee to attend, but pre-registration is requested. Contact Dave Peterson (meeting coordinator) Email: dave@devonknight.com Tel: 604-677-2759. For more information about the Roundtable, visit the CRW website at www.coquitlamriverwatershed.ca

SALMON COME HOME FESTIVAL

On Sunday October 21st, the Hoy/Scott Watershed Society and the City of Coquitlam will be hosting the festival from 11 am to 3 pm at the Hoy Creek hatchery. Free parking is available at Douglas College, City Hall and Pinetree Community Centre. For further information please call 604-927-6536 or check the website at www.hsws.ca

RIVER CHAT by Gord

On August 20th, Hydro opened one of three gates at the dam with the result of a rapid increase in flow. On August 19th, a crew was in the river moving logs to deflect high flows into the Upper Coquitlam River Park channel to keep the mouth open. The flow wasn't high enough to clean out the channel, although the bar at the mouth actually decreased slightly. It did refill the UCRP Pond, which had got very low during this recent dry spell. On the 21st, I returned and dug the channel down for 5 solid hours, and now the flow is sufficient to bring the pond back into functional shape. Adult sockeye are in the river with two live ones and one carcass so far!!

What an amazing fish, with so few juveniles successfully passing the dam, we still get returns.

Photos

These photos were taken by Grant Mayert of a soaring Cooper's Hawk and a Barred Owl. Both were spotted on the Cooper Property where there is a plan to develop the forested property.



AUGUST RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Ian (W-2) Aug. 29

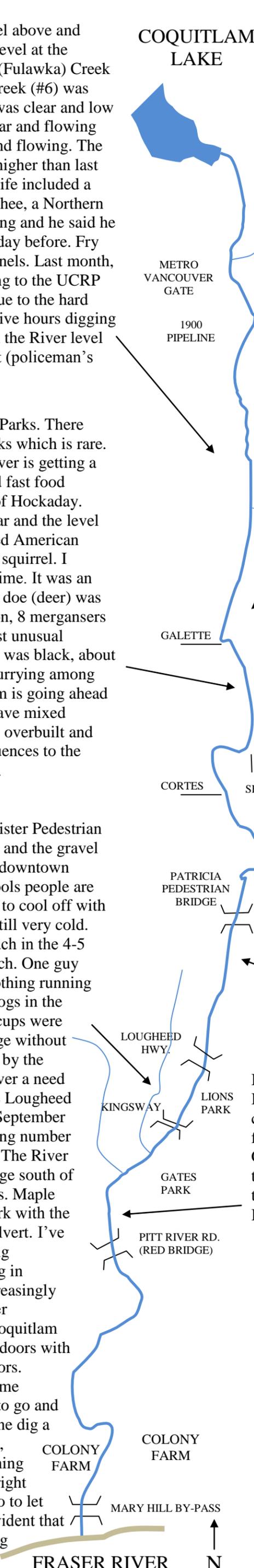
The River was clear and at a normal level above and below the gravel operations. The water level at the Galette gauge was .580 metres. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was clear & low flowing. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and low flowing. Partridge Creek was clear and low flowing. Marquart Creek was almost clear and flowing well. Goodyear Creek (#11) was clear and flowing. The Upper Coquitlam River Park Pond was higher than last month and the outlet was flowing. Wildlife included a Raven, Great Blue Herons, Spotted Towhee, a Northern Flicker and fry. I talked to a person fishing and he said he caught and released a rainbow trout the day before. Fry were seen in one of the UCRP side channels. Last month, I commented on the lack of water flowing to the UCRP Pond. It was flowing again this month due to the hard work of a local river steward. He spent five hours digging out a channel for the water to flow when the River level is low. Thanks so much! Touch-me-knot (policeman's helmet) was flowering.

Dave (W-3) Aug. 23

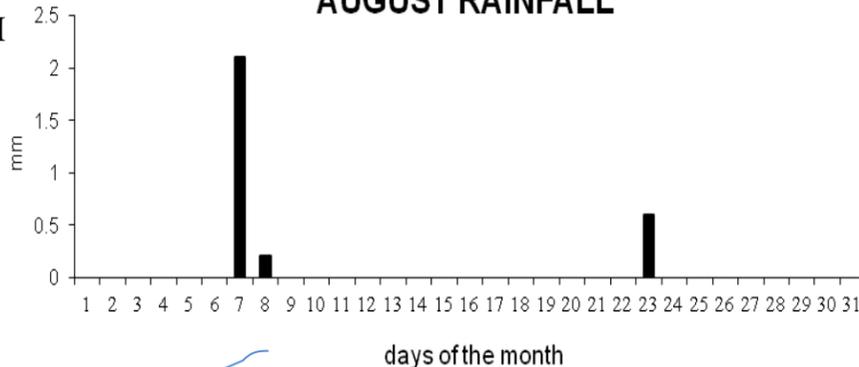
Lots of people at Galette and McTavish Parks. There were people on the trail between the parks which is rare. I saw waders and rafters, although the river is getting a little shallow. There were drink cans and fast food containers at Galette and the south end of Hockaday. McTavish was clean. The River was clear and the level was normal for August. Wildlife included American Dipper, mergansers, deer, raccoons, and squirrel. I haven't seen any kingfishers for a long time. It was an interesting month for wildlife. The large doe (deer) was by McTavish Park. A family of 4 raccoon, 8 mergansers regally swimming upstream, but the most unusual sighting was what I took to be a mink. It was black, about a foot long including the tail and was scurrying among the riverside rocks. Looks like Coquitlam is going ahead with the McTavish Park completion. I have mixed feelings about this. Probably going to be overbuilt and possibly overused. The ultimate consequences to the river and surrounding area are unknown.

Murray (W-6) Aug. 18

The busiest area was south of the McAllister Pedestrian Bridge both on the east side of the River and the gravel bars. With the increase in apartments in downtown PoCo, and lack of outdoor swimming pools people are increasingly traveling to the River to try to cool off with young families despite the River water still very cold. Today was the busiest I've seen this Reach in the 4-5 years I've been involved with RiverWatch. One guy was fishing under the train bridge but nothing running and no hope anyways with people and dogs in the River. Good old 7-11 and their Slurpee cups were everywhere. I picked up ¾ bag of garbage without even getting close to the likely mess left by the sunbathers & swimmers. If there were ever a need for a river cleanup – at least between the Lougheed Bridge and Gates Park – it would be in September or early October. There were an increasing number of grocery carts along the River as well. The River was clear and at a normal level. The gauge south of the Lougheed Bridge measured .5 meters. Maple Creek was 15" below the high water mark with the water slimy and stagnant north of the culvert. I've likely said this before, with the increasing population in PoCo and Coquitlam living in multifamily facilities, it has become increasingly important that the two cities make further investment to protect and enhance the Coquitlam River Watershed. People need to get outdoors with their families versus spending time indoors. During this hot spell, the River has become increasingly important place for people to go and cool off. It wouldn't hurt to have someone dig a few decent swimming holes in the River, which would also likely enhance the fishing in the fall. With the River being so low right now, despite continuing efforts by Hydro to let water out of the dam periodically, it's evident that any decent holes for swimming or fishing are gradually filling up with gravel.



AUGUST RAINFALL



Mallee (E-2) Aug. 19

This was the first cooler day after this summer's stunning heat. I expected the puddles and smaller creeks to have dried up but amazingly, water was still trickling towards the Coquitlam River and there were still muddy patches. Precarious leaps and balancing were necessary to navigate the trail. Even at Crystal Falls, a substantial outpouring of water pelted down. However, crossing Pritchett Creek was now easily manageable without getting wet as it hadn't been on my previous walks along this stretch. I saw 4 people cycling and 46 people walking. Unfortunately, this was the first walk where I'd noticed a disturbing amount of garbage: piles of empty pop cans, plastic bottles, Starbucks' containers and even evidence that someone had lit a camp fire. No stones were visible around the ashes – very worrying to find under the present dry conditions. The Coquitlam River was super clear and in spite of no recent rain, the current was flowing pretty quickly.

Murray (E-3 south) Aug. 14

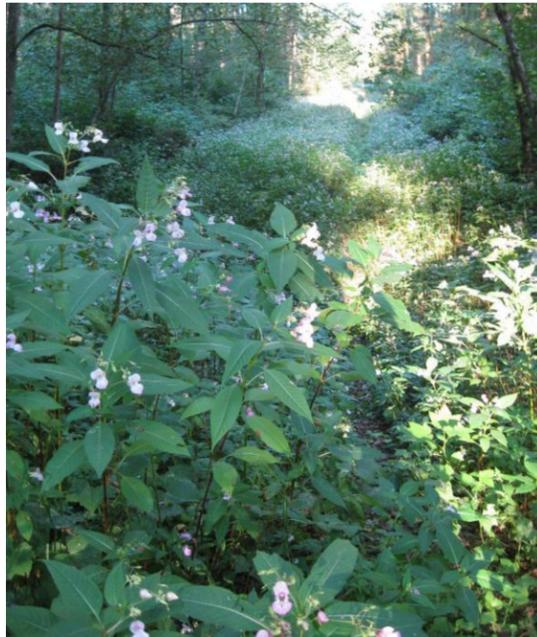
I collected about ¼ bag of garbage. Relatively clean considering activity down around the river this time of year. The River was clear and at a normal level. It was pretty quiet for wildlife – nothing jumped out at me.

David (E-5) Aug. 29

It was the first time I had seen the dog off leash park empty. Work is almost finished at the Mountain Bike Park near Patricia Ave. Talked to one of the hosts/workers; they were busy testing their work as they went. The trail was clean. The River was low, but normal for this time of year. The only birds spotted were North-western Crow & American Robin. Mountain Ash and Indian Plum were noticeable as their leaves are already starting to turn yellow, probably from all of the heat recently. Even with the shower, the forest looked dry. Lions Park is always busy in the summer; the kids really enjoy the playground.

Ian (E-7) Aug. 27

I saw 6 dogs on leash and amazingly no dogs off leash. The River was clear and at a low level. Maple and Scott Creeks were clear and barely flowing. Birds included Great Blue Heron, Wood Ducks, Brown Creepers, Spotted Towhees, and chickadees. I saw some bear scat on the paved PoCo Trail. Snowberries were out. Hardhack, fireweed, touch-me-not (policeman's helmet), & knotweed were flowering. Blackberries were ripe and delicious.



This is a photo of invasive touch-me-not (policeman's helmet) taking over the pipeline right-of-way near the Red Bridge. Photo by Ian

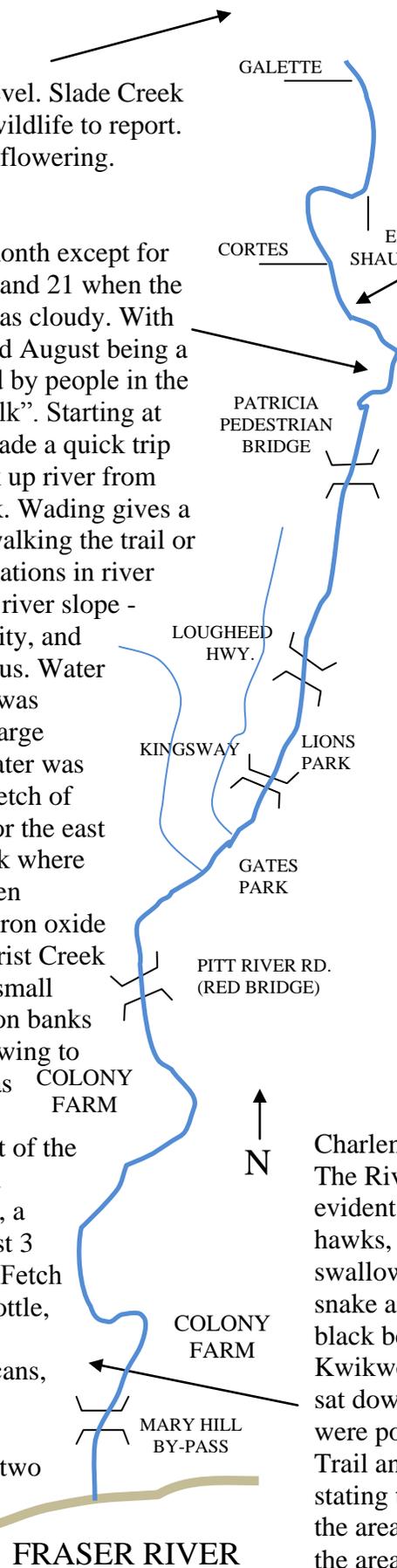
AUGUST RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Ian (W-1) Aug. 29

The River was clear and at a normal level. Slade Creek was clear and flowing. There was no wildlife to report. There were a few foxglove plants still flowering.

Jeff (W-4) Aug. 12

The river was very low and clear all month except for approximately 36 hours on August 20 and 21 when the level rose dramatically and the river was cloudy. With the river so low, the warm weather, and August being a month when fish wouldn't be bothered by people in the river, I decided to do a real "River Walk". Starting at 7am on a beautiful sunny morning I made a quick trip down the trail then waded slowly back up river from Patricia, staying close to the west bank. Wading gives a view of the river very different from walking the trail or hopping boulders along the bank. Variations in river bottom – sand vs pebbles vs boulders; river slope - rapids vs pools; water depth and velocity, and riverbanks become immediately obvious. Water temperature was pleasant and wading was straightforward, except for the three Large Woody Debris structures where the water was deep and fast. The most interesting stretch of riverbank, visible only from the river or the east bank, was in the vicinity of Grist Creek where near vertical clay and cobbles have been exposed. I counted 37 occurrences of iron oxide leachate, most between Patricia and Grist Creek with a few farther upriver. Two more small clumps of knotweed were discovered on banks not visible from the trail or boulders owing to bush or steepness. The river's edge was teeming with fry and water striders. A Great Blue Heron flew upstream. Most of the garbage in or beside the river reflected seasonal activities – 6 single flip-flops, a deflated rubber raft (I have seen at least 3 others recently), 3 sand toys, 4 balls ("Fetch doggie"), a blanket, a tanning lotion bottle, 2 pallets intended for firewood, marshmallows and approximately 40 cans, mostly beer. Many of the cans were submerged in the river. Other garbage included plastic bags, bits of rope and two concrete blocks. One plastic bag on a small rocky island has been bugging me for months and I finally got it.



Murray (E-3 north) Aug. 13

Despite the low actual numbers the Reach seemed quite busy – must have been the kids in or around the River and some City crew taking away garbage or cutting back along the trail. There was also a private contractor building some fences along certain parts of the Oxbow Side Channels as part of the salmon enhancement protection program. This would appear to be near certain sections of the stream close to the walking trails to try to prevent or discourage dogs off leash from going into the stream. It was generally very clean considering it's summer with kids and families picnicking by the River. I picked up about 1/2 bag of garbage mostly of a plastic nature. The River was clear and at a normal level. The River looked good and while not high it would appear that BC Hydro is doing a good job of letting some water out to keep the river at a reasonable depth. I'm still tempted to take the grandson down on tubes from the David Bridge to the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge.

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Charlene (W-8 & 9) Aug. 30

The River was relatively low. Sand bars were evident. Water was murky. Bird activity included hawks, lots of Mallards, kingfisher, loads of swallows, gulls, and a Northern Flicker. I saw one snake and some squirrels. A (seemingly) small black bear was moving lazily through the Kwikwetlem First Nations housing. It eventually sat down in front of one of the homes. Notices were posted at the west end of the Sheep Paddock Trail and near Kwikwetlem First Nations housing stating that VRT herbicide had been sprayed in the area. The sign was warning people to avoid the area for 24 hours