

# COQUITLAM RiverWatch

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



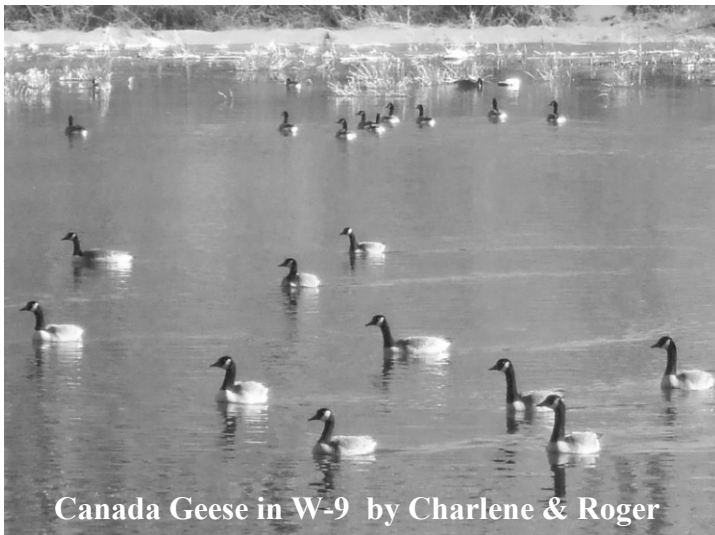
FEBRUARY 2012

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 161

## COQUITLAM RIVER CLEAN UP A HUGE SUCCESS

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Garry Elgear and the gang at Riverside Fly & Tackle hosted their 9<sup>th</sup> annual clean up of the Coquitlam River. There was a line of people across the parking lot waiting to sign up. They were overjoyed by the amazing turnout and it was by far the largest yet. The river is now noticeably much cleaner due to the efforts of the over 250 hard working volunteers. This event has done a lot to increase the awareness of the issues present in the Coquitlam River ecosystem and will hopefully make some of the local residents more mindful of the river in their backyards. Over 400 garbage bags were used and approximately 3-4 tonnes of garbage were collected from the river banks. Everything from tires and cast iron stoves to rebar, couches and even a toilet was removed. Thanks to everybody who came out and helped clean up such a precious river system. For the full story check out their website at [www.rsfat.com](http://www.rsfat.com)



Canada Geese in W-9 by Charlene & Roger



Scott Creek & the silty Coquitlam River in Reach E-7 taken on Jan. 29 by Ian

### BC ENDANGERED RIVERS LIST

This year marks the 20th annual "most endangered rivers" list from the Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC). ORC is asking for nominations toward its 2012 BC Endangered Rivers List.

Your nominations will help them choose the "Top Ten" rivers in BC that face threats to their ecological health.

Deadline for nominations will be **Monday March 5th**. The final list will be distributed later in the spring, helping to raise awareness of BC River issues.

**Please send your river nominations to:**  
[outdoorrec@orc.bc.ca](mailto:outdoorrec@orc.bc.ca)

To view Endangered Rivers Lists from previous years, visit: [http://www.orcbc.ca/pro\\_endangered.htm](http://www.orcbc.ca/pro_endangered.htm)

### NEWSLETTERS ON WEBSITE

Newsletters are now on the Coquitlam River Watershed website. Click on the events tab on the right side of the home page. Check out the website at

<http://www.coquitlamriverwatershed.ca/default.htm>

Newsletter editor  
Ian McArthur  
(604-939-4039)  
Fax: 604-931-4453  
Email: [imcart@telus.net](mailto:imcart@telus.net)

# JANUARY RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Ian (W-1) Jan. 28

A truck canopy has been dumped on the side of Pipeline Road. The River was clear and at a normal to low level. Slade Creek was clear and flowing well. There was no wildlife to comment on.

Ian (W-2) Jan. 28

The River was clear above and below the gravel operations. It was a normal to low level for this time of year. The water level at the Galette gauge was .650 metres. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was clear & flowing. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and flowing. Partridge Creek was cloudy and flowing. Marquart Creek was cloudy and flowing high. It was so high it was overflowing and finding a new path to the River. Goodyear Creek (#11) was very silty and flowing. Birds I spotted included chickadees and Golden-crowned Kinglets. I did see Great Blue Heron prints in the snow on the shore of the Upper Coquitlam River Park Pond. UCRP Pond was almost covered in ice and slush.

Ian (W-1 & W-2) Jan. 29

After doing reach E-7 and seeing the river very silty, I did a quick trip upstream around 5pm to see if I could find a reason for this. What a difference a day can make. The River was cloudy above the gravel operations and very silty below. It was at a high level. The water level at the Galette gauge was 1.000 metre. Slade Creek was cloudy. An unnamed water course that joins Slade Creek at the culvert under Pipeline Road was very silty. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was very silty flowing high. Mantle Creek (#6) was very silty and flowing high. Partridge Creek was very silty and flowing high. Partridge Creek was getting very silty water from the C. S. & G culvert and from the creek coming from the west. Marquart Creek was silty and flowing high. Goodyear Creek (#11) was very silty and flowing high.

Jeff (W-4) Jan. 2

On this day it was cloudy and dry. Rain held off until the afternoon. The river was low and clear. There were a few suds in the Gabriola outfall and in the upper part of Grist Creek. The other outfalls and the Maple Creek well were running clear. A fair number of people were out doing a variety of activities. Unusually, dogs on leash outnumbered dogs off leash by 5 to 4. 2 mergansers flew upstream and a large bird (Bald Eagle?) soared high overhead. Otherwise, there was only a small amount of birdsong. Salmon carcasses were getting fewer with only 2 complete and parts of 8 on the river and 1 in Grist Creek. I didn't do a litter pickup this month due to weather and flu.

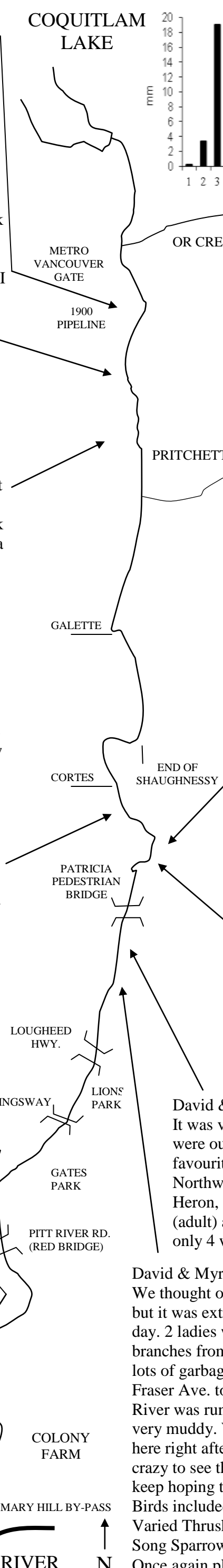
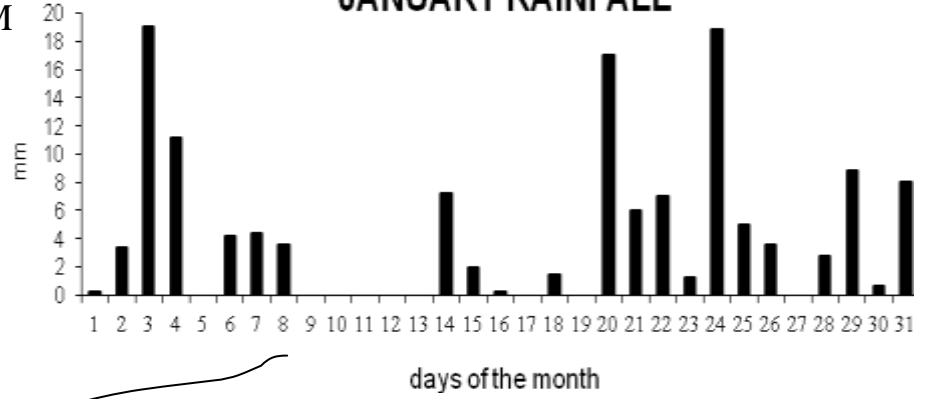
Charlene & Roger (W-8) Jan. 29

The River was very high and murky. Lots of organic debris – branches – flowing downstream. Birds included Bufflehead, geese, gull, hawk, kingfisher and Pileated Woodpecker. Human activity was quiet on this day. Weather was wet and grey, which is probably why. Lots of coyote scat and dog poop along the reach.

Mike (E-8) Jan. 1

Families and dog walkers were out taking advantage of the fair weather. Between Pitt River Road and the Wilson Farm I saw Northern Flickers, Mallards and Wood Ducks in the water. The northern portion of the perimeter channel at Wilson Farm was very silty due to the recent rains and their effect on the habitat restoration work. It will be nice to see how things improve once the vegetation takes hold. I saw a pair of Hooded Mergansers exploring this new habitat and a Belted Kingfisher perched in shrubs along the channel. In the Coquitlam River, which was quite high but only mildly cloudy, there were Buffleheads and a Common Goldeneye. Other birds I saw included Black-capped Chickadees, Red-tailed Hawks and a White-breasted Nuthatch. Recent beaver activity was evident near the dyke to the Wilson Farm. Animals I saw included a Douglas Squirrel munching on rose hips, and on the return trip along the dyke near Pitt River Road three River Otters were frolicking in the slough. What a great finish to my New Year's walk!

## JANUARY RAINFALL



Murray (E-3 north) Jan. 6

Most walkers & joggers were accompanied by their dogs. 8 dogs were off leash and 4 were on leash. This section of the reach was very clean. One dog walker noted that he preferred to walk his dog (obviously off leash) on this side of River as there wasn't as much garbage for his dog to eat. He also commented on the safety of this river for walking animals. It remains evident that a few home owners whose properties back on the riparian area that this is their personal dumping ground for garden waste. I found a fire extinguisher and left it at the dumpster. There was also a discarded propane tank in the same area. No respect whatsoever with the beautiful area at their backdoor. The River was clear and the level was high, but normal for this time of year after 2-3 days of periodic heavy rain. The rapids were roaring, just ideal for expert kayakers. There was more water being diverted back into the River from the settling pond rather than being all directed into the Oxbow Side Channel. There was still a good flow in the side channel, but the water was surprisingly a little murky. I saw 2 Mallards in the side channel and a merganser in the River. It is a good place to get an hour of exercise. Ran into someone at the Aquatic Centre after my walk that had a similar great feeling as I did about the River and what the PoCo Trail offered for walking, jogging, biking, etc.

Murray (E-3 south) Jan. 9

It was very quiet with most of the traffic earlier in the day with people out walking their dogs. I only collected a ¼ bag of garbage. The River was clear and at a high level. It was a foot or two higher than a few days earlier when I did the north part of the Reach. The highlight of the walk was seeing 4-5 dark spawners in the lower side-channel heading into the first pond behind the co-op housing on Shaughnessy. I'm not sure what they were but quite possibly hatchery coho as they were only 3-5 lbs. I was surprised to see spawning salmon in the side channel this late in the season. I was of the opinion that most of the chum or coho had finished spawning by mid-December.

David & Myrna (E-5) Jan. 13

It was very quiet for human & animal activity but boy the birds were out. Great to see so many birds, especially one of our favourites, the Downy Woodpecker. Birds included Northwestern Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Great Blue Heron, Common Merganser, Downy Woodpecker, Bald eagle (adult) and Glaucous-winged Gull. 7 dogs were on leash and only 4 were off leash. The River was clear and on the low side.

David & Myrna (E-5) Jan. 29

We thought our last walk was quiet, but it was extremely quiet on this day. 2 ladies were cutting small branches from Alders. There was lots of garbage on the trail from Fraser Ave. to the river dike. The River was running high, fast, and very muddy. We shouldn't walk here right after a rain, drives us crazy to see the river so muddy. We keep hoping that things will change. Birds included Northwestern crow, Varied Thrush, Spotted Towhee, Song Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. Once again plenty of bird life.



Very silty watercourse near Mantle Creek in W-2 by Ian

# JANUARY RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Murray (W-6) Jan. 11

I saw two transient camps with one near the Maple Creek culvert (occupied, as there was a bike there) and one under the train bridge. Two shopping carts were at the cul-de-sac near the Mosaic project below the Lougheed Bridge. You would have thought the city or Super Store (I told them two weeks ago one of the carts was theirs) would have taken them away by now. A PoCo employee was cleaning up along the dike & below the Kingsway Bridge. I think he was wondering if I was taking over his job. He was going down into the gullies of the riparian area, which was more thorough than I was. The River was clear and at a normal level. The River had dropped a bit since doing Reach E-3. The River looked good and measured 2 meters at the gauge below the Lougheed Bridge. Maple Creek at the culvert was clearer with some flow than last month and measured a foot below the unofficial high point. Two ducks were on Maple Creek before the culvert and two were on the River. I also saw a squirrel. There were three chum skeletons on the culvert above Maple Creek – not sure what brought them up. Fishermen I talked to hadn't caught anything but said one early steelhead had been caught below the McAllister Pedestrian Bridge. It was a great morning for a walk. It was like spring after a frosty night.

Charlene & Roger (E-8) Jan. 15

There were more dogs than people today and there were more on leash than off (9 to 5). The River was very high and still. Water was being pumped from the Coquitlam River into the Wilson Farm via the new pumps/gates. Sections of the Wilson Farm were quite swollen. Bird activity included geese, heron, merganser, Northern Shrike and Bufflehead. There was a work vehicle at the new tidal gate but we didn't see any workers.

Charlene & Roger (W-9) Jan. 15

The River was very high and still probably slack or high tide. Bird activity included Bald Eagle, Northern Shrike, geese, gulls, Mallard, heron, and towhee. It was beautiful. Carpeted in fresh snow. Human activity was low but we saw lots of large birds.

Mallee (E-7) Jan. 21

This section of the trail unfortunately deviates away from the river for much of the walk but is a great sprint in snowy conditions because the tarmac path was ploughed. Consequently, there were a lot of walkers in spite of the grey, listless afternoon. I saw a total of 3 fishermen. One diehard fisherman was still around on my return trip while two others had given up catching anything. One cyclist was texting as he was riding so not watching the path. I saw 2 dogs on leash and 9 off leash. It was amazing how many of these off leash dog owners carried the leash as if their dogs were actually attached to them! There was very little litter around, but I suspect that was because the snow hid most of it. The River was an odd murky light khaki colour; obviously much higher than usual and surging at a fast pace. The gushing water could be clearly heard, even when not in sight. Wildlife included a black squirrel, crows, a lone Wood Duck fighting the current, and I heard several chickadees but didn't see any. A plastic bag was hanging in a tree, a plastic tooth flosser was on the path, two pairs of sneakers were dangling over the power lines at Gates Park and two empty Coke cartons and empty coke cans were at the base of Red Bridge.

On my drive back along Shaughnessy, near E-5, I saw a beautiful Bald Eagle gliding through the trees close to the river.

Ian (E-7) Jan. 29

The River was very silty and flowing at a high level. Maple and Scott Creeks appeared clear flowing into the muddy Coquitlam River. Birds included Wood Ducks, Mallards, Spotted Towhee, chickadees, & crows. Reeve Slough was very quiet for wildlife compared to last month. Two more trees have come down near Gates Park due to beaver activity. An active homeless camp is located near the high power towers.

