

# COQUITLAM RiverWatch

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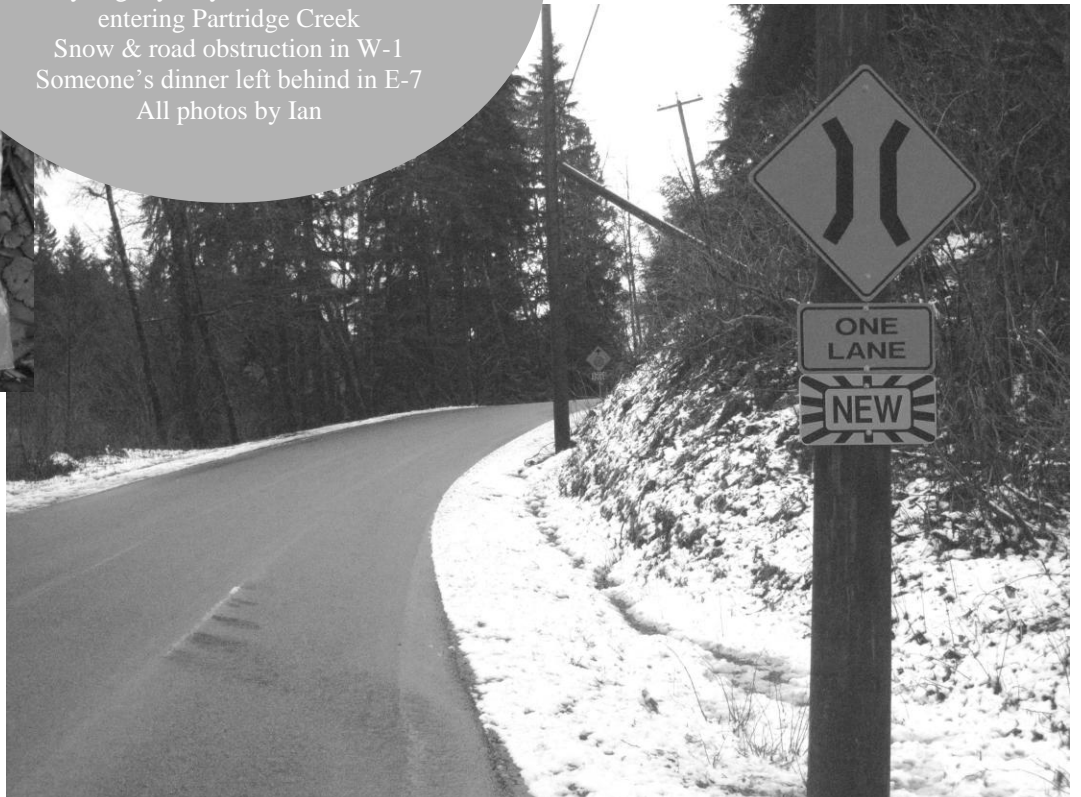
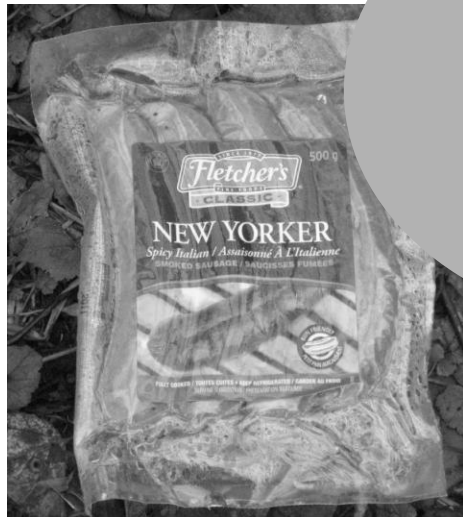
NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 162



## PHOTOS FROM THE COQUITLAM RIVER WATERSHED

Clockwise from top left  
Garbage left in E-7  
Only slightly silty water from culvert  
entering Partridge Creek  
Snow & road obstruction in W-1  
Someone's dinner left behind in E-7  
All photos by Ian



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# FEBRUARY RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Ian (W-1) Feb. 25

A crew from Metro Vancouver had the road closed to vehicle traffic, but I was able to park and walk the reach. They were repairing a small part of the road that was eroding. It had been only one lane for almost a month, but will be back to two lanes once the work is complete. There was 1 to 2 inches of snow on the ground. The huge amount of garbage that had been dumped a ways off Pipeline Road had been cleaned up during the Coquitlam River Clean Up. The River was clear and flowing at a normal level. Slade Creek was clear and flowing. There were more dump trucks than normal. Birds included chickadees and a raven

Ian (W-2) Feb.25

The River was clear above the gravel operations and almost clear below. It was a normal level for this time of year. The water level at the Galette gauge was .720 metres. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was clear & flowing. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and flowing. Partridge Creek was cloudy and flowing. The source of the cloudiness was from the culvert. Marquart Creek was slightly cloudy and flowing. A small water course near the mouth of Marquart Creek has had a lot of sand come into it. Goodyear Creek (#11) was almost clear and flowing. The only wildlife seen was 5 Varied Thrushes. There were still quite a few salmon bones around UCRP Pond. It was very quiet around the pond. The locked gate for Galette Park was open and people are parking at the bottom of the hill.

Dave (W-3) Feb. 22

All the people I saw were at Galette Park. The gate was open and one of the fisherman's truck was in the park. The River was clear and at a normal level. It was a nice day on the river. Quiet but unusually clean. Some new growth was showing on the bushes and trees. I saw no wildlife, not even one bird. I walked the riverside trail from Galette Park to McTavish Park. I was surprised by how dry it was even though there had been lots of rain the previous day. Nice day to visit the trail. The river was at a good level. The rocks on the east side were covered with moss, the sound of the wind in the trees, and the gurgling of the water was perfect. There was evidence of trees being broken and/or cut along the trail. McTavish Park is already being despoiled with tire marks and discarded Christmas trees.

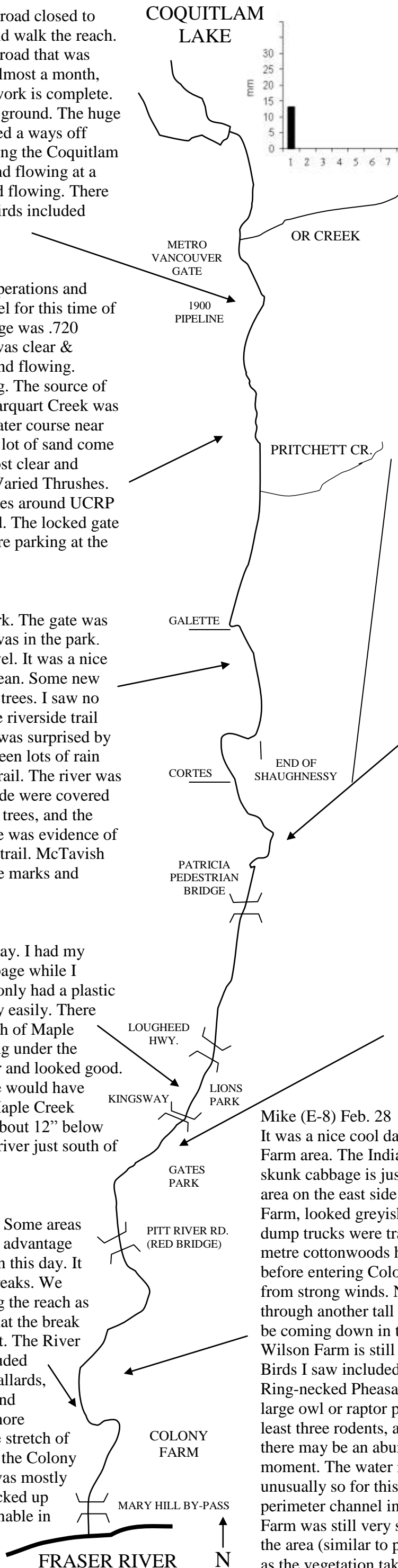
Murray (W-6) Feb. 26

It was very quiet on the Reach on this day. I had my grandson along with me to pick up garbage while I recorded. I forgot a garbage bag so we only had a plastic grocery bag to fill up which we did very easily. There was an active homeless shelter just north of Maple Creek. There was no one currently living under the Kingsway Bridges. The River was clear and looked good. A little lower than normal otherwise we would have seen a few fishermen along the river. Maple Creek looked good at the dike with the level about 12" below the high water mark. The gauge on the river just south of the Lougheed Bridge was 1.5 meters.

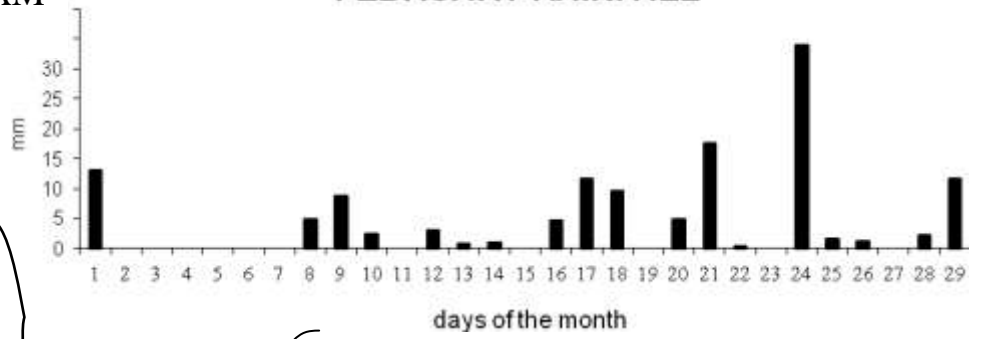
Charlene & Roger (W-8 & 9) Feb. 19

It was pouring with rain the day before. Some areas at higher elevations had snow. We took advantage of the break in clouds to do our reach on this day. It turned out to be beautiful with sunny breaks. We were surprised at how quiet it was along the reach as we only saw 14 people. We expected that the break in weather would bring more people out. The River was high and cloudy. Bird activity included kingfisher, mergansers, geese, gulls, Mallards, heron, sparrow, Pileated Woodpecker and Northern Flicker. There seemed to be more garbage than usual, especially along the stretch of W-9 between the pedestrian bridge and the Colony Farm parking lot, and at the mouth. It was mostly plastic and to-go food wrappers. We picked up what we could reach (some was unreachable in the ditches) and filled up a whole bag.

## COQUITLAM LAKE



## FEBRUARY RAINFALL



Murray (E-3 north) Feb. 19

I saw 25 people doing a variety of activities. It was nice to see a few others out on a Sunday morning enjoying the day. I picked up about a ¼ bag of garbage mostly in the riparian area behind the River Springs subdivision. I picked up the BBQ propane tank that I couldn't carry out the last time I was on this walk. The River was cloudy and at a high level, but not nearly as dirty and high as yesterday when I went over the David Bridge. The water in the Oxbow Side

Channel was murky as well. Good flow but still some water diverting directly back to the River via the settling pond. Despite the River cloudy and high, it's just nice to be out along the River for a peaceful walk.

Murray (E-3 south) Feb. 22

It was very quiet on this part (Patricia Pedestrian Bridge to Big Rock) of the River on a beautiful afternoon. There was very little garbage. Maybe we're still seeing the benefits of the major cleanup done 2 ½ weeks ago. The River looked really good after fairly heavy rains over the last 3-4 days. Slightly cloudy and running fairly fast & high. Great place to walk on a sunny winter day.

Ian (E-7) Feb. 19

Someone had left behind a backpack, tin foil, & unopened packages smoked sausages. The riparian area looked cleaner this month due to the many volunteers who helped pick up garbage as part of the Coquitlam River clean up on February 5. The bike I have reported on for the last couple of months is now gone. The River was slightly cloudy and at a normal level. It had been much higher recently. The River was very silty the day before at 1:30pm. Maple and Scott Creeks appeared clear and flowing. Birds included Hooded Mergansers, Mallards, Wood Ducks, robins, and many very vocal chickadees. The Indian-plum leaves have started to come out. This is the sign of spring not too far away.

Mike (E-8) Feb. 28

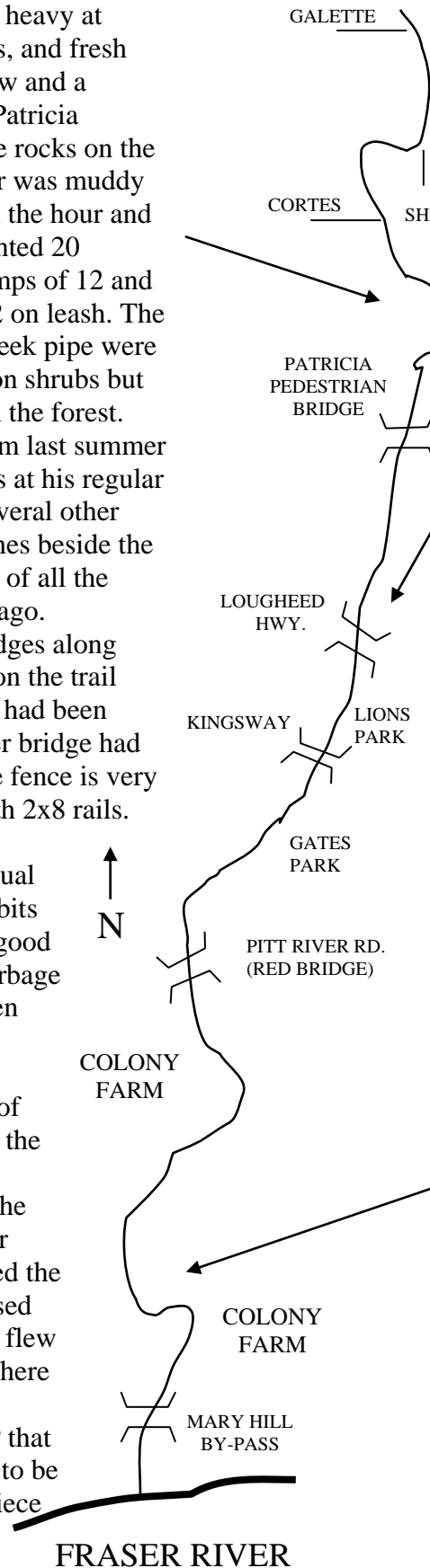
It was a nice cool day for a walk and slightly windy in the Colony Farm area. The Indian-plum is finally starting to bud and the skunk cabbage is just starting to show. The water in the swampy area on the east side of the dyke from Pitt River road, near Colony Farm, looked greyish; likely from the gravel pit operation. The dump trucks were travelling through quite regularly. Three 20-30 metre cottonwoods had fallen across the dyke about 100 metres before entering Colony Farm. It appears they had been uprooted from strong winds. Nearby a beaver had made it 2/3 of the way through another tall cottonwood, about 5 m off the dyke that will be coming down in the next wind. The perimeter channel at Wilson Farm is still brown and murky from the restoration work. Birds I saw included Mallards, Belted Kingfisher, Wood Ducks, Ring-necked Pheasant, and Black-capped Chickadees. There was a large owl or raptor pellet on the dyke, which was comprised of at least three rodents, and the vole (or mouse) I saw, indicates that there may be an abundant source of prey for raptors at the moment. The water in the river was slightly cloudy but not unusually so for this area of the river. The level was high. The perimeter channel in the northern Wilson Farm area of Colony Farm was still very silty due to the recent rehabilitation work in the area (similar to previous month). This will hopefully improve as the vegetation takes hold.

## FEBRUARY RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Jeff (W-4) Feb. 19

It was a cold drizzly day with rain, heavy at times, during the previous 24 hours, and fresh snow on the hills. The river was low and a muddy greenish colour. From the Patricia Bridge, I could barely make out the rocks on the river bottom so I can't say the river was muddy but it was certainly very cloudy. In the hour and twenty minutes for the walk, I counted 20 walkers, 27 joggers, including clumps of 12 and 6, 4 cyclists, 6 dogs off leash and 2 on leash. The Maple Creek well and the Grist Creek pipe were running clear. Buds were starting on shrubs but there was still a clear view through the forest. Dry black stalks of Indian Pipe from last summer were still present. A kingfisher was at his regular spot by the Gabriola outfall and several other birds were seen. A few piles of bones beside the river were the only visible remains of all the salmon carcasses of a few months ago.

Coquitlam is replacing the two bridges along Grist Creek and installing a fence on the trail beside the creek. The upper bridge had been replaced by February 19. The lower bridge had been removed by February 25. The fence is very strong – large wooden uprights with 2x8 rails. This month's litter pickup was on February 25. The trail was in its usual clean condition with mostly small bits of litter. The riverside was also in good condition. Some large pieces of garbage that had been there a while had been removed, most likely during the Coquitlam River Cleanup on February 5. According to the City of Coquitlam (phone call February 3) the application to develop the Cooper property, 1388 Gabriola Drive, at the north end of the reach, is still under review by the City. City staff visited the site on February 2 and was impressed with the property and an eagle that flew upstream as they were watching. There is hope that the developer will not request the amendment to the OCP that would be required to allow houses to be built on the river side of the new piece of Gabriola.



David & Myrna (E-5) Feb. 27

We wanted to check out the mural being painted on the new hi-rise at Lions Park but it was covered in scaffolding and tarps. I will get some pictures as soon as it is unveiled. There were full doggy doo bags left beside the trail. You see these bags of dog stuff sometimes by the trail other times hanging from the bushes. If one goes to the effort of picking up after their dog, why wouldn't they dispose of it properly? The River was clear and at a normal level. Birds included Glaucous-winged Gull, Black-capped Chickadee, Northwestern Crow & American Robin. Indian-plum leaves were ready to pop, Ivy was really noticeable with all of the leaves off the trees & a tree with some berries, possibly Pacific crab apple but not sure. It was great to see the sun; it is such a precious commodity at this time of year. I hate to sound like a broken record but invasive plants continue to be a problem in this reach.

Mallee (E-8) Feb. 20

In spite of the clean up, I still spotted nine pieces of garbage; very depressing after only one week. The river was glassy with an odd khaki green tinge. From the pedestrian overpass, I noticed a bubbly grimy slick about 1 metre wide floating slowly to one side of the river. Because of the heavy rain days earlier, much of the tall grasses were flattened and the water level higher as some of the grasses were partly submerged. I spotted only three crows as the day belonged to the ducks spying seven flying over and about thirty at various watery locations along the route. A photographer said he saw three herons perched on posts but I'm guessing they were along the path towards Mary Hill as I never saw any. A number of trees had fallen; one about 25 metres tall uprooted.