

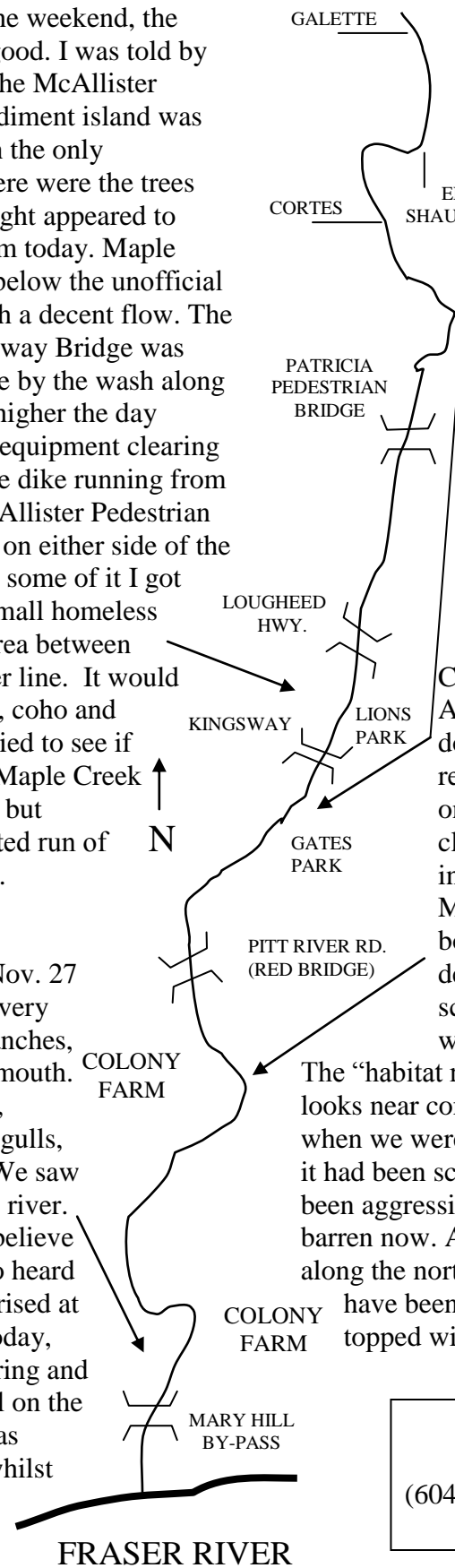
NOVEMBER RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Murray (W-6) Nov. 28

As a result of heavy rains during the weekend, the River was quite high but looking good. I was told by one walker while observing from the McAllister Pedestrian Bridge that the large sediment island was completely covered yesterday with the only resemblance of a sandbar being there were the trees above the waterline. The River height appeared to have receded by approx. 3 feet from today. Maple Creek at the culvert was about 6" below the unofficial high water mark and was clear with a decent flow. The gauge south of the Lougheed Highway Bridge was 3 meters. Again there was evidence by the wash along the River that it was substantially higher the day before. There was a large piece of equipment clearing approx. 20 feet on either side of the dike running from the Maple Creek culvert to the McAllister Pedestrian Bridge. As a result of the clear cut on either side of the dike a lot of garbage was exposed; some of it I got but really too much to handle. A small homeless shelter was set up in the riparian area between Maple Creek and the Wilson power line. It would appear that all major runs of chum, coho and spring have now left the River. I tried to see if there were any chum carcasses in Maple Creek between the mouth and the culvert but couldn't see any despite an estimated run of over 100 Chum returning this year.

Charlene & Roger (W-8 & W-9) Nov. 27

The river was hugely swollen and very cloudy. Loads of debris – logs, branches, leaves – was heading towards the mouth. Bird activity included hawk, eagle, Black-capped Chickadees, thrush, gulls, Mallard, Bufflehead and towhee. We saw a group of very active ducks in the river. After checking our bird guide we believe they were Greater Scaups. We also heard frogs in the ditches. We were surprised at how quiet it was along the reach today, especially as the weather was clearing and drying up. We noticed that the trail on the west side of Colony Farm Road was flooded out. The sun popped out whilst we were doing the reach – it felt wonderful.



Ian (E-7) Nov. 20

I saw a guy at the Red Bridge that was cleaning his boot after stepping in dog poop. He wasn't happy about it. The River was clear and at a normal level. It had been two feet higher recently. Maple and Scott Creeks appeared clear and flowing. Birds included gulls, Mallards, Hooded Merganser, Spotted Towhees, and chickadees. I saw salmon splashing around in a couple of areas in this reach. I even saw one jump out of the water. There were many carcasses and the gulls were feeding on them. The cottonwood and alder trees have almost lost all of their leaves. It was getting quite dark by the time I finished my walk at 5pm.

Charlene & Roger (E-8) Nov. 6

A dog rescue group was out with at least 20 dogs. All on leash and acting very responsible. In total we saw 28 on leash and only 3 off leash. The River was very low, clear, and moving quickly. Wildlife activity included hawks, geese, gulls, Bufflehead, Mallards, sandpipers. Spawning salmon, both dead and alive, were seen. Many of the dead were seen on sand bars, along with scavenging crows and gulls. Alive ones were looking pretty tired from their travels.

The "habitat restoration work" in the Wilson Field looks near complete. All of the big machinery was gone when we were there. Much of the large field looked like it had been scraped clean, aka vegetation for habitat had been aggressively removed. It looks so different and barren now. All the potted plants that we had seen along the north side of the field last month appear to have been planted. Surface water in the field was topped with a sheet of ice.

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COQUITLAM RiverWatch

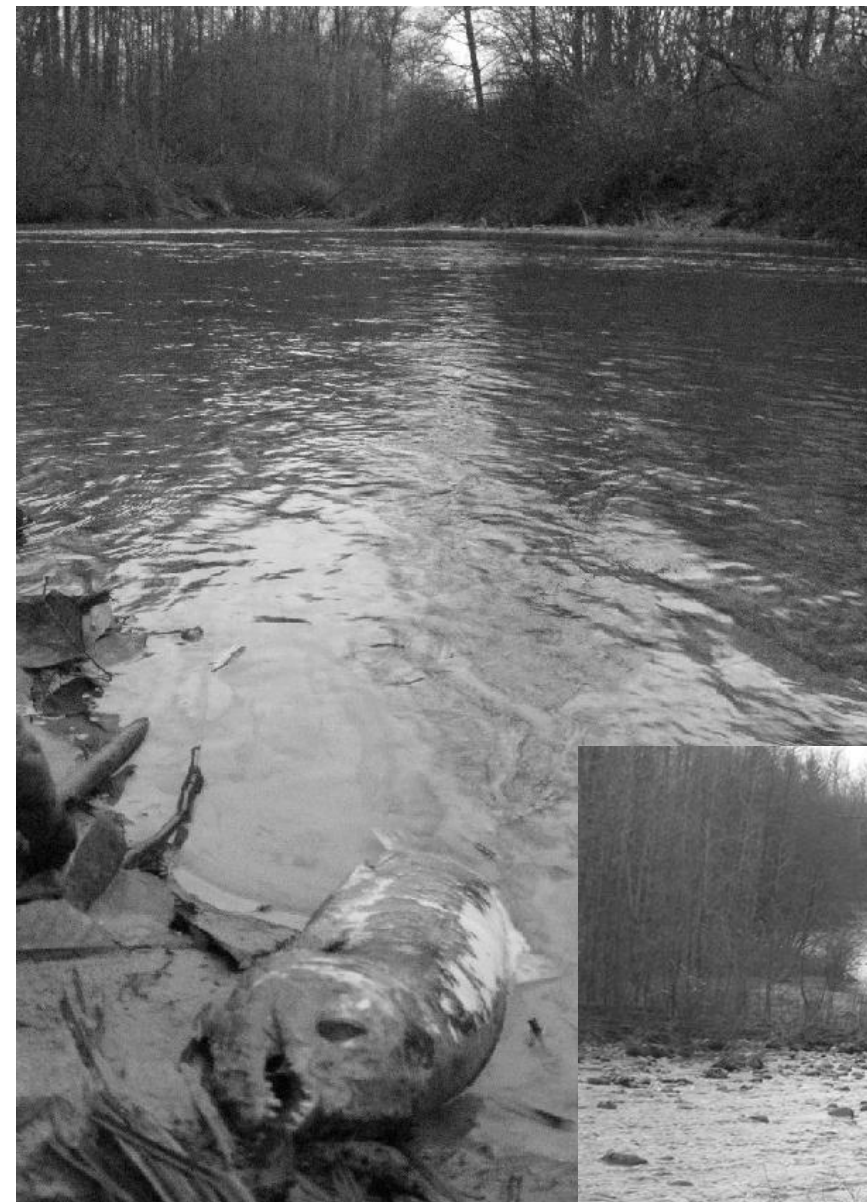
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NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 159



The photo on the left is a dead salmon on the shore of the Coquitlam River in Reach E-7 by Ian
The photo on the right was taken from the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge looking south by Mallee

HAPPY NEW YEAR & GOOD LUCK IN 2012!!!

We would like to take this time, around the festive season, to thank all the RiverWatch volunteers and all the people that bring awareness to the environment. The Coquitlam River Watershed has some major problems, but with some awareness and education of the local residents, things will change. Let's hope the New Year brings a cleaner and more biologically diverse watershed.

NOVEMBER RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Ian (W-1) Nov. 13

The River was clear and flowing at a normal level. Slade Creek was clear and flowing well. I saw dead salmon, but did not see and living ones. There was a tiny bit of snow on the side of Pipeline Road.

Ian (W-2) Nov. 13

The River was clear above and below the gravel operations. It was a normal level for this time of year at both. The water level at the Galette gauge was .720 metres. Falacea Creek (#4) was clear & flowing well. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and flowing well. Partridge Creek was clear and flowing well. Marquart Creek was almost clear and flowing well. Goodyear Creek (#11) was clear and flowing well. The only bird I saw was a Spotted Towhee. The lack of birds in this reach is troubling. Salmon carcasses were lying a few feet from the Upper Coquitlam River Pond and had been pulled apart and partially eaten. I saw at least 20 salmon carcasses around UCRP Pond. There were at least 20 swimming in the UCRP Pond and the outlet to the pond.

Mallee (W-3) Nov. 5

There was no one on the trail, probably because this is a rougher trail than W-4 and is not suitable for bikes. But this is definitely a better trail for viewing the river. There was a sinister wide trail of dark water that gushed through the middle of fast flowing river. At the water's edge in one spot, was a stagnant pool that had an oily residue floating on the surface. Wildlife included six salmon, two large healthy deer, gulls, herons, and birds I could not identify. One heron was gliding over the River following it up stream. I saw 23 dead salmon, three of which were up on the bank as if someone or something dragged them there. It was a far cry from a walk I did along Scott Creek about ten years back from only Lougheed Highway to Guildford Way when I counted 550 salmon spawning!

Dave (W-3) Nov. 23

The river was clear was as high and fast as I had seen it for some time. Winter residents like thrushes, juncos, chickadees and towhees are back but not in the same numbers as previous years. There was a big mature Bald Eagle eating something in a tree near McTavish Park. More gulls than usual, drawn by the salmon. There were hardly any squirrels around. Maybe because of the eagle. It doesn't take long for the litter to accumulate especially at Galette Park. There is a litter basket there but there are times when people don't use it. This is the exact same comment I had in 2009.

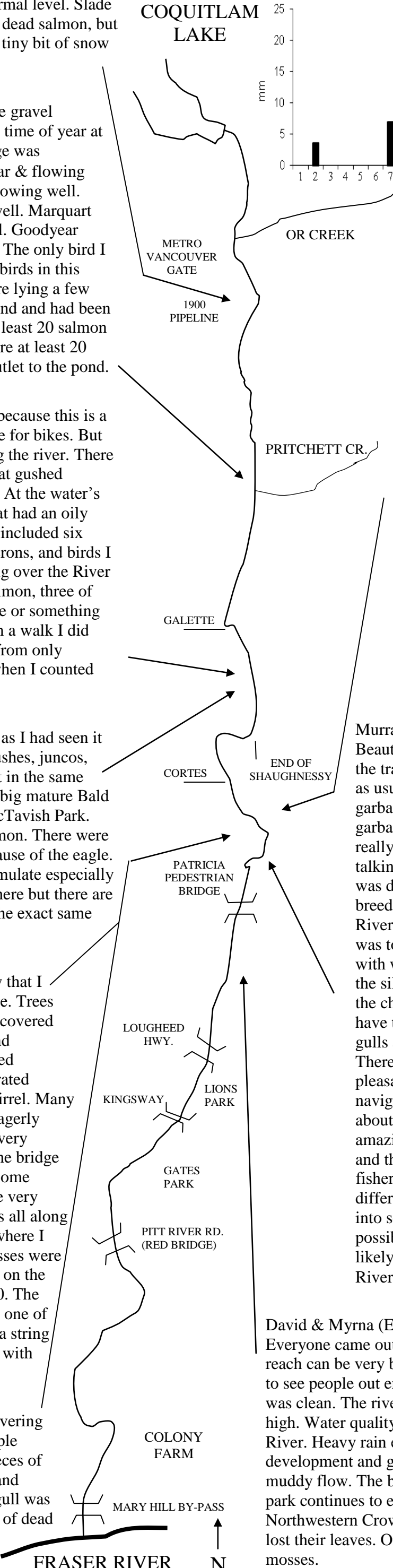
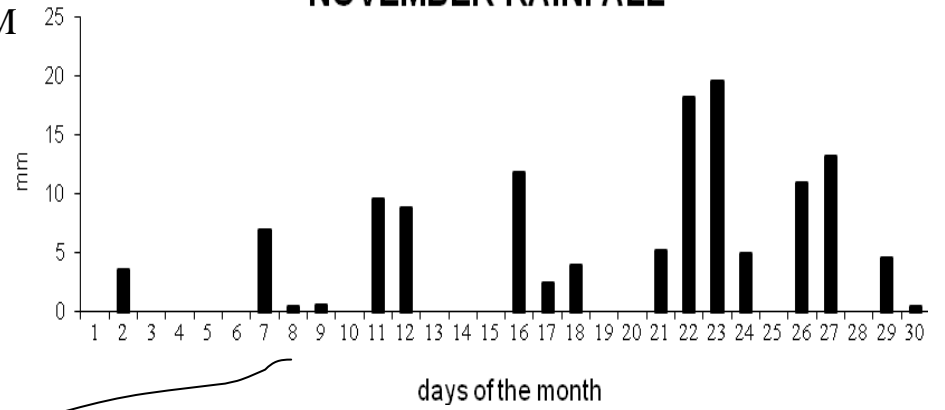
Jeff (W-4) Nov. 5

The river was clear and very low, so low that I could hop boulders along the river's edge. Trees were roughly half bare and the trail was covered with a mix of mostly broadleaf maple and cottonwood leaves. Birds spotted included chickadees, Mallards and 3 widely separated sightings of dippers. I also spotted a squirrel. Many people on the Patricia footbridge were eagerly looking for salmon, with the kids being very excited. I saw only 1 live salmon from the bridge but saw more than 30 during the walk. Some salmon were energetic while others were very tired. There were many salmon carcasses all along the river – I counted 167 on the stretch where I was close to the river. Most of the carcasses were in the river but some had been pulled up on the bank. Litter pickup was on November 20. The worst spot being the remains of a fire on one of the beaches where someone had burned a string of Christmas lights and sprayed the area with orange spray paint.

Mallee (W-4) Nov. 4

A great easy walk with golden leaves covering the wide path. It seems a number of people missed the garbage bins and dropped pieces of garbage near them. The river was clear and flowing at a normal level. One hopeful gull was perched on a rock midstream. The smell of dead salmon was definitely in the air. I saw 22 salmon that were resting upstream & 2 dead ones.

NOVEMBER RAINFALL



Murray (E-3 north) Nov. 6

The Reach was quite clean with a 1/3 bag of garbage picked up mostly consisting of some running shoes. The River looked good, nice and clear with normal flow but we could likely use a bit of rain to bring the water back up for the fish habitat. Oxbow Side Channel looked good and it was nice to see 6-8 dead chum in the channel. As I'm unfamiliar with the flow of the channel, I was a little amazed to see them in there and wondered where they had entered. There weren't very many birds to speak of, but there were lots of chum salmon. I talked to 3 fishermen at the Big Rock. One had indicated that he hooked into approximately 24 wild coho a couple of day ago (sounds a bit like a fishermen's story to me) as there must have been a school passing through. Last week DFO & the PoCo Hunting & Fishing Club were in the River and netted several coho for the hatchery breeding stock. Just a lovely morning to be down at the River. The River looked great and the fall colours were gorgeous.

Murray (E-3 south) Nov. 10

Beautiful day and the traffic was dispersed throughout the trail and not just at the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge as usually the case. There was a minimal amount of garbage – only about 1/4 bag if that. Maybe some of the garbage was covered by leaves. The River looked really good. It was clear and at a normal level. I got talking to a fisherman this morning in reach W-3 who was down helping the DFO bag more salmon for breeding stock. His position on the flushing of the River in early October by Hydro for a week (mainly it was to lower Coquitlam Lake to a reasonable level with winter rains expected) didn't do much to move the silt to the mouth of the River. All it did was narrow the channels along the River and where I fish I would have to tend to agree with him. I saw a few ducks and gulls along the River but little else in the way of birds. There were still a lot of chum in the River and I was pleasantly surprised to see two chum still trying to navigate the Oxbow Side Channel near the entrance about a 1/4 mile up from the pedestrian bridge. Truly amazing when you consider the very narrow waterway and the elevation up from the River itself. The two fishermen hadn't caught anything and remarked how different it was from a week ago when they hooked into several coho at the same fishing hole. It is quite possible that the major run of coho is now finished and likely in the upper part of the River past the Coquitlam River parks.

David & Myrna (E-5) Nov. 27

Everyone came out to enjoy the sun after the heavy rains. This reach can be very busy, especially around Lions Park. It was great to see people out enjoying the sun and the river corridor. The trail was clean. The river was very silty and moving extremely fast and high. Water quality continues to be an issue for the Coquitlam River. Heavy rain events flush large amounts of silt (from development and gravel operations?) into the river, turning it into a muddy flow. The bank on the PoCo side, near the dog off leash park continues to erode in these high water events. Birds included Northwestern Crow & Glaucous-winged Gull. Most trees have now lost their leaves. Once again it is the time of the Sword ferns and mosses.