

COQUITLAM RiverWatch

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JULY 2014

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 190

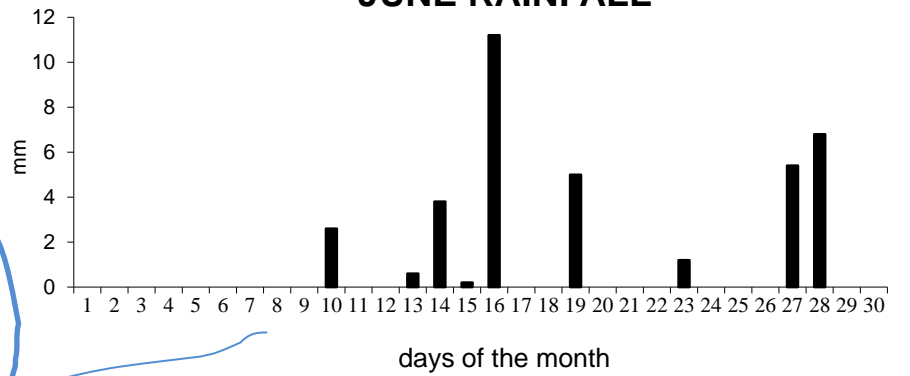


Photos
clockwise
from top left

New pond in Upper Coquitlam River Park by Ian
Indian-pipe in E-4 by Susan
Red-flowering currants in W-2 by Ian
Patricia Pedestrian Bridge during heavy rain by Jeff
Saw Blade Falls on Coho Creek on Burke Mtn. by Ian
Bigleaf maple seeds in E-5 by David

JUNE RiverWatchers' REPORTS

JUNE RAINFALL



Ian (W-1) June 30

The River was clear and at a low level. Slade Creek was clear and flowing. Birds included Belted Kingfisher, Swainson's Thrushes, and a robin. I saw fry in Slade Creek. Salmonberries and huckleberries were both ripe. Plants flowering included foxglove, foamflower, and Siberian miner's lettuce. On my drive to the reach, I saw a bear on the old SPCA property near Pipeline Road and Robson. On my return a deer was in the same location.

Ian (W-2) June 30

The River was clear above and below the gravel operations. It was at a low level. The water level at the Galette gauge was .550 metres. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was clear & flowing. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and flowing. Partridge Creek was clear and flowing. Marquart Creek was cloudy & flowing. Goodyear Creek (#11) was clear and flowing. Birds included Belted Kingfisher, Swainson's Thrushes, & robins. There were fry in the Archery Pond and side channels. There were lots of fry in the new pond and some of them were jumping. The Belted Kingfisher I saw was at the Archery Pond which is great news as it would only be there if there were fish to eat. Someone pulled out some knotweed and left it on the trail near the Archery Pond. This is not the best way to remove invasive knotweed, but someone was trying. Vetch was flowering. Butterflies were gracefully floating around. Thimbleberries were out, but not ripe. Red flowering currants were also out, but I don't eat them.

Dave (W-3) June 18

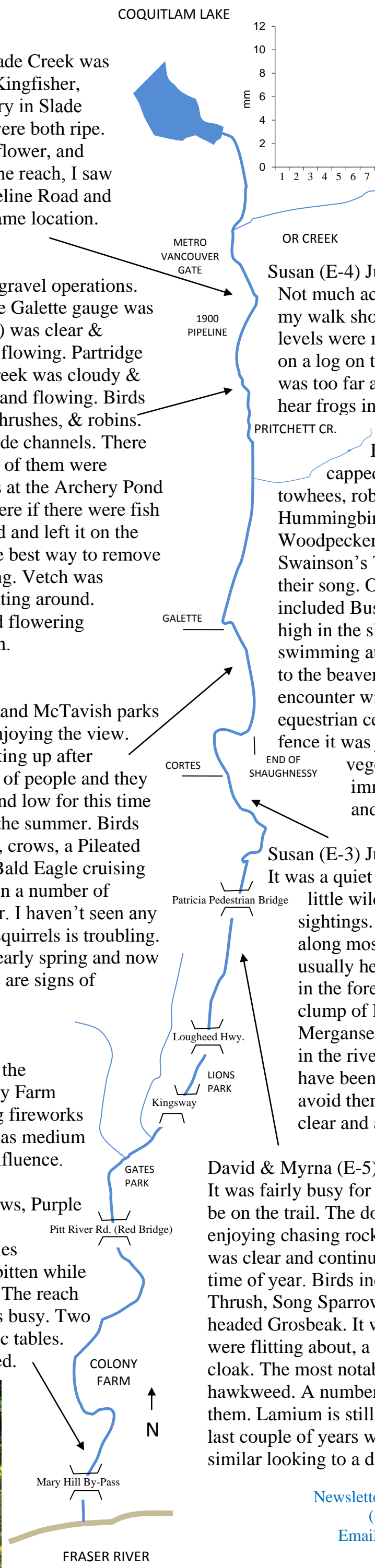
There were a number of people at Galette and McTavish parks sitting and reading, talking to friends or enjoying the view. The two parks are clean as people are picking up after themselves. The parks continue to get lots of people and they behave themselves. The River was clear and low for this time of year. It normally hits this level later in the summer. Birds included towhees, White-crown Sparrows, crows, a Pileated Woodpecker (finally), and a nice mature Bald Eagle cruising above the river. The eagle has been seen on a number of occasions. I also heard a Belted Kingfisher. I haven't seen any squirrels for six weeks or so. The lack of squirrels is troubling. There were fewer through the winter and early spring and now there are none. The trail was dry and there are signs of increased usage.

Charlene & Roger (W-9) June 30

There were quite a few people working in the gardens. Parking lot at south end of Colony Farm road was quite full, many folks purchasing fireworks for Canada Day celebrations. The River was medium to high and rather murky at the rivers' confluence. There was lots of organic matter floating downstream. Bird activity included sparrows, Purple Martins, one eagle, towhees, and one hummingbird. We also saw many butterflies and MOSQUITOS. Roger and I both got bitten while walking through the bush near the mouth. The reach itself was quiet but the main park area was busy. Two families had set up lunch on the new picnic tables. The new bathroom facilities were well used.



Invasive hawkweed in E-5 by David



Susan (E-4) June 27 **Oxbox Side Channels**

Not much activity on this reach on this day, and I cut my walk short because it started to pour rain. The pond levels were much lower than usual. I saw a frog sitting on a log on the lower pond, a medium sized one but it was too far away to see details. It is always a treat to hear frogs in this area as they are not common. Quite a few clumps of Indian-pipe were seen. Birds seen on this day included Black-capped Chickadees, Mallards, Song Sparrow, towhees, robin, Northern Flicker, goldfinches, Anna's Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbirds, Downy Woodpeckers. The most numerous species were the Swainson's Thrushes and the forest was filled with their song. Other birds seen on this reach this month included Bushtits, kingfishers, and black Swifts flying high in the sky. Also recently seen were two beavers swimming at dusk, and a river otter on a log leading up to the beaver lodge. Last evening I had a close encounter with a yearling bear in the meadow at the old equestrian center. As I came around a curve in the fence it was just a few feet away from me eating vegetation, but luckily it scampered off immediately. The side channels were clear and at a low level.

Susan (E-3) June 27

It was a quiet day along this reach, with few people and little wildlife, although I did have some memorable sightings. A female Western Tanager was foraging along mossy branches. A Swainson's Thrush, usually heard and not seen -- and when seen usually in the forest -- was hopping along river rocks with a clump of lichen in its beak. And a female Common Merganser was leading six juveniles through rapids in the river. Dozens of dead trees close to the paths have been tagged for cutting down, presumably to avoid them falling across the path. The River was clear and at a low level.

David & Myrna (E-5) June 11

It was fairly busy for a weekday afternoon and a pleasant day to be on the trail. The dog off leash park was quiet. One dog was enjoying chasing rocks thrown into the river for him. The River was clear and continues to be low, which is a concern at this time of year. Birds included American Robin, Swainson's Thrush, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow and a Black-headed Grosbeak. It was great to see two types of butterflies were flitting about, a western tiger swallow tail and mourning cloak. The most notable plants included foxgloves, lamium and hawkweed. A number of Indian plum had ripe fruit hanging on them. Lamium is still a major problem in this reach but in the last couple of years we've seen a rapid increase in hawkweed, similar looking to a dandelion but taller, sparse and open.

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JUNE RiverWatches' REPORTS

Jeff (W-4) June 1

The river was clear and very low under a pale blue sky with wispy clouds. I walked down close to the river, returning along the Trans Canada Trail. Fry and water striders were along the edge of the river and in Grist Creek. A large fish carcass was rotting by the river. A Mallard couple were paddling in Grist Pond. Goat'sbeard, thimbleberry, salal, false lily of the valley, honeysuckle, Siberian miner's lettuce, ninebark and others were in bloom. The reach seemed covered with cottonwood fluff. I discovered yet another clump of knotweed. There were even a few mushrooms out. The fence and signs by Grist Channel had been tagged with black spray paint. A lot of garbage had been brought down outfalls by the recent high water. The water quality in the outfall at the north end of Gabriola was poor with some foam by the pipes and a clump of foam lower down. The Grist pipe and Maple Creek well were running.

On June 25, I noticed that someone had put up survey tapes near dead trees along the trail between the north end of Gabriola and the Coquitlam/PoCo boundary. The 19 or so trees had a red dot painted on them. The trees have evidence of bird use and are both conifers and deciduous and of varying heights. I don't know what the plans are but it would be a shame if they were removed completely.



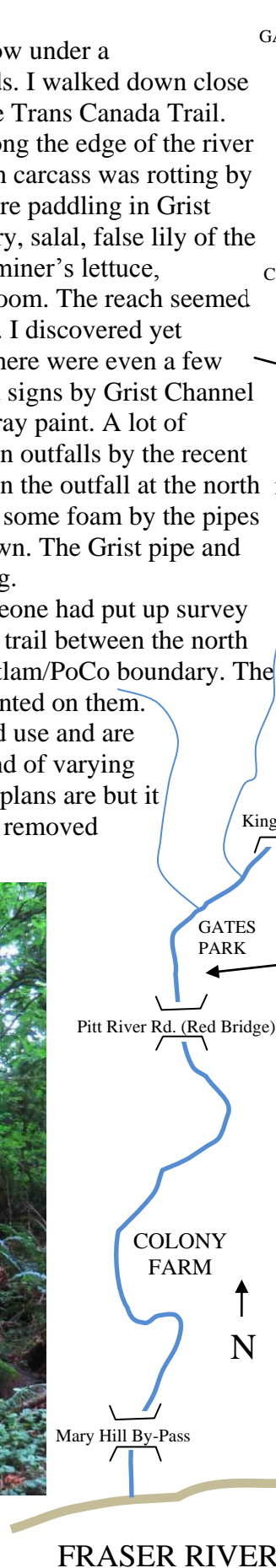
Tree with red dot in W-4 by Jeff

David & Myrna (E-5) June 30

Lots of people were out enjoying nature along the river. 8 people were lounging at the beach just south of the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge. The dog off leash park was quiet, must be because all the off leash dogs (6) were on the trail! The River was clear and still low. Birds included American Robin, Swainson's Thrush, Spotted Towhee, Northwestern Crow and Black-capped Chickadee. Plants of note included bigleaf maple (with seeds) and domestic apple. Along the path from Shaughnessy Street to the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge there were still a few apple trees that are producing a number of stunted apples. The trees are mostly overgrown with blackberry and other shrubs but a few survive from when this area was much more open and had a small orchard.

Ian (E-7) June 30

I saw beer cans and bottles floating in the River, which is a sign more people are partying along the River. The River was clear and at a low level. The River was a little deeper and flowing very slowly at the Red Bridge. This was due to the Fraser River freshet. Maple and Scott Creeks appeared clear and flowing. Birds included Wood Duck, Spotted Towhee, Swainson's Thrushes, and robins. I also saw a beaver and heard frogs. It is always a treat when our national animal is seen. Plants flowering included hardhack, Cooley's hedge-nettle, fireweed, and elderberry. Invasive plants flowering included morning glory and touch me nots.



FRASER RIVER

Daily Water Quality Checks *by Jeff*

I checked the river every morning in June. The river was low or very low all month, cloudy on the 13th, 27th and 29th and murky on the 28th, otherwise clear. The murkiness on the 28th came with a rise in river level. Water quality in the outfall at the north end of Gabriola Drive was poor, as usual, all month, and extremely bad on the 19th and 28th and even worse on the 10th. On June 11 the route for the new trail through the Cooper property from the Trans Canada Trail to David Avenue was marked with survey tape.