

COQUITLAM RiverWatch

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MAY 2012

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 164

INPUT NEEDED FOR RIVERVIEW'S HERITAGE CONSERVATION PLAN

As you know, Riverview is in the Coquitlam River Watershed and has many watercourses flow through the lands. The provincial government intends to complete a heritage evaluation by September and then undertake future land use planning early next fall. This is a critical time for the Riverview Lands. If you do not wish to see the land sold off for private development, now is the time to speak up. Please attend one of the public drop-in workshops or visit www.riverviewvalues.info for more information and to provide input online.

Public Drop-in Workshop

June 11, 2012 4:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

Port Coquitlam Recreation Complex – Mabbett Room
2150 Wilson Avenue, Port Coquitlam

Public Drop-in Workshop

June 12, 2012 4:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

Centennial Pavilion – Centennial Room
620 Poirier Street, Coquitlam

ADDITIONAL RiverWatcher's REPORTS by Jeff

Friday, April 27 was a day off work so I did an early morning weekday river walk instead of my usual weekend walk. The river was low and clear although it had been very high and muddy on Wednesday and Thursday. Many small pools had been left as the river level dropped. A few fry were in a pool still connected to the river but none had been trapped in other pools. The high water had left a slippery coating, which made the walk south along the river treacherous in places. I saw no one on the trip down river but saw many walkers, joggers (including a group of maybe 40 students from Maple Creek Middle School) and dogs on the return up the trail. This means that the trail is very well used weekdays as well as on weekends. Elderberry, fairy bells, bleeding heart, salmonberry, skunk cabbage and trillium were in bloom, and false lily of the valley and false Solomon's seal were in bud. Knotweed was getting big with some stalks over 5 feet high. I discovered yet another clump on this walk bringing the number of clumps on the reach to 20. Some of these clumps are only a few sprouts but others are huge, containing over 300 stalks. There are also several clumps of lamium and ivy on this reach. There were 3 survey tapes marking recent steelhead redds (I may have missed others). 2 mergansers and 2 geese flew overhead and lots of other birds were singing away. The new fence by Grist Creek makes litter pickup along the creek difficult!

I was with the Maple Creek Streamkeepers removing ivy along Ozada Avenue on Sunday, April 15. After working we went for a walk and saw a river otter swimming in Grist Creek before it went into the woods. We spotted it a bit later swimming across the Coquitlam

River where it disappeared into the woods again. This is the first otter I have seen on the river and it was a thrill.



Muddy Partridge Creek flowing into a clear Coquitlam River on Apr. 14 by Jeff



Steelhead smolt being released from screw trap in Reach W-2 on Apr. 28 by Ian

APRIL RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Ian & Deanna (W-1) Apr. 28

There were 3 tents at the party beach with at least 4 people standing around. A couch and a commercial size cooler had been dumped off the road and are now 40 feet below right on the edge of the River. The River was clear and at a normal level. Slade Creek was clear and flowing well. The only wildlife we encountered was three Pacific Wrens. Construction noise was coming from inside the restricted drinking watershed area.

Malley (W-2) Apr. 7

I had trouble locating the path and seemed to backtrack often. To top matters off, I slipped in a side stream, scraped my foot, wet my jeans, and my notebook and camera got submerged. When I got home, I buried my camera in rice which actually did the trick so I saved my camera. I did see an American Dipper in the River. The River was clear and flowing at a normal level. The water looked pristine and running lazily.

Ian & Deanna (W-2) Apr. 28

The only dog we saw was off leash and charging at us. It was friendly, but you would not have known by the way it was coming at us. The River was clear and at a normal level above and below the gravel operations. The water level at the Galette gauge was .750 metres. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was clear & flowing. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and flowing. Partridge Creek was almost clear and flowing. Marquart Creek was cloudy and flowing. Goodyear Creek (#11) was clear and flowing. Birds of note include American Dipper (singing), Belted kingfishers, and Steller's Jays. At Galette Park, I saw what I believe was a 2 foot steelhead swimming in the River. We could see warning signs for fish counting screw traps that are in the River below UCRP. A huge pile of gravel has been left at UCRP on the paved area. The rocks that were left there a few months ago are still there. It looks like the City is using this area to store them before using them elsewhere.

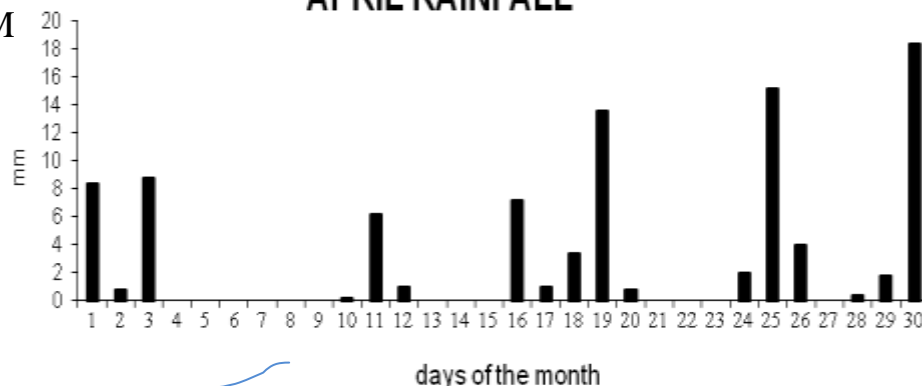
Dave (W-3) Apr. 28

Spring hasn't sprung yet because of the poor, wet weather there aren't many people or wildlife around. The main activity areas were Galette and McTavish Parks and these areas are fairly clean and litter free. There was one hummer doing loops over the river at the foot of McTavish. The ground is soggy and the trail from Galette to McTavish Park is a bit dicey to walk. The trail is being used more frequently by area residents and there are more people walking or fishing in the unconventional west bank beyond the trail. A fisherman was fly fishing at the south end of the reach and walking upstream. The River was running fast and remarkably clear considering all the rain we have had. Wildlife included squirrels, crows, gulls, humming bird, robins and what appeared to be a Townsends Solitaire.

Murray (W-6) Apr. 8

It was a quiet Easter Sunday morning – very pleasant stroll on this day. The Reach was surprisingly clean even around the usual messy area of the McAllister Pedestrian Bridge. However, I filled a garbage bag as a result of finding a pile of children's clothes dumped in one area. The designated debris dumping area at the Maple Creek culvert has not been picked up by City crew for months. There is still an active homeless camp near the Wilson power lines, but the area is neatly kept. No homeless or mess under the Kingsway Bridges on either side. It's nice that the fishermen under these bridges consistently maintain a large garbage bag for their refuse. The River looked good but somewhat low as a result of no rain for a few days. There is still an awful lot of debris – fallen and cut trees – needed to be cleanup off the gravel bars above and below the McAllister Pedestrian Bridge. Water at the Maple Creek culvert dike was low – approx 15" below the unofficial high water mark. The gauge across from Lion's Park measured 1 meter. Wildlife included some robins and a squirrel.

APRIL RAINFALL



Ian & Deanna (E-2) Apr. 28

Even though this forest is private property and there are plans to develop this area, we still saw 27 people enjoying this lovely trail. The River was clear and at a normal level. Birds of note included Pacific Wrens, crow, and we heard a Barred Owl on our return around 3pm. There were fry in the creeks along the trail and we heard frogs. Salamander Lake had egg sacks which were either frog or salamander. Trillium and Siberian miners lettuce were flowering. This reach is so beautiful I don't know how anyone could think of developing this area. It needs to be in public hands and protected for the wildlife and for future generations to enjoy.

Susan (E-3) Apr. 26

A quiet day on this reach, between rainstorms, lush green and smelling of spring. The forest floor was carpeted with blooming bleeding-heart and false lily-of-the-valley. Salmonberry bushes were in the peak of bloom, with a few berries starting to form. Fresh new leaves are now on the cottonwoods, alders, maples. The huckleberries are just starting to bloom. After the heavy rain, the river was high and clear, with an amber tinge. Same as last month, the reach was remarkably clear of garbage. Besides the usual chickadees and robins in the forest, soaring high I saw an eagle and a flock of black swifts.

Murray (E-3 north) Apr. 9

Fairly quiet on the Reach despite it being Easter Monday and a holiday for some. 12 dogs were off leash and only 1 was on leash. Unbelievably clean – a couple of poop bags that was it. Nice to see the City finally removed the empty propane tank I left at the bear proof garbage container two months ago. The River was clear and at a normal level. The River looked good. Good flow in the Oxbow Side Channels but still noticing water running back into the river from the settling pond. I saw a large flock of crows going after a raven. It appeared to be threatening their nests. Looks like fishing is just about over with for the year. Despite it being a holiday for some, no one on the River fishing although could likely use a rain to bring the fishermen out for one final try.

Murray (E-3 south) Apr. 27

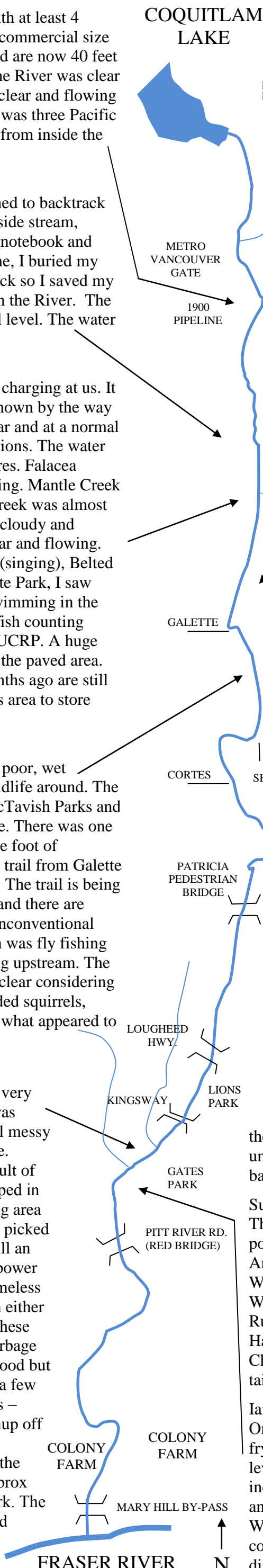
Surprisingly quiet for a dry Saturday morning although I do find more dog walkers at the north end of this reach than the southern end while you get more of the biker and jogger traffic down near the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge. This portion of the reach was unbelievably clean – only picked up a few pieces of paper, no poop bags. The River looked great.

Susan (E-4) Apr. 26 **Oxbow Side Channels**

The dogs outnumbered the people with most of them off-leash. The pond was clear and at a high level. On Oxbow Lake, I saw American Wigeons and Mallards, and on one of the beaver ponds Wood Ducks. I also saw/heard a kingfisher, a few kinglets, and a Western wood-pewee. Other birds I saw this month Anna's and Rufous hummingbirds, Purple Finches, Goldfinches, Fox Sparrows, Hairy Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers, Pileated Woodpecker, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Bushtits, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-necked Ducks, Common Mergansers, & herons.

Ian (E-7) Apr. 29

One of the fishermen I saw didn't catch anything, but did see some fry swimming around. The River was clear and flowing at a normal level. Maple & Scott Creeks appeared clear and flowing. Birds included Great Blue Heron, Pacific Wren, Common Mergansers, and Red-winged Blackbirds, and Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers. Japanese Knotweed was about six feet tall. The camp I commented on last month is gone. There is another one a short distance downstream and it is well hidden. I found three traps that are being used in an effort to locate new infestations of plant pests.



APRIL RiverWatcher's REPORTS

Natalie & Marcus (W-5) April 7

3 kids were playing with stones and 2 women were along the rocky shore picnicking. Seven dogs were on leash and none were off leash. We were surprised that no one had their dogs off leash. One biker was biking with his dog on leash. We saw a burnt computer mouse and power supply that were close to the shoreline. There was a burnt pile with broken glass, a lighter and beer cans right on the rocky shore, seemed like a fresh burn. Ashes were everywhere along the rocky shore section of the river. The River was clear and at a normal level. Birds included American robins, Spotted Towhee, Dark-eyed Juncos, Varied Thrush, Golden-crowned kinglet, Pileated Woodpecker, Steller's Jay, and White-crowned sparrow. The trail was beautiful. Both sides of the trail were dominated by blooming Indian-plum and salmonberry.

Charlene & Roger (W-8 & 9) April 22

We saw 28 people out cycling today. Most were very responsible and wearing helmets. One group seemed to be on a tour of sorts. There were 2 people fishing at mouth catching lots of logs! 12 dogs were on leash and only 5 were off leash. The River was clear and at a low level. Birds included 5 herons (4 were fishing); towhees, Northern Flicker, pheasant, Mallard, sparrows, swallows, and we heard a Red-winged Blackbird. The reach was alive with birdsong. We also saw 2 cutie coyotes, one slithering snake and one (eye catching) turtle sunning itself on an exposed slough log. A few people were photographing it.



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This trap is being used in an effort to locate new infestations of plant pests.

Natalie & Marcus (E-5) April 8

It was a beautiful sunny day with a touch of wind, with lots of blooming salmonberry and Indian-plum along the trail. We saw a dog owner let his dog into the river to fetch his ball a few times. We walked over to say hi, let our dogs socialized. I respectfully let him know about the potential salmon alevins/fry in the river and how activity within the river in that sensitive time would be detrimental to them. He was very cooperative and didn't know about it and immediately recalled his dog. I told him about the dog park (on Shaughnessy) located just further down the trail and he was happy to go there instead. There were lots of birds singing and even had a few Mallards and a merganser happily frolicking in the water and perching on the rocks. Other birds we saw included Steller's Jay, woodpeckers, and a Varied Thrush. We also spotted a Northwestern Garter Snake right adjacent to the trail closer to the Lougheed Hwy Bridge. The River was very clear, and at a normal level. A lot of human activity on the trail.

David (E-5) Apr. 29

I stopped at the beach near the Patricia Pedestrian Bridge, always a favourite place for dog owners to throw sticks or balls into the river. On this day there was an older dog, could barely drag his hind legs but he kept trying to get his owner to throw large rocks for him. He would pick one up gently, take to his owner and place at his feet and wait patiently until the gentleman would throw it. The river was clear and I was surprised to see the water level so low, thought we had enough showers that it would be at least normal level. Wildlife included North-western crow, American robin, and an Eastern Grey squirrel. Bleeding Heart and Bitter Cherry were in bloom, False Lily of the Valley carpeting the forest floor and Vine Maple leave starting to emerge. I'm always amazed when the Bleeding Heart and False Lily of the Valley take over the forest. Everything is becoming green, hurray!

