



**Stoney Creek Trail Report
No. 76 - July 2025**

Front photo: two Cleavers shoots looking for trouble over the Dog Corral fence. More about Cleavers on Page 3.

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Himalayan and Cutleaf blackberries are just two of the many flora species that are invading Stoney Creek Trail. To give you an idea of how many invasives there are, I have identified all flora and fauna mentioned in this report as such by putting 'native' and 'introduced' (non-native) in the photo captions. Keeping track, you will see the invasives outnumber the natives two to one.

As illustrated in a chart on Page 10, it's been a very dry stretch through June and July and especially hard on slugs and snails. However, the very pleasant temperatures have been a consolation.



Crayfish, which cannot tolerate polluted water, are common but seldom seen in the creek because of their camouflage. Can you see the one in this photo? The fact that we have them says good things about the creek water.

Speaking of camouflage, can you spot the owl in this photo?



Those of us who go up Hemlock Hill at the south end of the trail have been dodging vicious blackberry thorns for weeks. Eventually the issue was reported via the [City website](#) resulting in the vines being trimmed back before another week had passed. Good work PRC!

Cleavers are Rampant on the Hill



Cleavers (*Galium aparine*) (*native*), also known as bedstraw, has tiny white flowers (1) and 4-sided stems. Its stems are too weak to stand on their own, but they are densely covered with hooked hairs (3) which act like Velcro. This enables cleavers to creep up and anchor onto nearby vegetation such as this Bitter dock (2). A metre-tall mass of cleavers (4) is swarming a Vine maple. With nothing to climb on, a "haze" of light green cleavers (5) blankets the low-lying vegetation along the Hemlock Hill path.



Crayfish

This photo was sent to us by **Mark Binning**, who lives near the trail. He came upon this little critter while walking between Bridges 5 and 6. Due to the size and pale patches at the base of its pincers, this is probably a juvenile male Signal crayfish, a species native to BC. Crayfish are crustaceans (aquatic animals) that breathe with gills, similar to fish.



If crayfish find themselves in polluted or poorly oxygenated water, they will leave their aquatic environment voluntarily in search of better conditions. Unlike most fish, they can survive out of water for a surprising length of time. In a damp, cool environment, they might survive up to one or two days.

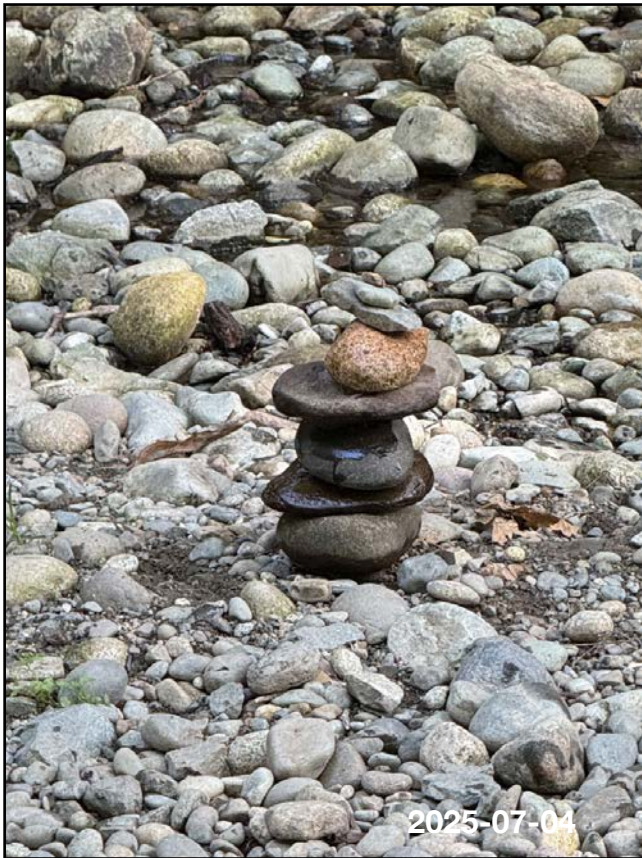
There are several factors that allow them to extend survival time. Crayfish have the ability to hold water where their gills are located (near their head). As long as they can keep their gills wet, they can extract oxygen from the air, avoiding suffocation. If the environment is humid, this will significantly extend their survival time out of water since this also prevents their gills from drying out. Hot, dry conditions can kill them from within minutes to a few hours. This little guy certainly did

not make his way onto the bone-dry gravel path voluntarily!

A crayfish is a macroinvertebrate and has no backbone, depending instead on its exoskeleton to support its body. As it grows, a crayfish sheds this exoskeleton, as do crabs and many insects. A freshly molted crayfish is particularly vulnerable, as its shell is soft and it cannot retain water around its gills effectively.

This is obviously a Canadian crayfish—he's got his elbows up! We hope he "gave as good as he got" from the dog, or whomever left him stranded on the trail. By the way, there was a happy ending—after this photo was taken he was returned to the creek.

Observations



Below: a "melting pot" of balsam, blackberries, and burdock sharing a thicket of Golden-twigg dogwood (*all introduced*) beside the Bowl fence. Very Canadian. 😊



Above: a team of "rock balancers" visited and created several small works at various places along the creekbed. As you might expect, their works had disappeared by day's end.

Below: some unusual items found along the trail.



balsam



blackberry



burdock



Fauna



1: This abandoned **Wasp's nest** was probably made by yellowjackets (*native*) rather than paper wasps, as it is fully enclosed.

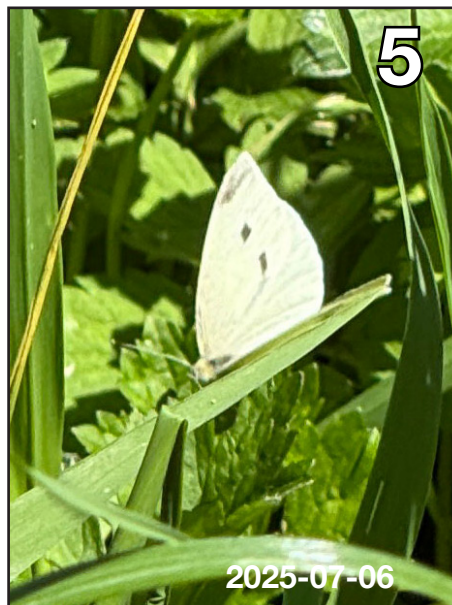
2: A **grove snail** (*introduced*) has reached the top of a Reed canarygrass stem, which is drooping from the weight.

3: This **honey bee** (*introduced*) on a blackberry flower is probably from a hive at a local berry farm.

4: The **Prunus Miner bee** (*native*) is a solitary, ground-nesting bee, and an important pollinator.

5: A **cabbage white butterfly** (*introduced*) is resting briefly on a blade of grass.

6: A **golden paper wasp** (*native*), with hind legs dangling, hovers in a mass of cleavers—probably looking for aphids.



Plant Families 1/2



Brassica

- 1: Hedge mustard (*introduced*)
- 2: Wavy bittercress (*introduced*)

Balsam

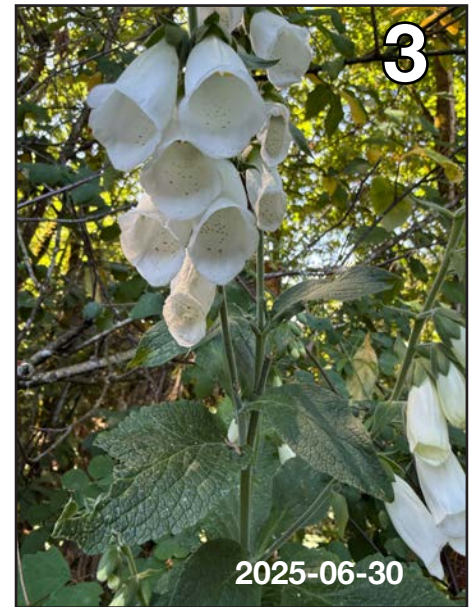
- 3: Himalayan balsam (*introduced*)
- 4: Small balsam (*introduced*)
- 5: Spotted jewelweed (*native*)

Aster

- 6: Wall lettuce (*introduced*)
- 7: Pineapple weed (*native*)



Plant Families 2/2



Plantain

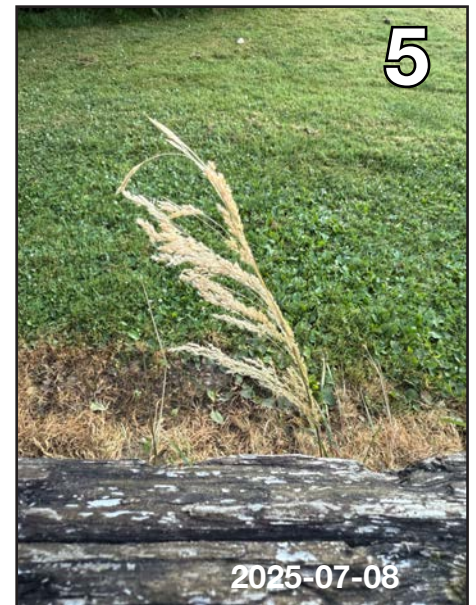
- 1: Ribwort plantain (*introduced*)
- 2: American brooklime (*native*)
- 3: Foxglove (*introduced*)

Grass

- 4: Perennial ryegrass (*introduced*)
- 5: Canada bluejoint (*native*)

Polygonaceae (buckwheat)

- 6: Curled dock (*introduced*)
- 7: Bitter dock (*introduced*)



A Dog!



Boeddha is a mix of different breeds (Maltese, Shih tzu and another unknown breed).

He was born in 2013 in the Netherlands and grew up with his four-year-old friend, Biko, a Chocolate Lab.

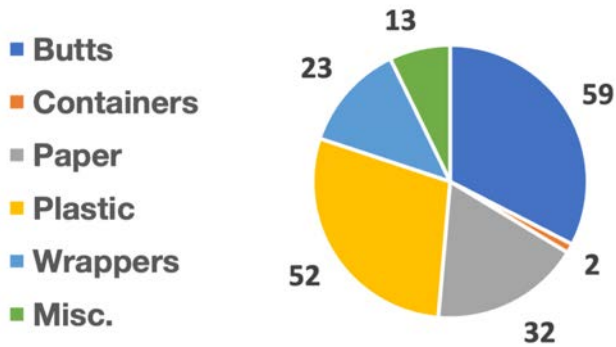
When he was four years old he emigrated with his owners to Canada. After several moves in the Lower Mainland, we ended up in Abbotsford.

Unfortunately, 14 days after the move, he had to say goodbye to his big brown buddy (Biko had turned 14).

Boeddha is a fun travel companion. As soon as the car opens, he is the first in. He loves walking and swimming.



Litter Tally July 2025



Total litter items = 181

Containers: bottles, bottle tops, cans, coffee cups, lids, juice boxes.

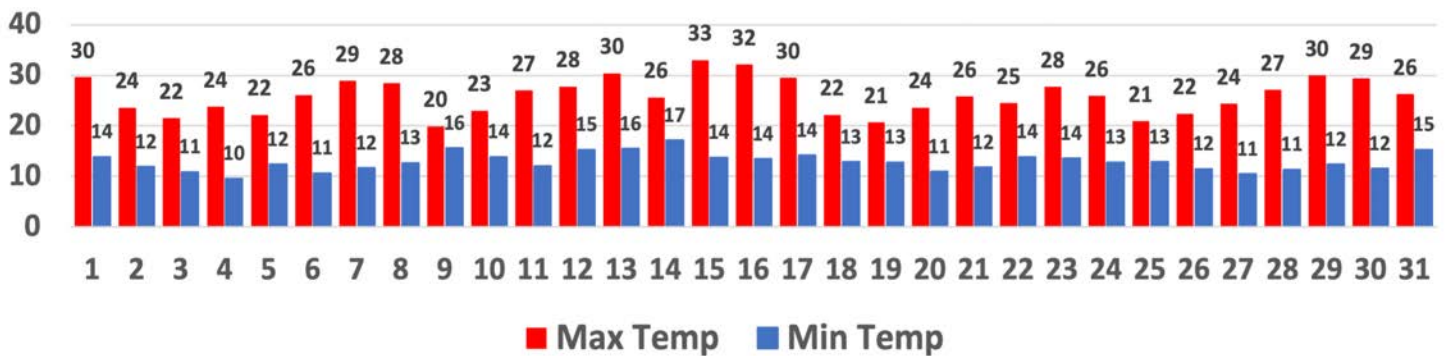
Paper: tissues, napkins, posters, newspaper, receipts, cardboard, etc.

Plastic: dog waste bags & shreds, other items made of plastic.

Wrappers: candy wrappers, foil, cellophane.

Miscellaneous: clothing, glass, chewing gum, dog balls & fragments, etc.

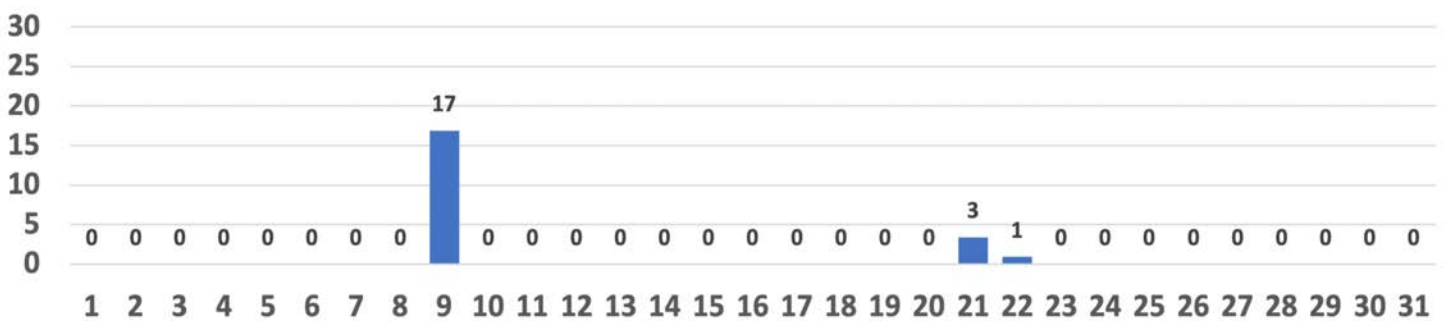
Air temperature at YXX July 2025 (°C)



■ Max Temp ■ Min Temp

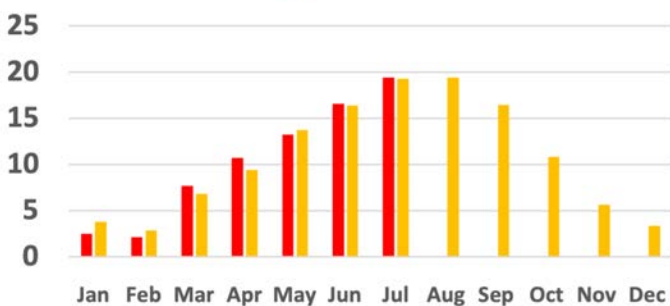
Precipitation at YXX July 2025

Total = 21.2 mm



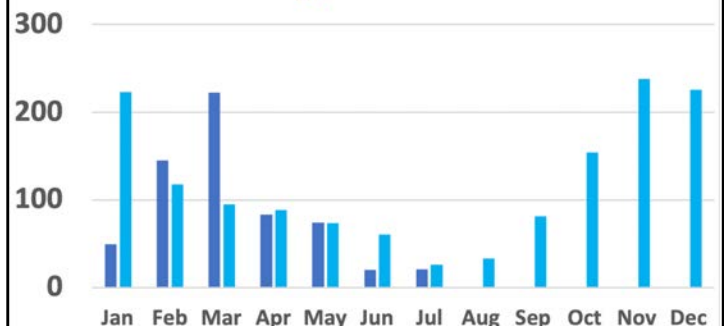
Average Temperatures in 2025

Average: 2019-2024



Precipitation in 2025 (mm)

Average: 2019-2024



For convenience, I use these custom place-names:

