



**Stoney Creek Trail Report
No. 88 - July 2026**

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The photo on the front page introduces the main feature in this report, the natural recycling of a red alder tree.

A correction: in regard to last month's report, the mysterious water surfacing beside the Bowl path **was not a seep!** I learned—too late—from the City that the source was actually a leak in an

‘unmapped’ water pipe running down from Coachstone Way, probably to supply the tap in the dog corral. The wet spot was visible for weeks but, shortly after I reported it, a warning cone was placed and the pipe was soon repaired. The existence of seeps on the west side of Sumas Mountain is still true: excavations for new houses on lower Latimer St. and Coachstone Way do fill with groundwater.



Over the last couple of months, have you noticed that there are a great many yellow flowers along the Trail? See [a feature](#) about them on the Trail website.

We've been fortunate to receive background information from Harry Boxall about his amazing photo of the deer that was published in last month's report ([see Page 9](#)).



Have you noticed the loaded apple tree at the Forks below the playground?



A very unusual bird visited the Trail this month ([see Page 8](#)).

An Example of Natural Recycling 1/3



1. These red alders have been standing near where Sadie's Bench is now for perhaps 20 years. The splitting bark on the one on the left shows it has been dead for quite a while. The pile of red "sawdust" at its base indicates that it has been infested by a burrowing insect.

2. The tree was in danger of falling and was a hazard to trail walkers, so it was felled by a City Parks crew late last winter.

3. Six months later, pieces of bark were being pulled off, probably by nocturnal animals searching for grubs.



An Example of Natural Recycling 2/3



4. Up close, you can see the stump has been thoroughly perforated by a burrowing insect.

5. Just two weeks later, the stump was being torn apart by predators. Raccoons, skunks, and even crows could have been responsible.

6. As the stump was pulled apart, the large white insect larvae that had made the tunnels in the tree were exposed to daylight and open air, making them easy targets for birds and small mammals.



An Example of Natural Recycling 3/3

The insects that tunneled into the alder stump—large, C-shaped, creamy white grubs with distinct orange heads—were likely the larvae of the **rugose stag beetle** (*Sinodendron rugosum*). Uncurled, they would measure 3–4 cm in length. ("Rugose" comes from the Latin word meaning "wrinkled"). They are called stag beetles because the adult males have large mandibles (jaws) that resemble antlers.



Stag beetle larvae feed exclusively on soft, decomposing hardwood logs and stumps, using them both as food and shelter. Red alders are among their favourite hosts. These larvae likely hatched in fissures on the bark and then tunneled inward, forming pupal chambers within the decaying wood.

Moist hardwood breaks down easily. Fungi that soften the wood create perfect conditions for larval insect growth. When larvae ingest the softened wood, specialized microbes and fungi in their gut break it down even further into sugary nutrients.

Rugose stag beetle larvae are beneficial decomposers, not pests. By consuming the rotting wood, they are recycling nutrients, helping to turn stumps like this one into rich soil.

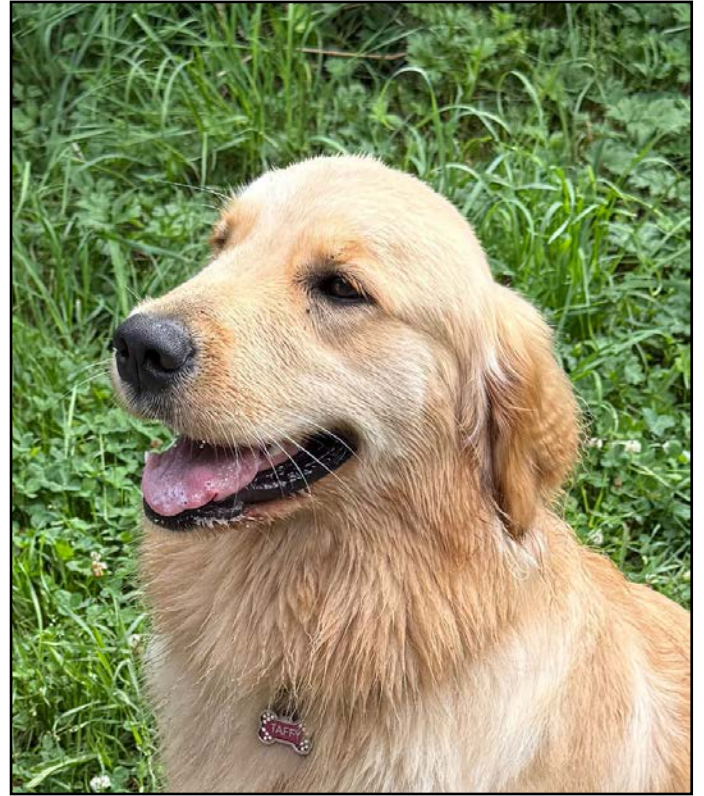


Adult stag beetles are relatively small, around 15 mm long. They are native to the Pacific Northwest, including the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

Stag beetles undergo complete metamorphosis (egg -> larva -> pupa -> adult). In our climate, their larval stage would typically last 1 to 3 years (90% of their lifetime). Their pupal stage lasts a few weeks, and then, after emerging as adults, they live for only a few months.

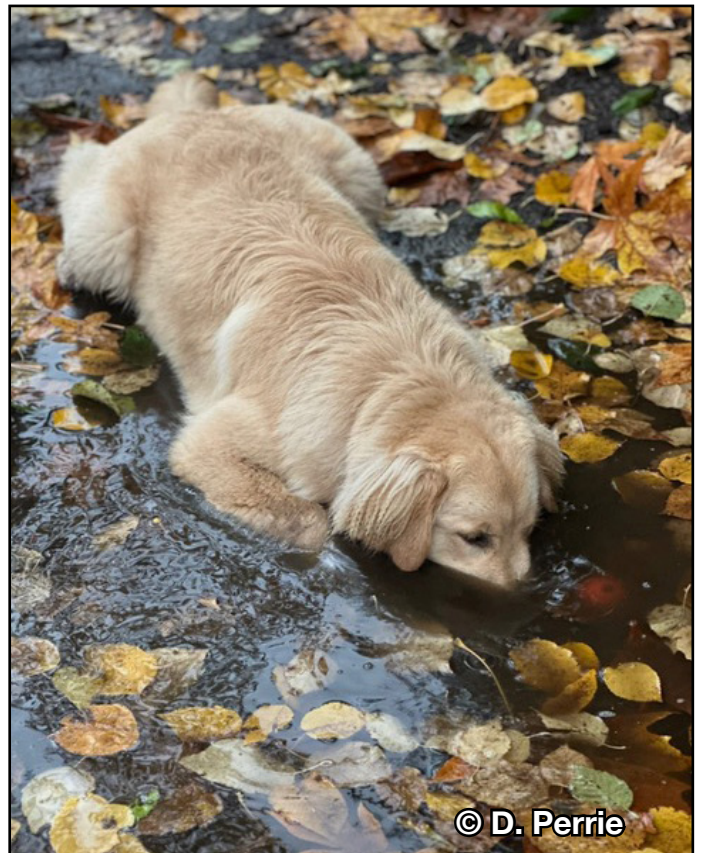
Dogs

"Taffy is 16 months old and has been walking through Bateman Park since she was about 12 weeks old. She has many friends (both dogs and people) she sees at the park on a regular basis. Taffy is successor to Selyca (Therapy Dog Extraordinaire), who also spent many years walking through the park.



"Taffy is full of energy and love. She will show you her affection by jumping on you or going between your legs. (We are working on these problems). But she also knows when to settle when needed. If you've ever given her a treat, she will remember and seek you and your pockets out to get another. She loves to jump on the wooden bench between Bridges 5 and 6 and will wait for her treat.

"Taffy has passed her Canine Good Neighbour test and is now enrolled in Rally. Once she reaches the age of two, we will look into preparing her for the SJA Therapy Dog program. If you see us in the park, say 'Hello.'"





**Queso, Roxy and Finley
on the Bridge 5 bench**

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Mia the Parrot

"Mia is a male Congo African Grey, hatched in 2002. For many years—right up until 2019—everyone believed Mia was female. African Greys look identical regardless of sex, and unless an egg appears, the only reliable way to know is through a DNA test. Mia was rescued and spent time in a temporary home before coming to live with us, and he has now been part of our family for seven years. With proper care, Mia has the potential to live to about 65 years old.



"Like most parrots, Mia is highly intelligent and needs plenty of interaction throughout the day to stay happy. He loves to laugh and makes us laugh every single day. Among his 100+ words and phrases, his favourites at the dog park or on the trail are barking like a chihuahua or making loud squeaky toy sounds—much to the confusion of nearby dogs. He also enjoys interacting vocally with children.

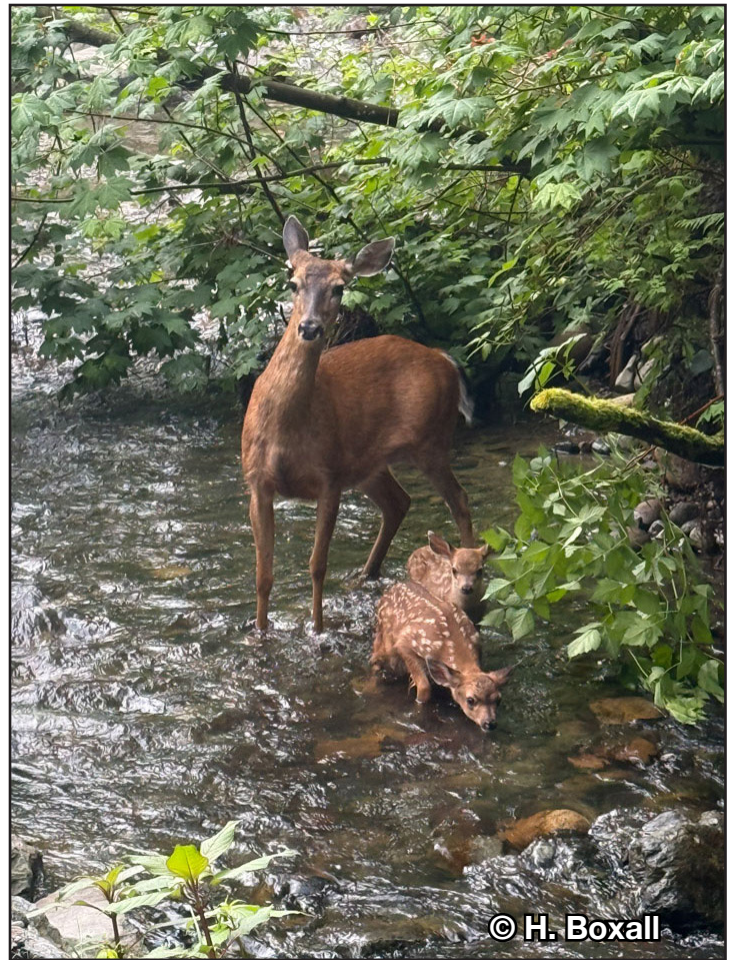
"On warm days (17°C and above), Mia loves going to the dog park. When we're on the trail, he rides in a specially designed parrot backpack, which keeps him safe and prevents any risk of being picked up by a bird of prey.

"There are many other parrots hoping for loving homes.

Greyhaven (greyhavenbirds.com), a non-profit bird sanctuary located in the Ladner area, cares for numerous birds who have outlived their original caretakers and are waiting for dedicated people to adopt them. It's also a wonderful place to volunteer and learn what life with a parrot is truly like. Please consider visiting Greyhaven instead of purchasing from a pet store—so many parrots urgently need caring humans to love them."

Contributed by Zanzara Huebsch

The Rare Encounter: June 6th, 8:00 am



"I was out walking in the morning, remembering having seen a Barred Owl the last time I was in the park at the same time and was looking out for another, hopefully.

"Then I saw the deer in the creek which Mabel didn't notice right away. I was surprised that the deer didn't run off and then I noticed its fawns which explained why the mother did not run off right away.

"Mabel did then notice them and made to give chase. The family went into the brush on the far side of the creek. Mabel is frightened of water and so didn't give chase across the creek. The fawns disappeared and the mother kept watch."

Contributed by Harry Boxall

Odds & Ends 1/3



1. The nectar of the **broad-leaved helleborine**, a non-native orchid, is a particular favourite of wasps.

2. The tough little **pineapple weed** grows in high traffic areas where few other plants can survive.

3. Can you see the coloured tips on this **lipstick powderhorn** lichen?

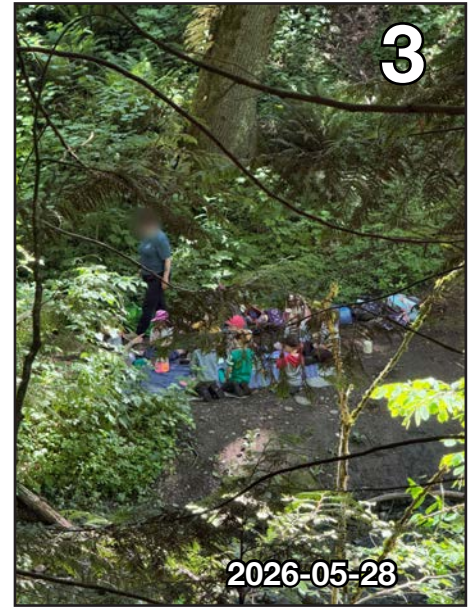
4. The seed head of the **cat's-ear** looks much like that of a dandelion: both are in the aster family.

5, 6. A comparison of **Saskatoon** berries (left) and the larger **black chokeberries** (right): both belong to the rose family.

7. The **Douglas spirea**, native to BC, is also known as "hardhack" because it forms dense, tough thickets.



Odds & Ends 2/3



1. The Trail is a commercial-free zone—yeah! So this **advertisement** should have gone on a bulletin board.

2. The **solar-powered lights** on Bridge 1 are obviously no longer useful.

3. **Outdoor classes**, like this one being conducted in the ravine above Bridge 6, are welcome.

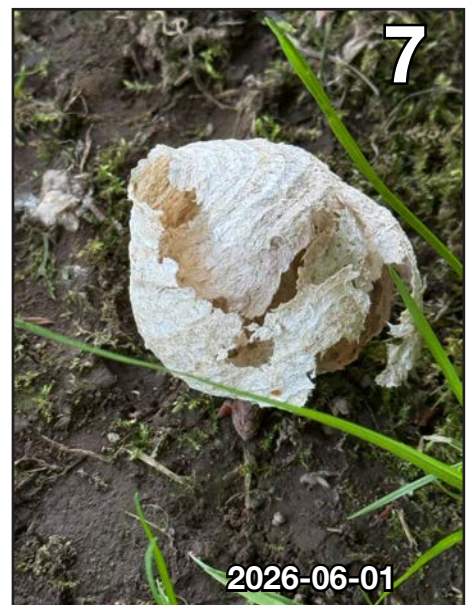
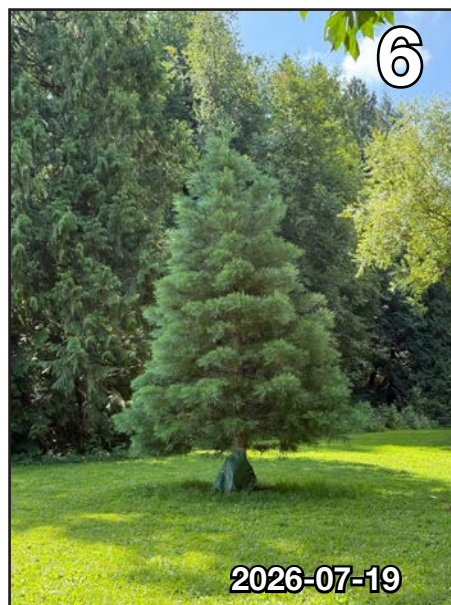
4. Tucked under a fence rail, a web built by the aptly named **funnel weaver spider**.

5. This **painted pebble**, and others, were nested in the redcedar "Twins" behind Joplin's bench.

Remember the pebble festivals [during COVID-19](#)?

6. Jordan's memorial **giant sequoia**, planted on the Straightaway three years ago, is doing very well.

7. A small remnant of paper from a **hornet's nest**.



Odds & Ends 3/3



1, 2, 3. These three plants are all on the BC invasive species list: **bittersweet nightshade**, **sow thistle** and **Canada thistle**. The first is toxic to mammals, while BC law requires the last two to be controlled.

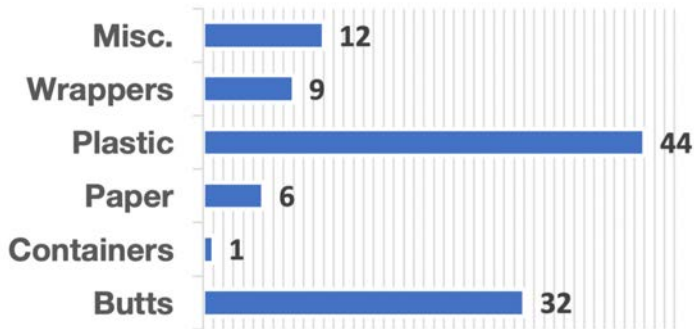
4. The **hedge bindweed**, such as this one near the Dog Corral, is not on that list, unlike its cousin, the field bindweed, which can be recognised by its much smaller (2–3 cm) pinkish flowers.

5, 6. Two backyard escapees I've recently found growing on Hemlock Hill: the **orange day-lily** and the **great burnet**, which produces dark seed heads on its long, slender stems.

7. The bright yellow flowers on this **twinberry honeysuckle** (a native) are beginning to open.



Litter Tally July 2026



Total litter items = 104

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

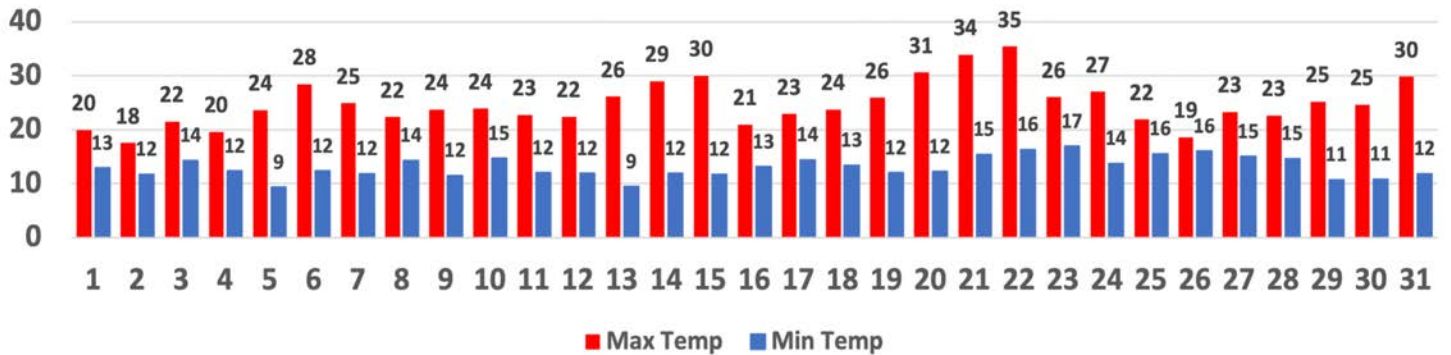
Wrappers: candy wrappers, foil, cellophane.

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

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

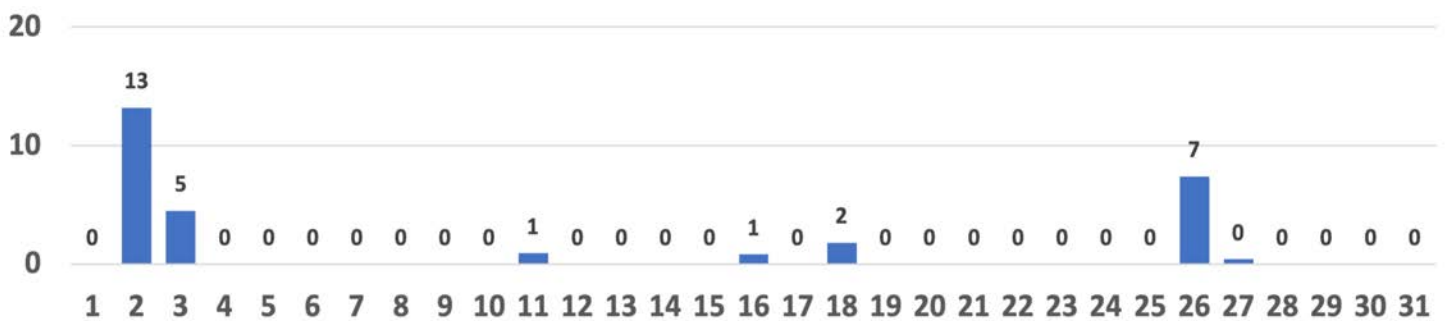
Containers: bottles, bottle tops, cans, coffee cups, lids, juice boxes.

Air Temperatures at YXX July 2026 (°C)



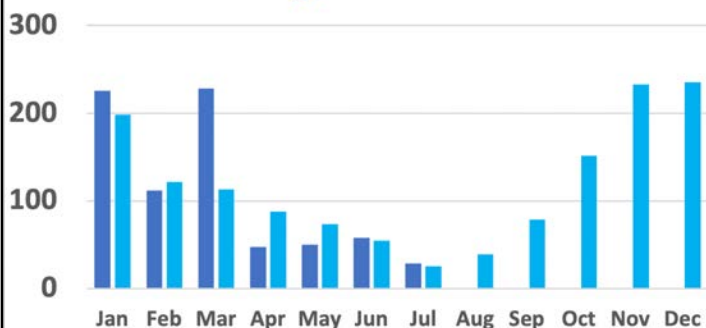
Precipitation at YXX July 2026

Total = 29.0 mm



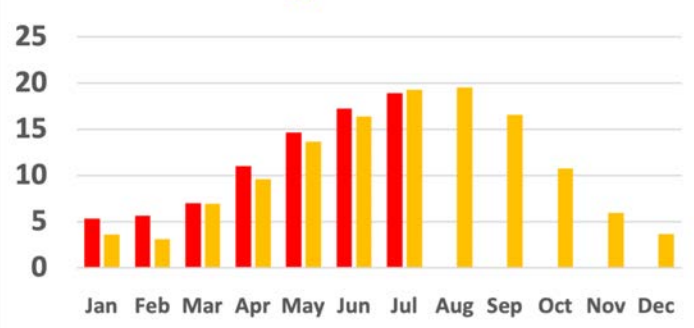
Precipitation in 2026 (mm)

Average: 2019-2025



Average Temperatures in 2026

Average: 2019-2025



In my trail reports, I use these custom place-names for reference:

