

# Stoney Creek Trail Report

November 2020



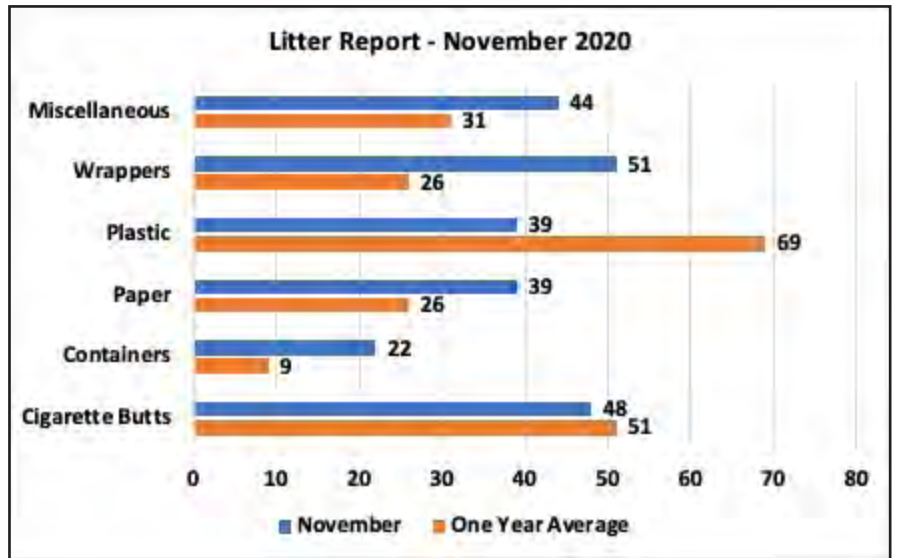
Looking north towards Bridge 1: 2020-11-04

The month of November got off to a great start as far as litter is concerned. A large group of Halloween partyers (young people, we were told) emptied and scattered a dozen or so drink containers while having a fun time stripping all the posters, notices, and other items from both sides of the bulletin board near Bridge 2.

The chart shows that all but two types of litter greatly exceeded their monthly average. Only plastic items and cigarette butts were below average. So it looks like the low numbers reported in October were an anomaly, not the start of a trend.

Starting on Page 6, we have a special feature on this year's salmon run. The run, which began in late October, hit a peak this month. With the help of ARPSES, we plan to continue reporting on the salmon situation in the next couple of months, until the fish are finished doing their thing.

**ARPSES** (Abbotsford Ravine Park Salmon Enhancement Society) is a committed group of volunteers who work for the benefit of all of us. They are sanctioned by the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans. Their reports are sent to the DFO as well as the City and UFV (see <https://sites.google.com/view/arpSES>). We thank **Doug Gosling** for sharing his reports with us.



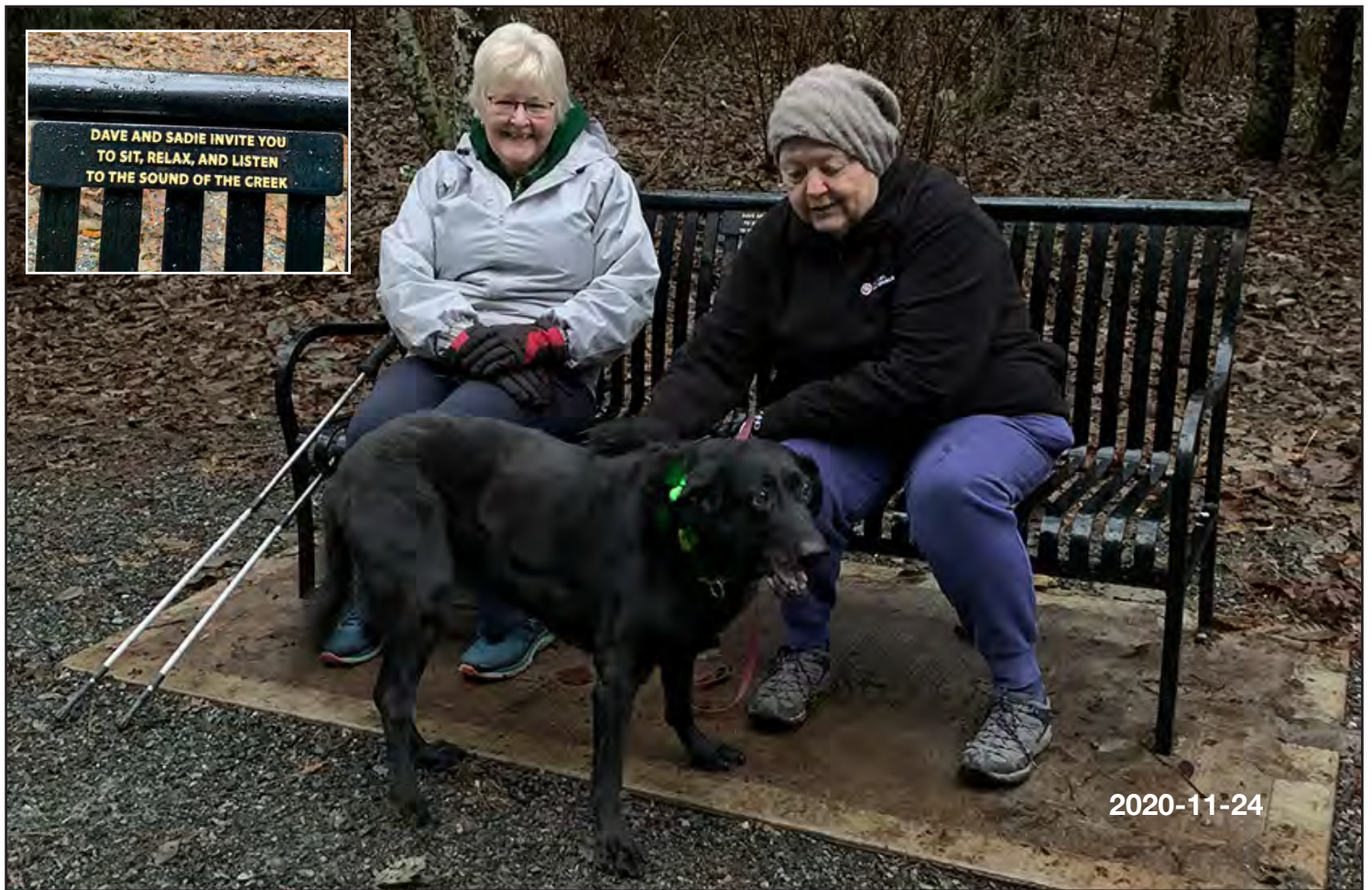
*Miscellaneous: clothing, glass, chewing gum, balls & fragments, etc.*  
*Wrappers: candy wrappers, foil, cellophane*  
*Plastic: doggy poo bags & scraps, plastic bags*  
*Paper: tissues, napkins, receipts, newspaper, cardboard, etc.*  
*Containers: bottles, coffee cups, cans, juice boxes, bottle tops*





Early in the month, the City replaced some damaged and missing Pandemic Distancing signs. At least one of them has been destroyed again since.





Above: Sadie welcomes two guests to her new bench near Bridge 3. We deeply regret that Sadie had to be put down three days after this photo was taken.

The photo on the left shows a red alder tree's winter configuration: bare branches, long green male catkins and small brown cones. The cones developed during last summer from the female flowers. They ripened and shed their seeds a couple of months ago.

When spring comes, small female flowers will appear along with the leaves, while the male catkins will elongate, turn reddish brown and release their pollen.



**Autumn leaves** (clockwise from top left): Red oak, hawthorn, pin oak, cascara.





On the 5th, **Doug and Juanita Gosling**, the members of ARPSES responsible for Stoney Creek, reported finding 43 spawning and 10 dead Chum salmon. Four Coho salmon were seen as well, signalling the beginning of their run.

Doug said, *“In calculating the percentage of new fish, I estimated 95% were new spawners, leaving 5% as still in stream but having already spawned and counted. Great year for Chum in Stoney Creek.”*

The photo at the left shows the creek at Bridge 1 after the heavy rain on the 3rd. This spate provided the right conditions for the many spawners that had been stalled in the lower part of the creek. Bottom left: the water clears up quickly. Bottom right: Chum spawning at Bridge 4.





On the left, two big Chum are in a deep spot across from the Dog Corral. Swimming becomes much more challenging upstream from there. In many places the water is not deep enough for the fish to be completely submerged.

Bottom left: a salmon is thrashing its way in the shallow water upstream of Bridge 5 approaching the ravine. Because of obstructions like that waterfall, it's a challenge for the fish to get that far. Fortunately, it's beyond easy access by people and thus a good place for a redd (salmon spawning bed).

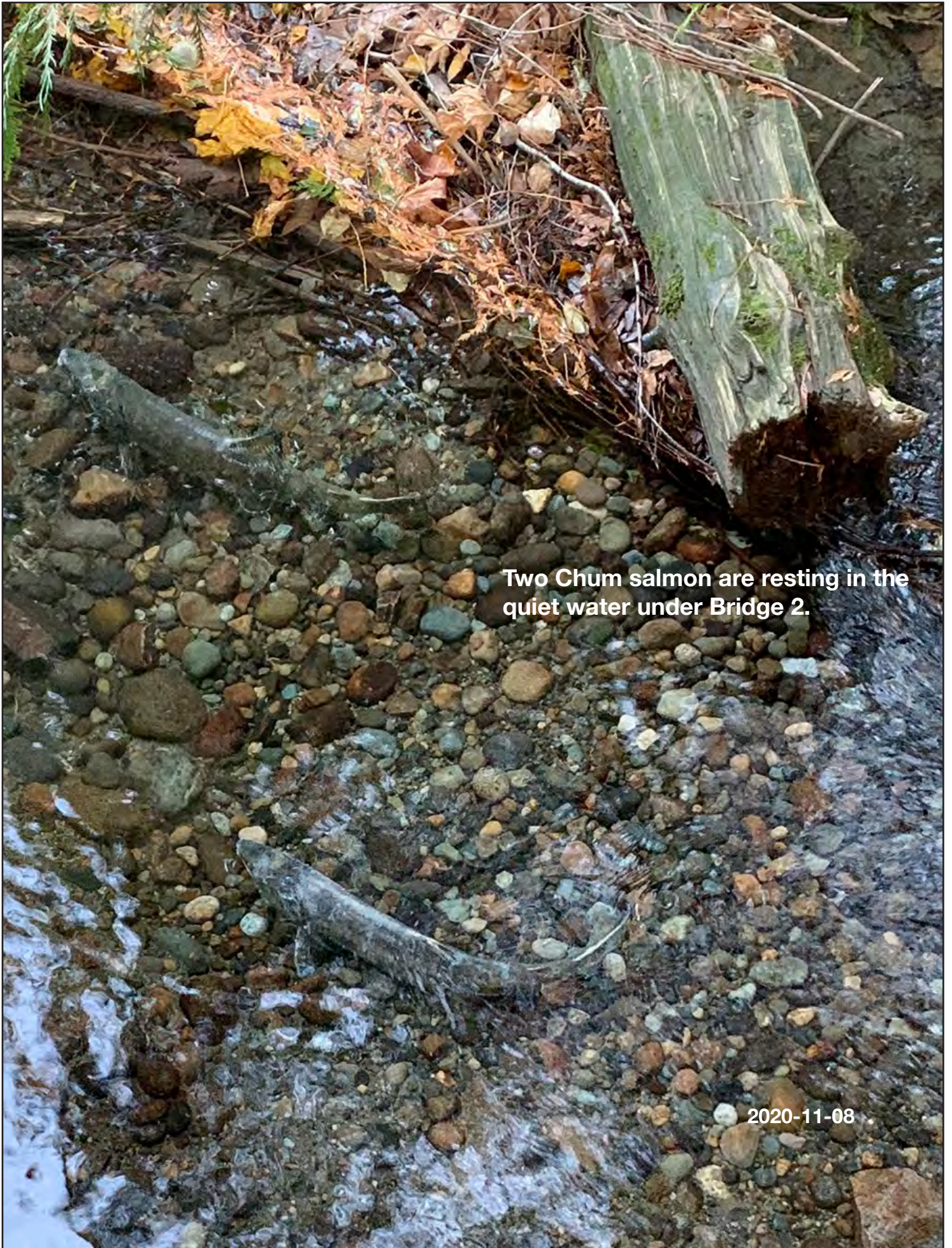
Doug Gosling's comments (Nov. 6):

*"I thought perhaps the creek would have been blown out but felt we should at least conduct the water quality testing. However, I'm amazed once again at how quickly that system blows all the high, dirty water out and in hours seems to be back to relatively clear flows."*



*"I was sure we'd find plenty of coho this week after more rains but really not many, or, perhaps they ran straight upstream in those high flows and we missed them in the lower reaches of the stream. However, I can't recall counting so many chum in one day. At one corner I stood and counted 13 live chum swimming in one pool ahead of me."*

*"Juanita and I are running into more and more folks who like to talk about the salmon in the stream. This is very encouraging; so nice to hear people become so interested in and understanding the value our natural assets bring us. What a nice way to spend a few hours."*



Two Chum salmon are resting in the quiet water under Bridge 2.

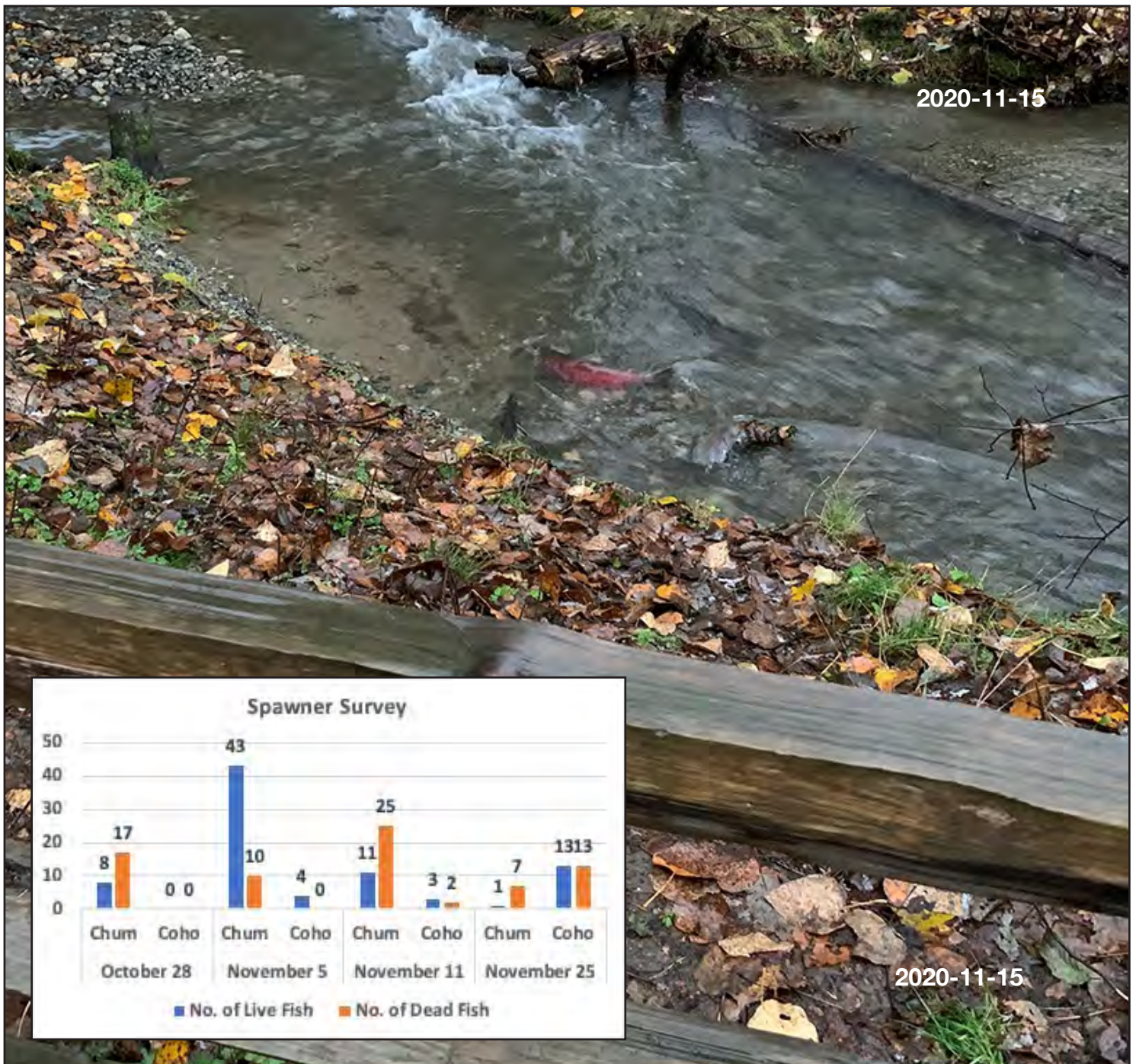
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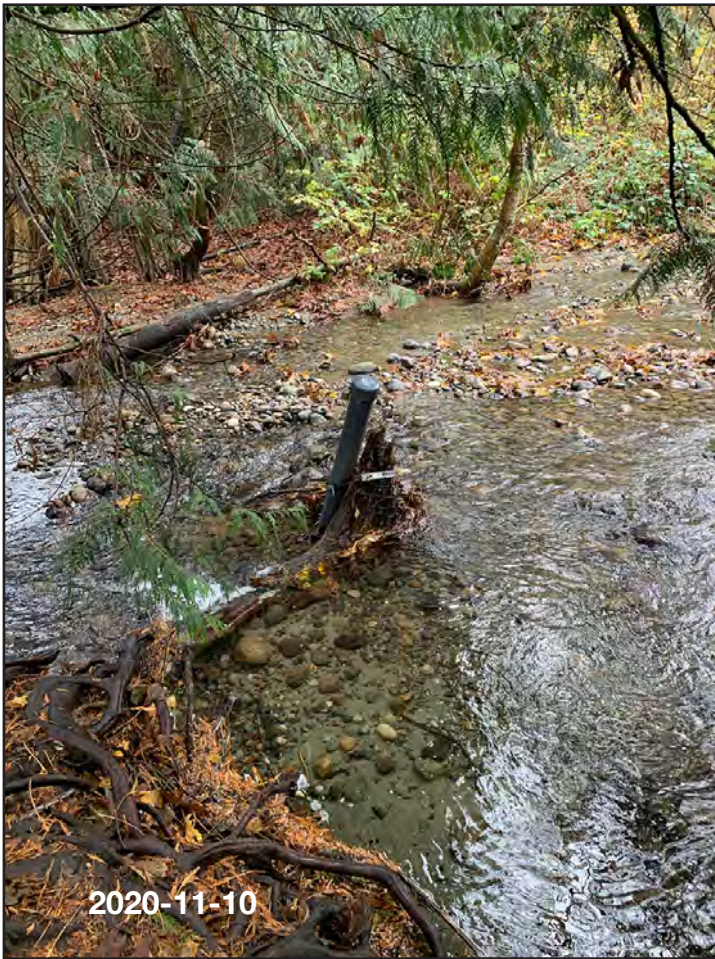


Doug Gosling's comments (Nov. 11):

*"The water was very low again in Stoney Ck this week. Lots of dead Chum which was expected after seeing so many live last week. I did not add any new fish to the Coho column as the ones I did see appeared to have been in the stream for awhile...likely counted them last week. As the rains appear so will the Coho. Next week we should see another influx. Lots of people walking the trail on this Remembrance Day."*

Below: as the Chum run tapered off, the much more colourful Coho salmon began to show up. Some did arrive on the tail end of the Chum run, but their run really picked up following the heavy rains on the 12th and 13th. The Coho are hatchery-born fish, while the Chum are wild.



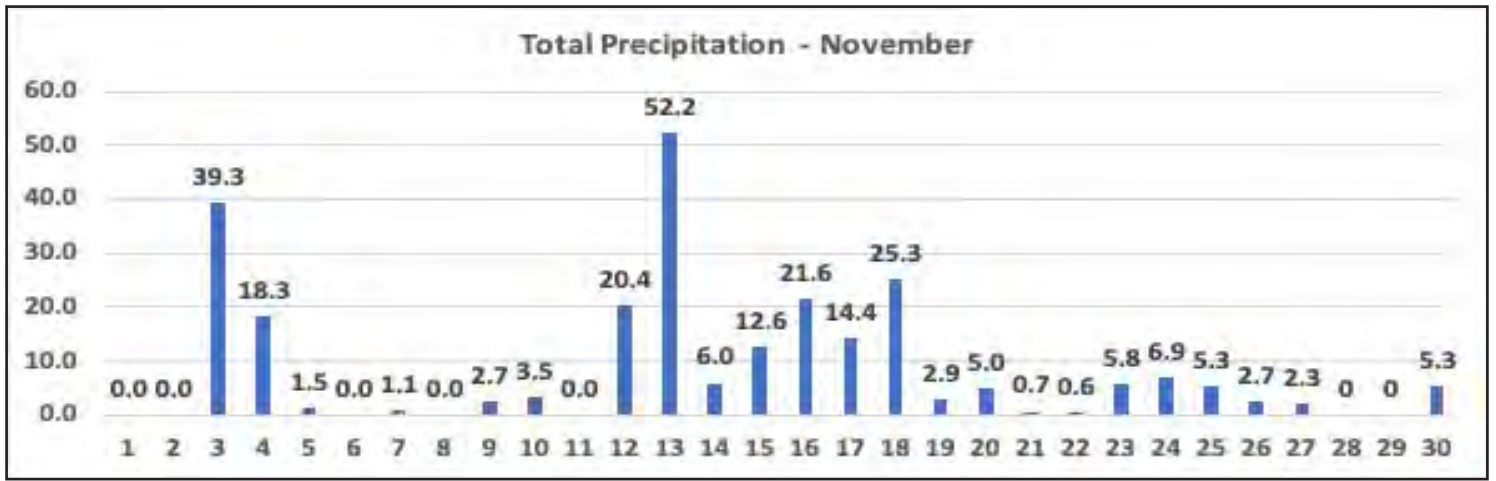


**For ten years** this mysterious pipe has been sticking out of the creek bed near Bridge 3. We've managed to find out that it once was a Hydrolab station for collecting a wide range of data on the creek water, and that it was abruptly decommissioned by the BC Ministry of the Environment in 2013.

Earlier this month, with the MOE's blessing, **Doug Taylor** of ARPSES cut the padlock, removed the cap and verified that the pipe was empty — this being the first step in having it removed by a City crew.

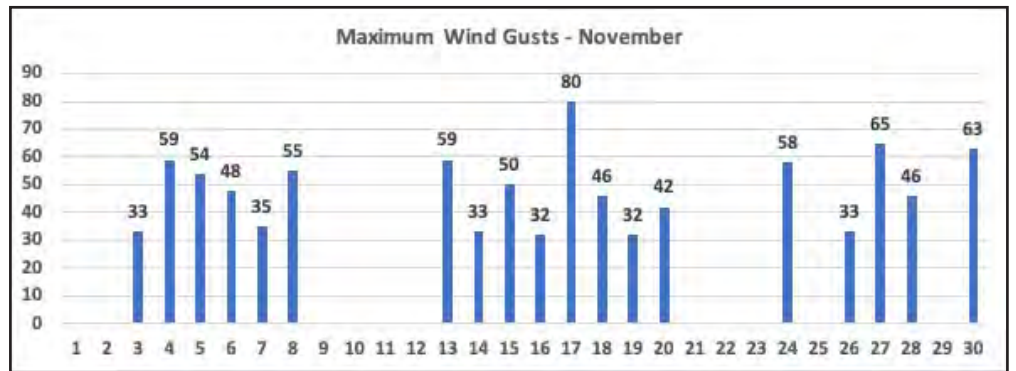
The pipe is located in prime spawning gravel. In order to avoid possibly disturbing any salmon eggs, Doug recommended that the removal operation be postponed until next summer.





**Rainfall report** (based YXX data): we were only three days into November when the winter rains hit us. At mid-month there was a stretch of five days when 140 mm (5.5 inches) fell. The total rainfall for the month was 256 mm (10 inches). Note that Stoney Creek Trail is 10 km from YXX.

On the positive side, the subsequent rise in the creek water level naturally encouraged the salmon to run. There will be more about the salmon in future reports.



It was a windy month as well, as the chart above shows. Surprisingly, only one tree came down, and not on the day of that big gust.

On the left, a photo shows the bypass channel and waterfall just above Bridge 4 that first formed during the heavy rainstorm in October. It has become a permanent feature of the creek.

Dave Rutherford  
Trail Volunteer



2020-11-14