



**Stoney Creek Trail Report  
No. 24 - March 2021**

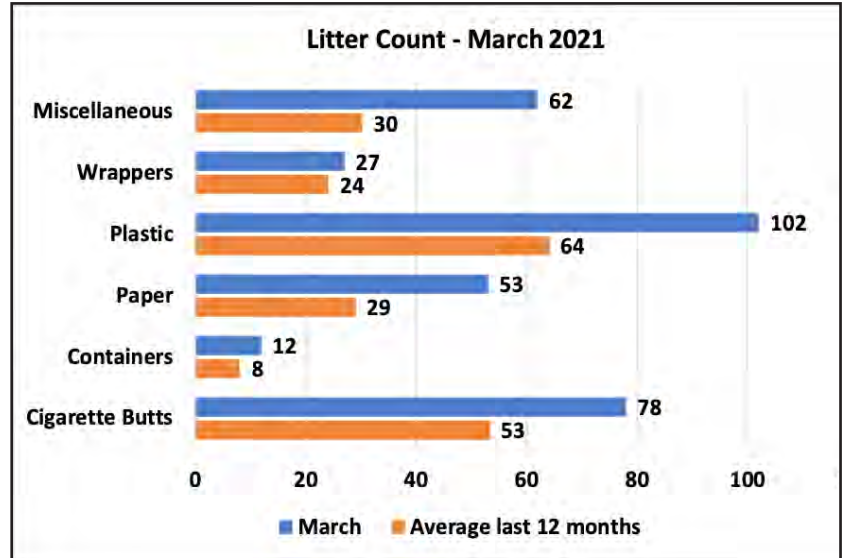
**Note:** the format of this report is **optimized for the iPad**, portrait view. Also, you will see that I have given **names to various places** along the trail (see page 10).

The bar graph shows that the amount of litter is up a great deal in most categories. Perhaps this is because of a greater number of people going outdoors due to pandemic rules??

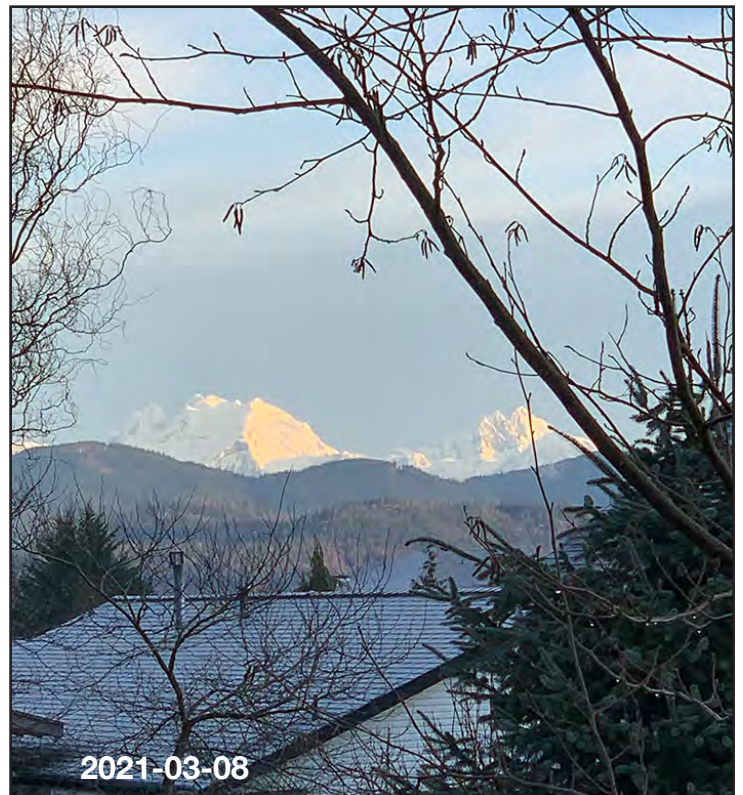
On page 7, I introduce some of the dogs that I often see on my daily (early morning and mid-afternoon) walks. I am planning to feature more of them in the coming months.

Below left: the Wild Wonder preschool children have been making very good use of the Trail. They gather most days in the glade above Bridge 2 — but not always: they will set up a “classroom” wherever they find something of interest.

Below right: if you care to walk up Hemlock Hill, you will be rewarded with a fine view of the “Snow Peaks,” namely Mount Robie Reid and Mount Judge Howay. They stand up along Stave Lake, over 50 km away; both are well over a mile high.



*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



## Developments:



We no longer have to walk through mud! Yay! The whole lower trail, from Bridge 0 to The Forks, now has a new gravel surface. Nice job too. Thanks City crew! And congratulations to the repairman who fixed the gate that accesses the soccer pitch.



## Signs of spring:



Walking the Trail becomes more pleasurable when the warmer, drier days of March arrive. It's a great opportunity to watch the beginning of the yearly cycle of new growth.

The Indian Plum, found in many places along the Trail, is the earliest shrub to bloom, signalling the end of the dreary days of late winter. (Look at the date on the first photo!)

Below, left: an Indian Plum blossom fully developed. Squash one between your fingers and it smells like watermelon.

In the swampy area between Bridge 4 and The Forks, the bright yellow, semi-aquatic skunk cabbages are popping up all over.



## More signs of spring:



If you were not totally absorbed in listening to music on your earphones, staring at your cell phone screen, or chatting with a friend while walking, you had a better chance to notice these and other signs of spring.

Top left: on Hemlock Hill, catkins (male flowers) dangle from a hazelnut tree. A member of the birch family, the hazelnut's pollen is often the cause of allergy.

Top centre: this red currant bush is one of the 50-plus shrubs and trees selected for planting on Hemlock Hill in 2018 by the City's urban forester, **Shawn Gurney**.

Top right: the bitter cherry tree, native to BC, provides an early, spectacular display of white blossoms. This one (also shown on the front page) is small, but there are much larger ones to be seen down closer to the creek.

The salmonberry, with its bright pink flowers, thrives close to the water even though it has to compete with its more aggressive cousin, the invasive blackberry.

This insect, a 4 cm long American Salmonfly, was spotted on the gravel path. Research reveals that the adult will not eat during a life span of about a month. Its earlier life stages (eggs and larva) hatch and develop underwater and are very sensitive to pollution, so its presence is an indication that Stoney Creek is a healthy ecosystem.



## Some of the unusual items found on the Trail this month:



A colourful, squishy dog ball; a thumb-less baby's mitt; and a damaged blue plastic crate.

A small aluminum saucepan and a stool in a child's secret hiding place.

A folding chair; a ball much too large for a dog to hold; and a long-lost lid from a metal Mickey Mouse box (who knows what it held?)



## Introducing Trail dogs! (We hope to make this a regular feature)



**Tikka** is an independent-minded 2-year-old Brittany Spaniel usually on the Trail early in the morning. Left to herself, she's always on the move, but was persuaded to stop long enough for this photo.

**Shasta**, an 80-pound German Shepherd Mastiff cross, is a regular early afternoon visitor. Her owner reports that Shasta "talks" a lot (as Mastiffs are known to do). "...it's different from a bark (although she does that too, of course), she just uses her voice in distinct ways."

**Lewis** is a well-dressed German Shorthaired Pointer. You will see him on the trail almost every morning, very early. His owner says that walking on the Trail is the highlight of the day for Lewis.



## More dogs:



**Buster**, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Pomeranian cross, is a lovely little guy. If you come to the Trail very early in the morning, he will always be glad to see you.

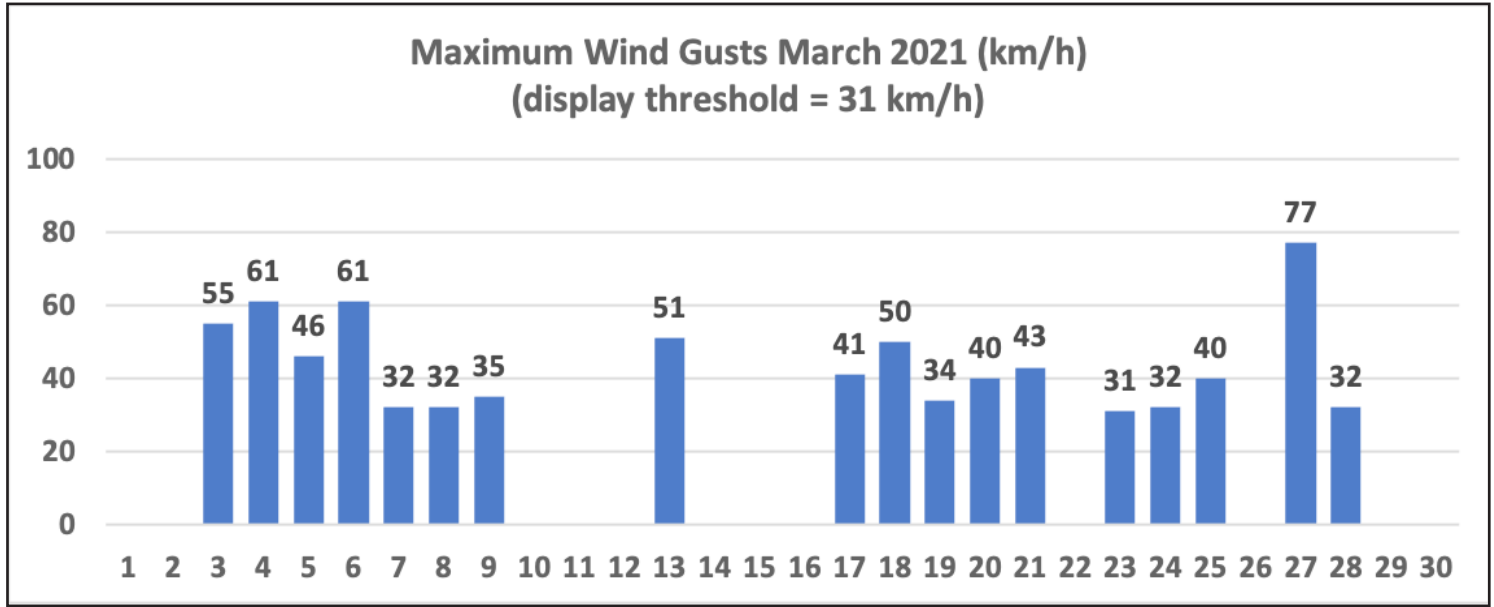
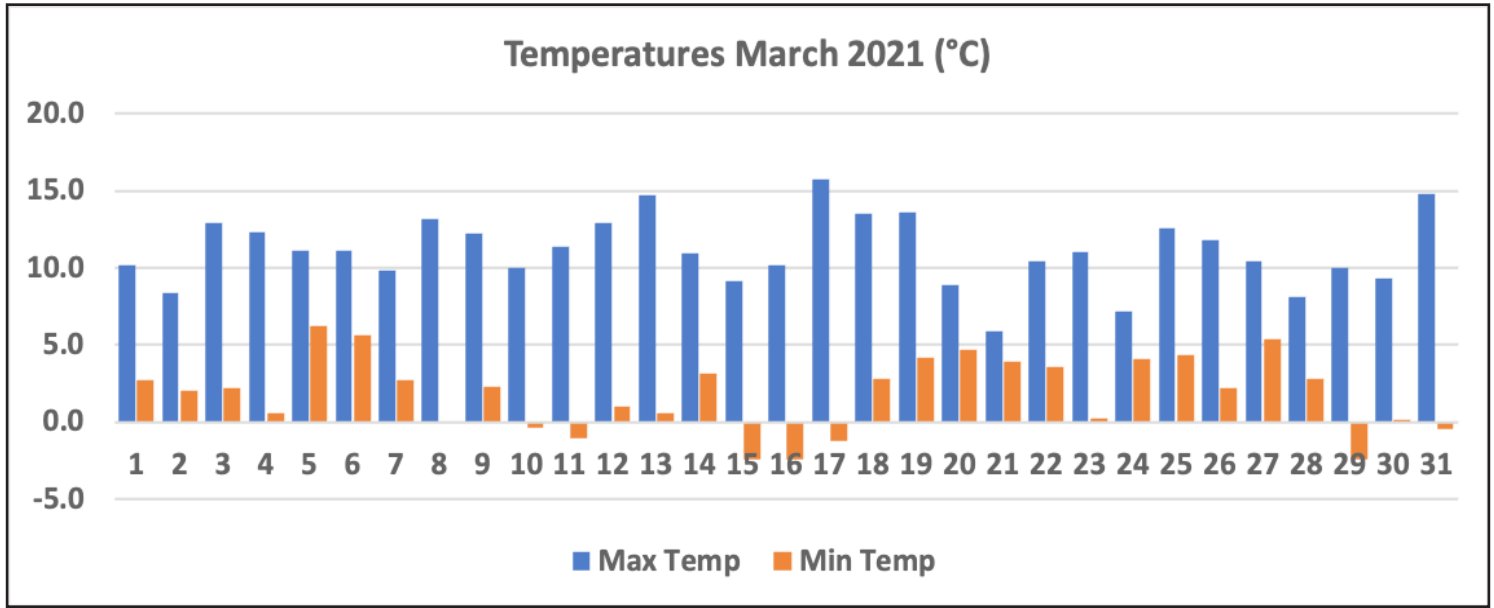
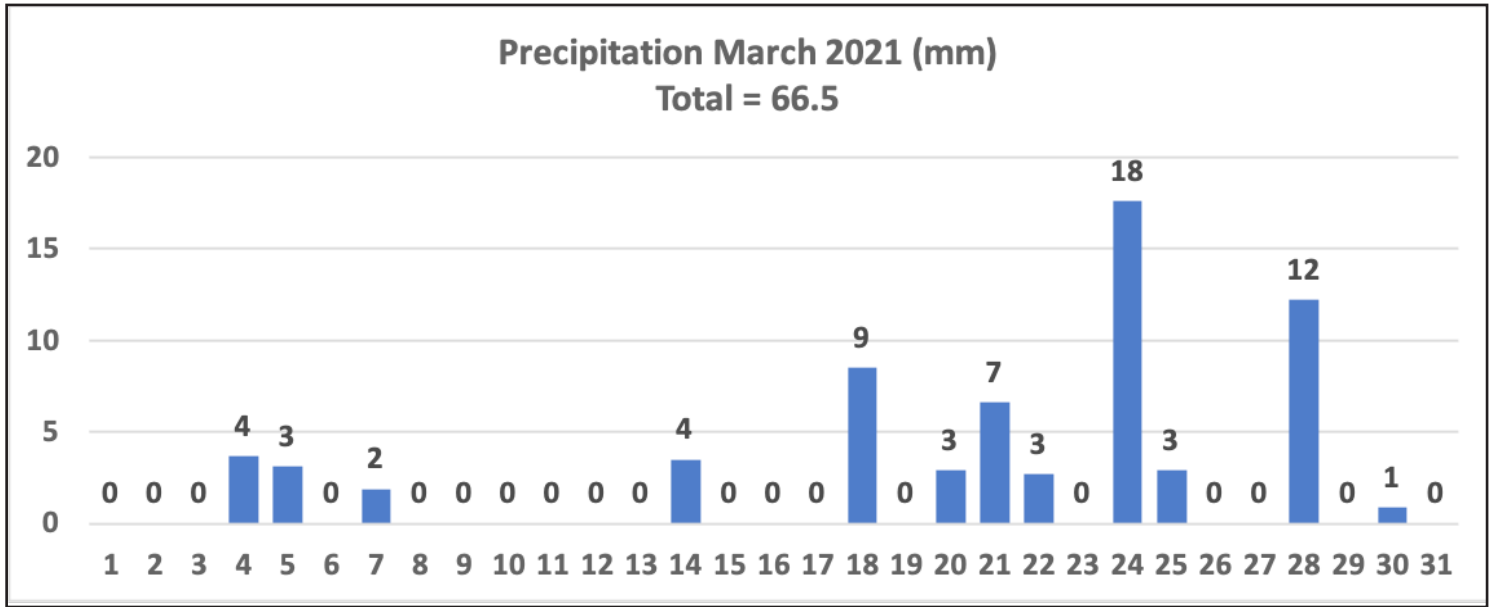
**Charlie**, a Shih Tzu, is a self-possessed old-timer who comes early in the afternoon. Although 15 years of age, he still enjoys walking the Trail. He's deaf, but his nose obviously still works well: he carefully checks for pee-mail all the way.

**Lexie** is a Husky Labrador cross who was rescued from Terrace, BC at 1-1/2 years of age. She now is a relaxed and friendly dog, turning 6 years old next month. Her owner reports that Lexie's favorite part of the day is her walk in Stoney Creek — even if she is taken somewhere else that day, she still insists on going to Stoney Creek.





**Weather data from YXX:** it was much drier (66.5 mm vs. 138.8 mm) and warmer (11° vs. 5.4° average daily high) than last month, but the winds were similar.



For convenience, I use these custom place-names:

