

2022-02-07

**Stoney Creek Trail Report  
No. 35 - February 2022**



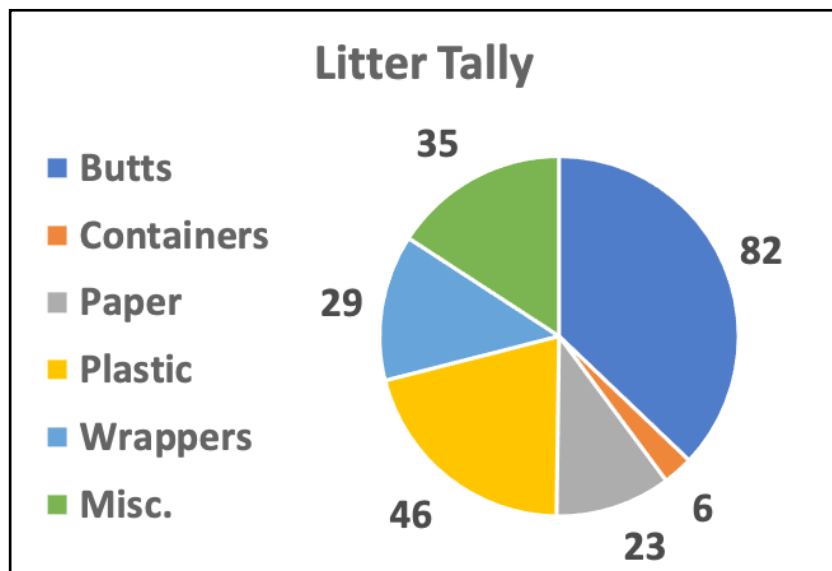
**The Front Page photo** shows a pair of Bigleaf maples adorned with little Licorice ferns. The maples are leaning out over an old oxbow (an extinct water channel) below the Forks. As you can see, the channel received a large load of gravel during the deluge last November. Notice there are some larger Sword ferns as well, growing on the ground at the base of the maples. Licorice ferns are featured on Page Three.

**Broken Bridge news:** On February 8th, **Shawn Gurney** of the Parks department e-mailed: “I’ve heard no news on the bridges but we are getting very close to completing the City-wide assessment of damages and priorities so I should have a timeline soon. I’ll let you know as soon as I do.” Unfortunately, as of the 24th, he says there is nothing to report yet.

**Stoney Creek Salmon news:** ARPSES president **Dale Taylor** uses a formula (based on days elapsed x water temperature) to calculate when the salmon eggs in the hatchery will hatch. He expects their alevin (baby fish) to emerge in the first week of March. For Stoney Creek, which has an average water temperature about three degrees cooler than the hatchery, he estimates our indigenous salmon fry will be free-swimming around mid- to late-March. You may recall that there were two large spawning runs after the deluges in November (see the December Report), so we could do well — if there has been a good egg survival rate.



It’s very likely you’ve seen the above sign standing near Bridge 2, at the entrance to the Glade. It is placed there while Stoney Creek trail is being used by the **Wild Wonder Forest School**. To learn more about the School, see Page Four.



- 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

On Page Eight, I’ve published the first ever Report story **contributed by a Trail Dog owner**. If you have a photo and a Trail story to share, I’d be glad to consider it for publishing.

- To identify the Trail locations mentioned in this report, see the “index” on Page 10.
- Back issues are available upon request.

- To see photos of all the flora that grows along the Trail, visit:

[www.stoneycreektrail.ca](http://www.stoneycreektrail.ca)

## Licorice Fern:

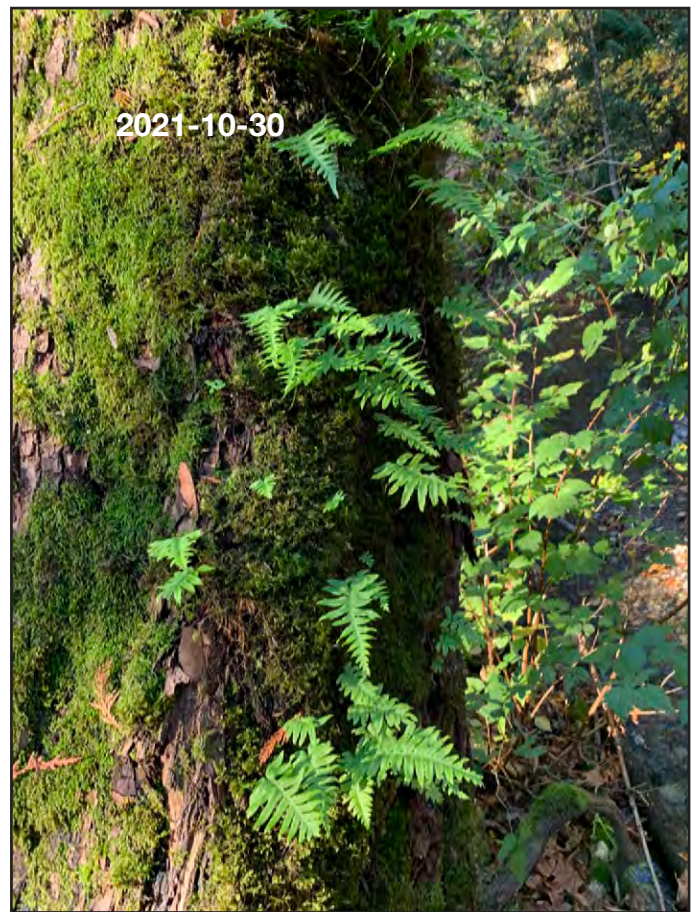
The Licorice fern, also known as “sweet root” and “many footed” fern, grows in shaded, damp locations such as are found in the Pacific coastal lowlands.

The name “many-footed” is given because of its creeping underground shoot (rhizome). The reddish-brown rhizome has a strong, sweet licorice flavor — which I can vouch for!

The feather-shaped fronds, with finely toothed margins and pointed leaflets, grow from the rhizome randomly and can be up to 50 cm in length.

Along Stoney Creek Trail, the Licorice fern usually grows amid the moss found on Big-leaf maples. It is not parasitic, but epiphytic, as it lives off moisture and nutrients from the air and rain rather than from the host tree. It can also have a close relationship with fungi, where its rhizome will intertwine with the filaments (threads) of a fungus.

The Squamish, Comox, Haida and other coastal nations chewed the rhizomes for their licorice flavor and used them raw, boiled, or baked as a remedy against colds and sore throats.



## The Trail as a Classroom:

Many Trail walkers will have noticed small children sitting in groups or walking together on Stoney Creek Trail. They are members of the **Wild Wonder Forest School**, which has



chosen the Trail as a venue. Pre-schoolers, ages 3-5, each take part in two 2½ hour classes a week, either morning or afternoon, Mon/Wed or Tue/Thu.

Wild Wonder feels it is important to meet regularly in one natural setting to experience the seasonal changes. The Glade is their main “classroom” or home base, but since Nature offers a variety of unexpected pleasures and learning opportunities, you will see the children visiting many other places of interest along the Trail.

**Kristin conducts a group session in the Glade**

The instructors follow a well thought out curriculum based on the principles of inquiry, play, and place-learning. They are trained in theory but also in practical skills. Because they emphasize community as well as nature, they teach the groups to cooperate with their peers as well as to enjoy all that nature has to offer.

**There are group games of course, but because each child is unique there are also activities for individuals.**



## Wild Wonder (continued):

Students take part in games such as counting rings in stumps, alphabet hunts in the woods, building things using found items, and singing songs of the seasons. They also experience free play and unstructured time.

The teachers are, of course, the base of security, but prefer to act as guides rather than as sources of information. Their goal is to build a sense

of freedom to explore. They try not to make learning stressful, but instead grow the desire in a child to learn to be inquisitive, to learn through discovery.



**The trio on the far left appears to be making some kind of stew using organic ingredients!**

**The children are always dressed appropriately for outdoor conditions. Here they go a “field trip” up the Straightaway.**

Stoney Creek Trail is an exceptionally good outdoor location for taking advantage of a child’s built-in sense of curiosity. Hopefully the children will carry with them a desire to learn, to be inquisitive and to care for the planet we live on.

## Taking a closer look:

That's not shaving cream or candy floss on the stick of wood, it's a bizarre phenomenon called **Hair ice**. It will form on wet, dead wood in conditions common at our latitude: high humidity with a temperature just below freezing. It is associated with a particular fungus and with deciduous trees such as our maples and cottonwoods. On a piece of wood that hosts the fungus, moisture will slowly freeze and form silky strands of ice. The diameter of the "hair" matches that of the natural pores of the wood. The formation can last for hours or days and might be repeated over several years.



The **Trumpet cup lichen** has a slender, grey-green stalk with a cup on top, making it look like a golf tee. On the outer surface and interior of the cup are fine, granular algal buds with brown, spore-bearing structures on the edges. A lichen is not a moss. It is a



The Trumpet cup, about a centimetre tall, likes to grow on rotting wood such as the fence rail on the Dog Corral.

symbiotic partnership between an alga and a fungus. The alga lives among the filaments of the fungus. It has chlorophyll and thus can provide the food in the relationship.

Lichens have adapted to growing everywhere, from sea level to mountain tops, from the tropics to the arctic. They're one of the most common life forms on Earth.

## Trail Dogs:



**Sam** (formerly known as “El Tigre”) is a rescue dog from the Mexican State of Jalisco. The vet’s best guess is that he is a greyhound X and approximately five years old.

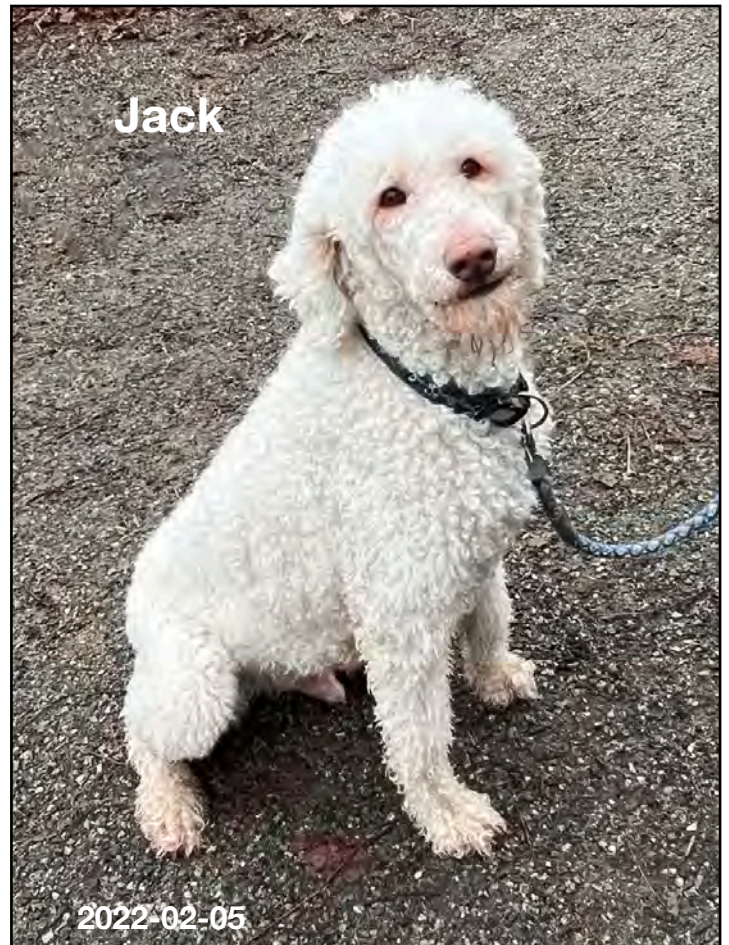
He is a very gentle boy and enjoys his visits to the dog park. He doesn’t necessarily engage in the high jinx in the Dog Corral but does enjoy watching his peers as they dash around doing meet-and-greets.

Sam then enjoys a leisurely stroll on the path, of course making new friends along the way.

“Hi, my name is **Jack**. I’m a standard poodle. I stand a little taller than most standard poodles because my dad was a jumbo. I’m turning 11 in April (no birthday cards or party gifts this year. I’m too old for that stuff).

“I hail from the Vernon area and was a birthday present to my master, the best birthday present ever. What I like to do in my spare time is take my master for a walk in the morning and get him to throw my favorite ball later in the day.

“If you look really close at my photo you’ll see I’m growing a beard (it gets the girls — I’ve still got it).”



## A Lucky Bunny Story, contributed by Jordanne Stahl:



On Saturday, Feb 19, Tikka and I were doing our typical lap of the Park. When we were coming from the parking lot towards Bridge 1, she started to get very excited about something in the woods. I could see a blue Rubbermaid bin, and it looked like there was straw sticking out the top of it. I thought that there may be some nest rehabilitation happening, so I made sure to pull Tikka off the hunt. She was pretty upset about that, but I leashed her up and we were about to make our way across the bridge when I saw a little white rabbit huddled up next to the blue bin, shivering in the rain. I leashed Tikka to the fence, climbed over, and picked up the little wet bunny. A couple folks passed (one kindly released a very unhappy Tikka from being attached to the fence), and no one had seen the rabbit being left behind. I got my partner (Toby) to come down and meet Tikka and me

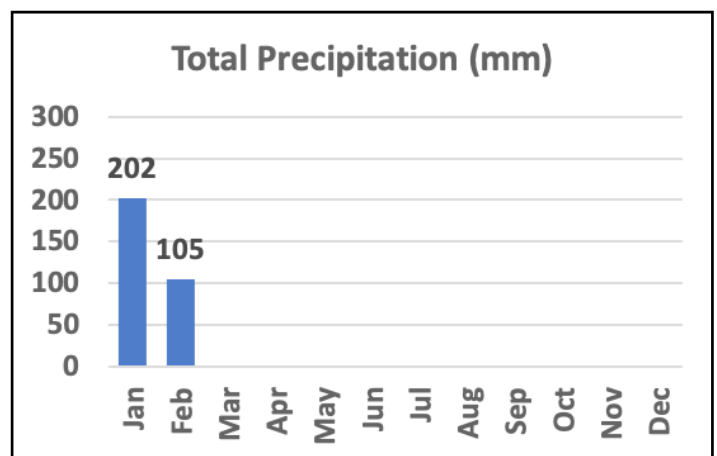
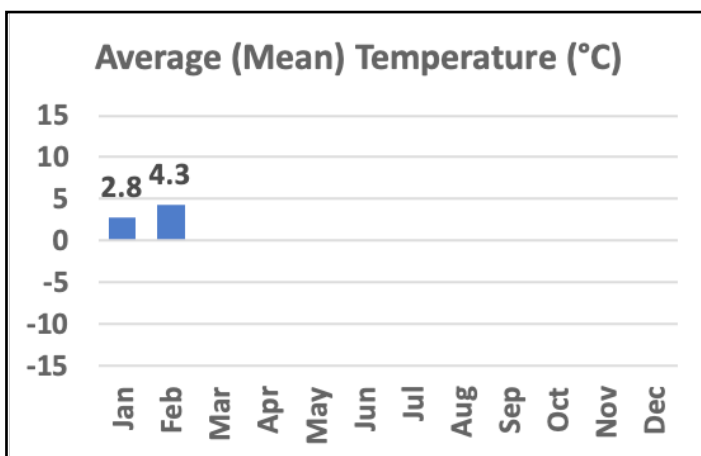
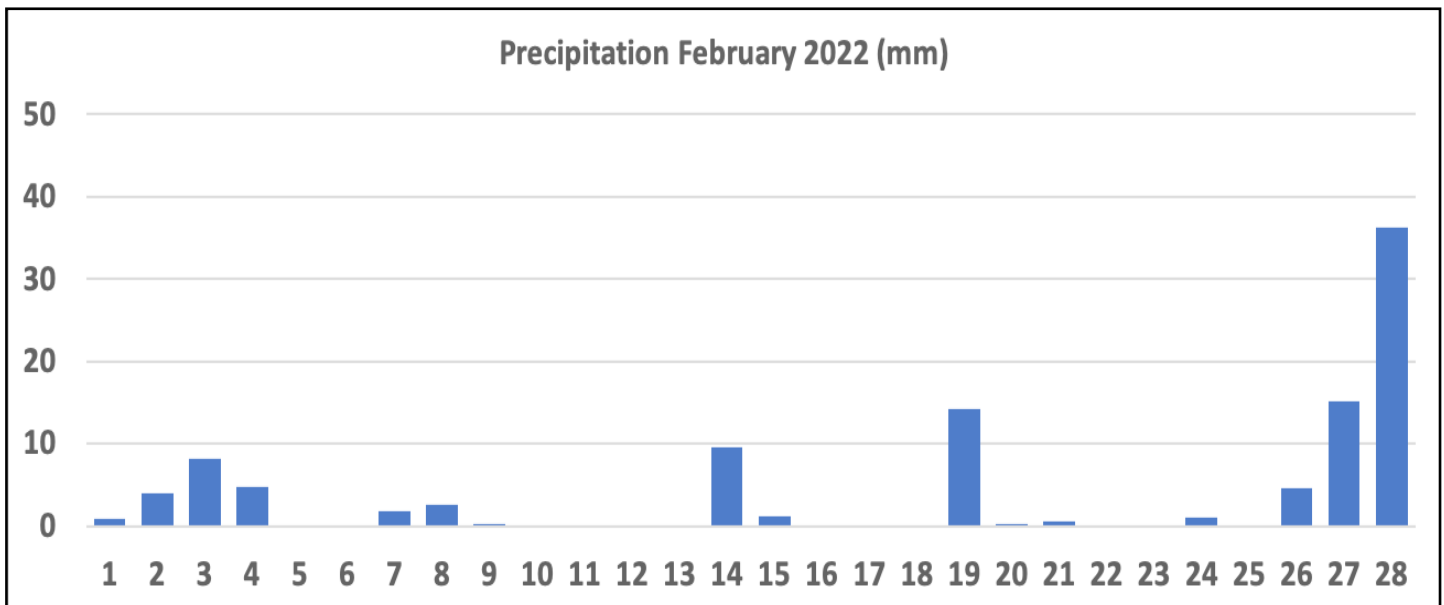
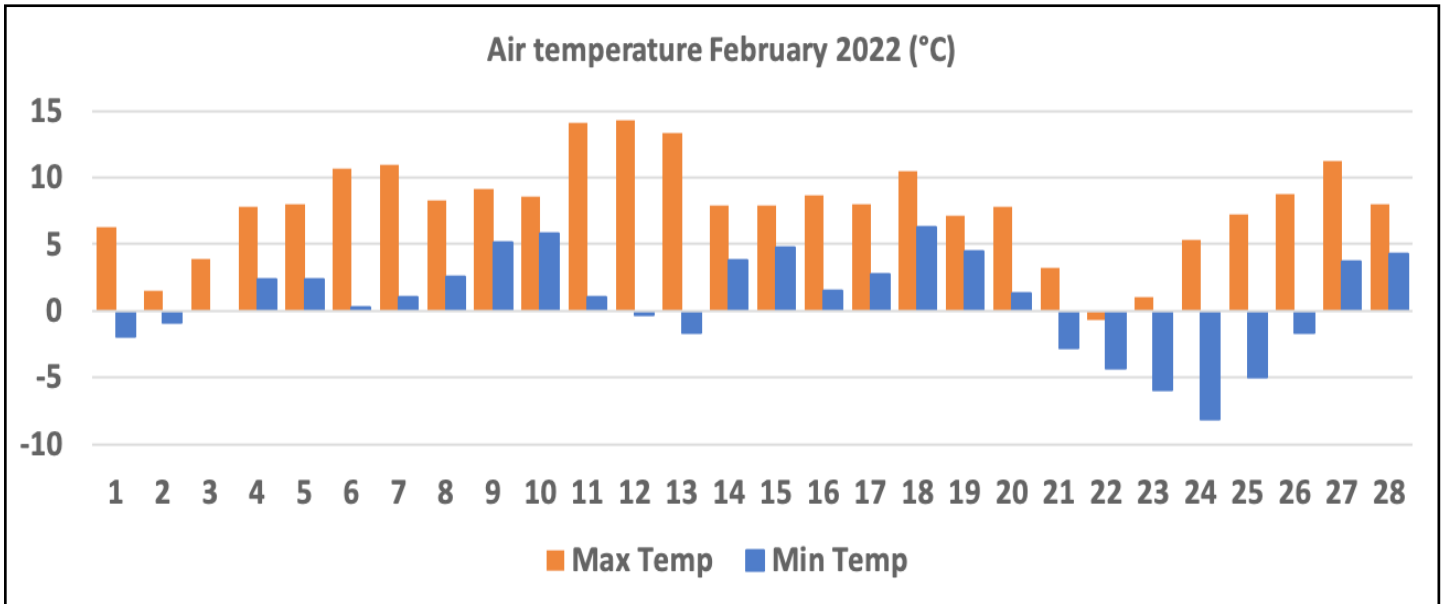
at the parking lot so that I could have a second set of hands — Tikka was very hopeful that I would give her the bunny as a treat!

As Toby and I were discussing our game plan with the rabbit, another couple with a dog walked by. Toby asked them if they wanted a rabbit. They told us that their adult daughter kept rabbits, and they would call her to see if she would take it on! Their daughter picked up the phone right away! While I don't think she was planning on keeping the bunny, she offered to give it a temporary home and look for someone to take it on. Considering she had bunny food and bunny space, and we have a dog bred to hunt rabbits, we thought that was a good idea. She came and picked up our little friend about 20 minutes later, and all was well in the end! That little rabbit had won the bunny lottery after being dropped in the Park.





**Weather comments:** This month started out much warmer than last February, then on the 21st we got an arctic outbreak, with north winds gusting to over 60 km/h at times. The BC Ministry of the Environment had predicted that the La Niña condition would likely cause colder than normal temperatures from February through April for the entire province. It looks like this may turn out to be the case. (Graph data from YXX):



For convenience, I use these custom place-names:

