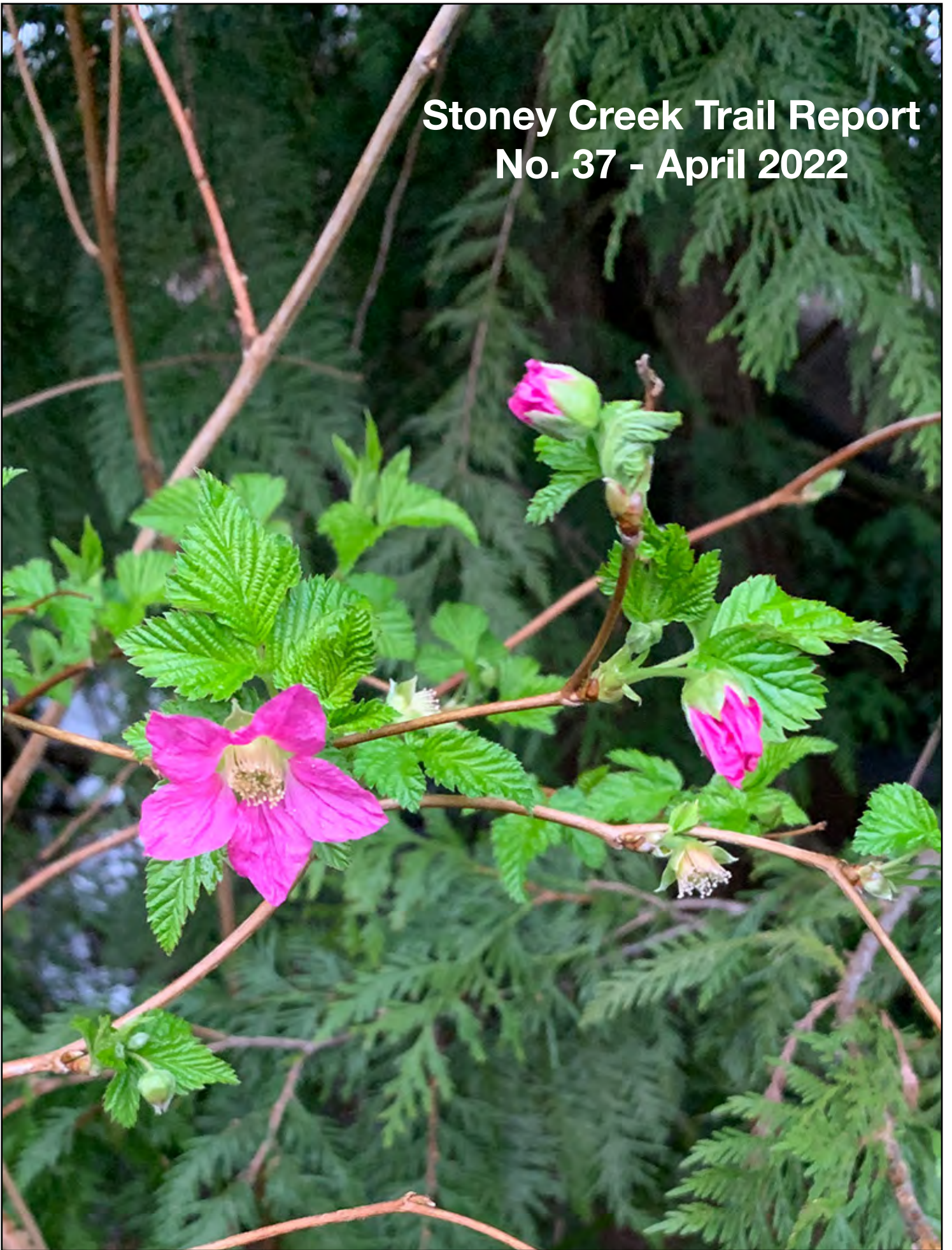


**Stoney Creek Trail Report  
No. 37 - April 2022**





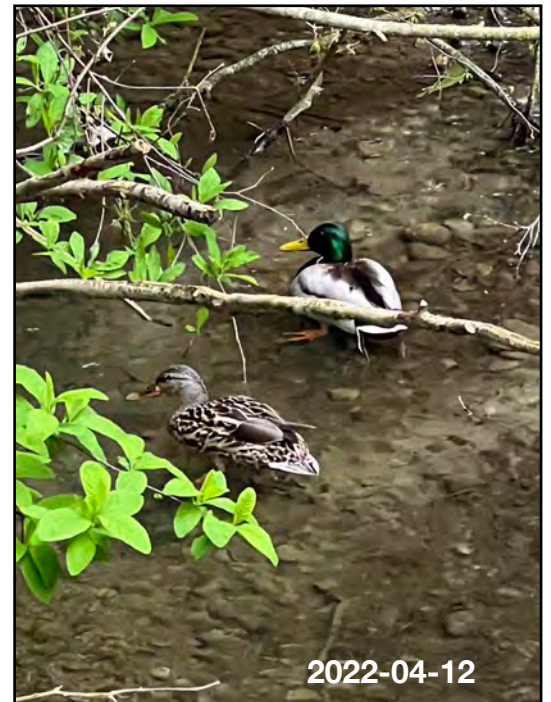
**The Front Page photo** is of a salmonberry bush nestled under cedars near Bridge 2. This familiar shrub is featured on Page Three.

**Broken Bridge news:** At mid-month, I was told that the people at Parks, Recreation & Culture are eager to get started on the repairs, but can't because senior management and Council are waiting for funding commitments from higher levels of government. There has been no news since then. Let's hope they will soon have all their ducks in a row.

Speaking of ducks, a pair of **Mallards** took a close look at a potential nesting site near Bridge 3. Apparently, it was too close to the pedestrian traffic on the Trail and they went elsewhere.

**Stoney Creek Salmon news:** This year's salmon "crop" can be seen in abundance all along the Creek. In the lower photo, bright sunlight reveals at least four **Coho salmon fry** (and their shadows).

**Have you noticed** the Amur maples are in bloom and broadcasting their wonderful aroma? One of them stands below the green litter barrel opposite the Hearthstone Court entrance. The aroma would be much better if we could have some warmer weather.



*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

**I have only one new Trail Dog this month** (I am still waiting for emails from several owners).

*Back issues of the Trail Reports, as well as photos of all the Trail Dogs are available on:*

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



## The Salmonberry:



The salmonberry is a perennial shrub in the rose family, native to the West Coast. It is typically found in moist forests and along streambanks, increasing in abundance in areas of higher rainfall. It often forms dense thickets that can provide refuge for small animals, as well as nesting sites for birds.

This shrub has tall, arching, woody stems with fairly harmless prickles rather than thorns.

Its golden-brown bark becomes papery and shreds with age. It has three dark green leaflets, the middle one being larger than the two side leaflets. The leaves have doubly serrated margins. They are smooth to slightly hairy on their top surfaces, and more pale and hairy on their undersides. The flowers have many stamens and five reddish-purple petals, and bloom in April and May.

The salmonberry is one of the earliest berries to ripen in our region. The berries, which actually consist of a cluster of many small drupelets, can vary in colour. Most are shiny yellow or salmon-red, but they can morph into a darker red variety, looking more like raspberries. They are quite edible, but bland-tasting and mushy, especially after a rain. In the wild, they are typically eaten by birds, bears, and small mammals, while the leaves, twigs, and stems are grazed on by herbivores such as deer and rabbits.

Salmonberries were a traditional Coastal First Nations food. The young shoots, gathered in the spring and summer, were peeled and eaten raw, steamed or dried. One traditional treat was a mixture of berries, dried salmon eggs and oolichan grease.

The salmonberry can be consumed as a tea to treat diarrhea or dysentery. As an astringent, a poultice of leaves and bark can be used for dressing burns and open sores.

On the Northwest Coast, the ripening of salmonberries is associated with the song of **Swainson's thrush**, which is called 'salmonberry bird' in many aboriginal languages.





## The Western sword fern :

The Western sword fern grows abundantly all along the West Coast. It flourishes especially in the understory of coniferous forests at lower elevations in moist or wet conditions. It is very resilient and survives occasional droughts. It has a high tolerance for shade but can also grow in the open.

This perennial fern has dark green, arching blades (fronds) that radiate from a woody, scaly clump of rhizomes at their base from which a new generation unfurls in the spring. **Note that the “fiddleheads” of Sword ferns are NOT edible.** The pinnate (feather-like) fronds have leaflets that are alternate, sharp toothed and pointed.

Ferns are not flowering plants. They reproduce by spores; microscopic bits of plant tissue that look like pollen grains. The spores form in rows of small brown dots (sori) on the underside of a fertile frond.

Sword fern leaves were used by the Coast Salish people as a pain reliever, applied directly to the area where pain and inflammation occur. The fronds were used as a protective layer in pit ovens, baskets and on berry-drying racks, and as flooring and bedding. In the spring, the rhizomes were dug up, roasted over fires or steamed in pits, then peeled and eaten.

The sword fern is known in a number of Vancouver Island and Puget Sound languages as the ‘pala-pala plant’ because it was used in a childrens’ game called ‘pala-pala’ in which they would see who could pull the most leaflets off a frond in a single breath while saying ‘pala’ with each one.





## Opening sequences:



**Top:** This Bigleaf maple's buds bulged then burst into blossoms and leaves.

**Middle:** The well-named Western trillium's petals turn pink with age.

**Bottom:** These photos show how a Hazel nut tree surrendered rather ungracefully to a fungus over a span of two years.



## New growth - a few examples:



**Top:** Pacific willow and Hooker's willow catkins, Bracken fern.

**Middle:** Horsetail, Amur maple, Red elderberry.

**Bottom:** Pacific bleeding heart, Golden-twig dogwood.



# Some found items this year:



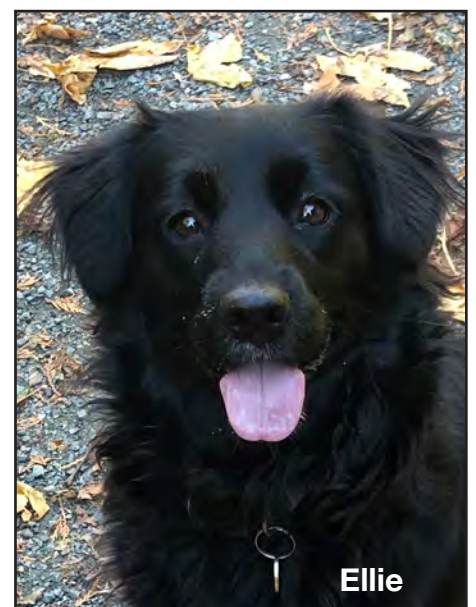


## Trail Dogs:



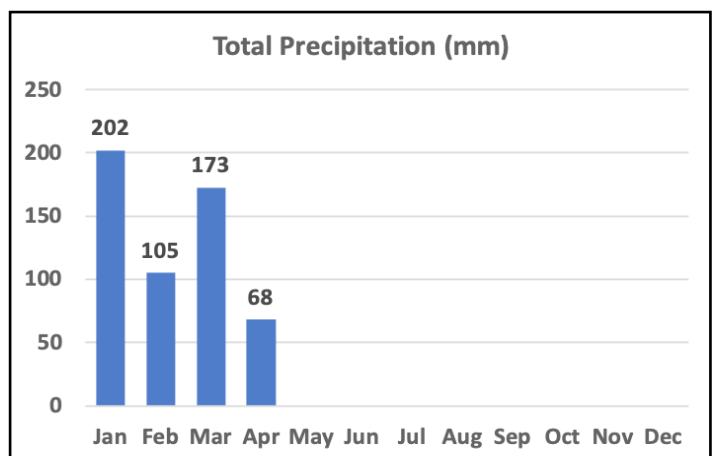
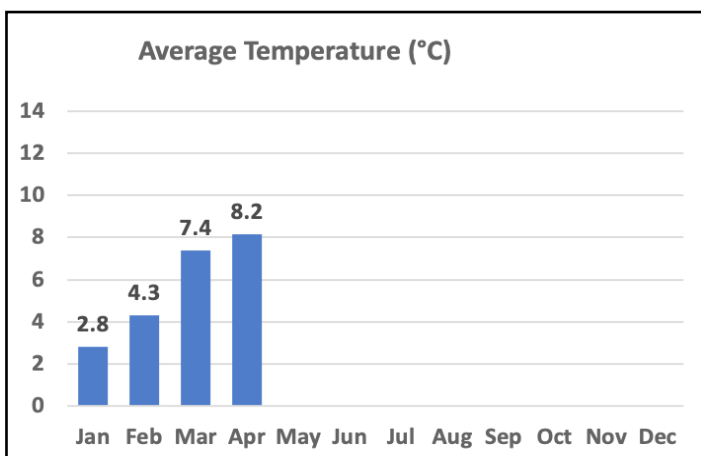
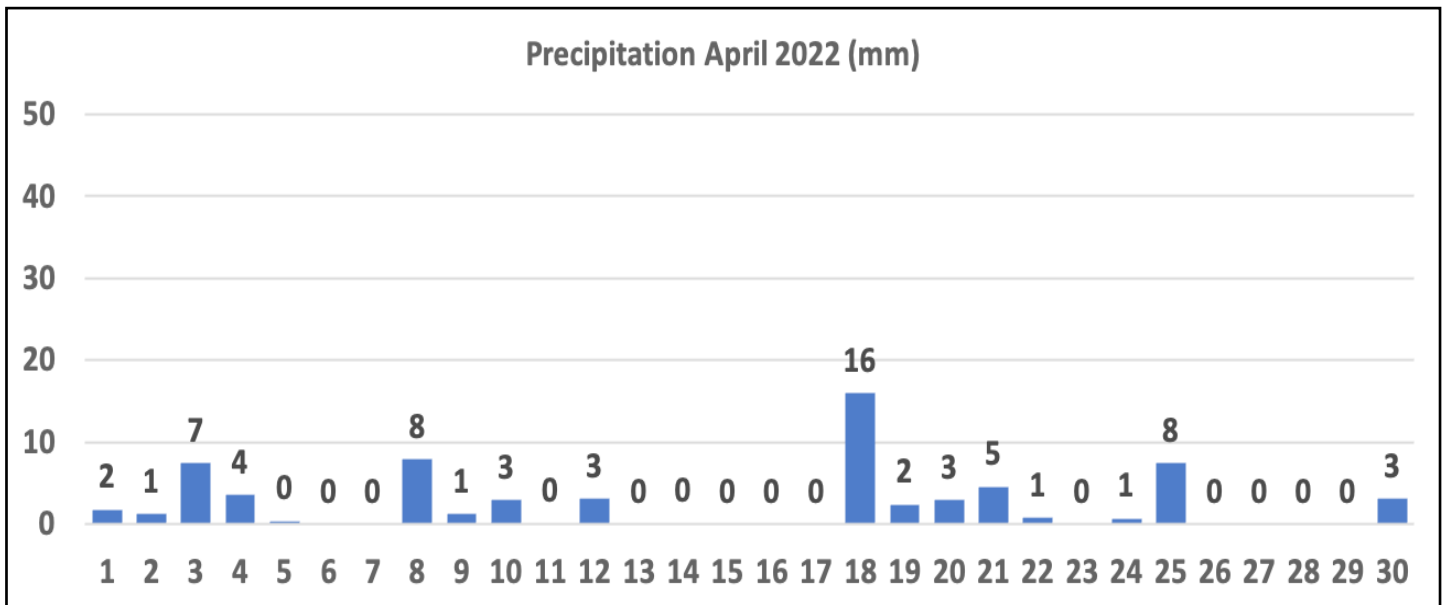
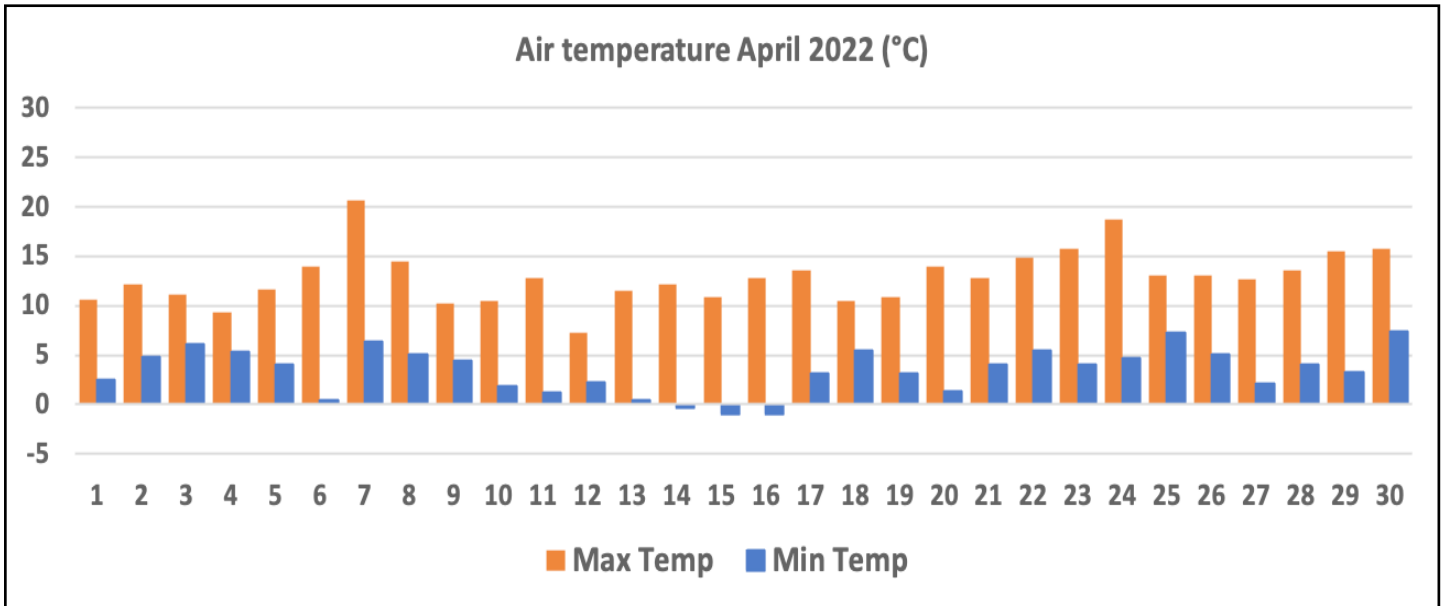
**Hazel** is a five-year-old Australian shepherd. She does 13 km/day (rain, sun, snow) with her dad. Hazel hasn't missed a day at the Park in over three years! During her walks she will take the opportunity to play with her friends — if she's in the mood. Playing usually includes being chased, herding hard, trying to fetch somebody else's ball and of course ear-piercing barking.

Hazel is super intelligent and friendly. Before COVID she was assessed and qualified as a St. John Therapy dog. She is eagerly waiting to go back to work but, oddly, she won't let anybody on the Trail pet her. Sorry Dave! Keep trying! Anybody who has seen us on the Trail knows that Hazel always needs to know where dad is and always looks back to see why he's taking so long. Hazel asks for permission, with a stare and barking, to go in the water at Bridge 3 to get her feet wet and grab a quick drink. She does this 10 times per walk!





Weather: (note: the data are from YXX, which is nine km away and with a different micro-climate). It was a cold month: the average daily temperature was less than a degree higher than March's. However, it was much drier and windier: wind gusts exceeded 31 km/h on 20 days vs.13 last month. The BC Environment Ministry says that the La Nina (chilling) regime could last through to June or longer. So, no Heat Dome this year??





For convenience, I use these custom place-names:

