Stoney Creek Trail Report
No. 42 - September 2022

On the The Front Page is a photo of a very tall western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), the namesake of Hemlock Hill. For virtual walks down and up the Hill, see Page 3.

Broken Bridge news: The City's focus continues to be on Sumas Prairie, although it should be pointed out that work *has been done* in our area: landslide and road repairs along Straiton Road; debris removal from McKee Road; sediment removed from Clayburn Creek; road repairs along Old Clayburn Road; and clean up and repair work at Matsqui Village Park. You may recall that restoration was begun near Bridge 5 a week after the first heavy rainstorm last Nov. 14/15 (152mm), but the downpour that fell during the final week of the month (231mm) put a stop to any further work.

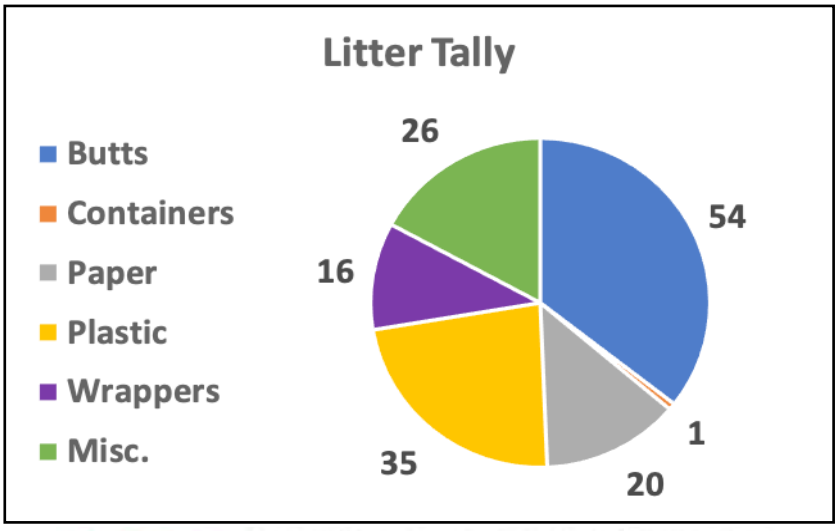
According to my source at the City, bridge design, procurement, permitting and funding have still not been completed. So, with the salmon spawning season coming up next month, I expect we will not see bridge restoration get underway until next year.

On August 27th, the BC Government **increased the drought level in the Lower Mainland to Level 3**. Among other things, there could be adverse effects on the salmon spawning migration. Currently, Abbotsford is only at Stage One Water Restrictions (lawn sprinkling once a week). Of course, cutting back on your water use will not increase the water level in Stoney Creek. However, if you would like to use water more efficiently anyway, here are some suggestions:

- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, shampooing or shaving.
- Reduce your time in the shower, or have one every second day.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge instead of running the tap for cold drinks.
- Stop watering your lawn.
- Use a bucket to wash your car.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk.

Back issues of the Trail Reports, as well as photos of Trail plants and animals are available on:

www.stoneycreektrail.ca



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

A Walk Down Hemlock Hill (on September 1st):

Hemlock Hill takes its name from the towering western hemlock tree that can be seen on the west side of the Trail if you look back to the south just as you enter the shady stretch (photo #5). There are also a number of smaller hemlocks growing where the Trail turns the corner (photo #2). Look for dark green evergreen trees with small, wide leaves. Hemlocks can be found only on this end of the Trail.

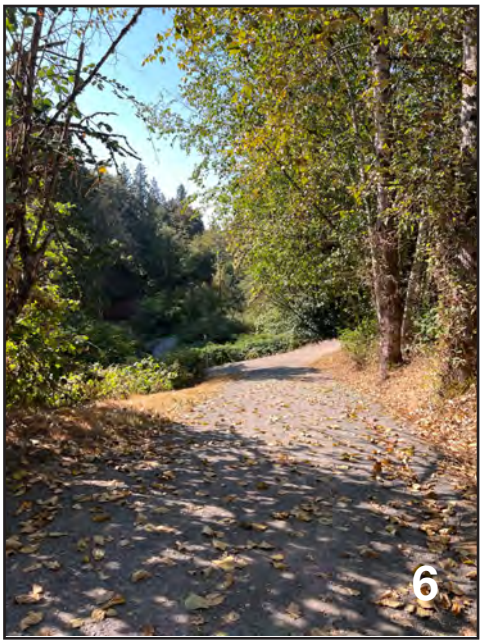
Entering from Latimer St., at the south end of the Trail

Turning north at the corner near the hemlock trees

Leaving the shade of the big maples and alders

Out in the open, going past the newly planted trees

Entering into the shade again, close to the houses



Looking down at the Forks, the bottom of the Hill

A Walk Up Hemlock Hill (on September 5th):

If you choose to walk the Hemlock Hill path in a southerly direction (uphill), you will climb about 23m (75ft, or 7 storeys) from Creek level at the bottom of The Forks to the Latimer Street exit. On the open stretch (photos #3, #4) you will see a large number of juvenile trees and shrubs, including Black hawthorn, Douglas fir, Saskatoon, Vine maple and Yellow cedar. They were planted through the initative of Robert Bateman HS students in 2018.

From The Forks, you see the steepest part of Hemlock Hill

Above The Forks, you walk in the shade near some houses

Further on, there is a stretch where trees were planted

The path levels out nearing the shade of alders and maples

Look for hemlocks near that shady corner ahead

There is the Latimer St. exit at the south end of the Trail

Snowberries:

The Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)—also called waxberry or ghostberry—is a deciduous shrub in the honeysuckle family. It grows from .5m to 2m tall and is found at low elevations to middle elevations from southern B.C. to California, often in the presence of Spirea (Hard hack) and Mahonia (Oregon grape). It is a resilient plant which tolerates dry or moist conditions and a variety of soil types in forests, on rocky hillsides or near riverbanks and streams.

The oval leaves have short stalks and grow in opposing pairs, on thin, wiry twigs. The flowers, which bloom in early summer, are bell-shaped, small, greenish-white to pink, and grow in small clusters. The closely packed fruit is a conspicuous soft, white berry that appears in late summer and fall.

The berries hold 2 to 5 seeds. When broken open, their insides looks like sparkling, granular snow. When stepped on, they make a cracking sound. The seeds are tough and hard, and thus are very difficult to germinate. They may lie dormant for up to ten years.

The white, waxy-looking berries are considered poisonous by aboriginal peoples. They are given names like ‘corpse berry’ or ‘snake’s berry’ in several languages.

The best place to see Snowberries on the Trail is near the top of Hemlock Hill.

Unusual Sightings:

Here are some examples of the many notable items that were found or seen along the Trail over the last three months:

Child's ring

Child's hat

Lawn dart

New Coachstone gate

Trail warning sign

Pale brittlestem

Premium joint pack

Yours truly

Trail Dogs:

"This is **Sparky**. Thirteen years ago we decided to get a mini Aussie Shepherd, but there were few breeders in BC. We found Sparky at a small breeder in Montana where they raised their puppies with their children and livestock. At 3 months, he made his journey to Seattle where we collected him.

"We quickly realized he was a 'herding' dog at heart. He has spent considerable time herding our Siamese cats over the years. In the end though, the cats run our house and he just obeys their rules.

"When we go for walks he is puzzled by other dogs' interest in balls and the water, neither of which he cares about. As long as he is with us, nothing else really matters. He is literally 'my shadow' and we run into each multiple times each day.

"Recently, Sparky has slowed down a lot and his hearing and vision have diminished, so you will notice he is on a leash. He is friendly and prefers little dogs (which I am sure he thinks are cats!). A visit will always result in excessive wiggles from his nubby tail."

"Roo is a one-and-a-half year old Cocker Spaniel-Poodle from Chetwynd.

"Her favorite mornings feature rallying all dogs, big and small, for a grand game of chase, followed by a 'raw' meat patty when she gets home, microwaved for precisely 3 minutes.

"She is an indifferent fetcher, a passionate explorer, and a kind friend."

Water Test Results:

Our thanks to **Stewart** and **Laurna Ritchie** for making available the following report. These results are based on a ***single water sample*** taken on August 9th. Note that four of the elements are above acceptable levels, so they are discussed below.

Toxic elements	measured	Max. acceptable concentration
Antimony ppm	<0.006	0.006 mg/L
Arsenic ppm	<0.010	0.01 mg/L
Barium ppm	<2	2 mg/L
Cadmium ppm	<0.005	0.007 mg/L
Chromium ppm	<0.10	0.05 mg/L
Copper ppm	0.036	2 mg/L
Iron ppm	0.189	0.3 mg/l
Lead ppm	<0.015	0.005 mg/L
Manganese ppm	<0.05	0.12mg/L
Mercury ppm	<0.002	0.001mg/L
Phosphorus ppm	<1.0	0.1 mg/L
Selenium ppm	<0.05	0.05 mg/L
Sulfur ppm	85.7	500 mg/L
Thallium ppm	<0.002	n/a
Zinc ppm	0.109	5 mg/L

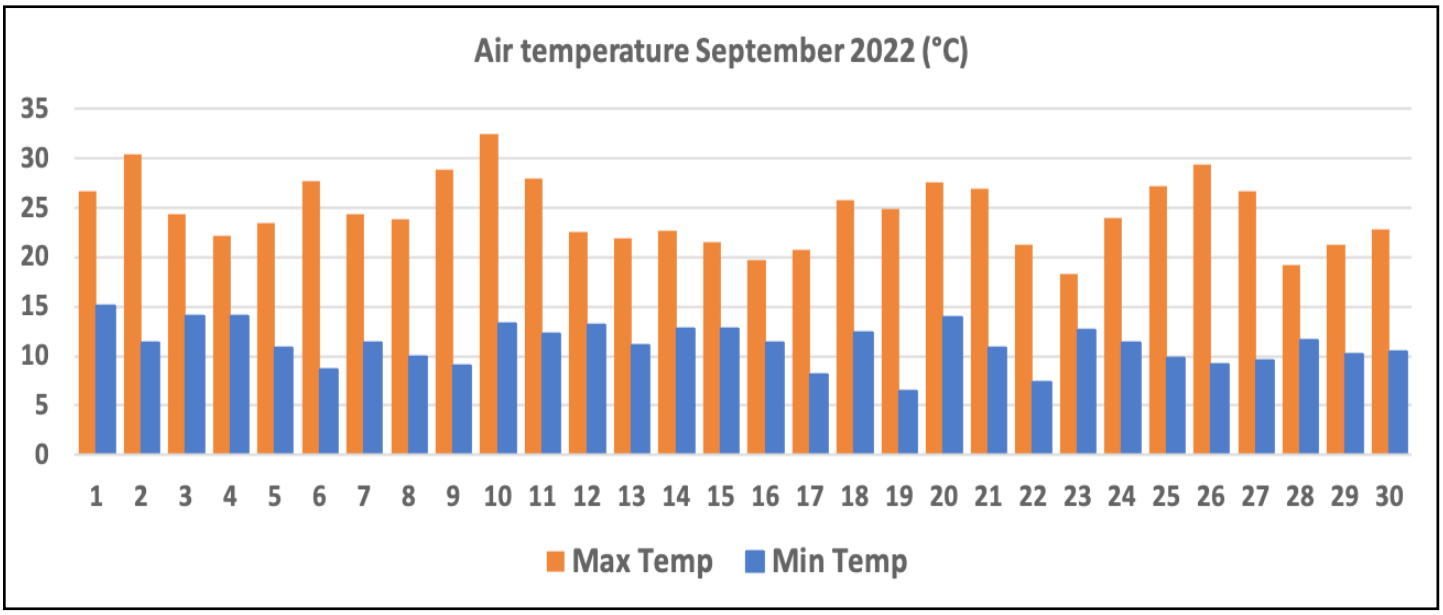
Chromium has two forms: Chromium (III) is naturally present in rocks and soil. It may be essential to nutrition and is considered non-toxic. Chromium (VI), which is toxic, can come from industrial effluent and the burning of fossil fuels. Unfortunately, the laboratory that did the analysis does not distinguish between the two.

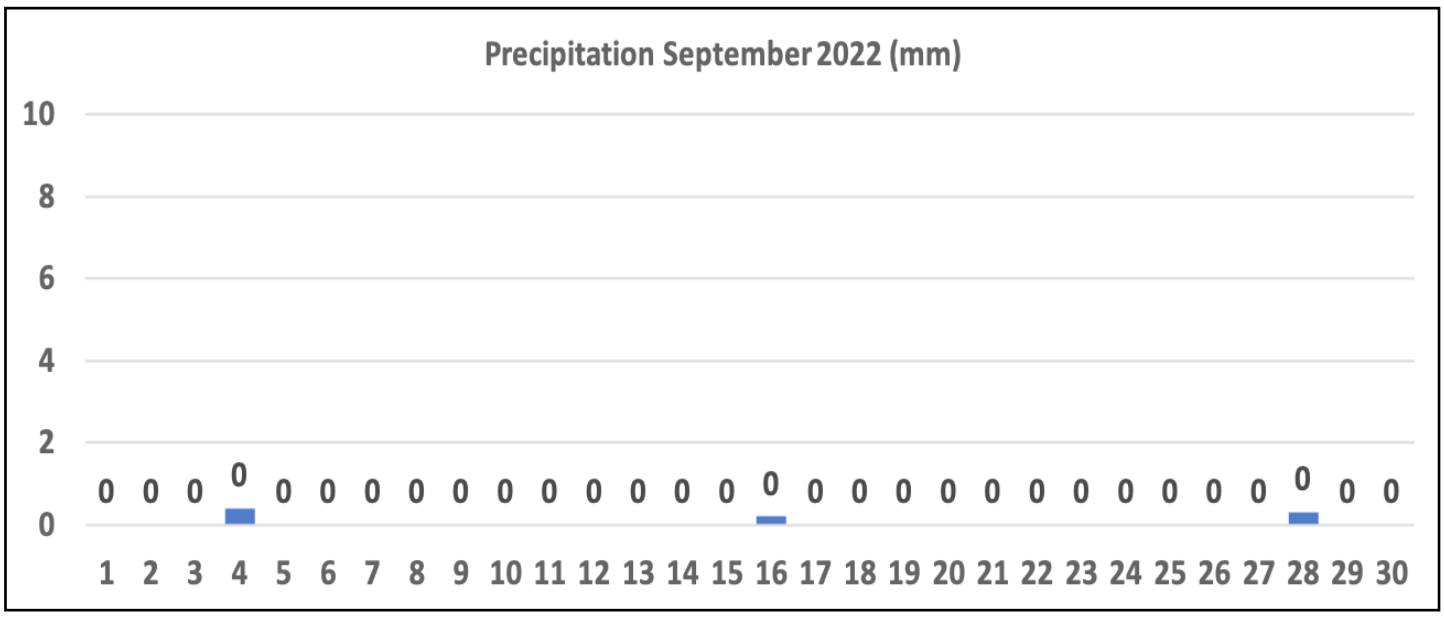
Lead is a naturally occurring element, but the main source is solder used in older plumbing and industrial waste carried in landfill and stormwater runoff.

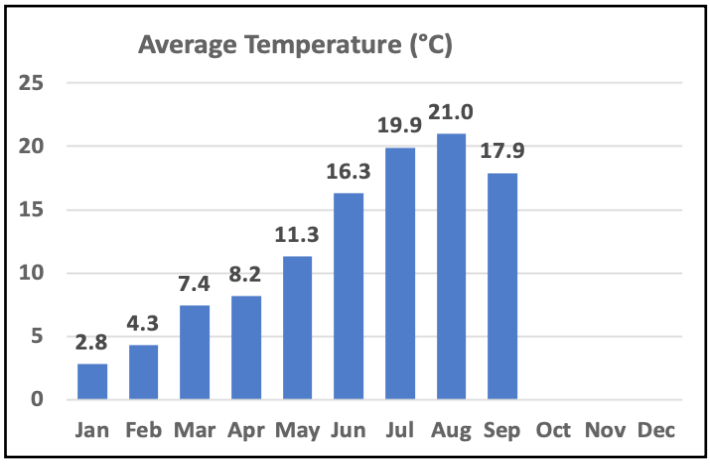
Mercury is found naturally in soil, water, air, plants, and animals. It can get into water from the weathering of rocks, but also industrial waste and pesticides. At higher levels it can cause nerve damage.

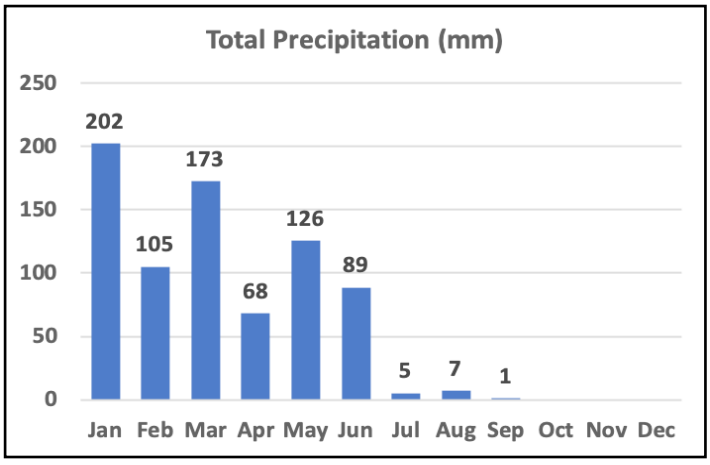
Phosphorus, an essential nutrient for all forms of life, is found naturally in soil, rocks, and plants. Phosphorus is used in fertilizers and detergents. It can also come from animal waste. It is much more common in surface water than in groundwater. Excess phosphorus can cause dangerous blue-green algae blooms.

From June 22nd (when our cold, wet spring came to an end) through to the end of September, YXX has had 13.7mm (half an inch) of rain. The grass in many places has turned brown and the parched trees are shedding dessicated leaves. The water level in Stoney Creek has dropped significantly—we've been told it has disappeared (gone underground) in places such as Palfy Park. Fortunately, the water temperature has been averaging about 14°. Juvenile Coho salmon can do well at this temperature.









For convenience, I use these custom place-names: