

**Stoney Creek Trail Report
No. 48 - March 2023**



The photo on the Front Page is of a **Western Trillium**, a shy native perennial that grows from a rhizome (an underground stem with nodes that will sprout). Its three-petalled flowers grow at the end of single, smooth stem 10-45 cm tall. It is rated yellow (secure) on the endangered species list. A few can be seen blooming in Stoney Creek vale every March, so if you can find one I congratulate you!

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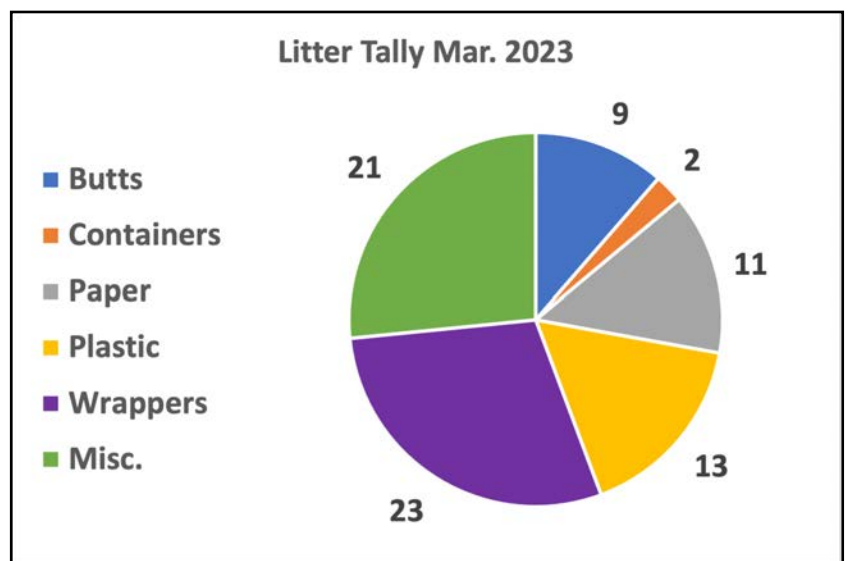
Broken Bridge News: (received from the City on March 29th): “It’s a priority for the City to complete the repairs to the Stoney Creek Trail bridges, along with the other damaged bridges across the City, by the end of this year. The City has pre-

purchased a 30-foot bridge structure to replace the upstream bridge that connects Latimer Street to Cobblestone Drive [Bridge 6]. In the next four to eight weeks, geotechnical works and civil survey in the area will be commencing, collecting information to design the bridge abutments to be installed later this summer. We are targeting completion of this bridge by the end of August or beginning of the new school year in September, if all goes well.”



ARPSSES news: I visited the hatchery on **March 3rd**, courtesy of **Dale Taylor**. Due to warmer cistern water temperature (between 10° and 11°) their salmon eggs (as featured in the December 2022 Report) have already hatched. They now have 10,000 Coho salmon fry swimming in two large troughs. The colder water in Stoney Creek means our wild eggs will need more time. Here is the estimation for our Creek: the incubation period for fish

eggs is calculated in “degree days” (water temperature x days elapsed). After about 420 degree days (10 weeks), Coho eggs hatch as **alevin** (with yolks still attached) and remain in the gravel. In roughly 720 degree days (about 6 weeks later), they will swim free and begin feeding as **fry**. Our largest spawning run took place in the first week of December and the water temperature has averaged 6° over winter, so the alevin will have been present since the middle of February. Be looking for those amazing salmon fry any time now! **Note:** you can understand why the alevin are extremely sensitive to disturbances (e.g. wading dogs).



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

ARPSES Hatchery Visit (March 3rd):



A sterilized broom is used to sweep uneaten food to one end, out through a mesh and down the drain.



The number of small fry in the December 8th tank is equal to the number of eggs one female coho can produce.



The older, larger fry tend to hang out below the feeder. Some will leap right out of the water when feeding.

There are two Cap troughs holding Coho fry, one with 7500 from the November 22nd fertilization (see the December Trail Report), and the other 2500 from December 8th. The water in the incubators was kept cool to suppress any pathogens. At first the troughs were at the same temperature, but are now at 10°, the temperature of the untreated spring water that supplies the troughs. The fry are fed daily by automated, clock-driven feeders. The troughs are swept clean of leftover food and waste daily by volunteers.



Outdoor (cistern) water is pumped into the first tank, then flows through a filter into the other tank.



To oxygenate the water, a small compressor pumps air through a hose lying along the bottom of each tank.



Dale uses a small sieve to remove fry that didn't survive. The rising air bubbles blur the view of the fish.

Dog Waste Bags & Dispensers:

The City provides **oxo-biodegradable** bags (over 200,000 a year!) for the dispensers on our off-leash trails. The plastic in these bags contains additives to make them degrade (break down) into small bits when exposed to open air and sunlight. Presumably, if they are buried in a landfill, they will degrade hardly at all due to the lack of exposure to oxygen (oxo = oxygen). To confuse the issue, there is another type of plastic labeled **oxo-degradable**, which degrades into harmful microplastics. It has been banned in the EU.



An alternative is **compostable** plastic bags. These are made from plant starch and break down completely through biological (bacterial and fungal) action into a harmless residue in a relatively short time.

Because commercial interests are involved, there is much argument about biodegradable vs compostable plastic. As to which is the more environmentally responsible type of bag to use, I've been persuaded through online research that the compostable bags are the better ones for our use.

If you would prefer to use compostable bags rather than the biodegradable bags provided by the City, you might try *Earth Rated* bags which are readily available locally.

This is an opportunity to mention and thank **Melodie**, the contractor who does such a great job refilling the three dispensers and removing the waste from the barrels.



Dog Corral



The Bowl



Bridge 3

Trail Dogs:



“**Bentley** (Devil Dog) is a Border Aussie, a cross between a Border Collie and an Australian Shepherd. He is 18 months old. My previous dog was a Bernese Mountain Dog and it’s fair to say that Bentley is pretty much the polar opposite. He came from a hobby farm in Agassiz. Bentley is a very happy dog who loves everybody and this can sometimes get him into trouble as he needs to say hello to everyone. He is a Chuck-it fanatic and sees nothing else when I have his ball with me. He is not possessive though, and does not mind if another one of his buddies wants to play along. He is however always looking to see what kind of trouble he can get into, hence the Devil Dog nickname. He has a particular fondness for cupcakes and has been unfairly accused of stealing same when I know that he would never do such a thing!! Regretfully his reputation precedes him. He certainly keeps me busy!!”

“**Max** is a Bernadoodle (Bernese Golden Mountain Doodle), 21 months old and weighing in at 33 lbs. His mom, Maggie (Golden Mountain Doodle), weighs 50 lbs, and his father, Elliott (Mini Australian Labradoodle), weighs 16 lbs. Max comes from Moonstruck Bernadoodles in Campbell River.

“Max loves to go for rides in the car, going for walks and meeting and playing (running) with other dogs in and around Stoney Creek Trail. He especially loves to chase and fetch his ball. Sometimes he finds it difficult to give the ball back. He plays tug with almost anything and makes sure our backyard is free of squirrels.

“He is a very happy dog, never seeming to run out of energy.”



A Memorial to Bridge Five (composed by ChatGPT)

It is with great sadness that we mourn the loss of the beautiful wooden bridge that once spanned Stoney Creek. The bridge, which stood as a symbol of strength and unity in our community for over [two decades], was destroyed in a tragic [flood] on [November 15, 2021].



The bridge had a rich history, having been built by skilled craftsmen in [2000]. Its elegant design and sturdy construction made it a beloved landmark, drawing visitors from far and wide to marvel at its beauty and craftsmanship.

Over the years, the bridge had weathered many storms and floods, standing strong and resilient in the face of adversity. It had served as a vital link for our community, connecting people and places and serving as a gateway to the natural beauty of Stoney Creek.



But despite its strength and resilience, the bridge was no match for the forces that brought about its untimely demise. Its destruction is a painful reminder of the fragility of even our most cherished landmarks and the importance of preserving and protecting them for future generations.

As we mourn the loss of the Bridge Five, let us also remember the many memories and moments of joy it brought to our lives. We will never forget its beauty, its strength, and the vital role it played in our community. May it rest in peace, and may its legacy live on in the hearts and minds of all who knew and loved it.



Changes to the Trail in a Decade (1 of 3)



Bridge 3: what's new in the bottom photo?



Changes to the Trail in a Decade (2 of 3)



Too bad one of the Nursery Trees had to be felled.



Changes to the Trail in a Decade (3 of 3)



The view down the Straightaway hasn't changed much.



Plant Species of Concern in Our Area (Second Installment):

Leafless wintergreen (*Pyrola aphylla*)

These are rather small perennial plants in the heath family having pink flowers on short stems. A notable feature is that the stigma, the central part of the flower that catches the



pollen, is curved and sticks out beyond the petals like a clapper in a bell. Since wintergreens are pollinated by insects, most commonly by flies, the rather large and complex stigma may be an adaptation to ensure that small insects carrying pollen have an attractive landing place.

Wintergreens prefer damp and shady locations in woods. Lacking leaves and thus chlorophyll, they are a mycotrophic plant, which means they feed parasitically on the local mycelia (fungi). Because of this, their survival depends on that of the supporting mycelia.

The flowers are produced in the summer and the rather inconspicuous greenish seed capsules are produced in the autumn. The seeds are numerous and very small. After the growing season, the plant dies down.

Yellowseed false pimpernel (*Lindernia dubia* var. *dubia*)

This rare annual herb grows in wet places such as sandy or muddy river-banks, pond margins, and meadows. It grows low to the ground but has a mostly erect branching stem 5-20 cm in height.

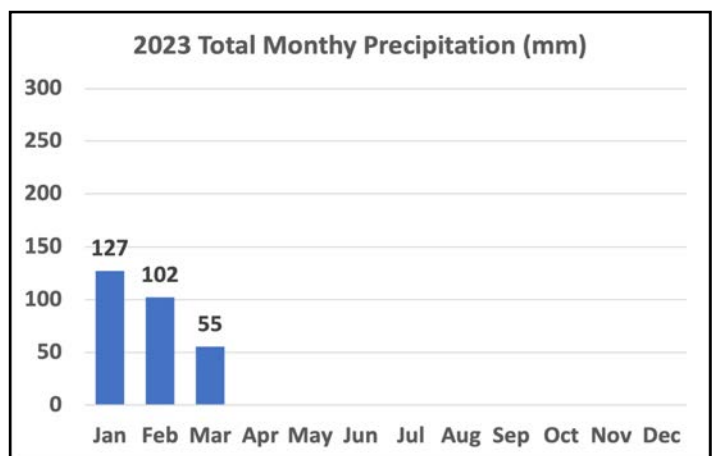
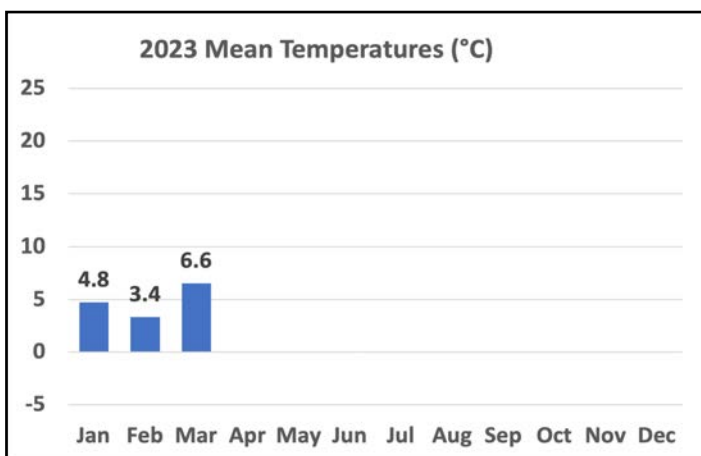
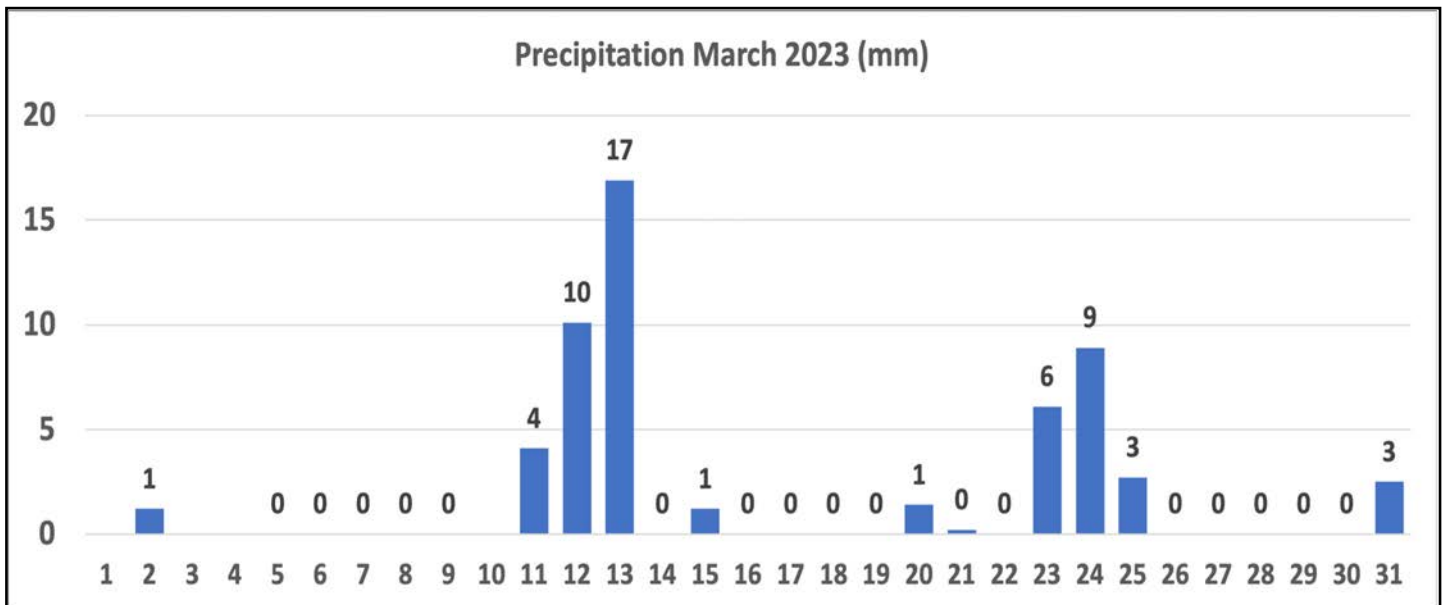
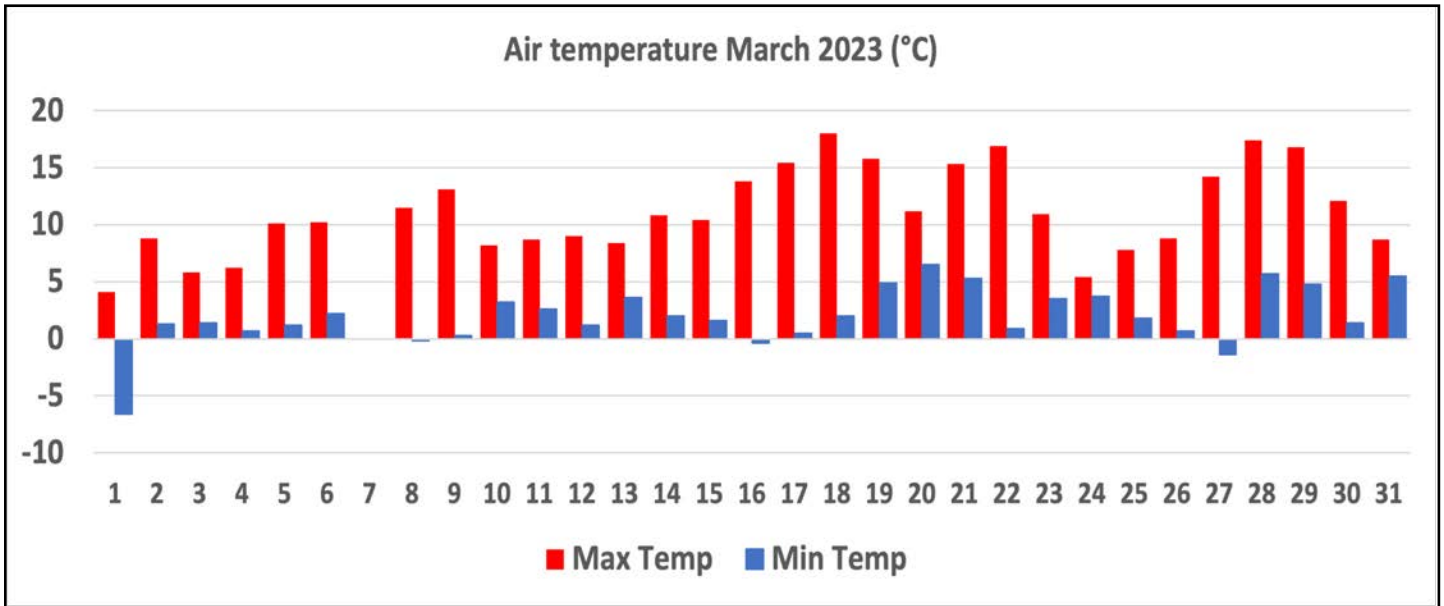
The leaves grow in pairs and vary in size and form, from lance-shaped to oval, toothed or not, and from under 1 cm to over 3 cm in length.

The tubular flowers are up to 1 cm long and grow on single stalks longer than the leaves. The petals are white with a blue or purple tinge, narrowly bell-shaped, and 6-9

mm long. The fruit is a capsule 4-6 mm long containing numerous small yellow seeds.



The **BC Environment** ministry states that up to mid-March (the latest available figures), the province-wide snow pack stayed level. The Fraser River Basin was at 92% of normal. **US NOAA**: La Niña ended early this month. We are now into neutral conditions and heading for El Niño this summer (warmer, dryer weather). Meanwhile, the Pacific Northwest outlook for April is—below seasonal temperature and normal precipitation.



For convenience, I use these custom place-names:

