



**Stoney Creek Trail Report  
No. 58 - January 2024**

The photo on the Front Page is from **Teresa O’Sullivan** (Sparky). Over a period of several days, “**Bucky the beaver**” was seen in the vicinity of the Dog Corral and up near Bridge 4 where this was taken. Thanks to Teresa for sharing this photo and the one on page 3. Apparently Bucky has not been seen since the 17th.

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In the past, I’ve featured native tree species that grow along the Trail, such as the [Pacific willow](#), [Paper birch](#), [Redcedar](#), [Bigleaf maple](#) and [Black cottonwood](#). In this Report, **non-native trees** are featured: the Corkscrew willow, Amur maple and Giant sequoia. The information about these trees comes from various sources on the Web, mainly good old Wikipedia.

A comparatively low number of **coho salmon** returned to spawn this past fall in both Stoney and Clayburn creeks. The total was a third of the previous three year average. Fortunately, ARPSES (Abbotsford Ravine Park Salmon Enhancement Society) has an



alternative source of salmon roe that they can turn to—the [Chilliwack River hatchery](#).

On the left is **Paul Neufeld**, who supervised the annual preparation of coho eggs at the Ravine Park hatchery last month. Paul estimates 16,000 eggs were processed, filling six incubator trays. He is picking out the eggs that were not successfully fertilized. They are easy to spot because they are opaque and appear white compared to the fertilized eggs which are transparent.

**An important reminder:** The precious wild salmon eggs from the recent spawning season are now hidden in the gravel of the creek bed. Please remember to prevent your dogs and children from walking in the creek at least until the fry emerge in the spring.

**FYI**, five of the world’s seven **Pacific salmon species** are found in BC: Chinook, Chum, Coho, Pink and Sockeye. All are *anadromous* (born in fresh water and raised in the ocean). We have one salmon species that lives only in lakes, the Kokanee.

You may not have stopped to look closely at the **painted pebbles** strung along the fence line near Bridge 3. More than a hundred of them have accumulated over many months. Some of the most attractive have disappeared. A selection of the remaining ones are shown on Page 9.



2024-01-14

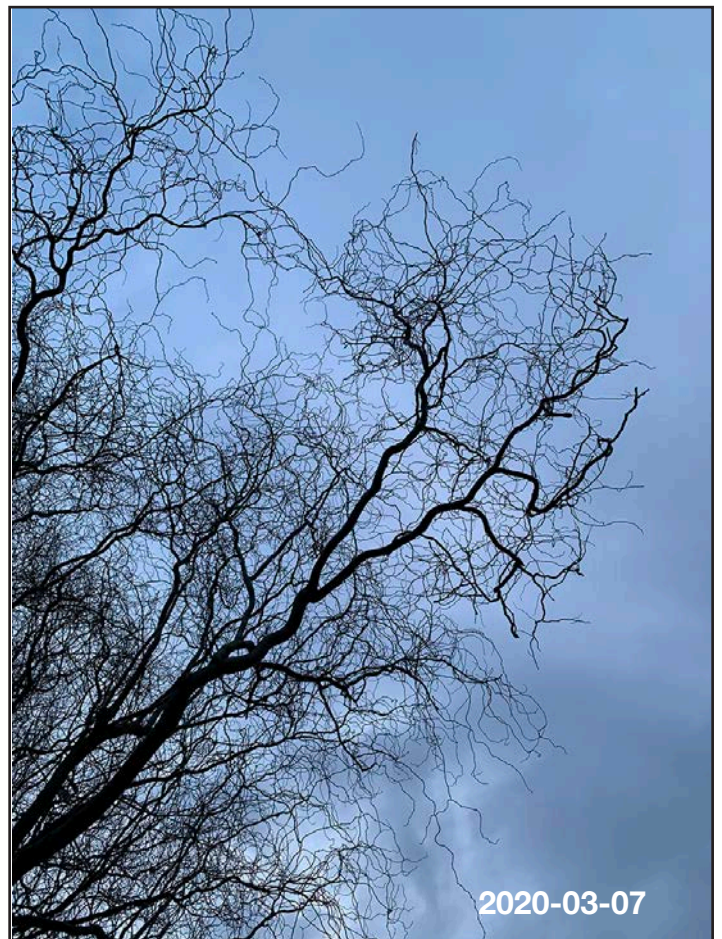
## Corkscrew willow (*Salix matsudana* var. *tortuosa*) (1/2)

The Corkscrew willow originally came from the dry areas of north-eastern Asia such as the Gobi Desert where its value was in sheltering agricultural land in oases from desert winds. As you might expect, it is more drought tolerant than most willows.



It was introduced into North America in 1923 where it since has been a cultivar (cultivated by people who have selected desirable traits for reproduction). The varietal name Tortuosa means “twisted.”

The Corkscrew willow is a medium-sized, multi-stemmed tree with twisted and curled branches, twigs and leaves. A silhouette of the tree in winter clearly shows this.



Its branches spread out, crossing over each other while reaching upward, very unlike those of its relative, the weeping willow, which hang downward.



The narrow, shiny green leaves of the Corkscrew willow are simple (rather than compound like those of the mountain ash) and are arranged alternately on the stems.

## Corkscrew willow (*Salix matsudana* var. *tortuosa*) (2/2)



In early spring, catkins and tiny green flowers form on the branches of the tree. The seeds are enclosed in green, pointed capsules.

A single willow produces either male or female flowers, not both. Unlike other trees on the Trail, they cannot self-pollinate. Since all Corkscrew willows in North America are descendants of a female cutting brought from China, their seeds are sterile.

The Corkscrew willow, like other willows, is easy to propagate. You can grow a new tree by simply taking a cutting and sticking it in moist soil. It is popular in nurseries as an ornamental tree. Its branches are commonly used in flower arranging.

The roots are shallow and aggressive, so this tree should not be planted near buildings, driveways or drainage systems.

It is a fast-growing tree but has a relatively short lifespan. The branches are prone to breakage or decay as it ages and becomes larger. The one we have on Hemlock Hill, left to grow untended, would have benefited from more care and attention. As you can see, large limbs have split off while others are falling prey to fungi.



## Amur maple (*Acer ginnala*) (1/2)



The Amur maple is native to Japan and northeastern China (Amur is a region of Siberia). It is grown as an ornamental plant in northern regions of Europe and North America where it was introduced around 1860.

The Amur maple grows either as a large shrub or a small tree. It is much smaller at maturity and with smaller *samaras* (winged fruits) than native maple species. The bark is a dull grey-brown, smooth and thin at first, but developing shallow fissures when older.

It is common for this species to grow multiple stems and for the crowns to be as wide as they are tall.

They are the most cold-tolerant of maples and have become naturalized in Canada from Saskatchewan eastward. In areas with harsh winters, they can help lessen the impact of winter storms and reduce home heating costs. In rural areas, they can be planted in rows as shelterbelts to protect livestock and control soil erosion.



Interestingly, the Amur maple is valued in Japan as a species suitable for bonsai. Cultivars have been developed to take advantage of its smaller size for use in restricted spaces, such as small yards. Planted in light loamy soils with good moisture, this tree can be a fast grower, in semi-shade or no shade at all.

## Amur maple (*Acer ginnala*) (2/2)

The Amur maple can be distinguished from other maples by the shape of its leaves: the middle lobe of the leaf is much longer than the side lobes. They have coarse irregular teeth, a dark green glossy upper surface and a pale underside.

Its small, pale yellow flowers grow in branched clusters, appearing in late April as the leaves are coming out. Unlike those of other maples, the flowers are very fragrant.

The samaras have a pair of reddish wings. They appear as early as July and are brown and fully ripe by October.

Next May, be sure to enjoy the aroma of the large Amur maple growing below the litter barrel near the Hearthstone entrance.



## Giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) (1/1)

This solitary tree in the Playground gives us a glimpse of the majesty of sequoias. These trees grow about two feet a year. This one, which is about 17 m tall and spreads roughly 4 m, is probably around 30 years old.



It's a juvenile as it hasn't produced cones. The illustration below shows the playground tree at its present size compared to the average size of mature Giant sequoias.

The Fraser Valley has a climate that is suitable for growing sequoia trees. This past fall, among a large number of trees and shrubs planted by City staff were about a dozen

Giant sequoia seedlings. They are located in a patch of ground at the very south end of the Trail where the soil is well drained and direct sunlight is available in the morning.

The decision on the spacing of the seedlings was based on the expectation that not all will survive (four of them have died already). If some do survive, each of these trees will eventually require a very large area. The breadth of just one tree would cover all of the space presently given to the seedlings. Those that do survive will develop a widespread root system and may be difficult to transplant successfully.

Native to California's Sierra Nevada mountains, Giant sequoias are related to California Redwoods, among the world's oldest and tallest trees. They are notable for having much thicker trunks than the more slender coastal Redwoods.

These beautiful trees can live for centuries. If even one of the seedlings survives, imagine what it will be like in 500 years....

Hopefully, the City will give care and attention to these trees. If all goes well, they will benefit the people who live in this area many lifetimes from now.





Samples from the Painted Pebble display (taken on 2024-01-10)



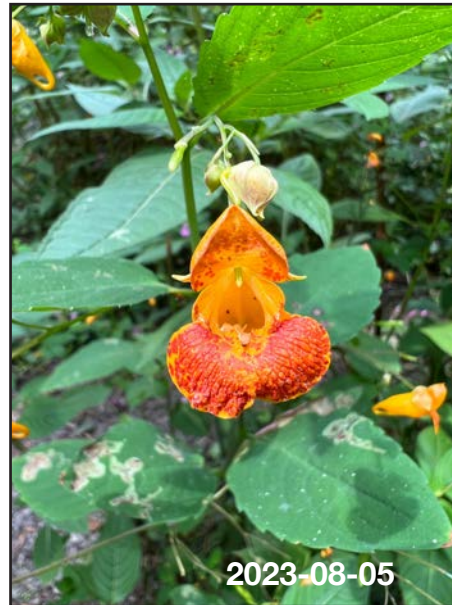
## Odds and Ends



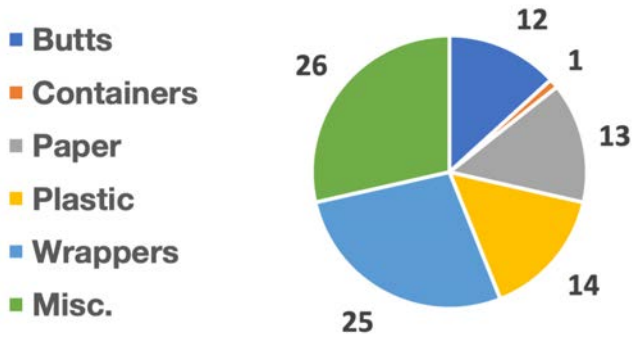
**Top:** Bucky had a go at this cottonwood tree. Abandoned footwear items (that odd thing is a traction aid)

**Middle:** A jewelweed flower from the Trail became the subject of a pastel in an art show in Mission.

**Bottom:** Ice in the Creek at  $-11^{\circ}$ . The first snow of the season, 25 cm. A juvenile Bald eagle eyeing a dead salmon near Bridge 5.



### Litter Tally January 2024



Total litter items = 91 (last month = 80)

**Containers:** bottles, bottle tops, cans, coffee cups, lids, juice boxes.

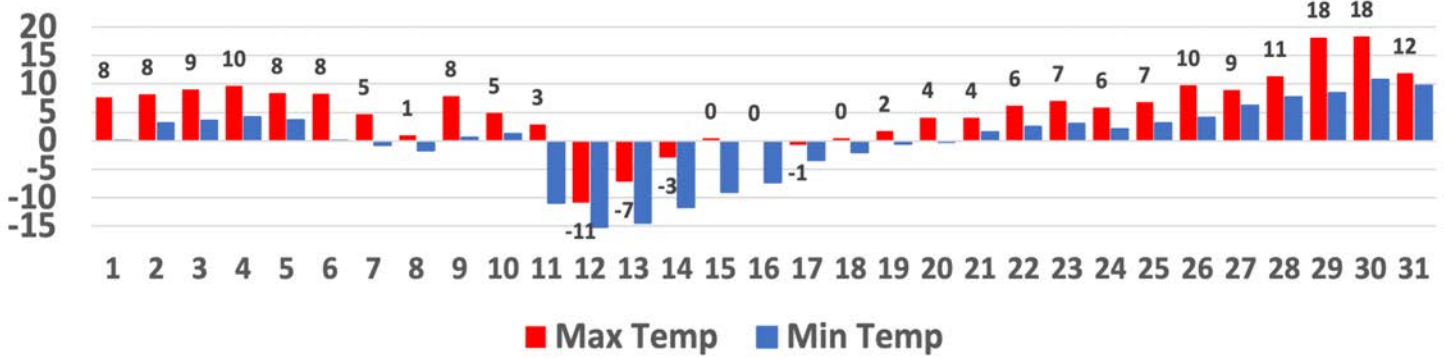
**Paper:** tissues, napkins, posters, newspaper, receipts, cardboard, etc.

**Plastic:** dog waste bags & shreds, other items made of plastic.

**Wrappers:** candy wrappers, foil, cellophane.

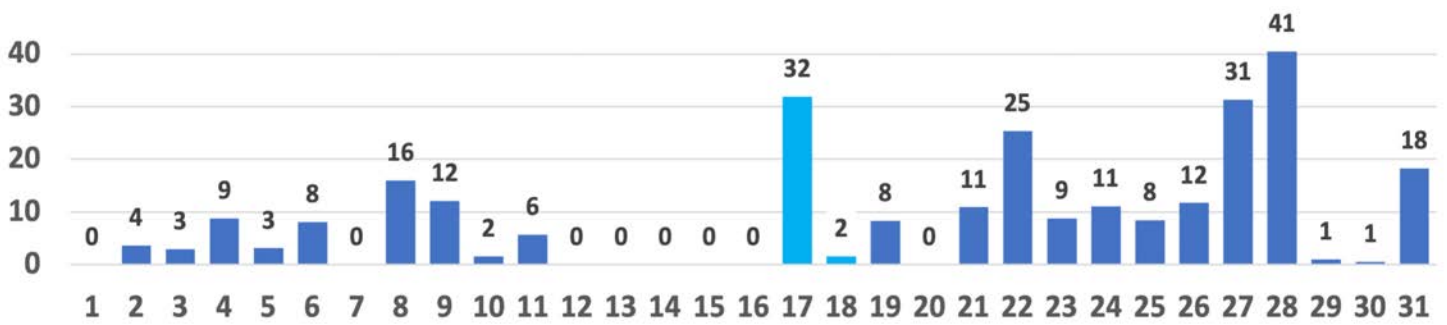
**Miscellaneous:** clothing, glass, chewing gum, dog balls & fragments, etc.

### Air temperature YXX January 2024 (°C)

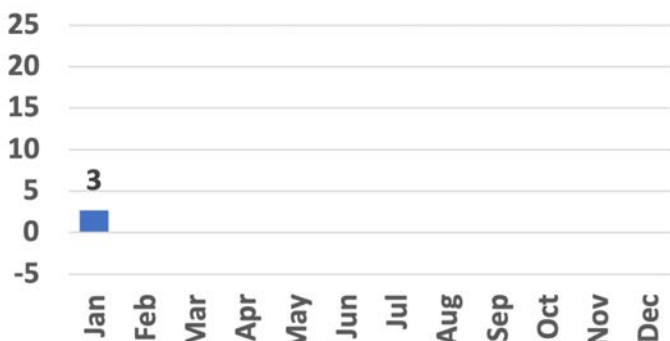


### Precipitation YXX January 2024 (mm)

Rain vs. Snow



### 2024 Mean Temperatures (°C)



### 2024 Total Monthly Precipitation (mm)



For convenience, I use these custom place-names

