

**Stoney Creek Trail Report
No. 66 - September 2024**

On the front cover, something for which we've been waiting 33 months: a new **Bridge 5!** The project was started on September 1st and completed on September 19th. It's a skookum structure, supported by two galvanized steel beams 18 metres long and .6 metres deep, made by Level Fabricators in Chilliwack. The deck, made of treated wood planks, is 1.9 m wide, while the handrails are 1.1 m high and 1.6 m apart.

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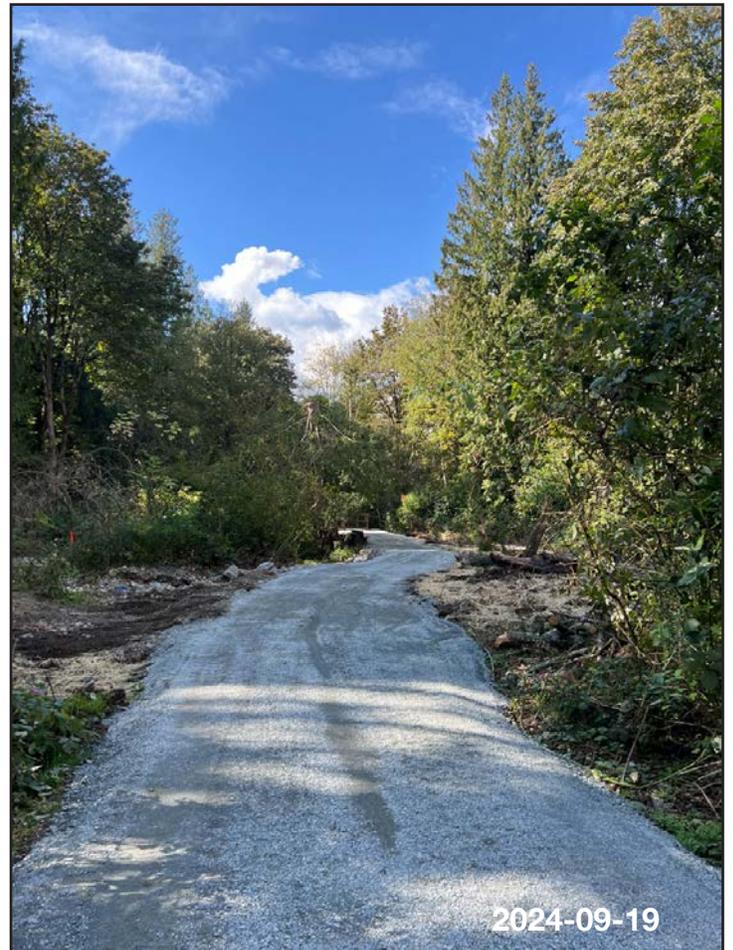
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The installation was done very capably by a team from GDM Construction under the supervision of **Brent Loates**. The results are an indication of the City's commitment to providing us with high quality park facilities.

The visual record of the whole project, which included Bridge assembly, landscaping and Trail resurfacing, begins on the next page. Note that several photos were submitted by other friends of the Trail. In view of the Foam Fiasco last July, I was especially pleased to see evidence of life in the Creek. It was provided by **Nathan Loewen** of Redcedar Environmental Consulting, who was responsible for protecting the resident critters during construction.

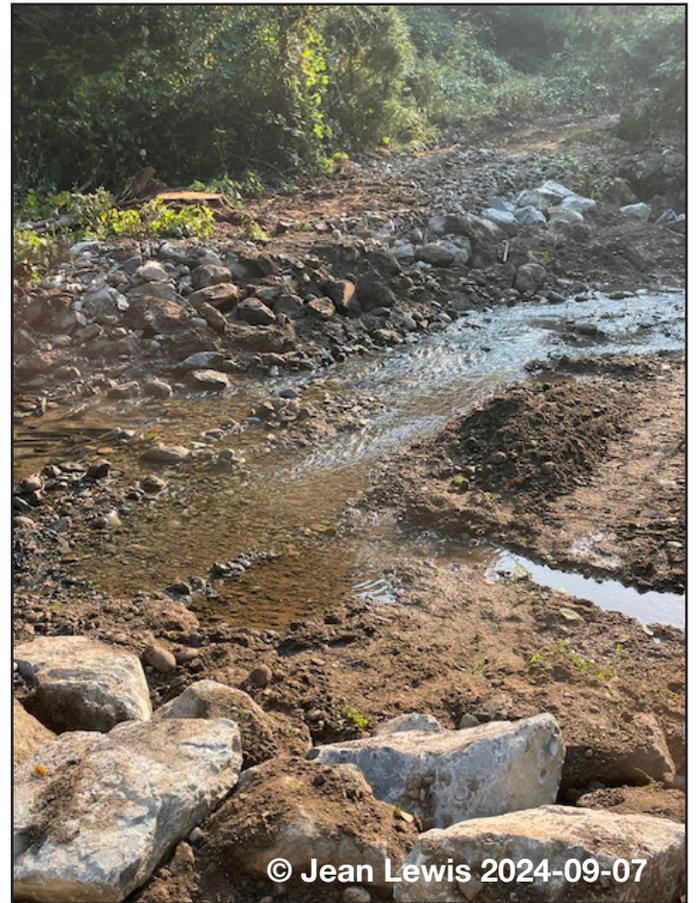
Below are before-and-after photos of the same section of the Trail looking north from the Forks, taken three years apart. As you can see, the Trail is in the same place, but the Creek location is very different. Gone now are several alders along the left (west) side, as well as the big red cedars that were near the Bridge.



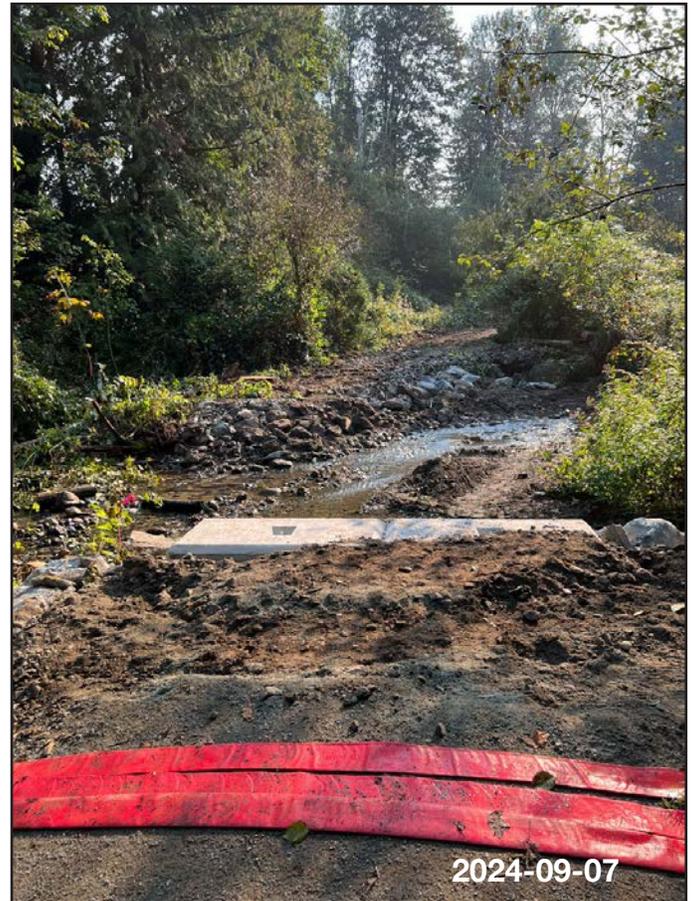
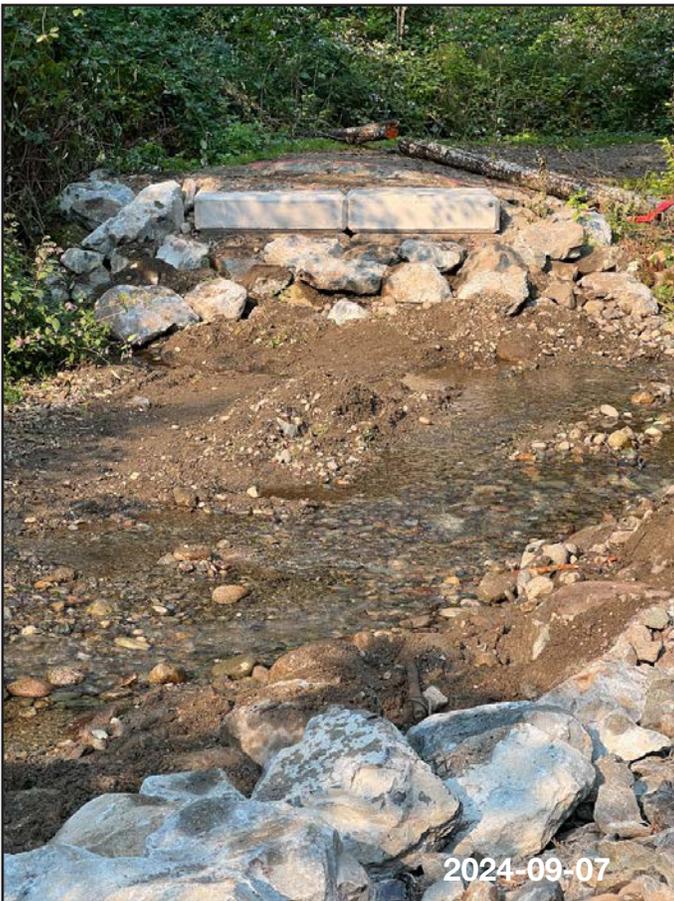


Above: the first signs that the project was underway. Measures were taken to keep critters (and people) out of the work area. **Below:** pumps and hoses were used to divert Creek water out of the work area. Happily, critters such as Coho, lampreys and crayfish were found and moved away from harm.





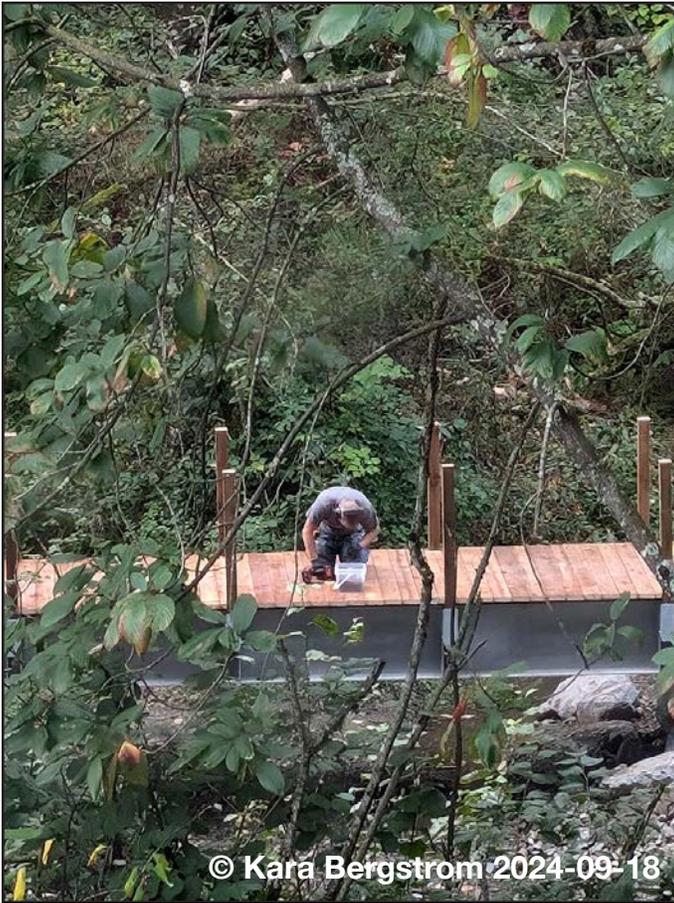
Above: next came the removal of two large wood beams, the remains of the old bridge. You can see the Creek water had not yet been diverted through those red hoses. **Below:** the first step in the new installation, the placing of concrete lock blocks to make the north abutment.



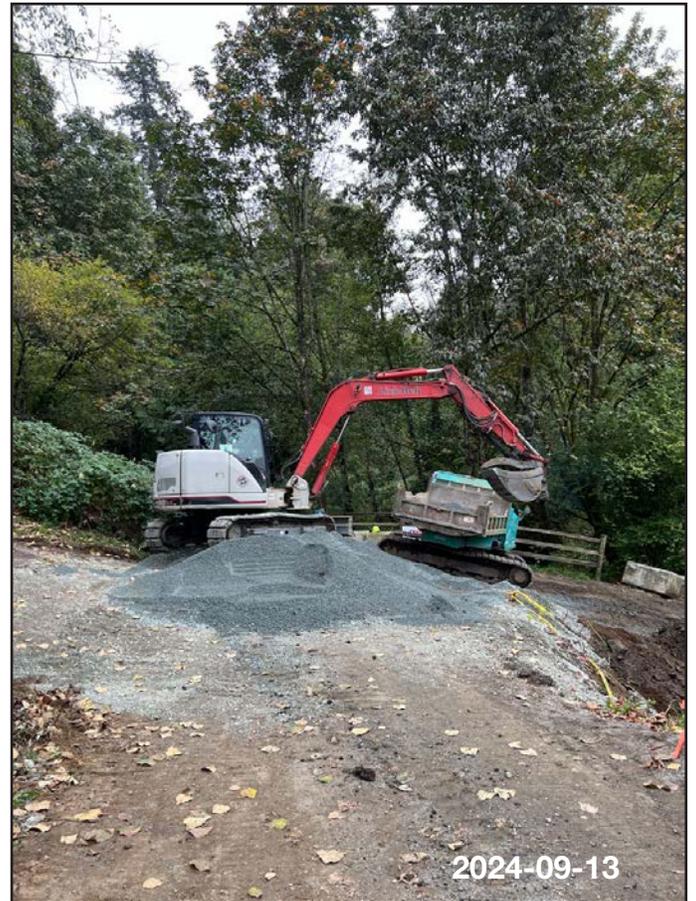
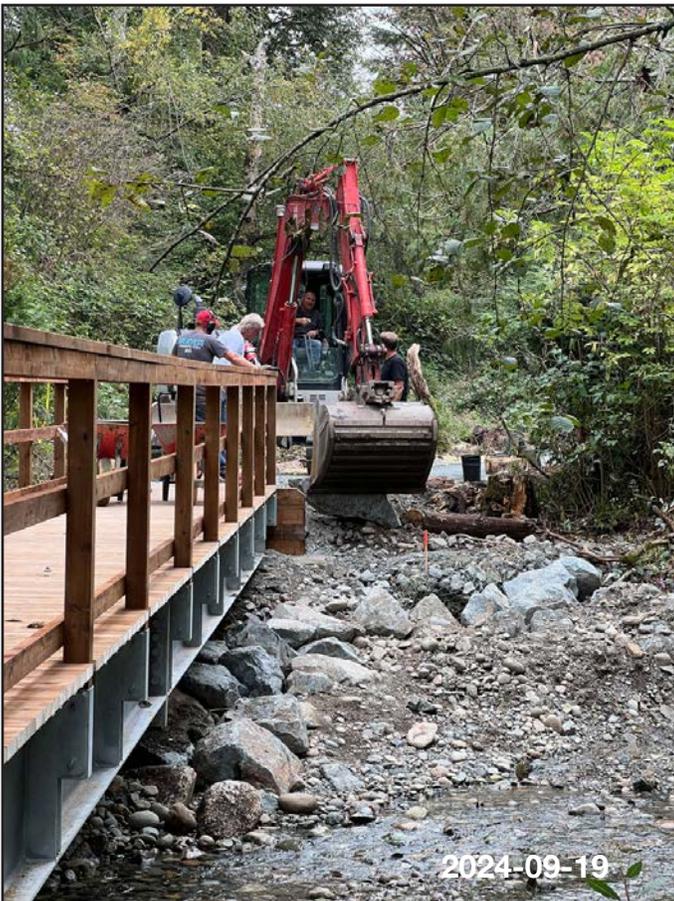


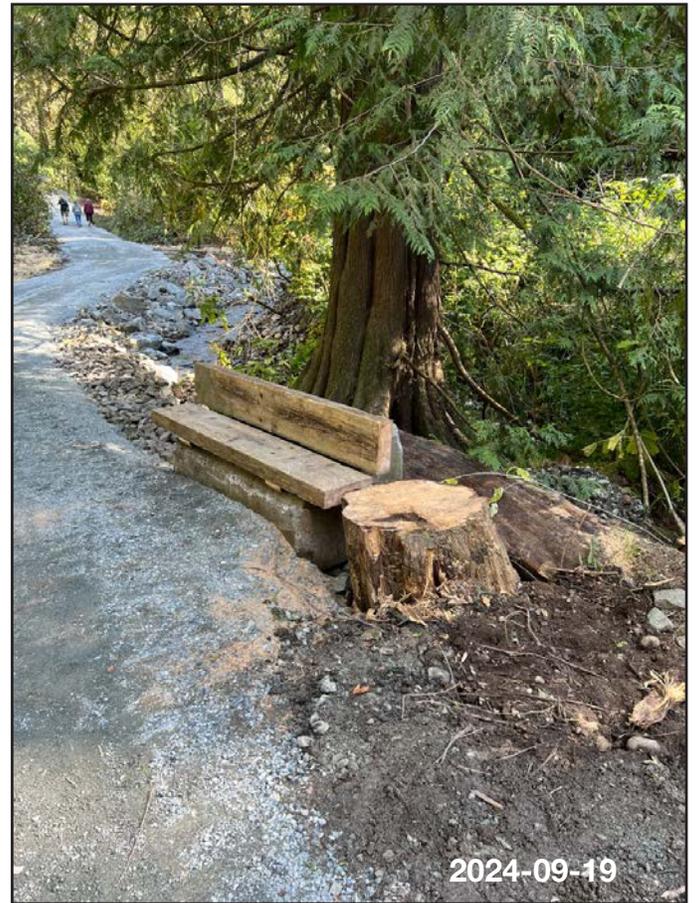
Above: the two halves of the Bridge arrived by truck and within hours were in place and bolted together. Notice the Creek bed is dry. **Below:** the public was not allowed in the work area, so our first glimpse of the Bridge was from a distance. Work progressed quickly so the Creek could be restored.



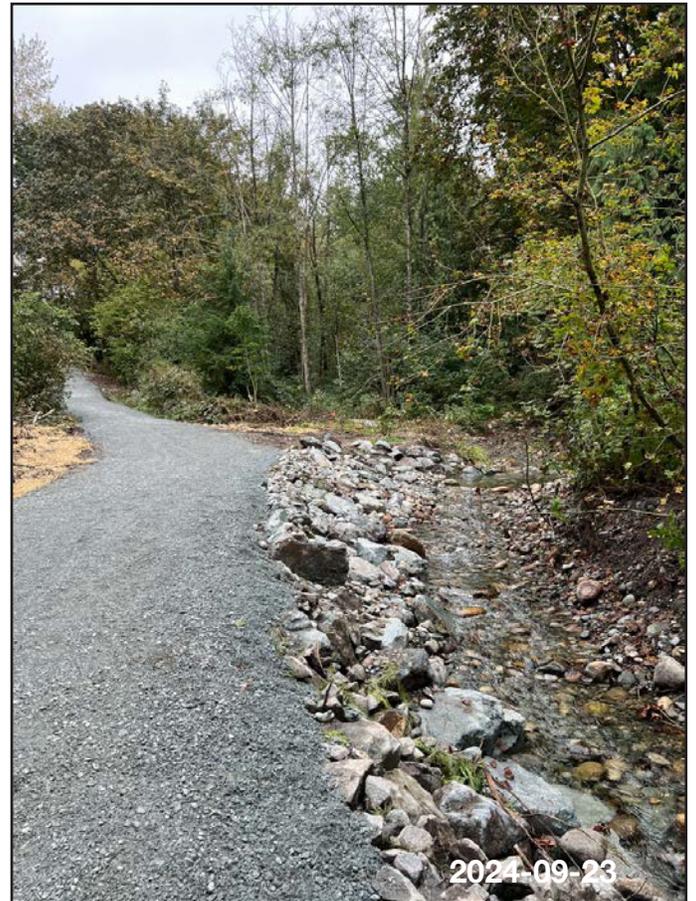


Above: the woodwork included a frame to retain a gravel ramp at the north end. **Below:** at the south end, boulders were used instead of a wood frame. While the Bridge was being assembled, machine operators were spreading new gravel and building up the path south of the Bridge.





Above: tamping the gravel was the finishing touch to the section of Trail below the Forks. That kid-sized bench was a nice idea. **Below:** The project was now finished, and the Bridge easily passed the “wheelchair access” test. The entire Creek is now flowing down that small channel.



The engineers behind the Bridge project believe it can withstand future high water events. They may not have been fully aware of the extreme conditions that have occurred in the past.

For years, upstream of the old bridge, the Creek flowed well away from the Trail. Then, during an 88 mm rainfall event in early 2021, a secondary channel opened up near the Trail. It was caused by fallen tree debris that diverted some of the water, in effect creating an island. This new channel carried perhaps a third of the water flow.



Subsequently, the City placed large boulders on one side of the new channel in an attempt to prevent erosion of the Trail and protect two large cedar trees standing near the bridge.

In mid-November 2021, the first stage of the infamous Atmospheric River dropped 150 mm of rain. The Creek went

on a rampage, causing serious damage. The new channel, much enlarged, undermined the boulders and one of the two cedars, and damaged the approach to the old bridge. A City crew attempted remediation by placing riprap (rocks) along the affected portion of the Trail to raise it above the water level.



Then, at the end of that month, the second stage of the Atmospheric River dropped another 162 mm of rain. This time, the water in the secondary channel took out the old bridge completely and toppled the larger of the two cedars (that dark shape on the right of this photo is the huge mass of soil held by its roots).

The stretch of Trail south of the new Bridge has now been built up more than a foot higher than it was before the November 2021 deluges. However, the fact that the old channel is now dry and the new channel is carrying the entire water flow suggests that there will be a problem in the future.

A dedication ceremony – Salmon Lives Matter: 1/2



Eddie Gardner, wearing the cedar hat, is from Chilliwack. He's an elder and councillor in the Sqwá (Skwah) First Nation, one of the several bands that make up the Stó:lō (STOH-lo), the People of the River. Beside him are **Nancy Wrenshall**, retired women's prison warden and **Terry Wilkinson**, who is on the Board of Directors of the Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance. Beside her is **Ed "Sxep Xylem" Hall**, a member of the Kwikwetlem (Coquitlam) First Nation who served as Chief and on Council for years and is the new WSDA president. On the end, **Calista Thirsk**, a Halq'eméylem (Halkomelem) language specialist and also a WSDA board member.



Eddie spoke passionately about the importance of honouring and protecting the wild salmon which play an essential role in sustaining life in our environment. Afterwards, Eddie and the first nations visitors performed ceremonial drumming and singing.

Salmon Lives Matter: 2/2

Here is a summary of Eddie's comments:

Western science does recognize the vital role wild salmon play in climate regulation, nourishing a wide variety of species and the forests from the ocean up to the headwaters of rivers along the Pacific Coast. However, science must also recognize its need to make a spiritual connection with Mother Earth. Many people in our part of the world do not appreciate that we have this amazing resource, so it does not receive the protection it deserves. For example, the federal government has extended fish farm licences for five years and failed to pass legislation banning open pen Atlantic salmon farms that pose a threat to do irreversible harm.

Here in Stoney Creek Park, we are very fortunate to have abundant native species such as cedar, willow, and shrubs that provide shade to cool the water for the salmon. As well, the natural flow of water over the gravel creek bed raises the oxygen level and thus the water quality for the spawning beds.

The cedar tree has literally been the Tree of Life for first nations people for millennia. Eddie harvested branches from a nearby cedar and sprinkled tobacco on its roots, thus blessing it and giving thanks. He then distributed pieces of the branches and invited everyone to make their own ritual offering of gratitude and respect to the sacred aquatic habitat of salmon by placing them in the creek.

Ed Hall shared some teachings and said a prayer to bless the area and praise the work WSDA members have done. Calista spoke some encouraging words about the work being done to care for the salmon and its habitat. At the end of the creek ceremony, Ed walked amongst the group performing a 'smudging ceremony' which consists of having burning sage in an abalone shell being fanned with an eagle feather to create a spiritually uplifting experience.

For more detailed coverage, see Kelly Perrin's FaceBook page, [Bateman Dog Park](#)



Trail Dogs



“**Gus** is a nine-year-old Labrador Retriever who loves the Stoney Creek walk. He enjoys swimming, sniffing, running and playing.

“His favourite activity is going on long walks. He always has his coat on, ready to go.”

“**Diesel** is a Staphy/?? cross (he’s not sure who his daddy is). He will be five years old on January 22, 2025. We found him on Craigslist during Covid.

“He is a wonderful companion with Ed and goes everywhere with him. He loves all people and most dogs. He is very quiet and content.”



Odd and Ends



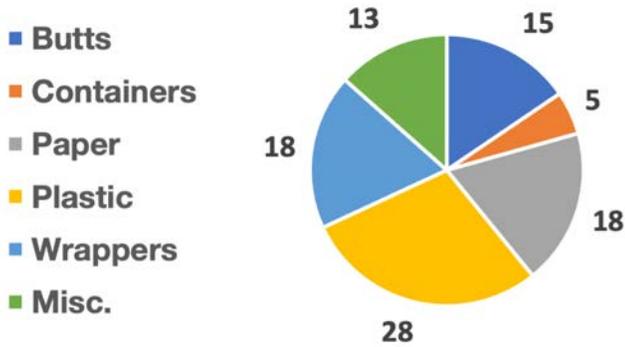
Top: how did that hole get in the boulder? Roundup time for a new Japanese knotweed outbreak—near the Dog Corral again. The Ribwort plantain blooms late in the season.

Middle: in seven years, the roots of a fallen alder have turned into nutritious soil.

Bottom: Fog droplets reveal a spider's engineering masterpiece. Mushroom season is upon us.



Litter Tally September 2024



Total litter items = 97

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

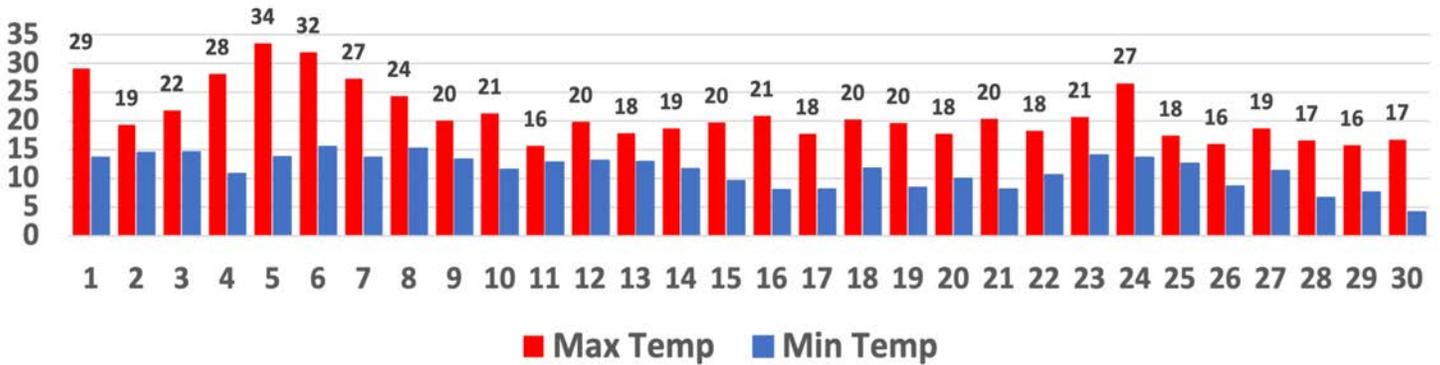
Paper: tissues, napkins, posters, newspaper, receipts, cardboard, etc.

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

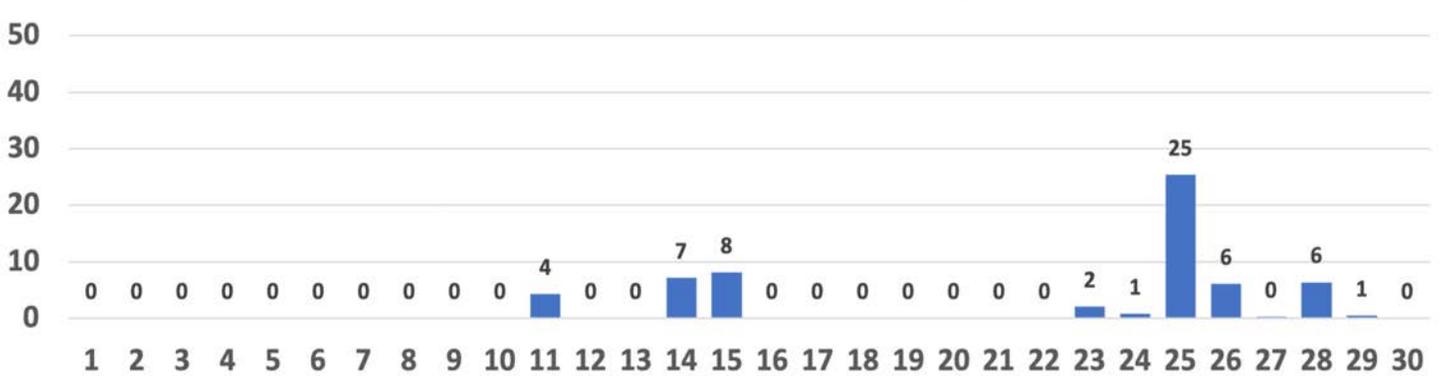
Wrappers: candy wrappers, foil, cellophane.

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

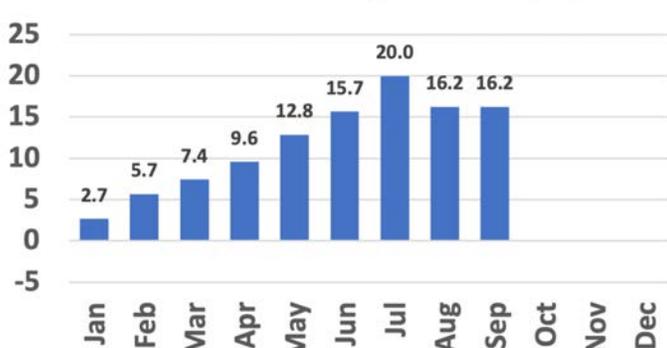
Air temperature at YXX September 2024 (°C)



Local Precipitation September 2024 (mm)

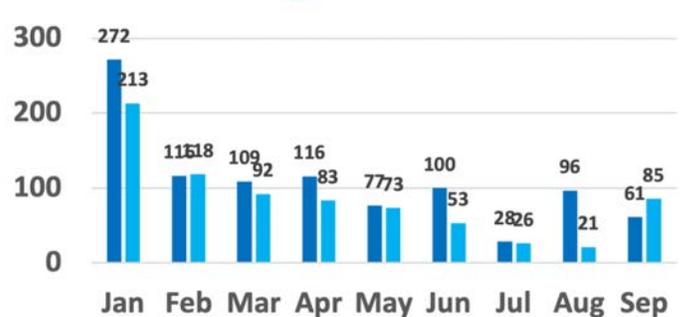


2024 Mean Temperatures (°C)



Precipitation in 2024 (mm)

Average: 2019-2023



For convenience, I use these custom place-names

