
NEWS RELEASE

Environmental response complete at Stoney Creek

ABBOTSFORD – July 12, 2024 – The City of Abbotsford is winding down a large-scale environmental spill response at Stoney Creek following positive results of surface water sampling and environmental assessments. The City of Abbotsford, in conjunction with Semá:th and Matsqui First Nations, as well as the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, has successfully completed mitigation efforts stemming from an accidental release of concentrated firefighting foam into the creek on July 3.

Comprehensive testing and analysis of surface water samples taken July 4 and 5 by GHD environmental consultants indicate chemical concentrations were below detection limits and had negligible risk to aquatic life in Stoney Creek. The assessment further determined that the loss of fish was not due to chemical contamination from the foam, but rather the short-term physical effects and foaming of the material, which limited the fish's ability to get oxygen.

As concentrations of the firefighting foam rapidly decreased through dilution, biodegradation and oxidization, and based on recommendations from the environmental professionals, the City with First Nations and government partners is discontinuing surface water sampling, fish salvage, and water treatment, has started removing animal deterrents and is fully reopening public access at Bateman Park in the coming days.

“We are grateful for the expertise and collaboration of our First Nations partners, the biologists and environmental experts for their careful and thorough assessment of the water in Stoney Creek,” said Peter Sparanese, City Manager of the City of Abbotsford. “The safety of our environment, aquatic wildlife and our community remains our top priority, and we are grateful the test results show the creek and surrounding area is safe.”

The surface water sampling reports and scientific literature information about the chemical components of the firefighting foam also indicate that the fish that were relocated during the response, as well as those that remain in Stoney Creek, are no longer at risk. Likewise, the chemical components of the firefighting foam do not accumulate in fish tissue and, therefore, the fish in Stoney Creek as well as the fish relocated to Clayburn Creek are no longer impacted by the chemical components of the firefighting foam.

During the response, representatives from Semá:th First Nation, Stó:lō Guardians, Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance and GHD conducted a fish salvage to remove fish from the creek. A total of 1,448 live fish were collected and moved to fresh water, and 922 deceased fish were removed. Up to 300 fish were also salvaged from an unimpacted upstream portion of Stoney Creek where they were stranded due to seasonal low water levels and relocated to Clayburn Creek.

The City will continue to investigate this incident and will adjust procedures as required, to safeguard against a similar accident from happening in the future.

Additional information:

- [GHD Summary of Response Efforts and Recommendations](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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