

Field Observations from TMEP ROW at KP1075.57

Date: Saturday, June 4, 2022

Time: 4:30am to 11am (6.5 hours)

Weather: Mixed sun and cloud. 14 degrees rising to 19 degrees.

Submitted by: Sara Ross

Methodology: Two members of CNFN walked a transect through a section of mixed mature woodland on the proposed TMEP ROW, adjacent to existing Trans Mountain Pipeline. We commenced at the main entry point in the SE corner of the work package south west of Bridal Falls Forest Service Road at approx. KP1075.57. We proceeded roughly towards the SW and as far as the stream crossing at KP1075.824. We walked back on a second generally parallel transect through existing TM ROW in a NW direction, through the wetland there while observing the forest edge that is proposed to be cleared.

NOTE: we followed the existing transects, presumably established by workers, including QEP/RPBio's on the site. These trails were easy to follow due to moderately trampled vegetation.

A note on methodology: As per industry standard practice, the Community Nest Finding Network (CNFN) uses "significant evidence indicators" as best practice, as set out in Site C Methodology to determine the presence of active bird nests, August 2015 (document available on request). We also spend more time on site conducting observations.

Significant Observation Summary:

Presence of nesting Red-breasted Sapsucker photo-documented 12 meters up in a mature birch tree at 49.19085, -121.73720. The sapsuckers' feeding area is documented 63m to the SW down the TMEP CWP at 49.19036, -121.73764. This nest requires a large buffer to include significant feeding sites. 4 other likely active nests in this CWP (SOSPx2, CWAX, SPTO) should also be buffered, as per significant evidence indicators noted below.

Detailed Observations:

24 bird species were recorded on site: SOSP (2 nesting), SWTH (likely nesting), RUHU, BHGB, AMRO (nesting - 1 currently buffered), WEWP, PAWR, BCCD, WETA, STJA, PIWO, CAGO, CORA, BRRCR, NOFL, WIFL, RBSA (nesting), AMGO, HUVI, WAVI, CWAX (nesting), BRBL, TUVU, SPTO (nesting). Also Douglas Squirrel.

4:30am: we carefully entered the site amidst full dawn chorus.

Sunrise: 5:05am.

6:30 am: we observed a solitary female human wearing white hard hat enter the site from the NE side off Bridal Falls Forest Service Rd. She entered the grove of mature cedars where we were conducting our nesting survey. She said hello.

9am at 49.19032, -121.73766

SOSP nesting behaviour. As we approached we saw agitated SOSP behaviour: a bird popped up to sentinel, then sang on song post at the top of a juvenile cedar tree approx. 3.5m high while another bird was observed in the underbrush. Birds remained in the area while we continued to observe, still agitated. Inferring presence of nest through significant evidence indicators.

9:02-9:10am at 49.19037, -121.73764

CWAX observed two times with nesting material in beak then flying down into bushes 6 m to NW below cedar tree. First observation at 9:02 the bird was carrying a long string of moss, and the second observation (at 9:10am) the bird was with another CEWA and was carrying a full beak of moss and a salmonberry flower. They perched 4m up on the branch of a very close sitka spruce tree before flying together down into the same area where they had landed before, under a cedar. We chose not to approach the nesting area so as to not disturb the birds, as is our preferred method for nest surveying in the height of nesting season. Inferring presence of nest through significant evidence indicators.

9:04-9:15am at 49.19036, -121.73764

RBSA seen feeding on holes in the bark of a birch tree travelling upwards from 9 to 11m up. It was also drilling new holes. While we observed the bird returned 3 times to the same tree to feed, then it would fly off directly to the NE, except one time if flew off to the SE into the denser forest. (We returned to this feed tree after locating the RBSA nest to photo-document and confirm location later in the morning, see below.)

IMAGE right: Birch RBSA food tree.



10:03am at 49.19036, -121.73791

SOSP probable nest location based on significant evidence indicators. We observed male-to-male aggression with the male located on adjacent territory (as noted in point above at 9am) where one bird chased off a second. 2 SOSP were coming in and out of a low bush (1m). One went to a song post up on an alder tree 4m up and sang while another - likely its mate - flew to the centre of the existing TM ROW and ate berries from a salmonberry bush. Inferring presence of nest through significant evidence indicators.

10:16am at 49.19082, -121.73745

SPTO pair agitation, probable nest. The pair rose up from low bushes as we approached and became vocal in the tree about 4m up, one fanning its tail in a showy way to attract attention, the other making agitated noises. They watched us as we watched them from approx. 5m away. We believe they are nesting near the base of the tree. We chose not to approach the nesting area so as to not disturb the birds, as is our preferred method for nest surveying in the height of nesting season.

10:40-10:55am at 49.19085, -121.73720

RBSA nest location approx. 12 meters up in a mature birch tree. Tree shows good signs of decay (shelf fungus) with live branches as well. Observed both male and female entering and exiting the nesting cavity multiple times at 4-8 min intervals. Mostly one would replace the other with both present on the tree, but one time a bird left the nest without the mate present, and the nest was left alone for 1 minute before an adult returned.





Conclusion: Buffering Required to Protect Nests

CNFN's Independent Monitors recommend buffering the following locations until nesting is confirmed to be complete by QEP/RPBio.

1. SOSP 30m radius around 49.19032, -121.73766
2. CWAX 30m radius around 49.19037, -121.73764
3. RBSA 50 to 60m radius around 49.19085, -121.73720, or extending to not disturb 49.19036, -121.73764
4. SOSP 30m radius around 49.19036, -121.73791
5. SPTO 30m radius around 49.19082, -121.73745

A note on 3. RBSA recommended buffer: While industry standard practice recommends a general buffer radius of 30 metre for cavity nesters (except pileated which need 50m) in this case CNFN recommends a custom buffer to include both nest and feeding trees.