



CITY OF  
**CHILLIWACK**

Park Operations

# Appendix C: Blueway Access Strategy

Updated June 2018





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# Introduction

Blueways are waterways such as rivers, streams, lakes, canals and coastlines that are suitable for use by people using non-motorized boats such as kayaks, canoes, rafts or rowboats. Blueways require suitable access points, take-outs and stopover facilities.

The Chilliwack area has several waterbodies that can be considered blueways. In terms of flat water or slow-moving waterbodies, there is Cultus Lake, Hope River, Camp Slough and the Vedder Canal–Sumas River, which are Class 1 blueways. Faster-flowing blueways include the Chilliwack River, Vedder River and Fraser River, which are Class 2 blueways.

This Blueway Access Strategy investigates Chilliwack’s blueways with respect to future suitability, potential launch and stopover sites, and improvements needed.

## Blueway Access Requirements

In order to function as a blueway, whether Class 1 or 2, a watercourse must be accessible for launching a watercraft. Access requirements include the following:

- adequate parking
- washrooms or portable toilet facilities
- staging area, preferably with picnic tables or benches
- little or no current
- convenient spacing, ideally at paddling intervals of one to one and a half hours
- little or no conflict with powerboats
- low-gradient beach or launch area where the watercraft can be boarded parallel to the shoreline



Day Use Area at West Side of Cultus Lake (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)

# Class 1 Blueways

## Class 1 Blueway Requirements

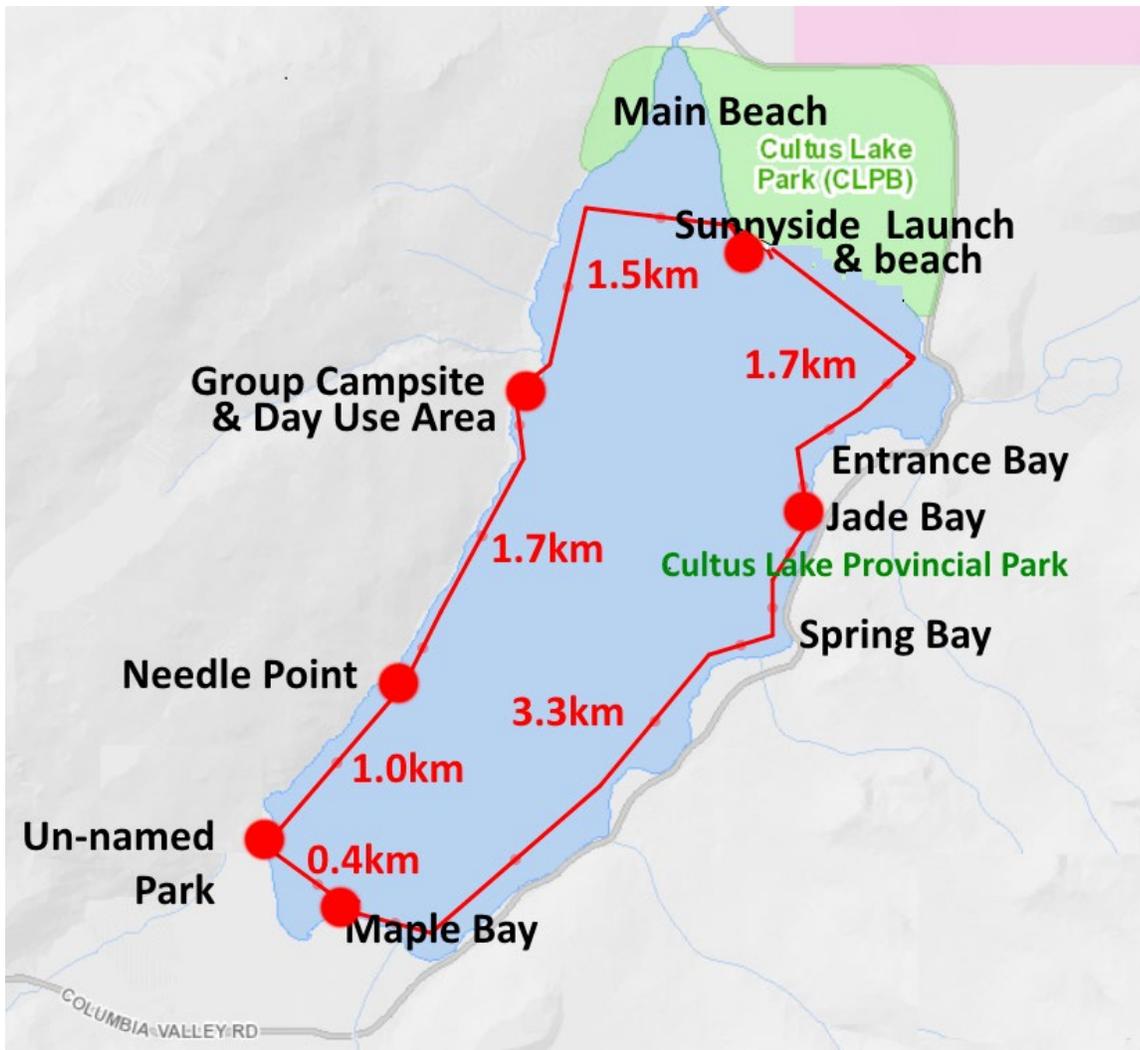
In order to function as a Class 1 blueway, a waterbody should meet all or most of the following requirements:

- still water or slow current
- no obstacles, or easily avoidable obstacles
- adequate width and depth
- adequate overhead clearance on bridges and culverts at varying water heights
- conveniently spaced and accessible launch, stopover and take-out locations

A Class 1 waterway has little or no current and few, if any, navigational hazards.



Sunnyside Beach and Launch (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



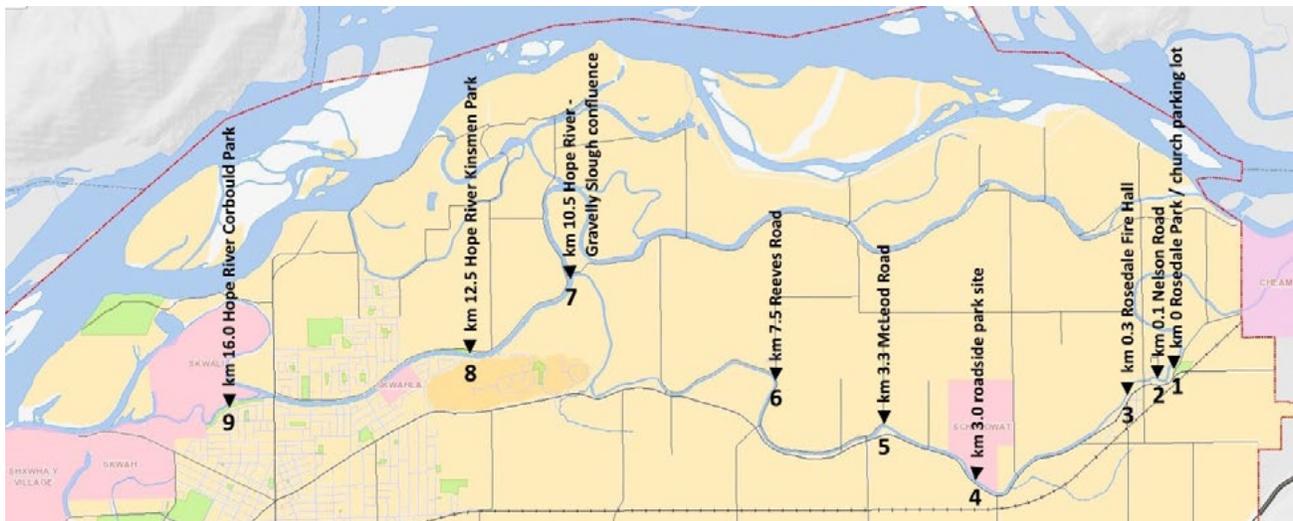
↑ Map 1 Cultus Lake: Paddling Distances between Key Points

## Cultus Lake

Cultus Lake is located approximately 8 km south of Highway 1 and 4 km south of Vedder Crossing. The lake is generally usable year-round. It is approximately 4.5 km long, offering a 9 km return paddle along the lower-traffic west side or an 11.3 km perimeter route. There are no navigation hazards; the only issues are conflict with power boats in the summer and occasional winds.

The lake has three official boat launch locations: Sunnyside, Jade Bay and Maple Bay. All have parking and washroom facilities nearby. In addition, there are accessible beaches at Sunnyside, Entrance Bay and Spring Bay, where small portable craft can be

launched. The western side, best accessed from the Sunnyside launch, offers excellent shoreline habitat with eagles, kingfishers, a beaver dam and an occasional otter. The day-use beach, next to the group campsite on the west shore, has a sand beach and a washroom. Needle Point, also on the west shoreline, has a soft gravel beach. A small park with no facilities is located at the south end of the lake in the Lindell Beach area.



↑ Map 2 Hope River Potential Access Point Locations

## Hope River

The 16 km section of Hope River between Rosedale and Hope River–Corbould Park forms a popular blueway that has, in the past, been navigable with few obstacles. In recent years, the upper sections have filled in with silt from agricultural runoff and have grown over with water-tolerant grasses. The lower 12 km between Grigg Road and Hope River–Corbould Park has adequate depth and width for boating, with the only issues being the seasonal growth of milfoil and some minor variations in current. In order to improve accessibility, a number of potential access locations have been investigated.

Nine potential launch or stopover locations were investigated (see Map 1):

1. Kilometre 0, Rosedale Park/church parking lot
2. Kilometre 0.1, Nelson Road
3. Kilometre 0.3, Rosedale Fire Hall: fairly good river access
4. Kilometre 3.0, undeveloped park at 50265 Yale Road: only river bank, no potential for parking
5. Kilometre 3.3, McLeod Road north: fair access to river, very limited parking (south portion of road is in use as private driveway)
6. Kilometre 7.5, Reeves Road: steep bank to river and limited parking
7. Kilometre 10.5, Gravelly Slough confluence: good launch beach, very limited parking.



Hope River: Upstream from Pedestrian Bridge at Hope River–Kinsmen Park (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)

8. Kilometre 12.5, Hope River–Kinsmen Park: excellent beach, adequate parking
9. Kilometre 16.0, Hope River–Corbould Park: excellent beach, limited parking

Of the locations investigated, only locations 7, 8 and 9 are considered usable launch sites at this time.



Access Point to Hope River (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)

### Hope River–Gravelly Slough Confluence (access point 7, kilometre 10.5)

While this site currently has very limited roadside parking, a gravel ramp leads to a reasonable launch beach.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Look at options to increase parking capacity.
- Make improvements to existing launch ramp.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.



Launch Ramp at Gravelly Slough–Hope River Confluence  
(Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



Hope River–Kinsmen Park Layout and Launch Area (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)

**Hope River–Kinsmen Park (access point 8, kilometre 12.5)**

Kinsmen Park has an excellent launch beach with direct access from a small gravel parking lot. The park will likely see increased use as a launch, take-out and stopover site as well as an increase in general park use. A portable toilet, sited near the existing playground and picnic tables, would be a good amenity to add.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

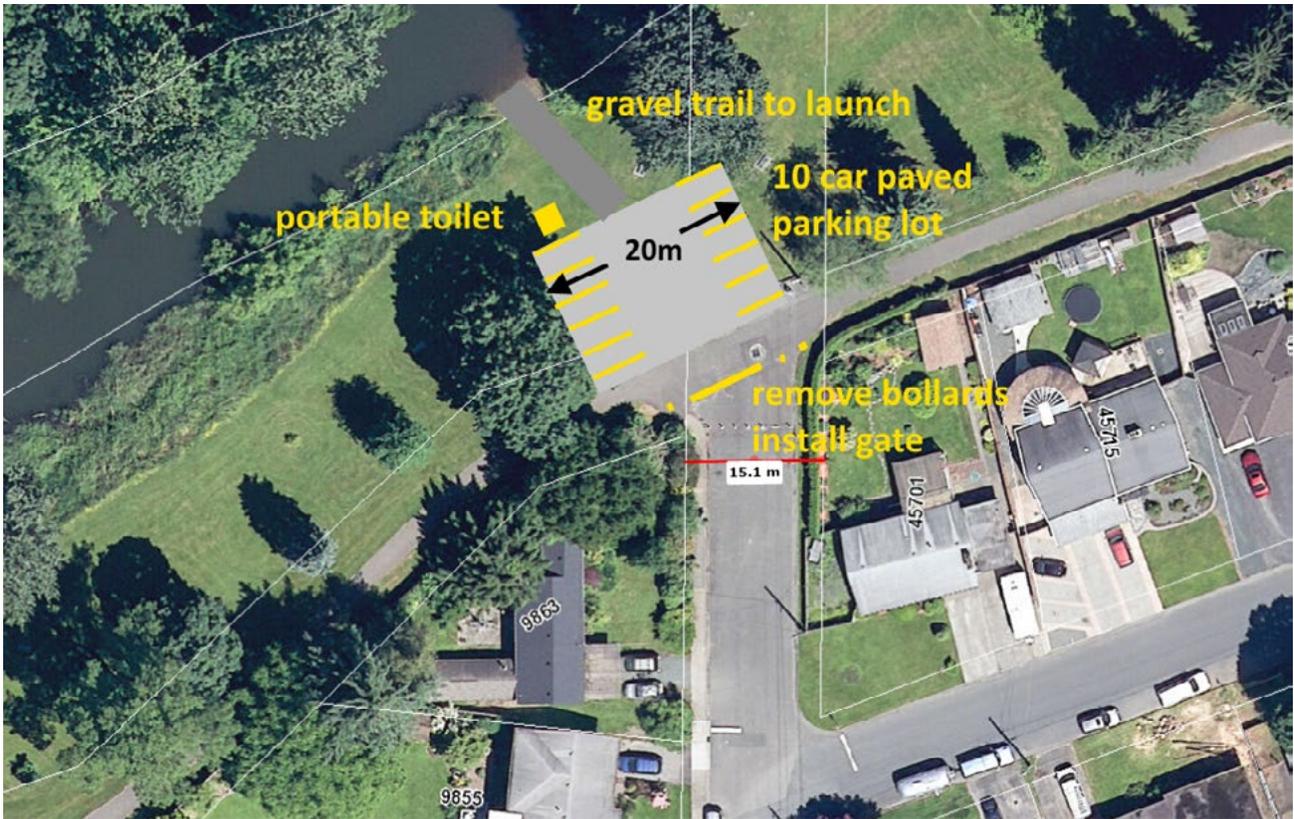
- Add a portable washroom to the site.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.
- Add an information kiosk map of blueway safety rules.



Hope River–Kinsmen Park Launch Beach (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



Hope River–Kinsmen Parking Lot (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



Hope River–Corbould Layout and Future Improvements (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)

### Hope River–Corbould Park (access point 9, kilometre 16.0)

Hope River–Corbould Park already functions as a launch and take-out site for Hope River. The sand and gravel beach serves a small slalom kayak course and is a launch site for return trips. As the grassy area leading to the beach is often soft, an all-weather trail should be constructed from the end of Corbould Street to the launch beach.

The park also functions as the neighbourhood park for the northwest sector of downtown Chilliwack. Additional improvements would include a portable toilet and picnic tables. As parking is limited at this time, a parking lot within the park should be considered.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Construct an all-weather gravel path from the end of Corbould Street to the launch beach.

- Add picnic tables and garbage receptacles to the park.
- Provide a portable toilet facility.
- Construct a parking lot within the park area.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.



Hope River–Corbould Park Launch Beach (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)

## Grigg Road Section

While Hope River is generally navigable in an upstream direction all the way to Grigg Road, there are no launch sites above Camp River. A paddling trip has to be done by launching at one of the downstream locations, then paddling upstream to a chosen destination and then back downstream to the take-out.

Above Grigg Road, there are several major obstacles to navigation:

- a fence across most of the river, just above Grigg Road
- private ownership of the river on 12 properties
- narrow-silted channel sections

Of the six upstream potential future launch sites, Rosedale Park (kilometre 0), Rosedale Fire Hall (kilometre 0.3) and McLeod Road (kilometre 3.3) are suitable. The narrow roadside park at kilometre 3.0 may additionally be suitable as a stopover point, accessible only from the river side.

Some overall general improvements are needed to facilitate the long-term recreational use of Hope River, most of which would require approvals from provincial and federal government agencies.

Required improvements are as follows:

- Remove in-stream obstacles such as fallen trees and logs.
- Resolve the land ownership and right-of-passage issue.
- Remove any human-made obstacles, such as the fence at Grigg Road.
- Dredge, straighten and armour upper sections to increase water flow.
- Prevent or regulate agricultural drainage.
- Control annual milfoil growth.



Rosedale Park and Historical River Access Point (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)

### Rosedale Park (access point 1, kilometre 0)

For several years, Rosedale Park and the church parking lot were used as the starting point of the annual canoe race, which started in Rosedale and terminated at Hope River– Kinsmen Park, 12.5 km downstream. With some improvement, the launch could potentially be re-established, but this would require an agreement between the City and the church for river access and possibly public parking.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Approach church property owners to discuss public access.
- Make improvements to boat launch area.
- Create additional on-street parking on Old Yale Road.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.

### Rosedale Fire Hall (access point 3, kilometre 0.3)

The Rosedale Fire Hall property is probably the best upstream launch site along this section of the river. As there is already a gravel parking lot, the only improvements needed would be developing a launch ramp and adding a portable toilet. There could be a minor conflict with the fire department during evening practices, meetings or during the very infrequent fires. This could be addressed by reserving a portion of the parking area for fire department use only.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Create a public parking area and designated fire department–only parking area.
- Provide a portable toilet within the parking area.
- Add gravel to the river bank. Grade and compact it to form a launch beach.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.



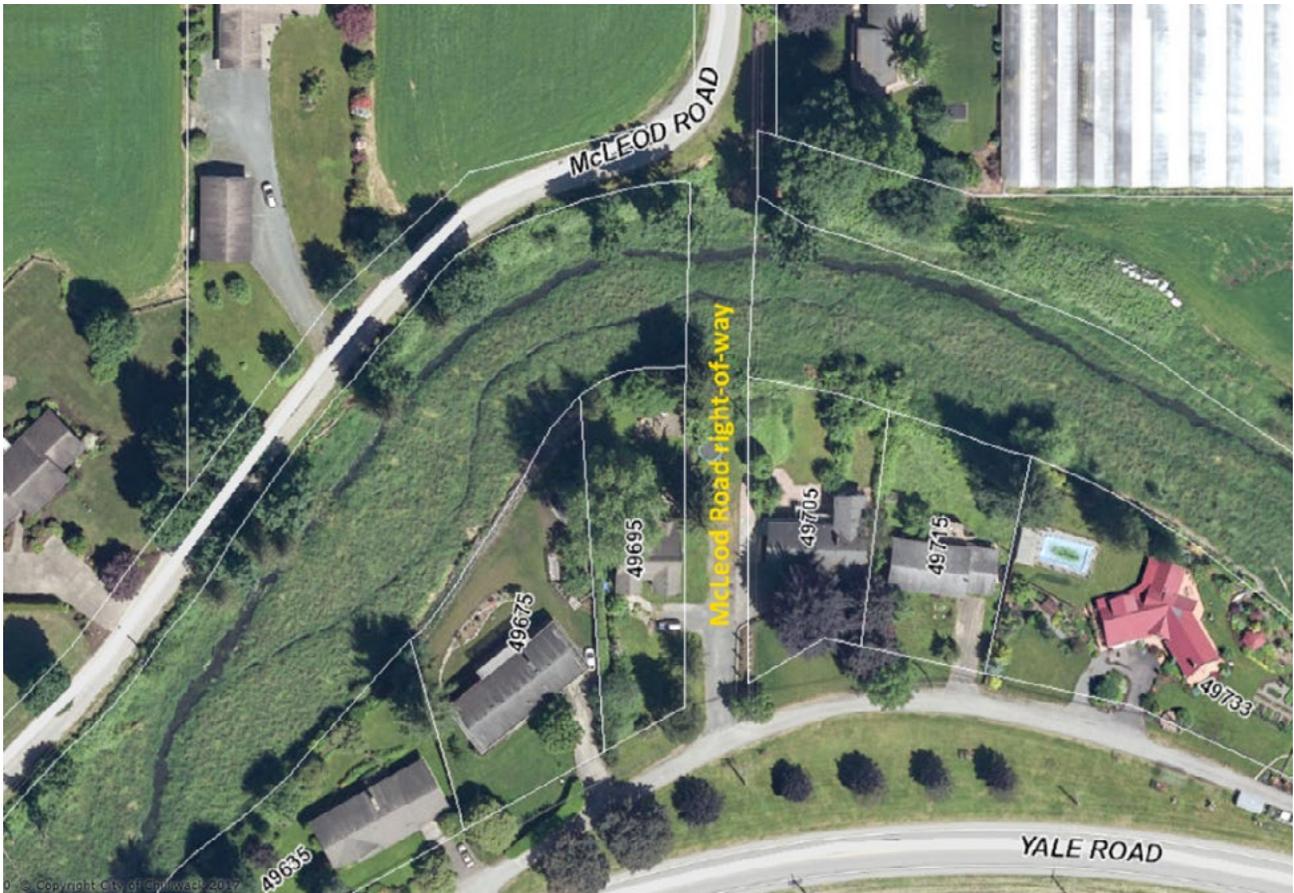
**Rosedale Fire Hall Property** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2018)



**Rosedale Fire Hall Gravel Parking Area** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



**Potential Launch Site: Beach Area** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



McLeod Road Right-of-Way (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)

### McLeod Road (access point 5, kilometre 3.3)

The McLeod Road right-of-way spans Hope River. South of the river, the right-of-way is occupied by a shared driveway that could be used as a launch facility. The north bank has a low slope and is suitable as a stopover location. There is room for limited parking to be created within the unused road allowance and adjacent Crown land on the north side of the river.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Investigate parking options on the north side of the river.
- Construct a gravel parking area in a suitable location.
- Construct an all-weather gravel path from the parking area to the launch area.

- Make improvements to the north bank to create a launch site.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.



McLeod Road Right-of-Way (North Side) (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



↑ Map 3 Camp Slough and Nelson Slough Potential Access Points

## Camp Slough and Nelson Slough

Camp Slough extends 11 km from the Fraser River, near Ferry Road, to its confluence with Hope River. The slough also interconnects with three other watercourses to the north: Bell Slough, Nelson Slough and Gravelly Slough. While short sections of these watercourses are navigable at this time, 28 culverts and narrow silted-in or blocked areas prevent any continuous passage for paddle boats. To improve navigation, the flow rate and the size of culverts would have to be increased. As this project is very expensive, progress will take several years.

There are three currently navigable sections:

- Camp Slough: very short section at Edmondson Road
- Camp Slough: Ballam Road to Kitchen Road
- Nelson Slough: Carey Road to Kitchen Road

Of the eight sites visited, only five offer potential as launch sites: 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (see Map 2).



Camp Slough at Edmondson Road (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



Edmondson Road Access (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)

### Access point 1: Edmondson Road

Edmondson Road offers good access to a very short section of open water. The area is currently usable, and only minor improvements would be required to develop a launch area. Within the unusual road configuration, some roadside parking is available.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

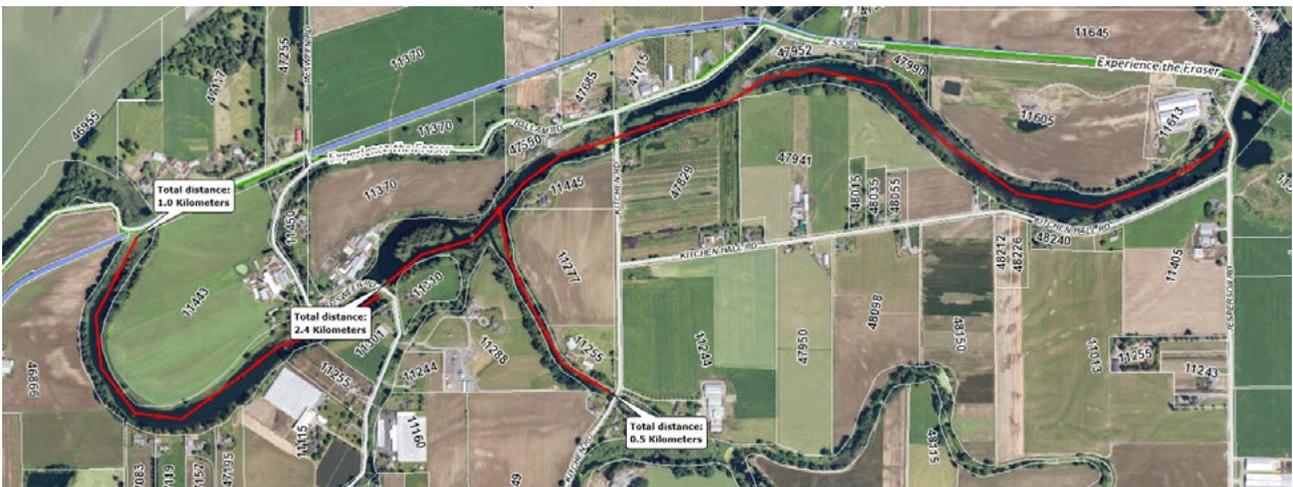
- Create a number of roadside parking spaces.
- Improve bank slope and create a useable launch and takeout area.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.



Camp Slough at Edmondson Road (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



Nelson Slough at Carey Road (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)



Nelson and Camp Slough Navigable Sections (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)

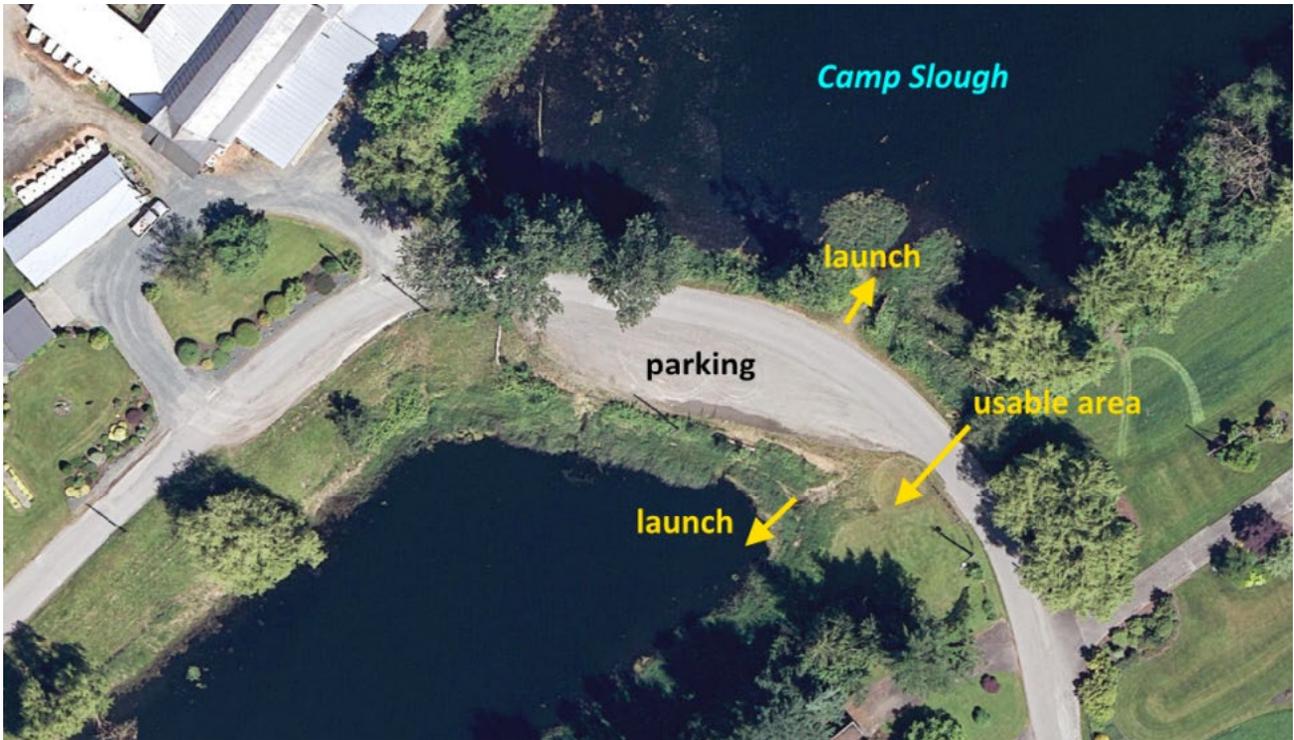
### Access point 4: Carey Road

While not on the main channel of Camp Slough, Carey Road is at the top end of Nelson Slough, which is a 1.8 km navigable section of Camp–Nelson Slough. There is an existing privately developed dock (on Crown land) and a gravel launch area with limited roadside parking. Improvements could include developing a small parking area and formalizing the launch area.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Create a number of roadside parking spaces.
- Formalize gravel launch area.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.

Although actually on a combination of Nelson Slough and Camp Slough, the section east and west of McSween Road, extending as far east as Jespersion Road is generally navigable. A portage at the Kitchen Road box culvert would be required. This route offers a 2 km return to the west and a return to the east of over 5 km.



McSween Road Access and Crossing (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)

### Access point 6: McSween Road

McSween Road has a large gravel parking area with existing launch ramps both upstream and downstream into Camp Slough. A large grass area, on public land but presently in use by a neighbour, could be used for day-use facilities.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Upgrade the roadside parking area.
- Install a picnic table to create a day-use area.
- Make improvements to both upstream and downstream launch ramps.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.



McSween Road Downstream Concrete Ramp (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



McSween Road Upstream Gravel Ramp (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



**Ballam Road Access** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)

### **Access point 7: Ballam Road and Dyke**

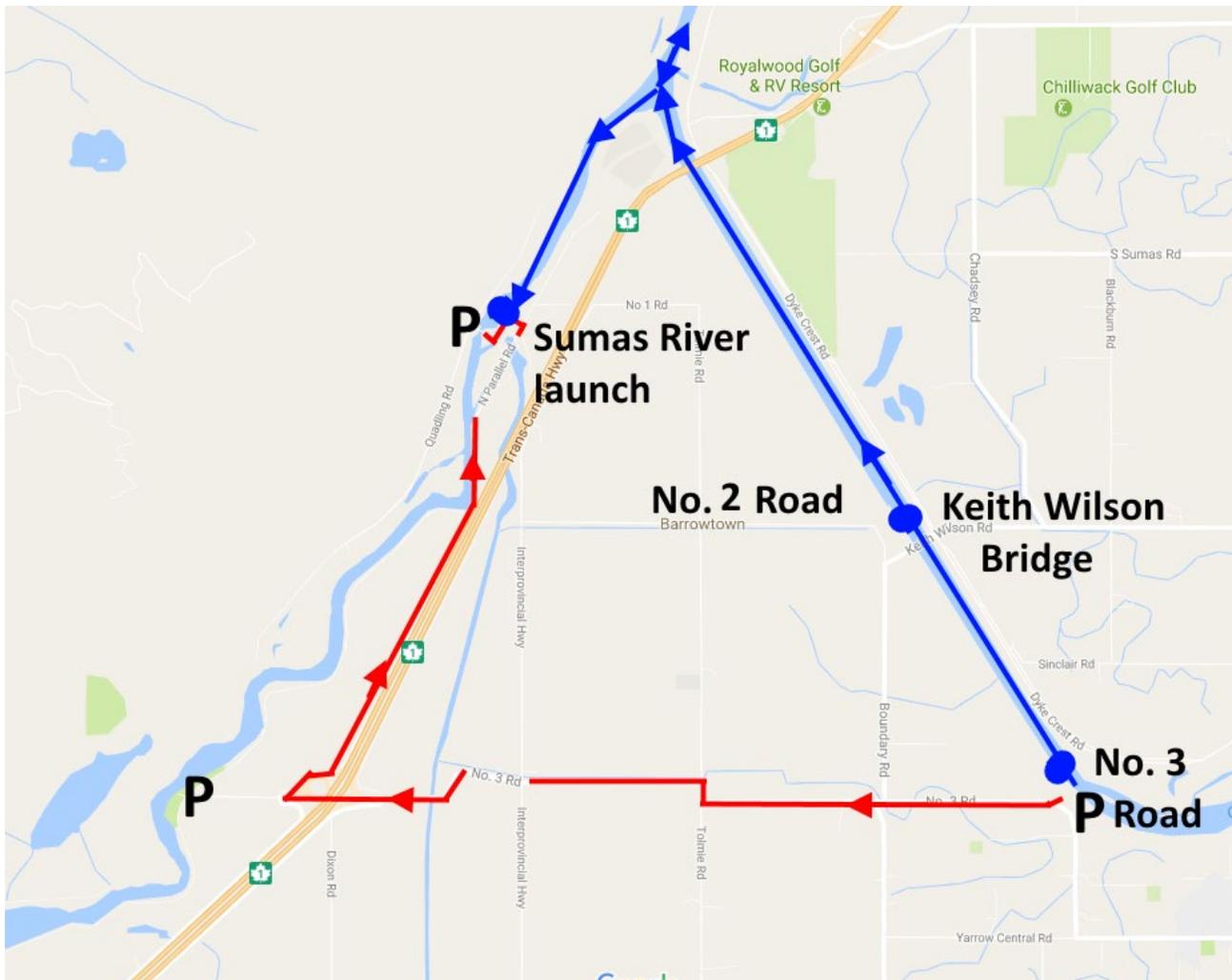
A rough gravel trail provides access to Camp Slough, with a small parking area at the end of the dyke. Improvements could be made to create a useable launch site.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Improve the parking area to accept additional vehicles.
- Widen and improve the trail to the river's edge.
- Create a sloped gravel launch area.
- Install a "Blueway Access Point" sign.



**Ballam Road Launch Site** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



↑ Map 4 Vedder Canal-Sumas River Route

## Vedder Canal and Sumas River

As the Vedder River becomes the Vedder Canal, the gradient drops considerably. While there is considerable seasonal variation, the late-summer current is generally slow, with few navigation hazards. The 6.2 km section between No. 3 Road and the Sumas River meets most criteria of a Class 1 blueway. A one-way trip requires two vehicles and a launch from the mud/silt cut bank at No. 3 Road. A return trip, starting at the Sumas River boat launch off Quadling Road in Abbotsford, eliminates the need for a second vehicle. While parking is available at both ends, launch conditions are much better at Sumas River, where there is a gently sloping sand and gravel beach.

The Vedder Canal-Sumas River route combines a downstream portion on the generally slow-flowing Vedder Canal with a short upstream portion on the slow-flowing Sumas River to make a 6.2 km route (see Map 3). This can be lengthened by a side trip down the Sumas River to near the Fraser River and back. While the route can be done as shown on Map 3, launch conditions at No. 3 Road need improvement.



Sumas River Downstream from Vedder Canal (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2014)

### No. 3 Road

There is an existing gravel parking lot at No. 3 Road and a gravel and dirt trail to a potential launch site. The launch and river current conditions vary with the flow of the Vedder River and the height of the Fraser River. There is a cut bank at a moderate height. The site is used by fishers and other water users, so a portable toilet should be installed at the parking lot.

Launch or stopover conditions at No. 2 Road (Barrowtown Road) are slightly better. A practical trip plan is launching at Sumas River, paddling upstream as far as desired, and then returning to Sumas River.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Make improvements to create a safe launch area.
- Add a gravel trail between the parking area and launch area.
- Install a “Blueway Access Point” sign.



No. 3 Road Parking Lot (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



No. 3 Road River Access (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



**Sumas River Parking Lot and Launch Layout** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)



**Sumas River Beach** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2014)

### **Sumas River Launch**

The Sumas River Launch is located within the City of Abbotsford boundaries. It has a large gravel parking lot and excellent launch beach.

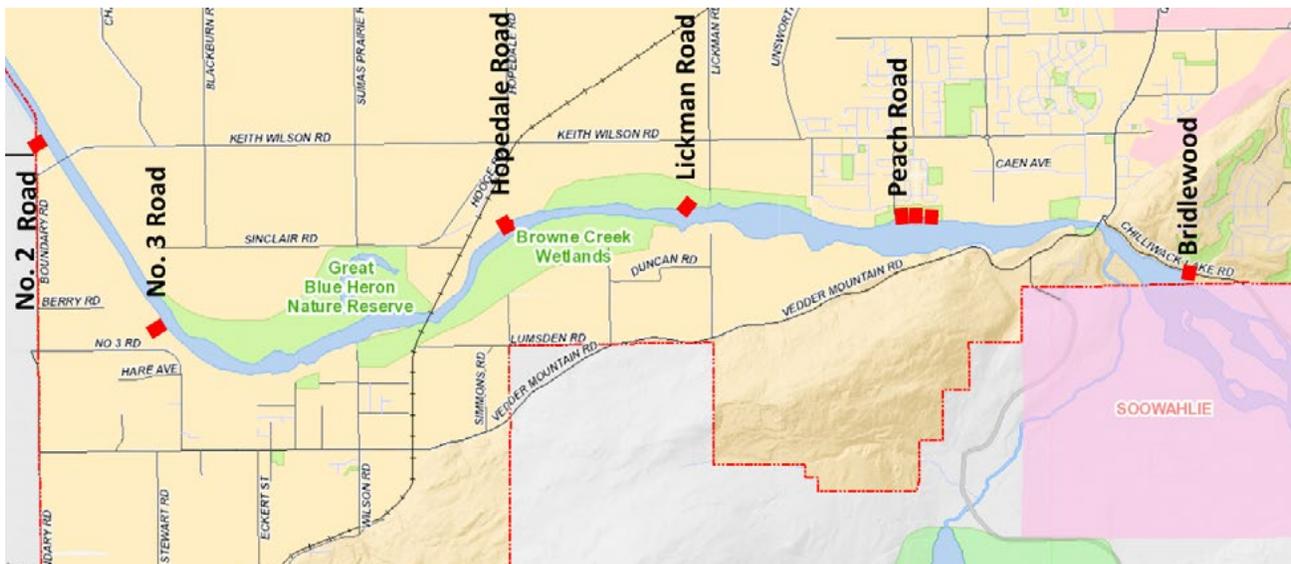
# Class 2 Blueways

## Class 2 Blueway Requirements

In order to function as a Class 2 blueway, a waterbody should meet all or most of the following requirements:

- few obstacles, avoidable by skilled paddlers
- adequate width and depth
- adequate overhead clearance on bridges and culverts at varying water heights
- conveniently spaced and accessible launch, stopover and take-out locations

A Class 2 waterway has a significant current, which varies with the season. The waterway may also have navigational hazards such as rocks or logs.



↑ Map 5 Chilliwack–Vedder River Access Points

## Chilliwack–Vedder River

The lower-gradient section of the Chilliwack–Vedder River extends 9.2 km from the Bridlewood parking lot to No. 2 Road. The rate of flow is not slow and varies considerably with the season. Late summer is popular with tubers. Navigation hazards include log jams, standing waves and sweepers. This route is suitable only for experienced paddlers.

There are several potential launch locations along this stretch of the blueway, some of which require improvement.

As the Vedder River is often swift-flowing, with navigation hazards, it is considered a Class 2 blueway. Class 2 blueways must have adequate cautionary and safety signage at all access points. The section from the Bridlewood parking lot on the Chilliwack River, to the beach west of the Hopedale Road parking lot is used extensively by tubers and rafters in late summer and by kayakers during much of the year.



Bridlewood Parking Lot Area on Chilliwack Lake Road (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)

### Bridlewood Parking Lot Access

The Bridlewood parking area has a hard-surface parking lot with a crosswalk to the river side, a rough rock and gravel ramp to a floodplain area, and then a dirt path to the river. The area is used extensively by boaters, fishers, summer river beach users, and short- and long-term campers. To improve its suitability as a launch site, the rock staircase or ramp should be improved from the road to the river's edge. Minor improvements to the dirt path would facilitate carrying a boat.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Build rock access steps from road level to river level.
- Build a gravel trail from the rock steps to the river's edge.
- Install a "Blueway Access Point" sign.
- Install a kiosk with safety information and cautionary warnings.

### Peach Park

Peach Park has a gravel parking lot, washrooms and a playground. Access to the river is provided by three rock "staircases." Aside from boaters, the area is used extensively by fishers and summer river beach users.



Peach Park Rock Staircase (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2018)



**Lickman Road Access Ramp** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2018)

### **Lickman Road**

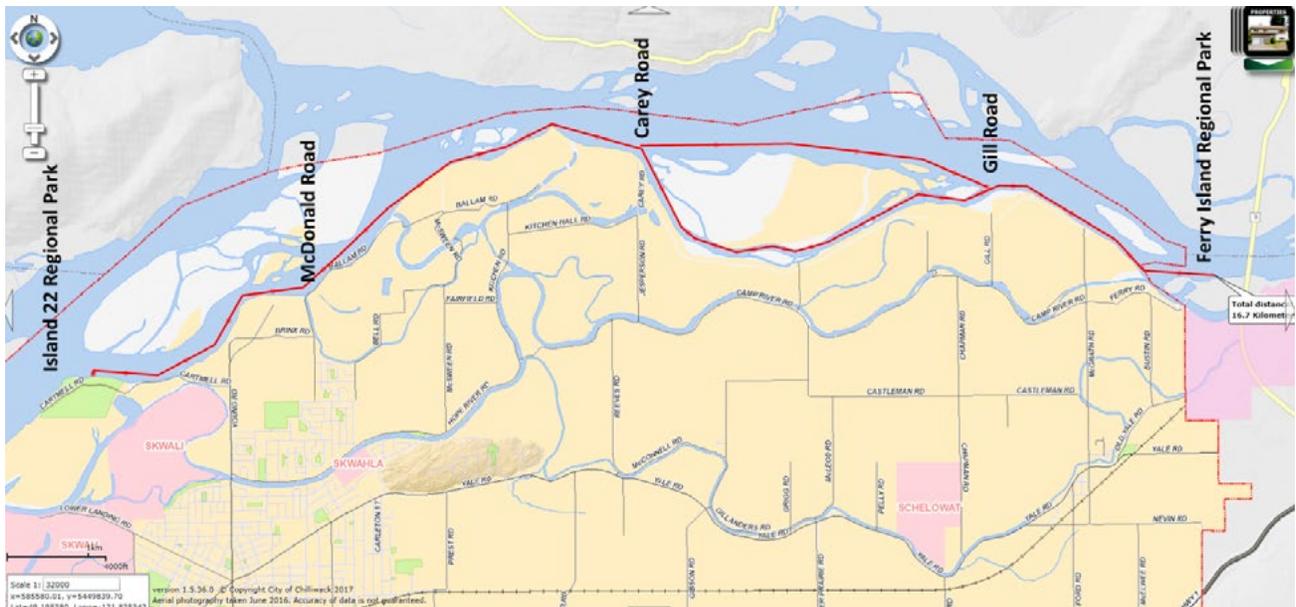
At Lickman Road there is a large gravel parking area, portable toilets and picnic tables. A gravel ramp to the river is located close by, just downstream. During much of the year the current is too swift for most river users, but during the summer months this is a popular access point.

### **Hopedale West Parking Area**

The Hopedale west parking area provides direct access to the river by way of a gravel ramp as well as a beach 850 m to the west.



**Hopedale West River Access Ramp** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2017)



↑ Map 6 Fraser River Access Points

## Fraser River

The Fraser River is neither flat water nor slow moving, but is generally navigable by experienced canoeists and kayakers before spring high water and in late summer. The 16.7 km section between Ferry Island Regional Park and Island 22 Regional Park offers adequate parking and good launch conditions at both ends. While some sections expose the paddler to the main flow of the river, there are sheltered back-channel sections.

As the Fraser River is often swift-flowing, with some navigation hazards, it is classified as a Class 2 blueway, and use by the general public requires adequate cautionary signage at all access points. The river is used by experienced canoeists and kayakers generally in late summer after spring runoff. There are several existing access points.



**Ferry Island Regional Park** (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)

### **Ferry Island Regional Park**

Ferry Island Regional Park is presently undeveloped. A gravel parking area is adjacent to a sand beach that offers reasonable launch conditions. The area is primarily used by bank fishers and as a launch site for motor boats.

### **Gill Road**

Although Gill Road has no facilities, the gravel bars accessible from the road offer a stopover or launch site. The area is primarily used by fishers, ATV riders and short-term campers. The Gill Road foreshore area is located on provincial Crown land and therefore is managed by the province.



Carey Road Access (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)

### Carey Road (End of Jespersion Road)

The Carey Road area has a gravel and silt unimproved launch ramp that is accessible except at very low water. The site also has some undeveloped roadside parking. The area is used extensively by bank fishers and as a motor boat launch. While most of the launch area is City property, the access crosses private land.

Future actions to improve this site include the following:

- Improve the parking area.
- Secure right-of-way for public access to launch area.
- Improve launch area and access walkway.
- Install a "Blueway Access Point" sign
- Install a kiosk with safety and cautionary signage.

### Island 22 Regional Park

Island 22 is owned by the City of Chilliwack and is operated by the Fraser Valley Regional District.

Island 22 has an excellent launch and take-out beach with generally calm water as well as paid gravel parking in the day-use area along with washrooms and picnic tables.



Island 22 Boat Launch and Day-Use Area (Image © City of Chilliwack, 2016)

# Summary and Conclusions

The use of many of our potential blueways is restricted at present by seasonal weed growth, culverts and siltation. Nonetheless several sections are presently navigable and warrant improvements in access and amenities to facilitate their use.

In addition to the very popular Cultus Lake, a 12 km section of Hope River offers the best potential, with only minor improvements needed. While seasonal weed growth impairs its use in late summer, the waterway is generally navigable from fall to late spring.

The Sumas River–Vedder Canal offers generally flat water paddling for most of the year.

Over the next few years, channel improvements and culvert replacement will greatly enhance the suitability of Camp Slough and Nelson Slough.

For the skilled paddler or rafter, the Chilliwack River and Vedder River are popular from late spring to fall. River access has been improved over the years with several access ramps and staircases.



