

HIGHWAY 5 COQUIHALLA UPDATE

November 2023



Ministry of
Transportation
and Infrastructure



Flood Recovery - Project Complete

In November 2021, the Atmospheric River event damaged more than 20 sites and six bridges along the Coquihalla.

The damage included collapsed bridge spans and washed out roadways at:

- Bottletop Bridge, 50 kilometres south of Merritt
- Juliet Bridge, 3 kilometres south of Bottletop
- Jessica Bridge, 20 kilometres north of Hope

Two years later, all construction and recovery work has been completed, with new permanent bridges built northbound and southbound at each bridge site.

Thank You to Crews and Communities

Thank you to the Highway 5 crews who have worked hard over the past two years to rebuild the damaged bridges and roadways, restore the natural environment and wildlife habitat, and work with nearby residents and communities. Thank you as well to the Nlaka'pamux communities, Syilx Okanagan Nation, Peters First Nation and Yale First Nation along with their monitors, for their support through the washout and rebuild process, and for providing their traditional and current knowledge to guide environmental restoration at each site.



Project Timeline

2021

December



The Coquihalla between Hope and Merritt reopened to essential commercial vehicles at a reduced lane capacity.

2022

January



The Coquihalla between Hope and Merritt reopens to all traffic.

2022

December



- Temporary repairs restored capacity to four lanes on the Coquihalla.
- The new permanent northbound Juliet Bridge opened to traffic.

2023

Spring – Summer



New permanent bridges are opened:

- Northbound on Bottletop Bridge
- Southbound on Juliet Bridge
- Southbound on Jessica Bridge

2023

October



New permanent bridges are opened:

- Southbound on Bottletop Bridge
- Northbound on Jessica Bridge
- All new permanent bridges are open



The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure regularly publishes these newsletters for local communities. See digital copies and the latest updates at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation-projects/bc-highway-flood-recovery/2021-flood-road-recovery-projects-highway-5>.

PROJECT COMPLETE

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Then & Now

In November 2021, these three bridge sites were heavily damaged, with several collapsed bridge spans and roadways washed away. After two years of hard work, the new permanent bridges are open for traffic.

Bottletop Bridge



Juliet Bridge



Jessica Bridge



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Environmental Restoration

In collaboration with local Indigenous communities and cultural monitors, environmental restoration has taken place to restore wildlife and aquatic habitat at each bridge site, and create wildlife crossings to increase connectivity for animals in the valley.

Fish Habitat

In-stream enhancements in the Coquihalla River, Coldwater River, and Juliet Creek have been designed to improve fish habitat. This includes rocks and log clusters, which create small pools that are easier for fish to spawn in and locations with slower moving water so the fish can rest.

Replanting

Native plant species have been replanted at each bridge site. These plants will encourage the use of the wildlife crossings under each bridge and provide shade over the water to enhance fish habitat.



Climate Resilient Infrastructure

The new permanent bridges have been built to be more resilient to extreme-weather events. This includes:

- Deep pile footings and longer bridge spans to withstand high water levels.
- Large rock protection to prevent erosion and scour.
- Replanted trees, shrubs and grasses to protect streambanks and increase shade.

Remaining Work

Although construction is done, minor work will continue on Highway 5 over the next year, including:

- Monitoring bridge and road works over the winter.
- Completing detailed inspections in the spring.
- Completing the restoration of wildlife and fish habitat next spring and summer, including extensive planting in wildlife corridors and along streams.

Last Project Newsletter

- As we celebrate the completion of construction work on Highway 5, this will be the last recovery update newsletter. Thank you to all of the communities and partners for their support throughout this work.



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