

Newport Forest

August 7 2002

3:00 - 9:10 pm

Weather: sunny/clear, calm, LM 29 C; FCF 22 C

Purpose: maintenance and exploration

Participants: Pat, Kee, and Nic

Coming in, we took the canoe from Edgar's garage and drove it down to the trailer, where we found Eva with her two great grandchildren, Jordan and Karissa. Pat remained at the trailer watching Junior while Nic and I went up to the tree station, where we *almost* finished the painting. One reason that process took so long was that I had first to install the hose adapter, assembled from about 6 different parts purchased at the hardware store. It leaks a bit, but with the hose attached, watering the trees in the station has become almost a luxury. Meanwhile, Pat had discovered something we had all overlooked for about three years - Arrowhead plants on the shore of Fleming Creek near the bridge.

Nic and I took the canoe to the RL, accompanied by Pat, who found a beautiful Black-and-Yellow Argiope in the long grass near the river. Nic showed Pat a nest he had discovered high on the bluffs. It turned out to belong to a pair of Blue Jays and had young in it. Back at the trailer we had some "frontier stew" and corn on the cob. Junior seems to like his box, but emerged for supper all covered with bits of insulation (shades of Ratty!) We did not finish supper until nearly 7 pm, putting the great Blind Creek Expedition in jeopardy. Nevertheless we set out.

The first surprise was to discover extensive patches of Dodder hanging on the thick vegetation of the semi-open forest, mainly nettles. Pat found a mint with tiny, very fragrant flowers arranged around the axils (S), some Fringed Loosestrife, and other plants. I looked up to see why the canopy was so open about 150 m in. There were several dead trees all around us, all White Elms. Had the Dutch Elm beetle cut loose a couple of decades ago, or was this a more recent response to drought? The corpses seemed older than that.

Pat continued to find interesting plants, collecting, in all, over a dozen specimens. We passed what appeared to be a new kind of Snakeroot (S?), Purple-flowered Lobelia, Alisma sp., some very tall Sparganium, Wingstem, White Vervain, and many others. All along the old creek bed, we passed very large Black Willows, some of them down and resprouting, some still standing grandly. Further in, we went through the willow swamp that Nic and I had visited briefly in the summer of 2000. But now, thanks to the drought, the black carpet of wet leaf mold had been replaced or covered over by every kind of moisture-loving plant.

We passed under the fence separating our property from Janik's. Wondering how much farther we had to go, I sent Nic on ahead to scout out the terrain. He reported by WT that we still had about 200 metres to go. We passed through a wonderful meadow-like area, covered with relatively low plants and looking almost like a lawn. Then the shoulders of a ravine began to pinch us in, the old creek depression suddenly becoming a ditch, then a trench with walls that were over our heads.

By the time we reached the river, the sun was about to set. Nic cheerfully volunteered to walk upstream to get the canoe so that Pat wouldn't have to walk all the way back. By the time we saw the green canoe come around the bend, the sun was setting and there was roughly enough twilight to make our way back up the river (fighting our way up two rapids) until we came to the RL and stowed the canoe. We cleaned camp, put Junior back in his cage, and drove out through the meadow in darkness.

Birds: (6)

American Robin (BCF); Blue Jay (RL); Catbird (ET); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Turkey Vulture (UM), Wild Turkey (UM)

butterflies: (6)

Black Swallowtail (TR); Hairstreak (sp) (RL); Monarch (RL); Red-spotted Purple (TR); Summer Azure (ET); Tiger Swallowtail (LM)

New species:

Common Water Plantain	<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	PD BC/W
Sparganium	<i>Sparganium eurycarpum</i>	nm/PD BC/W
Swamp Dodder	<i>Cuscuta [gronovii]</i>	kd/PD
Common Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	PD FC/br
Swamp Milkweed	<i>Asclepias incarnate</i>	PD BC/W