

Newport Forest

September 29 2002

3:45 - 6:20 pm

Weather: Prec. 65mm; sunny/clear; calm; LM 26C; FCF 22C

Purpose: to check on property

Participants: Nic and David Mihlik, Jane Haston

Following our arrival, I opened the trailer to find the cushions pulled off their seats, bird seed strewn across the floor, and the contents of the trailer in general disarray. I noted raccoon paw prints in the baking soda left by Pat, and the empty remains of a bag of Cheetos left in the trailer for Junior. I then went over to Junior's tree to discover two or three pieces of insulation at the base of the tree, suggesting that Junior may have been engaged in further renovations. After taking a few moments to fill Junior's tub and disperse dog biscuits, crackers and chicken, the three of us headed down to the river landing. Two Great blue Herons were spotted taking off from the river bend and flying down river. We stopped to enjoy the view for a few minutes and discuss various aspects of the property before embarking on the Blind Creek trail.

While walking the trail, I noticed numerous white, furry caterpillars with black lines extending down the centers of their backs. The ground was still damp from the recent rains and many small mushrooms were seen along the trail, no doubt as a result of the abundant moisture. I collected two different mushroom samples along the first 400m of the BC trail (one on a liner log, the other on a living tree). (S) At approximately 450m we ran into a clump of breast feathers lying across the trail, many of the feathers seemingly pulled out in clumps. The feathers were small (none over an inch in length), grey at the base and white towards the tip, and in some instances having a black dot at the very tip. Clumps of tiny feathers which were grey at the base and buff towards the tip were also found.

We stopped at the bench on the hogsback while I made a few notes and checked Lotor's tree. The hollow was occupied (for the first time this summer, I believe) so I gave a few whistles at the sleeping coon, hoping it was Junior. I got no response so we continued down the trail. Jane or David spotted a small twig nest beside the trail, at 700m. The nest was roughly 6 feet off the ground in a small tree (which I did not attempt to identify). I collected two more mushroom samples from liner logs but didn't note the locations. (S) We then walked back to the trailer.

David and Jane decided to relax in the chairs under the big maple while I went for a quick walk around the FCT. I whistled for Junior as I walked, stopping

periodically to listen for a reply. I collected one more mushroom sample from a log near Eva's hairpin. (S) I then completed the trail and went back up to clean the trailer. Before leaving I checked on the trees in the island, most of which appeared to have benefited from the rain. Those trees like the ash and silver maple which had been stressed all summer were unchanged in their appearance. I walked down to the triangle and checked a few trees, including the tulips which seemed much better off than they did prior to the rain. I stashed some food in Junior's box, locked the trailer and left the property.