

Newport Forest

December 31 2003

1:35 - 5:55 pm

Weather: prec. 20 mm (guess); clear; W < 40 kmh; LM 8 C; FCF 7 C

Purpose: to take up bridge

Participants: Kee, Nic

Driving to the trailer, we found the ground completely waterlogged, the tree station flooded and numerous small puddles remaining from the long and steady rain we enjoyed in the area last Monday. The river had back up into the creek, submerging the bridge once again, scotching our reason for coming.

We put up bird and deer food, however, then walked the TRT starting in the BC leg. On the HB, we decided to explore a possible trail route. We walked to the east end, noting where clearing would have to be done. On the way back I collected what I thought might be a Mossy Maple Polypore from a dying Large-tooth Aspen.* We then walked to the west end, passing through the hole in the fence into Janik's property. The game trail through the gap we created is now well established. We followed the trail to the top of the Blind Creek ravine close to the mouth, angling down toward the river and noting that the Thames had also backed up into the mouth of Blind Creek about 100 m. The river was large and monstrous-looking, with numerous branches and old drift piles racing downstream at nearly two metres per sec.

We then returned to the main trail, noting several very large glacial boulders jutting from the side of the ravine. Down in the RSF, we took a coke break, then continued on to the lookout points on the river bluff section of the trail, deciding where to put a new bench. On the way to these points, we flushed two Ruffed Grouse.

It was getting dark as we loaded the van and started the engine. The front wheels quickly dug a shallow grave in the soft clay loam and all efforts to extricate the vehicle only deepened the grave. In the end, we had to dig our way out, then race across the squidgy ground to avoid getting stuck again.

Birds: (5)

Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Ruffed Grouse (RB/RSF); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)