

Newport Forest March 23-24 2004 4:25 - 3:00 pm (2 days)

Weather: prec. 12 mm; overcast/hazy; SW < 15; LM 8 C; FCF 8 C

Purpose: NCC volunteer day

Participants: Pat, Kee, Bronwen Smith & 42 business students

We came in the day before 42 students from the Richard G. Ivey School of Business Administration were to descend on the property to assist with cleanup and other conservation duties. The group, brought in as part of the NCC volunteer program, would be under the direction of Bronwen Smith, the NCC Volunteer Coordinator.

We began the preparations for our overnight stay by washing the trailer floor and stowing away food and gear. Then we went birdwatching, noting a number of new arrivals. (In the process, we saw several flocks of Tundra Swans passing over, headed in various directions.) I checked the trees in the north and south cores, noting that 10% of these trees had been nipped by deer, not all fatally. About 7 of the trees in total had developed a severe lean, owing to being planted too loosely. I straightened them and packed more soil around the stem bases. In the BCF core, I was dismayed to see 70% of the young trees nipped, about half fatally. Next year - tomato cages!

Visiting the RL, we were unpleasantly surprised to see the bird-watching bench had been broken off at the base (no trace of holes or legs) and carried off by the swollen river.

We had supper after dark. The night was clear and the stars came out brilliantly. I went up to close the gate, visiting Edgar in the process. Nina is in Beattie Haven recovering from a bout of emphysema.

It was reasonably warm in the trailer as long as we kept two stove burners going. After 10 pm, we had two visitors, a large, fat raccoon (Roscoe?) and another that could only be made out by its headlights.

We slept fitfully under four duvets & sleeping bags.

Next morning we were up by 7:30. After breakfast, I got a call on the WT from Steve, who was driving Hwy 2 at the time! Did we want anything at the store? I went up to the gate to greet them, finding that Bronwen had already arrived in a rented 4x4. Steve drove her and Karen down to the trailer, while I helped the man

from the port-a-potty company position an outdoor privy just outside the property gates. A light rain began to fall. It would keep up, by fits and starts, for the rest of the day.

Bronwen greeted the arriving bus about half an hour later and, before we knew it, we were surrounded by noisy business students. Bronwen gave them a talk about safety from the back of the truck and I told them what they would be doing that day.

Steve took about 25 students to the RL, where five peeled off to deal with the large drift pile there. The rest followed Steve into the RSF, where I came upon small knots of them later, placing trail liners about 5' apart instead of 2'. Oh, well.

Before going into the RSF, however, I got about seven students cutting disks and two cutting thorn trees.

I stayed with the TRT crew until lunchtime, when they had pretty well finished with trail work. I was delighted to see that the disk-cutting crew had completed about 50 holes, more than enough for this year's planting.

After lunch, I took the students on a small walk down to the river, the TRT now being too greasy to walk and the FCT inaccessible owing to the bridge being out. At the RL I gave a talk about the history of the river, not being able to think of any other suitable topic. Within a half hour of our return, all the students had departed. We packed up only the essentials and walked up to the road, where I had taken the van (out) earlier.

Birds: (13)

American Crow (HBF); American Robin (FCF); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Northern Cardinal (FCF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Slate-coloured Junco (Tr); Song Sparrow (LM/BCF); Tundra Swan (BCF); Turkey Vulture (EW); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

Phenology: property now snow-free