

Newport Forest

April 17 2004

2:20 - 7:10 pm

Weather: prec. 0; sun/haze; SW < 20 kmh; LM 24 C; FCF 23 C

Purpose: Planting trees

Participants: Pat, Kee

The tree station soil has now dried to the point where I can begin to work it, extract a few trees and plant some more. The water tank must be fixed soon, especially if the spring rains fail. I measured the distance between Stake #1 and the edge of the bluff as varying between 40 & 50 cm.

Almost as soon as we arrived at the trailer, we heard the magic call of the Eastern Towhee. It was like having old friends back. Then Pat saw a Brown-headed Cowbird. They too, were back. Birds were calling everywhere. And then I saw our first Spring Azure of the year by the bushes behind the trailer.

We set out for the RSF, where Pat wanted to collect a few Virginia Bluebells for propagation. I would reline the trail. From the RL it was apparent that the TR is continuing to drop, the gravel bars now stretching another 5-6 meters further into the river than they had done last time. Along the bluffs portion of the TRT, we noticed that the Colt's Feet were blooming. This portion of the trail is very greasy in spots, owing to groundwater bleeding out of the HB above us.

We were in the RSF, pursuing our respective projects, when I heard the sound of a chainsaw running. I thought perhaps it was coming from Janik's so I dropped what I was doing and followed the RST, listening carefully. By the time I got to the RSF plot stakes, I could tell it was coming from Sittler's across the river. Walking toward the shore, I confirmed the source, but noticed an extensive area of new sand behind a relict bar that now joins the shore. (growth of point-bar?) Here I saw several patches of Virginia Bluebells. Pat came over at my urging. We both heard a tiny whining sound coming from an old BE near the edge of Plot #8. Peeping through a split in the trunk, I spied a baby raccoon, seemingly abandoned. We debated whether it was abandoned or not. I extracted the kit for a moment to feel its tummy. It seemed to have been fed recently so we decided to leave it in case the mother was still in attendance.

Returning to the trailer, we had lunch. While wandering after lunch, Pat noticed a bright red beetle crawling from under some bark on the old log. Amazingly, the "Bugs of Ontario" book had this creature in it. Thus the ID. (See new species, below.)

While Pat slept, I planted nuts recently purchased from Mathis Natvik. In each of 25 disks recently cut by our visitors from UWO, I planted four nuts: 1BN, 1BH, 1SH, 1RO. This kept me so busy that, in the end, there was no time to put in the 4 RBs I had brought down a week ago.

We left about 7 pm and drove to Rodney, where we visited Bill & Marjorie Preiksaitis in their lovely home/farm south of Rodney. Bill gave me three flats for planting: 24 Ohio Buckeye, 14 Yellow Buckeye, and about a dozen Eastern Hemlock. I was not greatly enthused about the latter, but took them because Bill seemed eager for me to have them.

New species:

Red Flat Bark Beetle *Cucujus clavipes* Tr (old log)

Birds: (20)

American Crow (EW); American Robin (ET); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (Tr); Brown-headed Cowbird (Tr); Canada Goose (LM); Common Flicker (UM); Common Grackle (UM); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Gold-crowned Kinglet (RST); Mourning Dove (UM); Northern Harrier (UM); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (LM); Red-winged Blackbird (UM); Song Sparrow (UM); Tree sparrow (UM); Turkey Vulture (UM); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr)

Phenology:

Spring Peepers calling in numbers; Eastern Towhees are back; Brown-headed Cowbirds are back; first Spring Azure; Spring Beauties in bloom; Virginia Bluebells half-bloomed