

Newport Forest

September 11 2004

2:25 - 8:05 pm

Weather: prec. 6 mm; clear; calm; LM 28 C; FCF 22 C

Purpose: to explore the gallery forest and creek bluff system

Participants: Kee

Shortly after I arrived, Harvey came in to cut some corn for his beef herd. Also, Karen's car was there and I contacted Steve by WT at the RL. By the time Harvey had gone, Steve and Karen wandered in from the river and we chatted a bit in the nook before they had to leave.

Here are some notes I took while I walked (and stumbled) my way along the 45 degree slope of the gallery forest that gives way, in patches to the open bluffs further upstream near the road: I left the FCT about 20' above the stream bed and tried to maintain that "altitude" as I worked my way through the heavily wooded lower GF, noting a Wood Frog as I went. I cut two one-metre sections of trail with my shovel to see how easily it might go. The terrain is very uneven here, with two minor "slump-gulleys" to make life difficult. They might need small plank bridges to span them. While I walked I could here the occasional pock-pock of a Chipmunk upslope.

About 100 m from the bridge, I ran into a small but robust stand of prickly ash. I also noted a lot of young ash and hickory trees, even a relatively healthy Bitternut growing right next to the creek. (Several other Bitternuts in the area were nevertheless infected with the Scolytus beetle.) I also found a few BMs that had died in the older sapling stage. A healthy Bluebeech, some Ironwood, Ninebark, Gray Dogwood (and Wingstem) grew abundantly in this area - all with dbhs ranging from 1 to 20 cm. At about 150 m from the bridge I had to cross a third, deeper ravine that will also require a small bridge (4') to span it. In this area, the trees were noticeably larger, with dbhs in the 10- to 25-centimetre range. They included Bur Oak, Hackberry, Black Walnut, Black Maple, White Ash, and one or two (ailing) Bitternut Hickories.

Nearing the 200-metre mark, I again encountered another slump ravine beyond which I found a more open area with a lot of herbaceous plants, as well as several small Bur Oak and BNH seedlings. A fifth small ravine opposite "junior's Beach" had a tangle of roots and a perfect-looking potential densite with a round, 20-cm hole amid the roots and a used-looking apron of leaves in front. It was here that I spotted a family of about 5 ducks that took off upstream, probably a mother with fully fledged young. Before the bluffs opened out into patchy bare soil, I came to

two stands of young trees separated by about 25 m of open vegetation. In the first stand, a spot check produced 8 BM, 2 WA, 1WE. In the second stand a spot check produced a count of rather young trees in the 3- to 25-cm range: 1SH, 1BM, 2HT, 2BW, 1BO, 1WA.

At the end of the second stand, I came upon the bluff erosion monitoring stake (#5). The bluffs were then largely open, with old field species mingled with bare clay. Beyond the open area, about 50 m of second-growth (young) forest extended right to the lot line with Harvey's property. Here I found a sharp bend in the creek and a very deep bed, with the creek narrowing to an astonishing 1.5 m width. (See map grid ref. H-9.) Perfect place for a simple little bridge.

I jumped the creek here and took the FCT back to the camp. Here the little black cat was waiting patiently for its meal of Friskies Seafood Treat. When I went into the trailer to get the can (previously opened) I found a Necrophorus Beetle munching happily away. (S) It must have flown into the trailer, attracted by the smell.

I took a supper of beans out to the nook, then waited as quietly as I could half way down the slope to the creek, positioning myself behind a large tree. I wanted to see if I could spot any raccoons crossing the creek, so I could tell what direction they came from. I saw two squirrels making their way home (one gray, one black), as well as what may have been the same family of ducks swimming upstream to the lower rapids where they dabbled briefly among the stones. But no raccoons at all.

New species:

Common Smartweed	<i>Polygonum hydropiper</i>	RL PD (earlier)
Gold-necked Carrion Beetle	<i>Necrophorus tomentosus</i>	Tr KD

Phenology: mosquitoes almost gone; Wingstems still have a few petals.