

Newport Forest

December 31 2004

2:40 - 5:30 pm

Weather: prec. 43 mm; ovcst; SW < 40; LM 8 C; FCF 8 C

Purpose: to get precipitation reading for end of year

Participants: Kee

With the heavy recent rains, I decided not to take the van into the property, but walked in, instead. Passing the TS, I noticed that it was completely waterlogged, with several open pools in the beds. Fleming Creek was up more than two metres, over the lower banks, but still below the terraces. (When I left, it had begun to spill over these, as well.)

I was pleased, however, to see 43 mm in the rain bucket and we now have *all* the precipitation (rain and snow) for 2004 recorded. We received 613 mm of precipitation in 2004, compared with 730 in 2003. The recent rains have reduced the snow cover on the property to 25% in the open areas and 95% in the wooded areas.

I decided to walk the TRT, noting on my way through the LM that some coyote scat had grown a coating of thick white hairs. (S) Along ET, there were lots of tracks, including deer of all sexes and ages, as well as the ski tracks of Graham Warwick, birding for the WENC December count. The TR was up substantially - to the foot of the bluffs and roaring along like a freight train. The upstream bend was still iced over, but the river was clear of ice down to the point. The water was quite muddy-looking.

Along the bluffs portion of the TRT I spotted what I thought were some new lichens, with low, crustose lobes. (S) Little did I realize that I was looking at a powder lichen I had already collected, being unable to resolve the soredia with the naked eye.

In the RSF I found many raccoon tracks, measured an average snow depth of about 7 cm. I was distracted from my peaceful walk, however, by roaring, banging and crashing noises from the river, so I made my way to the shore to see what was going on. A huge ice cake about 80 m x 40 m, was drifting downstream of the point bar, crashing into shore ice and breaking itself, with large shelves suddenly upending then being sucked under the hanging ice. If this were happening in March, I would call it "spring breakup."

In the Beech-maple portion of the RSF, I found many pools of standing water.

On the HB, Lotor was not at home, so I proceeded down to the BCF, where the old creek bed was flooded everywhere at the west end. Several cm of water overlay the slowly melting ice.

Tracks & signs:

Coyote (LM); European Hare (ET); Eastern Gray Squirrel (RSF); Raccoon (RL); (probable) Shrew (RSF); Virginia Possum (TRT/RL); White-tailed Deer (bucks, does, yearlings ET & RSF); Wild Turkey (LM);

New species: (new phylum!)

Cellular Slime Mold [*Dictyostelium*] sp. LM (coyote scat)

note: Cellular slime molds comprise the phylum Acrasiomycota, class Dictyostelia.