

Newport Forest

Saturday October 29 2005

2:00 - 7:00 pm

Weather: prec. 10 mm; RH 51%; clear; $N \leq 10$ kmh; LM 15 C; FCF 13 C

Purpose: trees & trails

Participants: Kee, Will

We stopped at the TS to pick up the 6 cedars I bought at Rae's a few weeks ago, as well as to water everything else - lightly.

At the trailer, we transferred the cedars to a wheelbarrow and trundled them down to the RL, where I selected suitable hole-sites and showed Will some planting basics. I then went down to study the beech for tracks, while Will (not a volunteer) did the heavy work. Here were a large deer, several older GBH tracks, as well as some fresh ones close to the water. Lots of raccoons and a small mammal that might just have been a young possum (dare I hope for a skunk?) Was that a bobcat track? I checked it closely. The claws had not printed but the tracks looked just a little "long." Indeed they failed the canine cross test, proving to be dog tracks after all - just the right size for an adult coyote, although one of Van Bommel's dogs can't be ruled out.

We went back to rake the two-bridge trail free of leaves. Leaf-fall is now 90% complete for most of Newport Forest. A few patches of older trees close to water are more like 50%. After a break, we went on to rake the entire TRT. While Will did this, I went to the sandbar to check the four trees there. I am amazed at the Pawpaw. Its leaves are still fresh and green! The two American Hazels are now turning, yet healthy. On the other hand, the Witch Hazel looked forlorn. It had also suffered a bad deer-nip. (As if to make up for this, we had already planted a tallish Witch Hazel in the Corner today, hopefully a good location.) Going to the river to fill a jug of water proved far from easy. The "easy" way of last spring was now a wall of clotburs and Devil's Pitchforks, wreathed about by swooning Stinging Nettles. My sweater and jacket were completely brown.

In the UM, as we stopped at the TS to unload some tools, two owls came swooping over the meadow, wheeling out over the creek bluffs, then circling back over our heads, barely 20-30' above the ground. I thought young GHOs, but if mature, could it be a nuptial flight? Siblings?

Phenology: leaves 90% off trees, GBHs still here,