

Newport Forest Tuesday August 12 2008

1:50 - 6:20 pm

Weather: prec. 36 mm; RH 64%; BP 98.94 kPa; calm; sn/cld; T 28° C

Purpose: trail maintenance

Participants: Kee, Jamie, Steve, Jeff (Nicholas)

I was pleased to see 36 mm in the rain gauge. So far we are well ahead of even 2006, our soggiest year to date. At this rate, our total precip could come to 1200 mm!

Steve arrived late, so we headed to the river bluffs with a sense of lost time to be made up. With three 40-minute work periods, we succeeded in cutting back and scraping the entire trail from the bluffs, through the point bar forest, the inland (BM) forest and up the HB to the top, where we met with the trail cleared last week. It was like driving the last spike in the transcontinental railroad!

Along the way, I noticed a small, iridescent-looking orb weaver which I clapped into a vial for later examination. It turned out to be a female Orchard spider. I thought we had already logged this species, since it is very common, but a check of the records revealed that we had not.

Clearing the trail ahead of the groomers, I was constantly running into *Micrathenas* which, for the most part, the crew dutifully ducked under as they went. (It takes hours to make an orb web.) The *Micrathena* (2 spp.) is probably the most common spider (of those readily visible) on the property.

Back in the camp, I went over to the Turkey nest which I had been avoiding for the last two weeks. Since Nina reported seeing a hen out with newly hatched chicks this morning, I expected to see an empty nest. All that remained were a few broken eggshells. In spite of the possibility that Raccoons had raided the nest, the evidence favoured a successful hatch.

Note: this was one of the best crews I have worked with. Steve is Unami Delaware and Jamie & Jeff are Oneida. We get on well with natives and I generally prefer them for conservation work.

New species:

Orchard Spider

Laucage venusta

RB KD Au12/08