

Site Visit Report

Newport Forest Tuesday January 6 2009 2:30 - 4:40 pm

weather: prec. 19 mm; RH n/a; BP 97.76 kPa; calm; ovcast; T -2° C
purpose: trail maintenance
participants: Kee, Brian

An astounding jumble of hanging ice-sheets greeted us we drove into the property. We discovered that a record flood had come almost up to the LM (Lower Meadow)!. We took the chain saw into the BCF (Blind Creek Forest) and found ourselves almost unable to proceed. Some of the ice-cakes were two inches thick and six to ten feet across, scattered like broken window glass throughout the woods. leaning crazily against bush or tree, crushing the smaller saplings and presenting a crazy landscape of uncertain footing. I fell three times, Brian once. Making my way gingerly across what seemed a firm sheet, I suddenly broke through finding myself up to my chest in a large hollow space with a wet bottom, shoes in slime.

We found sections of trail peeking through here and there. We cut one old elm that had fallen across the trail, but decided to leave the remaining deadfall for another day. About 20 more mature Bitternuts had fallen over, long dead from the Scolytus beetle attacks of 2004/05 (indirect drought effect). Camera #2 (at the bend in ET (Edgar's Trail)) had been immersed in four feet of water at flood crest. We removed it to take home. I replaced batteries in #1 and changed cards in #1 and #3.

Retreating from the woods, we contented ourselves with placing bud protectors on some 40 trees in the RZ (Regeneration Zone). Deer have nipped several of the shorter trees rather severely. leaving no leaders at all. I found the following tracks around the trailer and along the LM: Virginia Deer, Raccoon, Coyote; Virginia Possum, not to mention dozens of tracks made by Meadow Voles and White-footed Mice. I saw two Voles dive under the trailer.

Heavy winds had torn the tarp from the canoe and shredded it in the process (the tarp, not the canoe). Being unable to find the canoe cartop blocks, we decided to tow the canoe up to the gate, Brian sitting in the back of the van holding two steering ropes. It worked very well and we stowed the canoe in Edgar's garage until warmer weather. The wind has torn the TTLT sign from the farm gate. The TTLT should select a more permanent backing material for such signs.

IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



hanging ice in the Fleming Creek Forest: at flood crest, backed-up water is stationary long enough for a (sometimes thick) layer of ice to form. As the flood subsides, the ice floats at progressively lower levels until it comes to rest, momentarily on tree branches, cracking here and there, etc. etc.

(click on image to enlarge)



Brian stands at ice limit. Behind him is the edge of the LM

(click on image to enlarge)



Cam #1 caught a nice doe . . .

(click on image to enlarge)

(click on image to enlarge)



. . . and Cam #2 caught the flood coming in. It must have crested that night, because the last few shots are black. Then the camera probably went fzzzt-sizzle-blorb-skronk etc



a beautifully graphic illustration of the flood crest (hanging ice residue) in the Fleming Creek valley