

# Site Visit Report

Newport Forest Saturday March 28 2009 2:00 - 7:00 pm

weather: prec. 7 mm; RH 66%; 98.6 kPa; sn/hz; calm; T 16° C  
purpose: trail maintenance  
participants: Pat, Kee

We stopped at Edgar's Garage to see how the chainsaw course was coming. The instructor seemed to have things well in hand and the audience of 6 was attentive and focused. The property was dry enough to drive to the LM without fear of getting stuck or creating ruts. The frog chorus was somewhat subdued (we had expected the usual cacophony for this time of the season), but other signs were all on schedule and in place: Trout Lilies are up about 2", grasses and sedges are typically an inch or more, and the Virginia Bluebells are up about 2". Sitting in the Nook, we began our bird record for the day. "Was that a Towhee calling?" I checked the phenology charts (now under preparation for the Ten Year Study Volume): "It says here March 27 to April 17, so they'd be pretty much on time if they are here." Pat recorded one (black-phase) Eastern Grey Squirrel, the Red Squirrel that has been hanging around the camp lately, and several Chipmunks that eagerly ferried cheeksful of seeds from the tray feeders to their underground nests.

We removed the remaining bud protectors in the RZ (regeneration zone for those joining us late). We then went to the river. I changed the cards in Game Cans #1 and #3 along the way. (See end of report for scenes). The river is down, but still covers MB (Mussel Beach). Fleming Creek is running fast and about a foot above its normal level. While Pat divided her attention between birds and newly emerging plants, I worked my way from the RL (River Landing) to the top of the bluffs trail, marking flood-obscured parts of the trail with yellow surveyors flags.

I lost the trail and found it several times in the RSF before I even got to the BW (Bluebell Woods) sector of the RSF (Riverside Forest). The Virginia Bluebells are up in even greater numbers than last year. The patch, which used to measure about 10 m x 20 m, now extends over 110 m, from the original patch and downriver to territory where we've never seen them before. They seem to like the sand/silt sediments brought in by the frequent floods. There may be a special nutrient that gets deposited along with the floods (possibly emanating from the sinks & toilets of London). In any case they're thriving.

I made a rough measurement of the length of trail that intersects the bluebell area. It came to about 30 m before bending into the Boxelder component of the RSF. Note to Trail Bees: There remain about a dozen VBs still sprouting into the trail -- or uncomfortably close to the edges. Any horticultural person among you should bring a trowel and out-plant these specimens to "frontier areas" where there is more space.

I had just gotten into the Box Elders when Pat called on the WT (walkie talkie or Wild Turkey, depending on context). "Darren is here." Apparently the chain saw course had finished for the day and Darren Jacobs (member of Stewards Committee) had decided to make a visit. He walked into the woods to meet me. He was finding the course very interesting and useful and now felt a lot more confident in the use of his own chain saw. The course will not only enable him to cut on site, but will enhance his contract work at Rondeau.

Darren pointed out some Wild Leeks emerging here and there among the bluebells, (Two years ago the Oneidas had put the leaves into their baloney sandwiches, suggesting that I do the same; delicious!) On the way out of the BCF, Darren spotted an Eastern Towhee sitting quietly in a tree near the trail watching us, as if to say, "Of course I'm here. Take a good look!" Back at the Nook, Pat explained how she had cut a lot of Multiflora Rose here and there in the BCF on her way back from the river.

birds: (20)

American Crow\* (EW); American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (LM); Black-capped Chickadee (LM); Brown Creeper (GF); Canada Goose (TR); Common Grackle (GF); Dark-eyed Junco (UM); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Eastern Towhee (LM/HBF); Hairy Woodpecker (GF); House Sparrow (Rd); Northern Cardinal (RL); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-winged Blackbird (ER); Song Sparrow (LM); Turkey Vulture (WM); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF); White-throated Sparrow (BCF/R); Wild Turkey (EW) [strange: no blue jays!]

\* a flock of about 2 doz may have been mobbing an owl over EW.

ADVICE FOR TRAIL BEES: The trail is now well enough marked by yellow flags that, when you see it going UNDER a drift pile or tangle of dead trees, vines and drift, DO NOT attempt to avoid the obstacle by changing the trail. Clean out the obstacle. The trail is the trail.

## IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



trail with flags:

(click on image to enlarge)



Virginia Bluebells emerging

(click on image to enlarge)



Wild Leeks emerging

(click on image to enlarge)



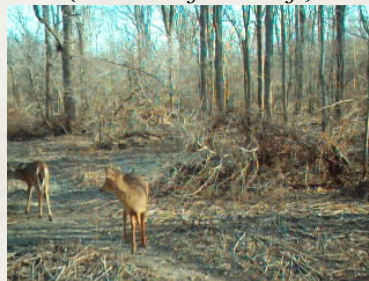
wild turkeys at Cam #1 (Wild Turkey cam frequencies are up markedly)

(click on image to enlarge)



Deer (buck?) sniffing measuring post at Cam #1

(click on image to enlarge)



Doe & yearling pass Cam #3 ) "Finish sniffing the bench, already. We haven't got all day!"