

Site Visit Report

Newport Forest Sunday May 3 2009 2:15 - 8:15 pm

weather: prec. 21 mm; RH 39 %; BP 99.1 kPa; SW 0-10 km/h; clr; T 22° C
purpose: birdwatching and trailer organizing
participants: Pat. Kee

First the weather: so far we are right up there with 2008 our best year for rainfall in the entire millennium! (400 mm) Second, the birds: although the Orioles and Yellowthroats do not seem to be back yet, we had plenty of birds to keep us busy. You could shut your eyes and get 20 spp. by ear -- all were calling. We are turning into a Grosbeak reserve; males were calling everywhere! (a dozen?) They sounded like a choir of Robins on LSD. Speaking of sounds, the call of the male cowbird is peculiar; it sounds like a jug of water being pouted into a glass.

As we reorganized the trailer, a scruffy-looking female raccoon came to eat bird seed. (The flooded creek may have kept her away from her day-nest for a while -- does she have kits somewhere?). Beeflies and Bumblebees were everywhere and lots of Emerald Tiger Beetles were about, as well.

I walked the TRT, changing the cam cards as I went. On the river bluffs, a kingfisher flashed by, just feet away from me, then a Cardinal in the opposite direction. The Juneberries on the bluffs are all in bloom. Deep in the RSF, the Virginia Bluebells are now at their peak and the Trilliums are all in full bloom on the slope of the HB. I noted as I walked the TRT that the trail bees had failed to clear several log blockages (owing perhaps to their enthusiasm for cutting snags). We will have to clear these ourselves. All the beeches I've planted in the BCF are thriving and growing. This may seem surprising, but in "Harvey's" floodplain woodlot next door, beeches are dominant in several areas. So they like it here. I took a sample from one of the overflow vernal ponds.

Back at camp, I prepared several more mulching shields and installed them. This is my attempt to kill off the grasses that crowd the trees and steal their nitrogen. The shields are made of shade cloth and the ground staples are made from recycled flag wires. We'll see how effective they are. While Pat was birdwatching at The Hole, she saw a Green darter zip by, still full of P&V after its trip from the tropics. We both noted that the Chipmunks are back in business while the Red Squirrel is absent. This exclusion business is looking less and less like a statistical accident!

The trees in the RZ are going gangbusters. On the trees nipped by deer, the lateral buds are taking over for the missing axial ones. This is to be expected, of course, but I've never seen such "vigorous" axial buds before. Maybe (just maybe) it's a sign of stellar growth to come. I found two colonies of tent caterpillars and gave them both an insecticide treatment. One species of tree that has taken with exceptional enthusiasm are the butternuts that we planted 2-3 years ago. These will make company for the butternuts in Betty Purcell's bush across the road.

birds: (28)

American Goldfinch (LM); American Robin (RL); American Tree Sparrow (GF); Belted Kingfisher (RL); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Blue Jay (GF); Brown-headed Cowbird (Rd/UM); Canada Goose (FCF); Common Grackle (GF); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Eastern Towhee (FCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Great Crested Flycatcher (GF); Hairy Woodpecker (GF); Kildeer (TR); Mourning Dove (ER); Northern Cardinal (RL); Red-bellied Woodpecker (FCF); Red-tailed Hawk (EW); Red-winged Blackbird (UM); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (FCF); Song Sparrow (UM); Tree Swallow (Rd/UM); Turkey Vulture (UM); Yellow Warbler (GF); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF); Wild Turkey (BCF); Wood Thrush (FCF)

new species:

Spiral Euglena *Euglena spirogyra* VP/BCF KD My03/09
Max Synedra *Synedra ulna* VP/BCF KD My03/09

IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



A black Cherry with mulch-cloth (note tent at lower fork)

(click on image to enlarge)



The trilliums are out and the . . .

(click on image to enlarge)



. . . Bluebells are peaking

(click on image to enlarge)



and who doesn't love those robust hickory buds?