

# Tree Planting and a River Run

Newport Forest Saturday November 21 2009 2:00 - 5:30 pm

weather: prec. 9 mm; RH 80%; BP 29.62"; calm; clr; T 11° C  
purpose: plant trees; overnight stay; trip down river  
participants: Kee, Erin (in part)

When Erin arrived, we set right into planting the remaining trees (maples & oaks) until we were done, with enough time to visit the river and assess the landing. It was treacherously slippery and one could even see slips made by deer as they followed the shoreline. Before she left, Erin passed along the depressing news that the Asian Carp, which has virtually destroyed fish populations in the Mississippi system, has breached the one remaining barrier to entering the Great Lakes -- a canal lock adjoining Lake Michigan. Might be just a few years before the Thames is "gone." (see below)

I set up camp for an overnight stay, having promised friends at Moraviantown that we would go down there in flotilla on the morrow. My evening was uneventful in the raccoon department. On those rare occasions where they don't show up at all, it is due either to the presence of predators or the attractions of a nearby cropland and its gleanings. Before setting out for a night walk, I noticed a flying squirrel at the Hickory feeder. (still around)

On my walk, I noticed that Delbert Sitler's old shack across the river had come alive with visitors, lights on, diesel generator humming into the night. Probably deer hunters. On the BCF side of the trail I startled some Wild Turkeys roosting overhead, but not with the usual crashing of giant wings and shower of dead twigs & branches. Perhaps they're getting used to me.

The night was still. The sky cleared partially around midnight, with a low of 5° C and a light ground fog developing. I slept well.

In the morning, the canoists did not arrive at the expected time, so I birdwatched until their arrival at noon. The bird of the day was the Tufted Titmouse that showed up at the feeders, along with a plethora of other birds.

We set out around noon, enjoying a leisurely paddle in the balmy weather. We spotted several eagles, passed Suckertown, then a bank with trees gnawed down by beavers, then a beaver lodge and several "slides" used to skid materials down the steep banks to the water. I hadn't realized how plentiful these animals are along the Thames. We passed Stink Creek (see photo below), a channel of milky groundwater effluent from sulphurous shales to the north. We arrived at M-town just before sundown and Steve Logan ran me back to the property in his truck. Back at Newport, I closed up camp, changed the cam card and headed home.

birds: (12)

American Crow (FCF); American Robin (BCF); Bald Eagle (TR); Black-capped Chickadee (Tr); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Hairy Woodpecker (GF); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (GF); Tufted Titmouse (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (BCF)

## IMAGES:

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*The Asian Carp is one big brute. American fishermen caught these monsters, possibly near the Michigan locks.*

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*our "flotilla" sets out . . .*

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*Stink Creek outlet: note milky effluent near bank*

*(click on image to enlarge)*



*Raccoons at trail cam respond to bait (several images with two animals)*