

## Work Day: A Success!

Newport Forest Saturday April 10 2010 12:35 - 4:30 pm

weather: prec. 43 mm; RH 68%; BP 102.1; clr; SSW 10- kmh; T 14° C  
purpose: TTLT volunteer Work Day  
participants: Kee + ≥ 20 TTLT volunteers

By the time I pulled up to the farm gate at 12:30, the road was literally lined with cars and the upper meadow was swarming with volunteers armed with loppers and axes. Fearing for my safety, I walked down to the trailer to take the weather and change the SD card on the game cam. I had predicted between 50 and 60 mm based on my Google Earth based analysis of the radar images. However, there was a mere 43 mm in the rain gauge -- still not bad. On the way back I found diminutive deer prints on the track, a sign that fawns are now a-dropping.

I walked back to the UM to find the line crew back from the West Ravine, having successfully driven the new posts and bolted on the signs. By 4 pm, as people began to break for home, there were a good 20 chest-high stacks of cut hawthorns dotting the meadow. Ground-nesting open country birds once again have (we hope) good habitat. The tree nursery had been cleaned up as well, with all woody debris carted away, including old pots, growing frames, etc. Jane Bowles agreed that with a little thought we might come up with a new use for the space.

Thames-Talbot thanks all the volunteers who made today's work such a success.

At this point, Pete Chapman declared that he had never been in Newport Forest proper and would I mind giving him a tour? Mhairi (pronounced as in the Gaelic, "Vary") MacFarlane of the NCC and Brent Sinclair (recent addition to UWO Biology) joined in and we went down to the camp to walk the Thames River Trail (TRT). Passing through Bluebell Woods, we saw that the Virginia Bluebells were just beginning to bloom, a full week earlier than our earliest phenology record for this plant. Since Pete is a pretty good birder, the walk proved very productive for the day's list. Earlier the line crew had spotted an Eastern Phoebe and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the West Ravine. Pete heard a Pileated Woodpecker and spotted a Sharp-shinned Hawk up on the Hogsback. (best bird of the day) We started two Wood Ducks from Vernal Pond A, as well. Mhairi's sharp eyes caught two Black Blister Beetles in the act (see photos below) and Pete's sharp ears also picked up some Wood Frogs calling from the west end of the swamp, calls I must have missed on earlier visits.

By the time we regained the UM, everyone had left.

birds: (18)

American Crow (FCF); American Robin (ER); Black-capped Chickadee (BCF); Canada Goose (FC); Common Flicker (BCF); Downy Woodpecker (BCF); Eastern Phoebe (WR); Field Sparrow (UM); Great Blue Heron (TR); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Pileated Woodpecker (RSF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (RSF); Sharp-shinned Hawk (HB); Song Sparrow (LM); Tree Swallow (Rd); Turkey Vulture (RSF); Wood Duck (VP-A); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (WR);

volunteers: (20+)

Muriel Andreae, Jane Bowles, Heather Campbell, Stan Caveney, Erin Carroll, Pete Chapman, Dave Dougherty, Darren Jacobs, Terry Keep, Andre LaChance, Steve Logan, Mhairi MacFarlane, Ken Murray, Nancy Murray, H. Quigly (?), Gordon Saylor, Brent Sinclair, Bernie VandenBelt, B. Wheeler, R. Wheeler  
(with apologies for misspelled or omitted names)

phenology: Wood Frogs calling; Eastern Commas and Mourning Cloaks emerged, Virginia Bluebells at half-bloom, deer birthing

## IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)

(click on image to enlarge)

(click on image to enlarge)



The water truck makes a delivery to the Drought Buster (Brad Carruthers & his tri-axle tanker)



The Virginia Bluebell patch seems to get a little bigger every year. Here, mixed with False Solomon's Seal, Wild Leek and a few other species, the Bluebells extend for well over 100 metres to a pile of river drift in the distance, picking up again on the other side, albeit more sparsely.



Waldo heads off to work early -- around 6:30 pm last friday.

Volunteers take a break by the tree nursery. Thanks to all who brought sweets & refreshments!

Virginia Bluebells at early stage of bloom

Two Black Blister Beetles in flagro delecti

Ahhh, spring!

Spring Beauties fully out: