

Re-Forest: Second Planting

Newport Forest Wednesday October 20 2010 2:20 - 5:15 pm

weather: prec. 0 mm; RH 51%; BP 102,8 kPa; SSW 25 kmh; sn/hz; T 19° C

purpose: to plant trees

participants: Kee

A strong wind from the SSW blew almost all afternoon. I planted one of the three remaining American Beeches at Edgar's Elbow (bend in the trail) and the other two along the Fleming Creek Trail half way down to the creek. Not planning to wear myself out, I planted the remaining White Oak by the farm track at the bottom of the Lower Meadow. This left just a dozen trees to go in next weekend.

I was pleased to see a pair of Red-tailed Hawks circling above Harvey's Bean Field. I went to the river to check the water level, finding that Mussel Beach is now half exposed. As I stood there examining tracks in the soft, slimy (and treacherous) clay, a Green Frog made a hasty exit into the water's edge.

I then relaxed in the Nook for a while, delighted to see a Tufted Titmouse and even more delighted a little later, to see a Purple Finch. (See today's bird list.) Coming in to the property, I would have predicted another no-bird day. Not so!

Birds: (10)

American Crow (FCF); American Gold Finch (Tr); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Blue Jay (LM); Downy Woodpecker (GF); Purple Finch (Tr); Red-tailed Hawk (EW); Screech Owl (Hole); Tufted Titmouse (GF); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr);

Best Bird Purple Finch. We see one of these every year or three.

Phenology: Deer becoming active as rutting season approaches. Trail cam caught part of a buck's antlers two weeks ago and yesterday picked up the ear (only) of a passing doe. (We rarely get deer shots outside of the fall season.)

IMAGES:



Open field plantings require a large disc to exclude grass roots which rob nitrogen from nearby soil. Discs also serve to accumulate rain. Here is our latest White Oak at the edge of the Lower Meadow.



Trail cam catches owl: A Screech Owl (confirmed by Dave Martin) in the middle of the Hole (trail cam station), possibly with prey too small to make out. Ear tufts not showing: absent or laid back (?) Length of bird = 21 cm approx.

Body faces left, head swiveled toward cam. (Must have picked up the sound of rushing electrons!) Note: time stamp on cam clock is out by about 7 hr since battery failure. Must be reset.



Local History: I took some pictures of tobacco curing sheds in the Wardsville area in 2001, just as tobacco farmers were being forced out of business by cheaper tobacco from China and the Amazon basin. The sheds have long since been dismantled.

For much of the 20th century tobacco farmers gave seasonal employment to high school students, Natives, immigrants and others willing to do the backbreaking work of priming and picking -- unless you were lucky enough to work off a tractor.