

Newport Forest

Thursday August 18 2011

1:55 - 7:00 pm

Weather: prec. 7 mm; RH 61%; BP 101.6 kPa; sn/hz; calm; T 32° C

Purpose: Trail maintenance

Participants: Kee, Steve Logan

The reality of managing a conservation property implies a mix of maintenance with monitoring. While not our favorite activity in the world, trail maintenance is necessary to keep Newport Forest accessible. Moreover, it's healthy work. Today I tried to keep the ATBI ball rolling, even as Steve's weedeater whined and zipped its way through vegetation on the trail. Scraping with a hoe, I might spot something, run for my camera, then find the critter gone.

We set out for the river, but did not start cutting until we got up on the bluffs. The general rule is that trails in shade need far less maintenance than ones in open sun. With yet more rainfall in the gauge today, there were fungi sprouting everywhere. On the bluffs I managed to collect several more specimens of the suspected "Curry Milky", hoping to confirm it with fresher specimens. (At home I could not confirm it so began to reconsider the Zoned Milky.) We stopped to listen at the "honey tree" an old snag that is home to a large colony of wild bees.

In the Riverside Forest, we took a detour to the Sandbar, a stretch of riverbank that is accumulating sand very rapidly, owing to winter floods. The Sandbar has some of the thickest vegetation anywhere on site, this year worse than ever, thanks to all the rain. It was the first time in my life that Stinging Nettle attacked my face instead of my arms! Amid rumbling from dark clouds overhead, we re-cut the trail right to the top of the sandbar, then returned to the main trail. On the way to the Hogsback we noticed many Russulas, Milkys, Oysters, Mycenas, and others. As well, we spotted a juvenile Wood Frog and American Toad on the trail.

Steve pointed out an Eastern Gray Squirrel up on the Hogsback and, when we descended into the Blind Creek Forest, there was another young Wood Frog on the trail. Sitting out on Edgar's Trail, waiting for Steve to finish with the weedeater, I noticed a new species, a small all-black day-flying moth with a white bar across each forewing. Unfortunately, it flew away before I could photograph it. Was it the White-striped Black moth (*Trichodezia albovittata*)? Another miss!

Steve also groomed the trail down to the creek before we left for the Rez. Out on the road, several very large horse flies began to buzz the van, landing on the hot metal shell, then taking off again. There, at least, I got a few images.

New Species:

“Red-legged Horsefly” [*Tabanus catenatus*] Rd KD Au18/11

Note: After checking several dozen horsefly images on the web, not to mention a few reference books, I am not yet certain of this ID, which is therefore placed in provisional brackets. The fly in question is merely closest to this species in its characters than any other I have yet reviewed. *T. catenatus* is a) known from Skunk’s Misery, b) varies from blackish to reddish in overall coloration, and c) is a rather close match in general pattern to the specimen at hand, except for having shorter abdominal stripes. I have sent my best image to Steve Marshall.

IMAGES:



In the Blind Creek Forest the Wingstem plants along the trail are rather higher than normal -- up to 2.5 metres.

Below: Oyster mushrooms bedeck the log of a fallen Bitternut.

