

Oc11/12

Newport Forest
Monitoring Nature

846

Date & Time: Thursday October 11 2012

Weather: Pr 3 mm; RH 54%; BP 102.3 kPa; clear; SW 5-50 kmh; T 15° C

Activity: Kee does a limited walkabout while Steve paints the trailer.

“You sound like you have that cold that’s going around!” It was the voice of a Tim Horton’s employee coming through the drive-thru speaker. At the window, she told me she’d had it for nine days! Fighting my cold, I drove into the site with a 60 km/hr wind assist. Trees were whipping as Steve gave the trailer a new paint job. “It’ll dry out pretty quick with this wind,” he said.

My energy was low, so I decided not to push things beyond a walk to the river, noting the beauty of sunlight on a wild Clematis called Virgin’s Bower (now in seed) along Edgar’s Trail. The forest gave some relief from the roaring wind.



At the river I sat on the Bluffs bench for about 20 minutes, seeing nothing more

exciting than three Canada Geese taking off for an unscheduled flight to parts unknown. On the way back, I dug a little more of my test hole at the Elbow, searching for the buried rapids of Blind Creek. I am now down 15 inches and the soil has become extremely hard to dig. It didn't dawn on me until later that the reason for the hardness was that Harvey Newport and his crew of tree-cutting brothers used to skid hardwood logs to market along that very trail. Wouldn't heavy equipment tend to compactify the earth? Maybe it would be better to dig a test hole in a neck of land between another pair of adjacent vernal pools.

Back in the Nook I took a break with Steve, noting a spider hunting near my feet. (See IMAGES below.) Steve said the virus has hit the Rez, as well. He also mentioned that a brief hail storm struck Chatham (near Moraviantown) just last night. Then he had to go. I hung around long enough to change the sd cards on the trail cams. (mostly pics of me walking by)

On the Longwoods Road (Highway 2) back to London, it occurred to me simply to cut the engine and let the wind blow me home -- snuffling all the way.

Phenology: 60-75% of canopy trees in the BCF are now bare.

Precipitation Report:

Precipitation over year to date (incl. H2O equiv. in snow) shows three years of drought-level precipitation, with a fourth about to be added, apparently. Regional average precipitation is 973 mm and our local "drought" baseline is 685 mm annually. A long-term average below this figure would result in loss of most of our trees and a vegetational shift to dry-climate species. Bad years are bolded below.

2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
528	1027	606	799	844	844	870	515	440

TTLT Newport Forest Work Day

It's still "on", with forecasts looking increasingly better through time. Predicted high is a balmy 14° C, with only a 40% POP. Work day runs from 1 to 4 pm, with many exciting projects to be involved in.

IMAGES:



Lumix camera catches a Nursery Web Spider (Pisauridae) hunting over leaves in the Nook. A close cousin to Wolf Spiders, the Pisaurids pursue a similar life style, but females carry their eggs in a sac attached to their spinnerets. The species shown here, *Pisaurina mira*, is widespread and common throughout the eastern US and adjacent Canada. If you memorize the delicate wavy white border on the abdomen and carapace, you'll recognize it every time you see it.



I have been noticing these strange-looking jet contrails over the last few years, puzzled at how they always persist, spreading into linear cirrus-type clouds. I mentioned them to a friend. “Oh, you’ve been looking at what they call ‘chemtrails’”, he said. I googled the word and found what he was talking about. Weather modification? For what purpose?

A sequence can be seen in the image above. The first plane to pass over left a trail that has spread somewhat. The second plane left the medium-sized trail and the third plane passed over just before I took this image. Apart from items found on the web, all I can tell anyone is that the jets usually have four engines, while commercial jets usually have just two. And sometimes the trails cut off abruptly, only to start again further on. Normal contrails disappear within a few seconds to a minute.

Another Newport Forest mystery!