

**Date & time:** Saturday April 5 2014 2:00 - 3:30 pm

**Weather:** Pr 7 mm; RH 42%; BP 102.2 kPa; sun/cloud; N 5-15 kmh; T 9° C

**Activity:** Stewards Meeting and brief visit to property

The first 1.5 hours of our visit were spent at the Stewards Meeting held at the home of Nina and Edgar Hurdle across from the property gate. (summary below)

Following the meeting, Darren and I (Kee) took Darren's Jeep down to the trailer to do a quick assessment of spring's progress and to install a new trail camera. We walked to the river, crossing Blind Creek. Its vernal ponds are now fully charged, as below. We heard a Pileated Woodpecker at work, then saw it fly overhead. Both



the river and Fleming Creek were in flood, a good two metres above normal levels. The creek has spilled well over its banks, inundating the Fleming Creek Forest, while the river had risen half way up the landing to our trail. The river was the source of flooding, as usual. The current rolled past our eyes at the pace of a fast walk, while the creek had merely backed up into a muddy lake that barely moved.

Darren had his camera set on a monopod as he angled for some images of Canada Geese across the river without alarming them. Earlier, while parking outside the meeting, he had spied a muskrat swimming across Fleming Creek. He paused to take a video and several stills. We continued last week's new monitoring scheme but omitted checking tree conditions as too little time remained to do so.

	snow cover	depth
Lower Meadow	0%	n/a
Blind Creek Forest	≈ 0.1%	5 cm
vernal ponds	well-charged & ice-free	

	ice cover	depth
Fleming Creek	0%	≈ 2 m (flooded)
Thames River	0%	≈ 2 m (flooded)

state of ground      thawed to 12 cm or completely in some places

We set up the new trail cam, the others having given up the ghost, then departed for the Upper Meadow and main road. Driving out was mildly tricky.

**Birds:** (11) American Robin (Hole); Blue Jay (Tr); Canada Goose (TR); Killdeer (Rd); Mourning Dove (EW); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Pileated Woodpecker (BCF); Red-tailed Hawk (Rd); Turkey Vulture (LM); White-breasted Nuthatch (BCF); Wild Turkey (EW) **Note:** No Sparrows seen/heard in 2014 (one “maybe”)

**Tracks and sightings:** Eastern Cottontail; Eastern Gray Squirrel; Muskrat; Virginia Deer (Nina reported seeing 14 deer at one time in the Upper Meadow recently.)

**Stewards Meeting Summary:** Present: Pat Dewdney (Chair), Erin Carroll, Kee Dewdney, Marg Hulls, Nina Hurdle, Darren Jacobs. Other commitments: Donald Craig, Bruce Parker. The Stewards met to arrange upcoming events and to discuss the management plan for the Upper Meadow. The Committee decided to recommend a successional thicket which is easier to maintain than grass. However the TTLT will make the final decision. Plans are proceeding for the new fence, but much road work must be carried out by the County first.

**Coming Events:**

Sunday, April 13 1-4 pm: TTLT Work Day, bring gloves, loppers or pruners

Saturday May 10 1 pm: Wildflower Walk along the Thames River Trail  
Saturday June 21 2pm: Dedication of memorial plaque for Jane Bowles

**IMAGES:**



A nice long shot across the river, but not representative of Darren's best work. He has taken some stunning bird photos - enough for an exhibition I would think. The Muskrat below was an even longer shot. You don't always get your choice of foreground, but there it was!

