Date and time: Sunday August 24 2014 2:05 - 5:50 pm
Weather: Pr 0 mm; RH 78%; BP 102.1 kPa; cld/sun; SE 5 kmh; T 28º C
Activity: Continuing mussel inventory of Mussel Beach

Before going to Newport Forest, we drove to the heart of the Skunks Misery forest complex where the Thames Talbot Land Trust had arranged a dedication ceremony to celebrate the donation of a 65-acre forested tract by Elaine Bebensee, formerly a local resident. This brings to four the number of sections or tracts within the complex now held in perpetuity by the Trust — including Newport Forest.

TTLT honchos pose for *The Bulletin* during a refreshment break: left to right: Linda McDougall, Board Chair; Stan Caveney, Land Securement; and Suzanne McDonald-Aziz, TTLT Director.

On the property we worked out a plan of action that took into account our respective mobility problems. Pat would look for new specimens while I worked my way along the beach, identifying every mussel I encountered, except the ones I found difficult. These went into a bucket for later examination at home. In this manner we worked our way as far as the second lagoon, encountering a dead Sucker on the way. We finally called it quits, owing to the doubly hot sun (direct and reflected from the river) and aching backs.

On the way back Pat spotted a curious-looking ant-like insect on the beach that I

thought might be one of the ant-mimic beetles. However, a clear image later revealed it to be a Velvet Ant, the first member of that family we have found on the property. She also drew my attention to a Black-horned Tree Cricket at the landing. I spotted a Diamondback Spittlebug on the trail back as well as a small Mangora spider. Pat then found a nymphal Ground Cricket. Most of the crickets and grasshoppers examined in recent weeks appear to be still in the nymphal stage and often hard to identify without experience. I tend to leave them alone. In the Nook, finally, Pat found a Leiobunum harvestman that (thanks to extended photographic resources in this order) can now be tentatively identified as on the list of new species below.

A Garter Snake and Brown Snake were both recently seen on site. Where are the Redbellied, Ribbon and Hognosed Snakes?

Birds: (10)
American Crow (LM); Blue Jay (GF); Common Grackle (GF); Field Sparrow (UM); Gray Catbird (RL); Mourning Dove (UM/ER); Northern Roughwinged Swallow (TR); Red-bellied Woodpecker (BCF); Song Sparrow (GF); Spotted Sandpiper (TR)

New Species:

Black-eyed Harvestman	*Leiobunum* [*flavum*]	GF pdKD Au24/14
Diamondback Spittlebug	*Lepyronia angulifera*	ET KD Au24/14
'Black-tailed Velvet Ant'	*Timulla* [*vagans*]	MB pdKD Au24/14
Stable Fly	*Stomoxys calcitrans*	ET KD Au24/14
Plain Pocketbook (mussel)	*Lampsilis cardium*	MB pdKD Au24/14

Species Notes:

1. We used the wrong name for the Agrimony Leafroller Moth in the previous issue. It should have been *Anacamsis agrimoniella* and not *Syncopacma larseniella* (White Strap Sober - England & Europe) Both moths are Gelechiids.
2. The reason for square brackets in the name of the Velvet Ant is that most specimens of this ant have a reddish flush at the front of an otherwise identical striped abdomen. This one didn't. Such colour variations are not unusual in general.
3. I thought the Stable Fly was unusually passive on its twig by the path, It turned out to be dead, but somehow stuck there in any case.

IMAGES:

The spectacular Pelecinid wasp known as *Pelecinus polyturator* was parked on this leaf as Pat passed it on the trail. Total length of wasp would be about five cm, with some individuals up to seven cm long. The species usually reproduces parthenogenetically, not requiring the eggs to be fertilized. Presumably the eggs will all develop into females. Males are encountered occasionally (no doubt feeling a bit useless). The range extends through the warmer regions of all three Americas.

The Ridged Wedge Mussel (*Alasmidonta marginata*) on the left and the Plain Pocketbook (*Lampsilis cardium*) on the right represent two moderately common mussels in the Thames system. The valves of the Wedge Mussel are brown with faint green rays radiating from the beak (at the top). The valves of the (female) Pocketbook are heavily worn, exposing the whitish shell beneath the outer skin.

But what or who made the two holes in the Pocketbook? I thought they looked like bullet holes. Pat had the more likely theory that a waterbird like the Great Blue Heron made the holes to get at the morsel inside.