

Date and time: Monday December 09 2014 2:05 - 4:50 pm

Weather: Pr 25 mm; RH 54%; BP 102.6 kPa; calm; overcast/sun; T 6° C

Activity: Clearing trails.

I met Steve Logan on site, along with his friend Neil up from New Jersey for a visit to Moraviantown. The plan was to walk the trails to assess tree damage and to clear what we could. The largest of the downed trees was one of the last giant willows that grew along Blind Creek — in the early days before Fleming Creek found a new outlet on the river. Three gigantic stems lay splayed out in the woods,



as above, the one to the right blocking the Blind Creek Trail (off camera). Besides the large willow, we found three other trees over the trail. Steve and Neil continued on up and over the Hogsback, while I headed back to the River Trail. On the north side of the Hogsback, Steve and Neil started three does that fled through the Riverside Forest toward the river. These were followed by a large flock of fleeing Wild Turkeys as the two descended into the woods. They found only one more tree over the trail, this one in the Bluebell Woods section next to the river. Here they were entertained by two Bald Eagles, flying downriver, then up again.

Meanwhile, on the trail back to camp, I ran across some curious fungal “buttons” that I’m not even sure are fungi. All on a rotting log. Further on I came to the spot

where earlier the three of us had come upon signs of the predation of a large hawk. Steve had been first to spot some feathers and fluff balls scattered on the ground beneath a tall elm, as in the IMAGES below. He surmised that a hawk had been attacked and predated by another hawk. I coveted one of the attractive feathers but was reminded of a tradition among native North Americans: I would have to “pay” for the feather by leaving some tobacco (a sacred substance) in exchange. That would please the Creator. Looking at the feather later, I thought it resembled some owl feathers I had found several years ago — which doesn’t make the mystery any easier to solve.

After changing the trail cam sd cards, I got a walkie-talkie call from Steve. They were heading back to camp. We took a break in the trailer to warm ourselves and catch up on Neil’s news. We all left shortly before sunset.

Trail Cam Report: The following animals showed up at The Hole over the last two weeks: Dec 4 4:55 pm Virginia Deer (head not visible); Dec 6 5:15 am Raccoon; 7:33 am Virginia Deer (large 8-point buck); 10:28 am Virginia Deer (doe); 12:41 pm Virginia Deer (head not visible); 1:55 pm Virginia Deer (doe); Dec 7 9:47 am Virginia Deer (doe); 3:56 pm Virginia Deer (doe)

Phenology: Both river and creek running at normal levels and clear.

New Species:

Here are the first few lichens collected and identified by Greg Thorn’s student, Dana Kavanagh during their windy visit to Newport Forest as described in the previous Bulletin:

Powder-tipped Shadow Lichen	<i>Phaeophyscia adiaastola</i>	Loc DK Nv24/14
Orange-cored Shadow Lichen	<i>Phaeophyscia rubropulchra</i>	Loc DK Nv24/14
Cryptic Rosette Lichen	<i>Physciella chloantha</i>	Loc DK Nv24/14

Readers Write:

Chris Guglieimo UWO Biology Dept.: “Thanks for the informative write up about our wastewater treatment. It is just up the road from us and plays an important role in the health of the Thames. Cool water Bear stuff too. The kids liked it.”

Laura Lee, potential Biology student: “You picked very good pictures of a water bear and 'water bear' for comparison. They're even in similar poses! Both are chubby and and have stumpy legs that make them very cute.”

Bruce Parker, Newport Forest Steward: Thanks for the insightful information on local wastewater. Most of us don't actually realize what happens after we 'flush'.

Gordon Price: Great bulletin! Always wondered what went on at what my boys referred to as the "poo factory". Thanks so much.

IMAGES:



Ecological mini-mystery: Steve thought these were remains of a large hawk (He thought a Redtail.), scattered over the ground under a tree where another hawk (in Steve's opinion) had dined on the corpse. Steve said, "Hawks will catch and eat other hawks." I thought they might be feathers of a Wild Turkey, but then realized that they were too short to be flight feathers for that bird.

Another possibility: After examining the feather I had "purchased", I thought it resembled the flight feather of a Great Horned Owl. Had it caught a mammal that had fought back before being dispatched?



Neil (in front) and Steve look up at damaged trees on the side of the Hogsback. Both used hoes to clear debris from the trails, leaving the clean pathway seen here.