

**Newport Forest**

June 24 2004

2:30 - 7:30 pm

**Weather:** prec. 0 mm; sun/cld; N < 10 kmh; LM 25 C; FCF 22 C

**Purpose:** maintenance

**Participants:** Pat, Kee, Steve

We stopped at the tree station to do an hour of maintenance. After about 30 minutes, Steve came driving up from the trailer - a complete surprise. He had apparently neglected to mention that he was sleeping over the previous night. On the previous day, he and Darren had retrieved the ramp and done a LOT of trail grooming. Today, Steve explained, he would help me get the trestle reinstalled. He mentioned that he had seen a mud puppy while walking the beach that morning. It had been out along the edge of one of the gravel bar lagoons that form when the river returns to normal summer levels. We visited the spot where he claimed to have seen it, but all we found were slither marks. I asked Steve whether he would swear on a stack of whatever books he held holy that it was, indeed, a mud puppy. He slowly shook his head in the negative. At the same time, we found a Spiny Softshell Turtle hiding in the lagoon mud right near the shore. (P - a good "cryptic" slide)

On our last visit, the creek had been about 2' above its usual level, thanks to plentiful rains to the south. On this occasion, it was almost down to its normal summer level, so we could wade out to near centre-stream to put the trestle back in position.

**Birds:** (19)

American Crow (LM); American Robin (Tr); Bank Swallow (TR); Blue Jay (Tr); Bobolink\* (UM); Common Grackle (GF/FC); Eastern Kingbird (LM); Great Blue Heron (EW); Grey Catbird (TR); House Sparrow (UM); Field Sparrow (LM); Great Crested Flycatcher (TR); Mallard\*\* (TR); Mourning Dove (TR); Northern Cardinal (LM); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Red-winged Blackbird (UM); Song Sparrow (LM); Turkey Vulture (EW); Wild Turkey (FC)

\*displaying territorial behaviour & carrying food \*\*female with 5 chicks.

Herptile alert: Mudpuppy      *Necturus maculosus*      TR SL Je24/04  
We will not log this as a new species until we can confirm the sighting.

**Phenology:** Catalpa in full bloom; first Northern Crescent (butterfly)