

Goin' Down the River

Newport Forest Wednesday October 14 009 2:35 - 5:50 pm

weather: prec. 24 mm; RH 72%; BP 99.7 kPa; ovcs; calm; T 8° C
purpose: canoe trip to Moraviantown
participants: Kee, Dan Bickel

We had hoped to be able to walk at least part of the property to reconnect Dan with previous memories. However, uncertainty about our trip time downriver dictated an almost immediate departure; Steve Logan would be waiting to pick us up under the M-town bridge at 5 pm.

We gave the canoe a quick cleaning, scrubbed the gunwales and applied some tung oil. About to step into the canoe at the clay beach, I warned Dan about the slick, wet clay. "One false step," I warned, "and your ass will be in the river." Whoops! I went over.

"I did that deliberately just to show you what it's like !"

The river was quite calm, its surface unruffled except at rapids, where the foot-over depth almost disguised them. We passed many grand old sycamores with hollow trunks, hanging grape vines, splendid old willows, and a healthy sampling of waterbirds. Twice we started up a Great Blue, as well as a flock of Canada Geese that would get started, fly downriver and land again, only to be started up again ten minutes later when we caught up with them. Several small groups of Ducks, a possible Meganser and some Mallards, were also out on the river. The only notable sightings were a Belted Kingfisher flying upriver right past us, and a large flock of Cedar Waxwings, gathering their forces overhead.

I showed Dan the remains of Suckertown (aka Cashmere), where there used to be a dam, a grist mill, and a small village with its own store. We also passed Stink Creek, a small stream of gassy water (hydrogen sulphide) seeping from the oil and gas deposits under the old Inniskillen oil fields to the north. We passed under the Bothwell bridge and came, somewhat uneventfully, to Moraviantown, where Steve and his brother Mike were waiting to pick us up. Total trip time was about two hours

The Logans trucked us back to Newport, the canoe stowed securely on a trailer made out of the back half of a chevy pickup. After a traditional exchange of gifts, the Logans left and we broke camp, changing the SD card on the new camera at The Hole. It must be a better camera than the ones we had been using, as it picked up our first (and long overdue) coyote. We have seen them twice, heard their night choruses about a dozen times, examined their scat and followed their characteristic (double-registered) tracks many times along winter trails.

birds: (11 - not to be included in annual count)

American Robin (TR); Belted Kingfisher (TR); Blue Jay (TR); Canada Goose (TR); Cedar Waxwing (TR); Great Blue Heron (TR); Mallard (TR); Northern Cardinal (NF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (NF); Red- tailed Hawk (TR); Spotted Sandpiper (TR)

IMAGES:

(click on image to enlarge)



Dan scans the shore for interesting trees

(click on image to enlarge)



The best fall colours were back at Newport forest

(click on image to enlarge)



Coyote in The Hole: checking the field . . .

(click on image to enlarge)



*. . . and sniffing the deer-rubbings on the post
The new trail cam has been set to take pictures in burst mode (two per)*