

Newport Forest Sunday May 21 2006

2:00 - 12:15 pm

**Weather:** prec. 41 mm; RH 70%; ovcst; NW 20kmh; LM 11C; FCF 10C

**Purpose:** two-day stay\*

**Participants:** Pat & Kee

We stopped at the TS in order to reset the bluff monitoring stakes and remeasure as a baseline for next year:

TS - S1	S1 - S2	S2 - S3	S3 - S4	S4 - S5
14.98m	9.92m	10.24m	9.92m	5.12m

At the trailer we filled both tray feeders, set up a new stand feeder between the young BWs, and settled the sisters (baby raccoons temporarily known as “Wheezy” and “Woozy.”) in the trailer.

I have decided that, given the plentiful rain thus far in 2006, I could remove all the drip cans from the LM. I removed a total of 40 from the SC and 30 from the NC, leaving the cans in two neat arrays, one by the trailer, the other by ET at the SC. I then inspected the LM regen zone, noting the following:

RO: newly planted trees now leafing out 1-3cm

BC: 8-10cm new growth

YB: 8cm new growth

SM: 8cm new growth

KC: still in bud

HB: one of these has “taken,” with a profusion of healthy new leaves.

Buckeyes: all doing remarkably well: 8-10cm new growth

WA: early in leafing-out stage: 8-10cm new growth

TT: all leafing out: 2-3cm new growth

RB: small leaves, struggling

Populus spp: 2-3cm new growth, leaves 1/4-1/2 full size

BW: 6cm new growth, leaves 1/2 out

Another poplar got a case of stem rot, dismembering the stem base completely. This is the third poplar we have lost this way. I assume it's a fungus, both ends of the dismembered stem fibrous, swollen and twisted. (no signs of gnawing, per se)

\*this visit not recorded in field notes because K. forgot to bring field-pack  
Fleming Creek is up about 20cm and the current is fast, about 1m/sec. The branch debris that had accumulated at the log bridge has now gone somewhat

downstream of it, some having piled up at the midstream trestle of the pipe bridge. Both bridges are still intact and usable.

We walked the TRT as far as the VB patch, noting the following as we went: The river cedars look unhappy and are not putting out much new growth, Seneca Snakeroot is now flowering in two main areas, one at the RL near the trail entrance, the other along the bluff trail. Starry Solomon's Seal also blooming now at the RL and elsewhere. On the way back, we noticed large showy white flowers on one of the dogwoods right beside the bluff trail. Eastern Flowering Dogwood!

Pat also noticed a new plant in the LM, Field Mustard (or Rape).

While Pat birdwatched before supper, I went over to the FC flats and cut a ten-metre circle in the GM which grows thickly there. I estimate that approximately 11,000 plants were cut in this manner. Among the GM, I could also see that a species of Gallium was competing well, shouldering up among the GM.

After supper we fed the sisters and I went to the road to close the gate, noting at least two woodcocks (perhaps three) making their mating calls. I stopped in to visit Edgar & Nina. Edgar told me that his grandfather told him that there used to be an Indian settlement on the Fleming Creek flats. (Hmm. an exploratory trench might be worth digging, some day.) Edgar also reinforced the "swamp coon" myth (?), telling how all-black raccoons used to run ahead of his combine when he worked for McCanns.

When I got back to the trailer Pat told how a "mother raccoon" came to the trailer door, seemingly to see if her missing babies were there. Pat brought Whoozy to the door and the raccoon reached out for her, then came forward to sniff her carefully. Suddenly, she lost all interest and went back to eating food scraps, as if to say, "Not mine!" If she was their real mother, this would probably be the right reaction, since they have lost their original scent by now.

Over night the temperature did not drop below 7C, thanks to the continuing cloud cover. I heard a Screech Owl warble-calling in the distance for several minutes at one point and often heard the flying squirrels pattering across the roof of the trailer and once along the canoe, which amplified its footfalls to a comical drumming noise. (idea: since the SFSs visit the roof so often, that would be the obvious place to throw peanuts for them, without having to worry about predacious raccoons.) I spent some time in the trailer, imagining some worthwhile investigations that grad students could carry out at Newport Forest, including garlic mustard ecology and succession in a point bar forest.

The morning dawned with mixed sun and cloud, but a lively chorus of birds, nevertheless. Pat's birding efforts racked up a steadily increasing score, including the Indigo Bunting, whom we see only a few times every year.

When I finally got up, I took a last look at the planted trees, finding the caterpillar of the Red-spotted Purple (or possibly a Viceroy) on the upper leaves of a poplar. I also nearly stepped on a baby Cottontail, out browsing on its own.

We left early today, in order to join Stan & Anita Caveney for a tour of Meadowoods down at the south end of Black's Road, just north of Lake Erie.

**Birds: (34)**

American Crow (EW); American Goldfinch (GF); American Robin (BCF); American Woodcock (UM/ER); Bald Eagle (BCF); Black-capped Chickadee (ET); Blue Jay (Tr); Brown-headed Cowbird (Tr); Common Grackle (BCF); Common Yellowthroat (BCF); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Eastern Kingbird (LM); Eastern Towhee (BCF); Field Sparrow (LM); Gray Catbird (EW); Great Blue Heron (LM); Great Crested Flycatcher (BCF); Hairy Woodpecker (Tr); House Wren (Tr); Indigo Bunting (Tr); Mallard (TR); Mourning Dove (LM); Northern Cardinal (Tr); Northern Oriole (GF); Red-bellied Woodpecker (Tr); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Tr); Screech Owl (FCF); Song Sparrow (RL); Tree Swallow (UM); Turkey Vulture (FCF); White-breasted Nuthatch (Tr); Wild Turkey (BCF); Wood Thrush (BCF); Yellow Warbler (BCF)

**New species:**

Eastern Flowering Dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	KD RB
Field Mustard	<i>Brassica rapa</i>	PD LM

**Phenology:** Seneca Snakeroot and Starry Solomon's Seal now in bloom.