

Newport Forest Wednesday January 16 2008 1:30 - 4:45 pm

weather: prec. 57* mm; RH n/a; BP 98,7 kPa; sn/cld; calm; LM +1 C

purpose: to cut deadfall off trails

participants: Kee & Steve

Steve got to the property before I did. I found him sitting in the back of his truck enjoying the sunshine. We filled the feeders and took one of Steve's two chain saws (the smaller one) into the Blind Creek trail, clearing deadfall as we went. (I hoped the loud whine was not bothering the animals too much.)

The BCF vernal ponds were full to overflowing after the recent flooding of the Thames. We could see the high water mark on the lower slope of the HB, where the leaves suddenly lost their clay/silt coating, turning from an ashen colour to crisp, brown autumnal shades. Anyone sitting on the BCF bench at that time would have been up to their necks in water !

We cleared to the slope of the HB and I suggested we quit, not anticipating that Steve would want to continue. We had a small break up at the HB bench, then continued on down the other side into the RSF, where we cleared two more deadfalls. There were several ponds in the RSF, as well, something I should have realized. The large pit by the new section of the RSF trail was mysteriously empty. Steve opined that the soil was unusually porous below the pit, draining into the river just 20 m away.

At one point, Steve stopped to listen. "There's some kind of commotion over there," he said, pointing downriver. It sounded like two raccoons having an altercation -- unusual in the daytime. I felt tempted to go and check, but held back. We exited the woods without further incident, being distracted only by a magnificent Redtail soaring above Eva's Woods.

There were lots of tracks about, most of them using long sections of the TRT: deer, raccoons, and coyotes. No skinks or possums.

*underestimate