PYRRHARCTIA ISABELLA, ISABELLA TIGER MOTH OR WOOLLYBEAR, APRIL 13, 2018

Larose Biodiversity Project

SOW # 2017-JW-01-02

April 30th, 2018

Quarterly Update

by Naomi Langlois-Anderson

Monitoring

The leaf buds are burgeoning, birds are getting their nests ready and snow is melting away. Spring has finally arrived, and with it; monitoring season.

Larose Forest is home to 14 species of amphibians, of which 8 are toad and frog species that actively call during mating season.

Male frogs and toads call to protect their territory and attract females. Each species has a very distinctive mating call.

Monitoring began on April 26th to determine the presence of amphibian species. Calls recorded the presence of Mink frogs and Northern Leopard frogs. Visual observations of the excacated drains also identified a pair of Blue-spotted Salamanders, several egg masses and Wood frogs within the drains.

Monitoring that took place on April 13th resulted in the discovery of an invasive species*: Phragmites australis*.

This grass species is commonly seen along highways 401 and 417. The tall grass has a dark brown or burgundy plume and is salt-tolerant, hence why it has successfully established itself along roads where heavy winter salting takes place. The seeds can sometimes lodge themselves in heavy equipment.

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Two clumps were found within the salvage cut area and occupy areas less than 100 m². The likely source is the heavy equipment used for the salvage cut.

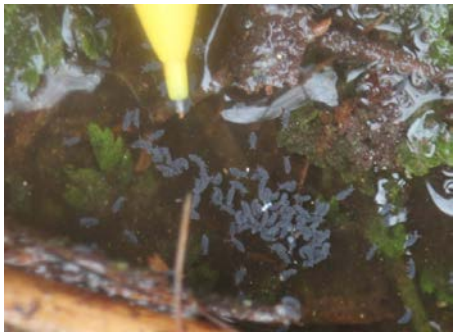
Close monitoring and eradication measures will be implemented during 2018 and 2019 project activities.

Site Conditions

The removal of the winter road closure on Concession Road 6 on April 26th, provided new access for additional monitoring equipment.

Minnow traps were deployed in the excavated drains to determine the presence and diversity of minnow species.

The project site snow melt of 90% on April 26th provided easier access than the April 13th monitoring activities.



A critter-cam has also been re-installed on the project site. Winter critter-cams didn't prove successful with large-flaked snow storms that used all the photo capacity and inadequate camera sensitivity.

Pit & Mound Topography

The forest is influenced by the landscape and climate where it grows. Wind, fire and wildlife are natural disturbances that also shape the forest. Wind can break tree limbs and knock trees over. Trees knocked-over by wind are called wind-throws and when they land on the forest floor, they become a part of the medium where plants and trees grow after some decay has taken place. Wind-throws create pits and mounds on the forest floor: the pit is the hole where the root ball once was, and the mound is the root ball, bole and canopy of the tree where it has landed on the forest floor. As the tree settles and decays, complex gradients, temperature, moisture, soil chemistry and structure, and degree of exposure and radiation create micro-habitat niches for forest species to colonize. As the tree pulls free from the forest floor, there is a mixing of organic soil and mineral layers that takes place as the tree roots are ripped out of the ground. This effect is an important influence on plant establishment and survival. As the disturbance progresses, vegetative succession and the establishment of a natural plant community unfold.

The 2018 project will see the re-creation of wind-throws: stumps from the red pine salvage cut will be lifted using an excavator and the stumps will be flipped-over. Soil will be excavated and placed onto the stumps to provide a planting medium. This will create the pits. Planting of native forest plants will take place after the excavation.

Questions About This Project?

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