

Journal Entry #4 – Fish Survey and Beaver

02/21/2025

Danielle Snyman

The fourth week of my internship at the Southern 8ths Farm started out super cold! Our high for the day was 47°F but it felt much colder. Luckily it was sunny out even though the wind had a nasty bite. Aidan and I were regretting our choice of not wearing gloves. Our day started off a little different than usual as we went out to see the fish surveying first instead of having our weekly overview and discussion.



Thompson Creek

This is because Dr. Blair, the professor from Winthrop University who was conducting the fish survey was only going to be there for another hour. Dr. Blair and his team had been conducting the fish survey since 10 am and were concluding the survey at around 2:30 - 3 pm. He has been conducting fish surveys like this one on Thompson creek for three years, but this is the first time that he has conducted a fish survey during the winter. Usually fish surveys are conducted in the spring, summer, and fall when there are more fish in the waterways. This begs the question though: Where do fish go during winter?

Originally, we were going to help with the fish survey, but Dr. Blair had brought three students from Winthrop as help and the area they were surveying had quite steep banks. That combined with the creek being ten and a half foot high where they measured the creek depth (but only about four to six foot high at the rock bluff) and there only being about



Inspiration Rock

an hour left in the survey, the Southern 8ths team decided it is best if we just observe as a learning experience. The portion of the fish survey that we got to experience was observed at Inspiration Rock, a bedrock rock bluff that is as old as the Appalachian mountains (>250 million years)! While the river was still murky, or turbid, it was much clearer than last week. While observing Dr. Blair and his team using the seine net method for

catching the fish, Anna observed new sediment build up at the end of the rock bluff. This new sediment could have been deposited with the high waters of Thompson Creek during hurricane Helene and the recent rainfall. Dr. Blair and his team were quite successful with the seine net method. This involves positioning a fine net (a seine) downstream in the creek, with people positioned upstream stomping and shuffling in the streambed to scare the fish downstream and catch them in the net. Dr. Blair also explained that earlier in the day they had used the backpack electrofishing method. In this method the researcher carries a backpack with an anode (negative) end and cathode (positive) end. The researcher then sticks both the anode and the cathode in the water and an electric shock is sent out. This shock doesn't affect the researchers because they must wear rubber waders that insulate them. It does affect the fish though. The electric shock stuns the fish temporarily, allowing their swim bladders to fill with air making them rise to the surface of the water. The researcher then quickly scoops up the fish with the net where they can be identified, measured, photographed and released.



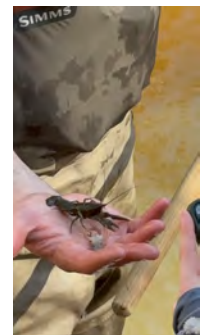
Dr. Blair and his crew with the seine net

There are many things that could influence the success of a fish survey. Some of the limitations that Dr. Blair and his crew experienced were: turbid (murky) water, underwater obstacles such as sunken trees, as well as the fish getting stuck in the vegetation when electroshocked. Another limitation is that it is hard to ID fish since they are so similar in appearance. Some juvenile fish look so alike that it is impossible to tell what species they are without sequencing their DNA. Some fish species they were able to identify included: Bluehead Chub, Creek Chub Suckers, Whitemouth Shiners, Tessellated Darter, and Redlip Shiners. They even found some Crayfish! While Crayfish aren't technically fish, they are an indicator species meaning they show whether the creek is healthy or not.



Bluehead Chub

If there are Crayfish the creek is healthy, if the Crayfish are sick or dwindling in numbers, there is something hurting the creek, and if there are no Crayfish then the creek is unhealthy. Another notable find is the Redlip Shiner. They are a notable find as they are only found in South Carolina in Thompson Creek. They are found almost everywhere in North Carolina but are only found in this one creek in South Carolina. Along with ID-ing the fish species, Dr. Blair also tested the dissolved oxygen (the amount of oxygen dissolved in the water), the conductivity (how well electricity moves through water), the salinity (how salty the water is), the turbidity (how murky the water is), and temperature. He found that the dissolved oxygen for Thompson creek was almost at 100% which is good for the plants and



Crayfish

animals in the stream. Even though the water looked murky the turbidity was only at 17 ntu (nephelometric turbidity unit; what turbidity is measured with), which is still really good especially when compared to other bodies of water. The temperature of the water was also at a balmy 4°C (~39°F).

After observing the fish surveying, we went back towards the Learning Center. This week we were not in the Learning Center though because the Pony Club had rented it out for the weekend to complete their community service as well as ride their horses. For their community service the Pony Club was making a new trail on the property so that will be fun to walk in the future! Some of their horses were also massive! We passed some on the way back to the Learning Center and I am always amazed to see just how big those majestic creatures can get! Our alternate location was the Man Cave above the Learning Center. The Man Cave is a beautiful space with the same wood lining the walls as the Learning Center. It also had some very comfortable seats! If I had an area like that in my house I wouldn't be found anywhere else!

This week there were some notable animals captured on the game cameras including a Bobcat, a female Northern Cardinal, a Striped Skunk, a River Otter, a Gray Fox, a Mouse (species unknown), and a White-tailed Deer called Paint Job! Paint Job earned her name due to her unique markings. She is a piebald deer, which means that she has irregular patches of white mixed with her tan coat making her quite unique. Since her

patterning is so unique it makes it easy to track her and identify her when she is photographed by the game cameras. Piebald deer are quite rare as it is a recessive trait and since it usually comes with spinal and mandible mutations that make it hard for the deer to eat and move. The coloration of the deer also makes it harder for the deer to camouflage and therefore more vulnerable to predators.



Pond at Fireworks Prairie

After learning about our notable piebald deer, Paint Job, we went out to try and find the River Otters. We first stopped at the pond by Fireworks Prairie. Unfortunately we did not see the Otters, but we did find evidence of Beavers! The evidence we found were some short sticks that were cut at a slant at each end with the bark completely gnawed off. We also got to see the trail that the Otter takes where it is photographed by the game camera, and the breathtaking views of the pond! On our way to another pond, called Otter Pond we found some wild daffodils growing along the side of Fireworks Prairie. Daffodils are an indicator of spring as



Daffodils

they are one of the first flowers to bloom. They are quite hearty and live through frosts so I expect that we will see many more in the coming weeks!



Otter Pond

When we arrived at Otter Pond we had to be very careful of where we stepped as there were holes everywhere. The water of Otter Pond is unfortunately very turbid due to clay sediment runoff from where a neighbor cleared forested land for a field. We hiked around the pond to see the Beaver dam as well as to see where the possible Otter den is. We did not find any Otters but we did find a tree with many sap wells. The sap wells are made by Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, a type of woodpecker. They drill holes into trees to drink the sap of the tree and it makes many living spaces for insects and benefits other wildlife. This tree had a tremendous amount of sap wells. Anna and Morgan said that it is the most sap wells they have ever seen on a tree as



Sap wells on tree

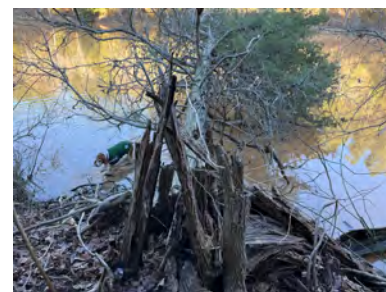
well as the lowest they have ever seen sap wells

on a tree. The sap wells went all the way to the ground! What is very interesting to me is that while the sap wells went all around the tree, one side had sporadic sap wells while the other had them lined up in horizontal lines along the tree trunk!

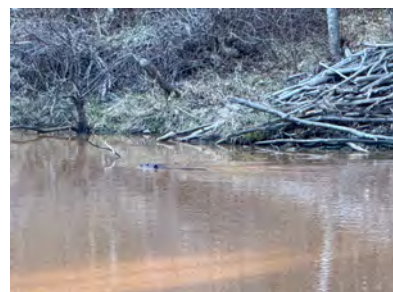


Tree stump of a tree fallen by Beavers

After examining the sap wells for a while longer we decided to turn back to start heading back. While on our way back to the side-by-side vehicles, we heard a strange sound. We ran to the water's edge to see what could have made it, only to see Smiley, the dog, rooting around some tree roots on the other side of the pond. We decided to make our way over to Smiley to bring her back with us. When we arrived at where Smiley was, we noticed what we originally thought was just tree roots was in fact another Beaver dam! This one was cool to see



Beaver dam and Smiley



Beverly the Beaver

as you could see two of the escape tunnels of the Beaver dam and when you looked into one of them you could even see the water underneath the dam! After a while of examining the dam and trying to get Smiley to come with us, we spotted a Beaver swimming in the middle of the pond! Smiley must have scared the Beaver out of the dam! We spent a while observing the Beaver swimming in the pond. I ran alongside the waters edge

of the pond, up and down, trying to get a good photo of the Beaver. It was a sight to see! This was my first time seeing a Beaver in the wild so it was quite the treat! At one point Jamison asked to borrow my binocular to see the Beaver better and he ended up getting a great photo of the Beaver with them. We must have scared the Beaver a bit by watching it and following it along the side of the pond as it used its tail to slap the water. Beavers slap the water with their tails to warn others of danger so there must have been more in the dam! Eventually the Beaver felt safe enough that it dove underwater and disappeared into its lodge and that is when we called it a day. On the way back to the learning center, Anna and Morgan decided to name the Beaver Beverly. I hope that we will get a chance to see Beverly in the future again!



Beverly the Beaver
Photo by Jamison

Journal Entry #3 – Owl Week

02/14/2025

Danielle Snyman

The third week of my internship at the Southern 8ths Farm was owl week! The day began with our weekly presentation of images captured on the game camera, the week's weather report, and the week's precipitation report. This week the game cameras captured images of Coyotes, Fox Squirrels, Bobcats, Wild Turkeys, River Otters at Fireworks Prairie, US interns, and even three Skunks! This was really amazing to see as it is quite rare to see skunks on the game camera images here at Southern 8ths. After the presentation we were shown videos of three juvenile barn owls that were found on Southern 8ths by Morgan at the horse paddocks a couple years ago. We were shown photos of the owlets puffing up their feathers and raising their wings as a defense mechanism to make themselves look bigger. It was disheartening to learn though that in the next few days two out of the three owlets had died. Morgan suspects that the owlets mother was killed and they were waiting for her again. Morgan and the Southern 8ths team decided to rescue the last owlet which they affectionately named Benny. Benny had then been taken to a local rescue center that kept him for two months to nurse Benny back to health. Benny had needed two rounds of parasite treatment and antibiotics. After Benny was healthy again, he was brought back to the Southern 8ths farm and released back into the wild. He is still occasionally spotted on the property!

After learning about Benny, we walked down to Thompson Creek. In the presentation earlier, we had been told that with all the precipitation of the last week the creek was extremely full, but I didn't realize just how full it was. When we reached the creek I was astonished. No longer could I see the creekbed, the bedrock or the slow moving, clear water from last week. It was replaced by a muddy creek, with a current so fast it would hurt your brain to try and follow a floating leaf. The banks of the creek were gone, submerged underwater, yet it was serene. The sun was out and shining, and you could still hear the birds singing even with the much louder sound of the creek.



Thompson Creek 01/31/25



Thompson Creek 02/14/25

We decided to move onto the next place as it was getting later in the day so we hopped into the side-by-side vehicle with Anna and Morgan in the front with Smiley, and Aidan, Jamison, and I in the back. Our next stop was to see if we could find the female Barn Owl at Jump Shed. On the way there we saw an Eastern Bluebird fly by. It was angled just right so that we could see the blazing red of its belly and the brilliant blue reflected back at us from the sun! When we arrived at Jump Shed we made sure to be extra quiet to not spook the female Barn Owl if she was there but, unfortunately, we had missed her. We did find some fresh pellets that suggested that she came back for the spring season so hopefully we will see her in the future! Our next stop was Fireworks Paddocks where Benny the owl had been found. Unfortunately we didn't have any luck finding Barn Owls there either, but we did find a dead bird.

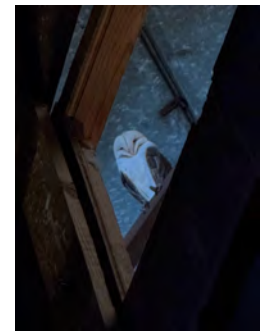


Dead bird that was found at Fireworks Paddocks



The Old Silo

Continuing our adventure, we traveled to the old silo which is where we ended up seeing the mating pair of Barn Owls! We had to be careful when entering the old silo as there is rusty metal everywhere but it was not hard to avoid. When we entered the silo we unfortunately scared away one of the Barn Owls and it flew out of the silo and into some nearby pine trees. Luckily the other Barn Owl stayed in the silo. It was super hard to spot but luckily we could still see it quite clearly. The Barn Owl was undisturbed by our presence as it didn't even attempt to look at us and just continued to sleep where it was perched! It was really cool to see and to attempt to get photos of! After watching the Owl for a while, Morgan grabbed some of the fresh pellets and we were off to go and dissect them.



Barn Owl Perched in the Old Silo

On the way back to the Learning Center we stopped at a place called Lookout. It is appropriately named lookout as you can see for a good distance part of the Southern 8ths property. To get to where we could see though we had to go through some dense pine trees that lined the farmland next to it. Aidan almost didn't make it through due to his height but luckily I could make it through relatively easily. While at Lookout, Anna checked a beetle trap that she had set up there for Longhorn Beetles. Unfortunately there were no longhorn beetles in the trap but there was a small beetle! Anna and Morgan also told us that there at Lookout was the only place on the property where Mountain Laurel, a flower, is found and that it had a smell to it. This was really interesting as Mountain Laurel isn't usually found this far south and isn't usually



View at Lookout from behind the treeline

found in the Piedmont region. What makes it more unusual though is that the Mountain Laurel has a smell. Usually Mountain Laurel is an odorless flower so for it to have a smell is very unique.

When we made it back to the Learning Center, we set up at the picnic tables outside so that we didn't make a mess while dissecting the owl pellets inside. We donned protective gear including a mask and gloves. We wore a mask so we didn't inhale bits of fur. We wore gloves as we were working with dead animals. Even though it is just the bones and fur of the owl's prey that are left undigested and regurgitated, we wanted to be safe rather than sorry. I dissected around five pellets of various sizes. The first pellet I dissected contained a rodent skull, possibly a rat due to the size. It was in great condition and even had both of its lower mandibles with the skull! I was able to remove most of the fur that surrounded the skull and found that none of the teeth were missing, not even one of the tiny molars! The next couple of owl pellets were uneventful but



First skull I found!



The four skulls found in the single pellet with the skull I found first

the last one was a doozy. It was the biggest pellet I dissected and it was tightly compacted. I was amazed to find four skulls in that pellet alone! It was no wonder that the pellet was so tightly compacted, the owl had feasted! I am amazed that the owl was able to expel the pellet through its beak due to how much bigger it was compared to the rest of the pellets. The skulls in that pellet were smaller than the other skull I had found. Some of those skulls could have belonged to shrews or moles.

We were able to determine that due to the fact that those skulls had sharper teeth with red tips and their lower mandible was straighter compared to that of a mouse or a rat. The find of the day was made by Jamison though. He was lucky and found a bird skull and talon in one of the pellets he dissected!

Jamison had to be extremely careful with it as bird skeletons are made up of pneumatized bone, which means that the bones have a bunch of really small air bubbles in them. Birds have pneumatized bones so that their skeletons are as light as possible for flight but this makes them extremely brittle. Jamison worked carefully and meticulously and was able to remove the compacted fur, from a mouse the owl had also eaten, from the bird's skull! It was incredible to see! After we dissected all the pellets, Morgan had us put some of the best ones in a bag to be kept for future reference and we cleaned up the area before heading off back to Wingate.



Jamison's bird skull!

Journal Entry #1 – Orientation Week

01/31/2025

Danielle Snyman

This first day of the internship was amazing. I had never known just how diverse a place like the Southern 8ths farm in Chesterfield could be. Getting there was already an adventure as Aidan and I carpoled and drove through the backroads of North and South Carolina to get there. We drove past some very dense forests and a lot of farms seeing some of the beauty that the Carolinas have to offer. When we arrived at the property, I was amazed at all the horse paddocks and the enormous stables.

Going into the Learning Center was also amazing. David, Anna, and Morgan were incredibly welcoming, and it is a privilege to get to learn from them! The physical Learning Center was amazing as well, with all the natural wood which came from the property. You could even see how some of the planks on the wall came from the same tree! My fellow interns, Aidan and Jamison, and I were then shown an amazing PowerPoint explaining what the staff at Carolina Wildlands Foundation does, and how we would help as interns. They showed us some of the game camera footage from different areas of the property. I was surprised to learn that there were River Otters on the property as I have never seen this species in the wild and to see them on the game cameras was truly amazing. I also didn't know that there were so many different species local to the area including Red Foxes, Gray Foxes, Bobcats, Beavers, White-tailed Deer, Raccoons, Wood Ducks, Eastern Bluebirds, Barn Owls and many more.

After the presentation we were taken on a tour of the property starting with a short walk to what the Carolina Wildlands staff call The Point. On the way there we were already able to see some of the small birds on the property and hear the crunch of the dry leaves as we were walking on the trail. When we got to The Point we came upon the location where a little stream ran into Thompson Creek. Standing there on the mossy ground, listening to the trickling of the stream leading into Thomson Creek, and learning things about the area I felt content. I



Thompson Creek view from The Point

have always enjoyed nature and being surrounded by people who felt the same was amazing. My fellow interns and I were warned about how much the creek could flood and were told about what wildlife we could find in the water which even included freshwater mussels ! I was surprised to learn though that even though Thompson Creek looks clean and has nice clear water, it has a high concentration of E. coli and low dissolved oxygen due to the surrounding chicken and cattle farms. While there a pair of Wood Ducks even flew by overhead allowing our second glimpse of the wildlife. Seeing the pair of Wood Ducks was really amazing as it is quite rare to see them especially so close. I was astonished with their agility as they were able to turn with the flow of the river and rise in altitude in mere milliseconds!



The Guardian

Leaving the point, we were taken around the property in side-by-side vehicles stopping at all the amazing sculptures around the property. I was amazed to learn that the sculptures were each made from a singular tree and carved using a chainsaw and chisels. The effort that was put into them by the wood sculptor was incredible. The first was called The

Guardian in which a bald eagle is soaring above, protecting numerous horses which embody the spirit of the land since horses have been on the land since at least the Revolutionary War. While there we were able to hear the wind rustling through the branches of the Sweetgum trees close to the sculpture as well as observe the Brown-headed Nuthatch climbing along their trunks, which just added to the experience of seeing all the beauty that the property has to offer.



Nuthatch sitting on a Sweetgum tree

My favorite of the sculptures was one that featured much of the wildlife that is found on the property. The vibrant colors in the sculpture, the scores of different animals, as well as the unusual shape of the tree just made it astounding to look at. The shape of the tree plays a big role in the sculpture since the tree it is made from is actually two limbs of the same tree that are attached by a branch of the tree connecting the limbs. What is amazing

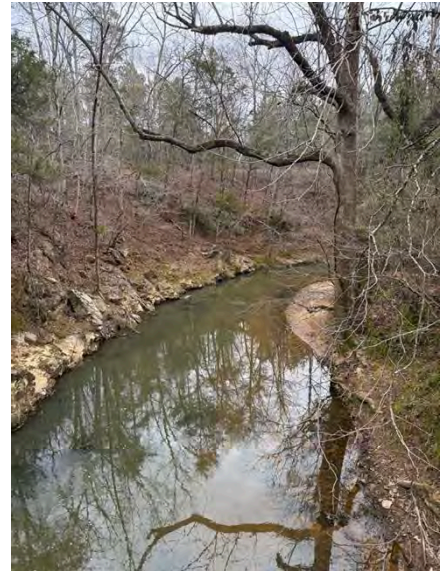
about it is that the branch does not have a visible joining seam. Being able to look at the sculpture and see so many recognizable species all together just makes you think how lucky we are to be able to experience the natural world. We then went on to see the area called Fireworks Prairie that has a bunch of wild grasses and



wildflowers. While listening to the grass swaying in the breeze, I was surprised to learn that they are going to have a prescribed burn to clear this area and reset the land.

My Favorite Sculpture

Unfortunately, our time ran a little short since it is such an enormous property with so many diverse areas but, before we had to go back, we were also able to see the pine forest on the property. The pine forest used to be a tree farm, but the area purchased for the Southern 8th farm was inaccessible to the logging trucks due to an unsafe bridge across part of Thompson Creek. It was able to be purchased as an amazing addition to the property. It was very interesting to see the Loblolly Pines in such neat rows up close and not from a highway. It was here where we saw the trap that Anna had set up for the Longhorn Beetles and we got to smell some of the pheromones that are used to attract the beetles. Alas, there were no beetles in the trap, as it is not beetle season quite yet. They are going to be emerging soon, so I am looking forward to seeing them then! While there we also walked on the “dangerous” bridge and looked out over Thompson creek. The bridge is only dangerous for big trucks, but it has no problem supporting a handful of people, so it was safe. The view from the bridge is breathtaking with trees reaching over the creek so I can’t wait to see it when it becomes lush and green!



View from the Bridge

During the tour of the property we met the founder, Brad Turley. It was amazing to meet Brad since when you talked to him you could just tell that he cares a lot for the nature and the wildlife that is there. While talking to him he told us that the most important thing in life is to ask QUESTIONS, no matter if it makes you look dumb because, otherwise, you will never learn anything. He also said it was important to have a STORY, since connecting with people goes a long way and, whatever you say, to say it with ATTITUDE. Now you don’t need to be arrogant or have a “better than thou” mindset, but you need to stand for what you believe no matter what others say. That attitude comes across when he talks about the property and nature. You can really tell that he believes in what he is talking about and that, even though others might not think that our natural world is important, he does and they need to consider that. This guidance will always stick with me. It was such a privilege to meet him and gain this experience, so I look forward to the rest of my internship at the Southern 8th farm!

Journal Entry #2 – Drone Week

02/07/2025

Danielle Snyman

This is the second week of my internship with Carolina Wildlands at the Southern 8ths Farm! The day started off with Anna giving us an overview of how the week's weather was, the precipitation for the month and what game images were caught on the game cameras since this week. This week the game camera photos included Wild Turkeys, Opossums, Gray Foxes, Fox Squirrels, Coyotes, Black Vultures, White-tailed Deer, a Beaver, and River Otters. Anna explained that it is actually quite a rarity to see the River Otters and it had been over a year since the game cameras captured them in the area! Anna also told us that it was the first time ever that Black Vultures were captured by the game cameras on the Southern 8ths farm so it was cool to hear about a first! Afterwards, Anna took us out to Fireworks Prairie to teach us how to use the drone.

It was quite an interesting experience as I had only ever flown those small ten-dollar toy drones and so it was fascinating to learn how to use a big one. Aidan, Jamison, and I were taught how to attach the propellers so that the drone was stable, where to attach the battery, and how to fly it correctly using an iPad to capture aerial images. Anna did warn us that the drone was quite loud, but I definitely didn't realize just how loud it actually was. The drone is also super sensitive so I was quite nervous to fly this high-tech device. I originally thought that it would be easier to look at the drone and fly it while looking to see where it was headed, but it turned out that it was much easier for me to fly it from the camera view! Another thing I was surprised about was the range of the drone. Aidan flew the drone at over 270 ft above the ground and it didn't complain by beeping about being out of range. The wind didn't really affect the drone much either, only a little on take off and landing. While in the air the drone was able to stabilize itself easily! Learning how to use this sophisticated little flying craft was thrilling but the sun was crazy bright and that made it hard to see the iPad's screen which showed the view from the camera. Along with making it hard to see the screen of the iPad the sun was extremely warm. It was already a warm day in general for this time of year, with the weather forecast saying that the high was 71 degrees Fahrenheit, but the sun made it feel much hotter. After we finished our drone training Anna took us on a hike to get out of the sun.

On the hike we crossed Talton Branch. The water was nice, cold but not too chilly. We spent some time there just walking and exploring the stream, getting our feet wet. Talton Branch had spots in the creek bed that were slippery with algae and other spots where we walked on silt. The water wasn't high so we could walk around with only our feet getting wet. At one point I accidentally stepped on an extra slippery spot and almost fell straight into the stream! Luckily I caught myself but I was much more careful afterwards! Close to Talton Branch, Anna pointed out some Poison Ivy without any leaves and recounted how Dr. Mills, a professor at Wingate University, had first shown her how it looked when she had him as a professor. That was interesting to learn as both Aidan and I had Dr. Mills as our professor for Zoology (the study of animals) and now have him as our professor for Ornithology (the study of birds). While looking at the Poison Ivy vines climbing the trees, Jamison found some Wild Onion grass, and upon looking closer I saw that it was everywhere along Talton Branch! Continuing the hike from Talton Branch, we were walking along the trail when we spotted some White-tailed Deer tracks. The ground there was quite soft so we hypothesized the deer must have been through the area quite recently. In the end our hypothesis was correct as we were startled by a couple White-tailed Deer booking it after we got too close to comfort. It was amazing to see just how fast the deer were and how well their camouflage worked, since we didn't spot them until they ran away, but they sure had spotted us!



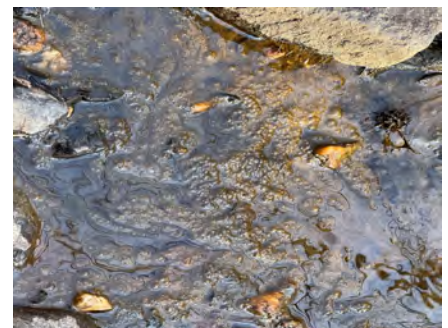
Deer Tracks in the Mud

We continued our hike and as we came to another spot of Talton Branch, where Anna spotted a turtle shell. Unfortunately the turtle, which probably belonged to a box turtle due to the dome shape, had long since passed but it is interesting to see how the spine is a part of the shell and not separate from the shell like I had thought when in grade school. When we reached the crossing spot of Talton Branch I spotted frog spawn! There were hundreds, even thousands of frog eggs! The frog spawn came from these itty-bitty frogs that we spotted along the



Turtle Shell that Anna Found

shore and guarding the eggs. Aidan managed to catch one of the frogs, which I later identified as the Northern Cricket Frog by using the iNaturalist app, without disturbing their spawn. These frogs are so tiny, it wasn't even as big as Aidan's finger tip to his first knuckle!



Frog Spawn in Talton Branch



Northern Cricket Frog in Aidan's Hand

After crossing Talton Branch, making sure to not disturb the frog spawn, we continued our hike when not 600 feet from Talton Branch I almost stepped on a North American Toad! It was camouflaged extremely well and you almost couldn't see it among the leaf litter. I am surprised that Aidan hadn't stepped on it since he was walking ahead of me. The American Toad was surprisingly big, especially compared to the Northern Cricket



North American Toad

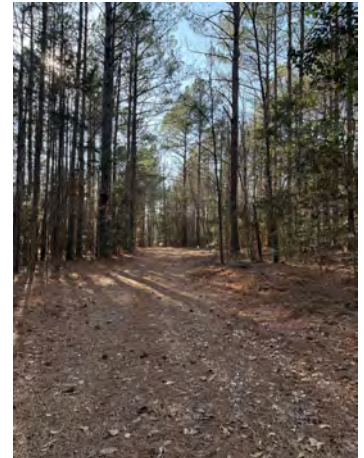
Frogs we had spotted not even 2 minutes before. I was also shocked that even though I had almost stepped on the American Toad, it didn't make so much as a peep. I guess it hoped that we would just leave it alone and go on our way, relying on its camouflage to keep it hidden.

The rest of the hike was uneventful as we only walked for five more minutes till we reached Fireworks Prairie again. It was fascinating how the geography of the land made the hike feel so much longer than it was, as the hike we went on was only a mile long, but it took us quite a while to walk. The end of the hike was steeper than the beginning, which is interesting because the start and end points were less than 500 feet apart. The hills and the crossings take more effort than one realizes and it can tire you out, but the hike was extremely enjoyable especially with the different geography.



Camouflaged North American Toad

In that mile we had seen prairie, woodlands, pine forest, and creeks. We had walked on slippery stones, soft pine needles, and crunchy leaves all while seeing wildlife and the beginnings of spring through the buds of new leaves on the plants and the sprouts of Wild Onions! I really enjoyed it even though it was only a small part of what we are going to experience on the Southern 8ths farm!



View of the Trail