

Newport Forest

Je 18/00

3:00 - 5:30 pm

Weather: cloudy, cool 15C, with sunny breaks increasing during the afternoon to continuous sun, no breeze

Purpose: to extend the River Forest Trail and search for new plants

Participants: Kee, Pat & Nick

(Note: Yesterday I brought Donner for a quickie look at the forest. We dropped off two bags of wood chips and explored the Hogsback trail just far enough to supplement the chip layer on this trail. On the way out, I saw an Eight-spotted Forester, *Alypia octomaculata*, a moth that flies by day. We also looked down the cliff at Fleming's Creek. It has overflowed its banks with the recent heavy rains.)

Coming across the Meadow, we spotted a Black Swallowtail, *Papilio polyxenes asterius*. Parking our van at the beginning of the Forest track, Nick spied a very large Green Frog, *Rana clamitans*, which sat cooperatively in the grass while we measured it at 10 cm. At the river, we found it to be down marginally from our last visit, although still very high. We made our way slowly along the River Trail because the clay was a bit slippery and Pat's footing was not the surest. Halfway to the forest, something slipped into the water with a large plop, almost certainly a turtle. Was it a Spiny Softshell? Near the forest entrance, Pat and I both smelled Sweetgrass, but couldn't locate the source of the smell, albeit evidently nearby. (This would be an amazing find.) Pat decided to stay on the bank to watch for animals while Nick and I spread the remaining bag of chips along the first 20-30 m of forest trail. Done, we returned to the riverbank and all had a simple lunch together. Pat suggested that driftwood from the river would make excellent corduroy for the muddier parts of the trail near the river.

We noticed at this point that Red Osier Dogwood, *Cornus stolonifera*, was plentiful near the forest entrance. We then all entered the forest, making trial of the trail by seeing if Pat could follow it easily. Except for one confusing fork, it worked. Nick and I then went ahead to the end of the trail as so far constructed and finished several sections leading to a slough just short of the power lines and the end of the property. (The plan is to turn the trail around the end of the Hogsback and into the Old Creek Forest, returning to the starting point. We can then cut a second trail up into the Hogsback and down the other side to join the junction at the river.

Out at the clearing again, I spray-painted an old piece of driftwood where oncoming canoes (next Sunday) could easily see it and so bring our annual canoe-

run to an end. During this operation, Nick spied an animal swimming the river. This turned out to be a Muskrat, *Ondatra zibethicus*. It was swimming from our side of the river to the north bank. On this trip Pat picked about 6 plants which she wanted to ID, planning to press them this evening.