

Newport Forest

July 25 2000

2:30 - 5:15 pm

Weather: hot 30C, sunny, no breeze

Purpose: to continue making trails and to survey linkage

Participants: Kee, Nick

We set to work on the OCF trail almost as soon as we got on site. Previous estimates of total length constructed were merely guesses. After much hewing, hacking, sawing and chipping, I paced out the extent of the OCF trail, disappointed to discover that it was only (approximately) 125 metres long. But it now follows the flank of the Hogsback. After hacking through a particularly tough combination of Multiflora Rose, Blackberry brambles, and Hawthorns (what tangles they produce!), we decided to forge ahead and “beat out” a tentative trail, always following the Hogsback flank. That way, we reasoned, we should meet up eventually with the RSF trail which was about to do the same thing in respect of the Hogsback, but from the other side.

It took about half an hour of steady beating to come in view of the deer-hunting blind behind the Hogsback. We had already seen the blind from the other side, scouting ahead on the RSF trail a few weeks ago, so we now knew the general route and that trail-making could proceed, confident of an eventual linkage. The RSF trail, however, is about 75% complete, whereas the OCF trail is only about 20% complete, so we are barely half done!

We encountered two notable species on our scouting expedition. One was a strange, and rather large moth that I had never seen before, resting on the bark of a White Ash. I have drawn it to the right (life size) after consulting my field notes. I also found myself staring, during a brief rest, at a Blue Ash! I was told that Blue Ash was sometimes found in the general area. And I had already examined a stand in the company of Jim Phipps by Newbiggen Creek some years ago. And here it was! I might also mention another specimen of that mystery snail which Nick found during our last visit to the west end of the OCF. At the time, I thought it might be *Triodopsis (Mesodon) multilineata*, but this more recent specimen gives me pause. I collected it to examine later.

We came out to the landing, where we had a (late) lunch. I looked for turtles, but only saw one slip into the water, further along the shore. A large Red-tailed Hawk flew right over our heads at one point, headed for the other bank. I saw a Silver-spotted Skipper (already found by Ann White two weeks ago) on some goldenrod by the lunch area.

New Species:

Animals

Mystery Snail

Mystery Moth, possibly a Great Ash Sphinx Moth, *Sphinx chersis*.

Plants

Blue Ash *Fraxinus quadrangulata*