

Newport Forest

May 26 2001

2:00 - 5:15 pm

**Weather:** cloudy, later turning sunny, 16 C, no breeze

**Purpose:** to extend the Fleming Creek Trail

**Participants:** Kee, Nic and Caleb

We picked up Caleb at Pop's and headed for the property, parking behind the trailer, as usual. In spite of the recent rains, the ground is not at all soggy, as one might expect. This probably means that the ground was very dry to begin with, the recent rains merely replenishing what was lost.

We filled six bags with chips and took them down to the creek, crossing at the lower ford. We worked very hard, not much noting wildlife. Nic and I took turns hoeing new trail, while Caleb alternately chipped and killed garlic mustard with the brushhook.

At one point, after we had roughed out the entire 100 metre stretch of new trail, Nic came up behind me. He had good news and bad. The good news was that he'd seen his first deer on his own. The bad news was that it was a baby and it was dead. We went to a spot about 30 metres back from our work zone and there, not 3 metres from the trail, was a very young fawn, all curled up in the grass and sedges.

Gingerly, we approached. I recalled that fawns have an instinct to stay very still when their mothers leave them alone, so I looked for breathing. there it was, very slow and faint. The fawn's eyes were open, as well, but it simply stared at the grass around it, without moving its eyes or even looking at us. We hoped the mother would come back to feed it, perhaps around sunset, after we'd left. In the meantime, we stayed well clear of the fawn, confining our work elsewhere on the trail. If it weren't for the young deer, we would have completed the whole 100 metres, a record for us.

Irony: the fawn's resting place was no more than 20 metres from the corpse of the buck that died last winter. It struck us that the fawn might be the offspring of the buck. The forest takes and the forest gives...