

Newport Forest

July 12 2001

1:45 - 6:00 pm

Weather: sunny 24C, mixed cloud, light wind from SW

Purpose: maintenance visit

Participants: Kee, Nic

Arriving on site, I put up the wren house near the trailer with Nic's help. We then carried two bags of chips down to the bridge (still looking good) and off down the Fleming Creek trail. I paced out the distances as follows: from entrance of trail (by trailer) to the top of the far stairs - 85 m; from the top of the stairs to the end of the present trail - 251 m. This makes a total of 336 m so far (including the bridge, of course).

Instead of setting immediately to work, we scouted ahead for the third time, this time roughing out the trail as we went. As a matter of policy, I'm keeping the trail to the upper terrace of the floodplain. But from the 336 m point and continuing well into Harvey's woods, the edge of the upper terrace bends away from the creek, no doubt marking an earlier watercourse for it. We continued roughing out the trail to this point, then returned to work in earnest. Because we now had less time, we completed only another 32 m of new trail.

Returning to the trailer, we took a ten-minute lunch break, then Nic went to bag more chips, under instructions to capture that mysterious snake (if he saw it) and place it in a special plastic bottle I had brought with me to-day. While nic bagged, I filled two jugs with from the creek and watered the dozen or so trees near the trailer and up to the creek bluffs. All are hanging in and a few are thriving, including (surprisingly enough) the Tulip Tree and the Kentucky Coffee Tree.

Following this, we carried the chips and our trail-making tools (brush-hook and hoe) down to the RL, noting that the river was down another four inches (even while Fleming Creek is up by nearly the same amount), exposing a new mini-terrace at the water's edge. We hacked the Riverside Trail from the Landing, up the bluffs and across them, all the way to the Hole in the Wall. We could not really strip the vegetation, the ground being too hard and the grasses and sedges too flexible to cut very effectively. We continued on into the east end of the RSF, clearing the path by cutting all vegetation up to a foot away on either side. I had forgotten how extensive the disturbed area of this forest is. Since the canopy is only partially closed, enough light gets in to encourage a riot of new vegetation, with Jewel-weed bending over the liner logs, Multiflora Rose and Black-caps sending new shoots right across the trail. We clipped all of these.

By the time we had worked our way into the old forest, where very little maintenance is necessary, we were exhausted. We paused at the first bench for some fluids, then walked up to the Hogsback, noting the track of a doe and, later on, that of a large buck. Two or three Woodcocks took off as we neared the top of the trail and, as we walked toward the power lines, Nic heard Wild Turkeys gobbling, then taking off.

Down in the BCF, we found the trail choking over gradually as we neared the third bench. We began once more to hack and strip, working all the way to our clearing efforts on the same trail two weeks ago.

All the trails of Newport Forest are now open, walkable, and easy to follow. However the portions of the Riverside Trail and Blind Creek Trail that pass through disturbed areas are still somewhat carpeted with new vegetation or the destroyed remnants of same. These portions are not yet fully back to prime condition. We did no chipping this afternoon on the latter trails, but left the bags in place for a later maintenance visit. It was, in any case, time to go.

I stopped at Nina's as she had captured a bug for us.

current length of FCT: 398 m

Birds: Red-eyed Vireo (NCF); Rufous-sided Towhee (NCF); Song Sparrow (FC); Blue Jay (NCF); Red-winged Blackbird (RL); American Woodcock (RSF/HB); Wild Turkey (HB/W)

New Species:

Dimidiata Stink Bug *Banasa dimidiata* HP

note: we also found a Dimidiata Stink Bug at A'Nowaghi, along the hedgerow, one summer. The legs on this specimen are a brighter green.