

Newport Forest Tuesday January 17 2006

3:15 - 5:35 pm

weather: prec. 38 mm; RH 100%; calm; ovcst/rn; LM 3 C; FCF 4 C

purpose: trail maintenance

participants: Kee

It was raining lightly when I arrived at the property. At the trailer, the Redbellies were scolding me for not having arrived sooner. (or else they were telling me to get the heck off their land) Fleming Creek is still running fast and high, about the same level as the last visit, thanks to the rainy weather. I checked the FCT by walking the bluff trail, crossing the log bridge and checking conditions on the other side. Checking the trees planted in the hollow of the FCF last year - and previous years - I found few of them in good shape. However, even the ones lacking buds were still alive, for the most part. At the bridge I had to double back. Note: the midstream trestle is leaning downstream, not upstream, as reported previously.

I then walked the TRT, noting that the river was up to the base of the bluffs, just covering the beach. I had brought the bowsaw with me and I used this to clear out three deadfalls from the trail. On the way up the HB, I noticed something frequently encountered at this time of year. Something converts the trail underfoot to a kind of ice honeycomb, a labyrinth of miniature caverns which squashes with a crackling/scrunching sound. I have been wondering how these honeycombs form. Do bits of dark leaf fragments absorb extra sunlight, melting the ice differentially?

On the Hogsback, I left a bag of puppy chow for Mrs Coon & her kits. Leaving the food inside the shopping bag helped to protect the supply from less talented animals.