

Date and time: Monday March 12 2018 3:10 - 5:35 pm

Weather: Pr 14 mm; RH 65%; BP 101.6 kPa; overcast; winds calm; T 1° C

Contents: Winter's last gasp brings bad luck.

With our worker Brian aboard, I made the fateful decision to drive onto the property instead of parking out on the road, as any sane person would have done.



Vernal Pond 'A' has filled, thanks to the melting of recent heavy snows. A thin sheet of decorative ice spans the middle. All set for spring!

Not without caution I parked on the far rise in the Upper Meadow in order to take advantage of the slight downhill slope, but only if I backed out — which would put us in the creek far down the bluffs. “Why don’t you turn it around,” said Brian. Good idea. I absent-mindedly went forward and promptly dug us in. Darn!

We called the CAA and, being told they would be there in one and a half hours, decided to walk in and do what we had come for in the meantime. Readings, cameras, and site imagery. That would take no more than an hour.

While in the Lower Meadow area, I retrieved the sd cards from the cameras, all except Camera #1 at The Hole. It was missing. Darn! Had it been stolen? There were no tracks there. Pinched by a Raccoon? They were clever but not that clever. I returned to the trailer in a state of depression*. That had been my favourite trail cam. We got some bird seed from the trailer and had just put it up when the CAA called. They were already out on the road! Hastily I locked the trailer, preparing to walk back out. “Where did you put your keys?” said Brian. “I think you left them

on the table in there.” I peered through the window. Darn again! More bad luck. Ever resourceful, Brian broke into the trailer by slashing a hole in the window screen and reaching in to turn the door knob.

In the Upper Meadow, we met the CAA driver who had now walked in. “I can’t get in here with my rig,” he declared. He had brought one of those flatbed trailer trucks, designed for roadside pickups only. Darn once more!

He left and we walked out to the road to seek help. The Hurdle house was empty. We decided to walk down to RuthAnn Newport’s house and had just sent out when a pickup truck came roaring down the Line, abruptly turning into the Hurdle driveway. It turned out to be Alex McIntyre who had a horse farm down the road. Learning of our dilemma, he cheerfully offered to come over in his tractor. At this point Brian walked in to get the van ready. It had sunk to the point where he could no longer squeeze under to get a chain around the frame of the van. So he used the van’s jack to hoist it high enough to squeeze underneath. Meanwhile back at the gate, who should come by but Darren Jacobs in his Jeep, accompanied by Steve whom we had called earlier. Then McIntyre’s tractor came along and roared in through the gate. It was one of those monster affairs, with wheels taller than me. I waited at the gate with Darren and Steve, being pretty much spent for the day.

To make a long story short, the extraction succeeded and out came the van driven by Brian followed by McIntyre in his tractor. Our luck has finally turned. But what about the property? That *was* the property — ecology writ large.

*I learned after I got home that Will had mounted the camera on the wrong tree, so presumably it’s still there.

Social Note: The Hurdle home across the road has been purchased by the McIntyre family who plan to move in as soon as renovations are done. Thus we will have new neighbours in the coming year(s) while Nina and Edgar Hurdle stay contentedly in their respective care homes. Nina has restricted mobility and Edgar has a slow form of Alzheimers. We shall miss them sorely.

Phenology: Snow patchy, averaging a few inches.

Spring Wildflower Walk at Newport Forest

This year’s walk will take place on Sunday, May 13 between 1 and 3 pm. The leader will be Will Van Hemessen, an experienced field botanist and ecological

consultant. He will be assisted by Muriel Andreae, whom many people know as a leader of past Newport Forest walks. Participants are asked to park inside the gate rather than on the road. Further information, including directions from Wardsville, may be obtained from Pat or Kee Dewdney <dewdney@sympatico.ca>. Light refreshments will be served. If the Virginia Bluebells are in bloom (quite likely but not guaranteed) you are in for a wonderful experience.

Image Gallery



This view of the upper creek bluffs shows the patchy nature of snow cover on the day. Despite overnight freezings well below zero, the ground has remained spongy.

The winter now coming to a close has turned out exactly as I had predicted last October. We may be in for steadily worsening winters, thanks to a little known but well established phenomenon involving the sun's magnetic field. Here's a popular account, not entirely accurate, but close enough: <<https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/894696/ice-age-weather-winter-is-coming-supernova-exploding-stars>>

Or, for a more detailed account, see

<<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2017/12/19/new-svensmark-paper-the-missing-link-between-cosmic-rays-clouds-and-climate-on-earth/>>