

## **Rucksack Spring, Summer, Fall 2000**

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### **SPRING CLEAN-UP OF McNABS ISLAND**

The 18<sup>th</sup>. Beach Sweep of McNabs and Lawlor Islands on June 4 was a success. Approximately 450 bags of garbage were collected and loaded into the dumpster at Eastern Passage. The perfect weather attracted 240 volunteers.

There were problems with some people who went to the island for the FREE RIDE, but there will always be freeloaders. The problem is that the people who work hard cleaning-up the island, do not appreciate seeing others enjoying a picnic.

There were problems with the passenger capacity of the Haligonian. After being told that the boat could hold 195, we were informed the morning of the cleanup that Coast Guard regulations limited the number of passengers to 147 during the month of June. Murphy's agreed to take the extra passengers on the Puffin, but there were still more volunteers than space on the boats.

Thanks very much to one of our members for hiring Four Winds Charters to take the extra volunteers to the island.

Overall everything went well and the beaches of McNabs Island and to a lesser extent Lawlor Island were cleaned. Along with the usual assortment of garbage, volunteers found a prescription bottle dated 1961, old weathered books and navy flares.

We had good press coverage from both the Daily News and the Chronicle Herald. Thanks to all the girl guides, boy scouts, Clean Nova Scotia and Environment Canada staff, the Sierra Club, and Friends of McNabs volunteers. Thanks to Dave Seaboyer on the island, Natural Resources, Parks Canada, Four Winds, Murphy's on the Water, McNabs Island Ferry, Schooner Industrial Supplies and BFI for their sponsorship.

Hope to see everyone on the island at next year's Environment Week cleanup in June 2001.

Catherine McCarthy  
September 2000

## **10<sup>th</sup>. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Friends of McNabs Island held our 10<sup>th</sup>. Annual General Meeting on April 19, 2000 at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

A standing room only crowd was treated to a slide presentation on Lawlor Island and the quarantine station by Dr. Ian Cameron. Lawlor Island greeted many immigrants to Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dr. Cameron shared with the audience recently acquired historic images of immigrants and the buildings that housed them on Lawlor Island.

The AGM saw the retirement, of long time director Dusan Soudek, who tirelessly put together the Rucksack newsletter for many years. Dusan was instrumental in coordinating many events on the island and still coordinates the Paddle and Cleanup of the Islands. Thanks Dusan for all your hard work.

## **McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park Advisory Committee Established**

A provincial park for McNabs and Lawlor Islands has been in the planning stage for decades. The islands have been zoned as parkland since 1975 when they were included as part of the near urban park system by the Province of Nova Scotia under the Halifax/Dartmouth Regional Development Plan. Over the years various obstacles hindered the islands from reaching official park status. Finally in the Year 2000, twenty-five years after the islands were zoned parkland, a government sanctioned park advisory committee has been established. The McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park Advisory Committee's mandate is to "advise on matters pertaining to the planning, development and management of a new provincial park to be called McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park."

The committee includes representatives from various community organizations, as well as members-at-large.

### **Community Representatives are:**

- Bob Horne (Eastern Passage Ratepayers Assoc.),

- Paul Macnab (Halifax Regional Municipality).

**Area Organizations and Interest Groups represented include:**

- Catherine McCarthy (Friends of McNabs Island),
- Jay Meeuwig (Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society),
- Colin Stewart (Halifax Field Naturalists) and
- Kate Carmichael (Downtown Halifax Business Assoc.).

**Members-at-Large include,**

- Patricia Manuel (NS College of Art and Design),
- Martin Willison (Dalhousie University), and
- Royce Walker (Past President of the Friends of McNabs Island Society).

The committee is assisted by supporting government agency representatives including,

- Mart Johanson and Ron McDonald (Parks Canada),
- Stephen Oakey and Marcus Garnett (Halifax Regional Municipality), and
- Brian Kinsman and Bob Young (Department of Natural Resources).

The new provincial park will include surplus Parks Canada lands that have just been transferred to the Province, resulting in provincial ownership of all of Lawlor Island and almost all of McNabs Island. Parks Canada will retain ownership and control of Fort McNab National Historic Site. Canada Coast Guard, under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, will continue to own lands around the Maugers Beach lighthouse as well as a small number of navigational aid sites. Just over three hectares (seven acres) of the approximately 400 hectares (1,000 acres) on McNabs Island, remain in private ownership. These lands are all located in the north-east corner of the island.

Natural Resources will accept ownership of Garrison Pier from the Department of Defence (DND), once repairs to the wharf by the federal government have been completed. Natural Resources has had some discussion regarding the acquisition of surplus DND lands at Fort Hugonin, but nothing has been finalized.

Due to provincial government budget cuts, Natural Resources does not have the budget to develop and operate a provincial park on its own. Natural Resources will assemble the land base for the park, provide provincial park

standards, and limited staff resources to assist in planning for park development on the islands.

Future development and management of park facilities and services would depend on the creation of partnerships with interested individuals and organizations. These facilities or services would have to be compatible with the park management plan objectives before approvals can be granted.

Several reports on the islands, such as, the Preliminary Management Concept for McNabs, Lawlor and Devils Islands completed in 1985, the Summary of Public Consultation Process on the Future Use, Ownership and Management of McNabs and Lawlor Islands prepared by Evelyne Meltzer in 1996, and the 1998 Land Use Strategy for McNabs and Lawlor Islands will form the basis of background material needed to develop a management plan for the islands.

The Committee is working toward developing a detailed park management plan that will include a vision for the management and use of the islands as a nature park. Specific park features, their preferred location and priority in the overall park development will also be identified. In addition, the committee will try to identify potential partners to help finance and operate the park. DNR staff will provide planning and technical advice and have primary responsibility for writing the management plan. Parks Canada has already completed a management plan for Fort McNab. It is hoped that the management plan for McNabs and Lawlor Islands will be completed before February 2001, which may permit development of new facilities and services prior to the 2001 summer season.

The McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park Advisory Committee is a first of its kind in Nova Scotia. Management plans for other provincial parks, such as, Cape Chignecto and Thomas Raddall Provincial Parks, were written by DNR staff without the support of an advisory committee.

The Committee's inaugural meeting was held at the Finlay Community Centre in Dartmouth on Thursday, July 13, 2000. Then on August 25, committee members toured Georges and McNabs Island. The tour of Georges Island revealed the extensive restoration that Parks Canada has done to Fort Charlotte on the island. The tour, guided by Parks Canada historian Dr. Ron McDonald, took us through the maze of underground tunnels that undermine Fort Charlotte. We were able to get a sense of the underground life of the soldiers who were stationed at Fort Charlotte and the dangers that they faced while working in an explosive magazine. For a short while, we even found ourselves trapped behind a locked door that made the claustrophobic among us very uneasy. Parks Canada expects Georges Island

National Historic Site to be open to the public within a few years. The island will be a major educational and tourist attraction that complements the Halifax Citadel, which is the most visited national historic site in Canada.

Our tour continued to McNabs Island where we hiked several of the main trails on the island, stopping often to sample the abundance of blueberries and blackberries that line the trails. We visited the Hugonin-Perrin Estate grounds and stopped for lunch on the steps of the Conrad house. We toured the historic houses that have been vacant since the 1980s, and the ruins of Fort Ives, and Fort McNab National Historic Site recently stabilized by Parks Canada. We even met some of the island's wildlife as we stumbled upon a frightened Great Blue Heron that was wandering about searching for the open shore of Back (Wreck) Cove, but got lost in a maze of Japanese Knotweed.

On a perfect summer day, committee members experienced some of the wonder that both Georges and McNabs Islands has to offer visitors. Even the boat excursion to the islands provided us with the added entertainment of an up-close encounter with a harbour seal lunching on a freshly caught fish.

Catherine McCarthy  
October 2000

## **McNABS ISLAND PADDLE AND CLEAN-UP**

This 3rd annual paddling event took place on Sunday, September 10, under beautiful sunny skies and balmy 18 C temperatures. We assembled at the unpaved parking lot beside Dooks Wharf in Shearwater. After the usual instructions and introductions we paddled in still conditions across the sheltered Eastern Passage towards McNabs Island, then turned left, and followed its eastern shoreline.

We stopped at small shingle beaches wherever we saw litter, near the McLean Farm site, near The Hermitage, and at Farrell Point. The tide was low, and thus we had no difficulty walking along the beach, picking up glass and plastic, and piling full bags into neat and visible piles at the high water line.

The Rifle Range Wharf was our lunch stop. Here we were joined by other paddlers, who had camped on McNabs Island the previous night. Now there were thirteen of us, ten kayakers and three open canoeists, a far cry from the first McNabs Island Paddle and Clean-up in 1998, when all participants were canoeists.

After lunch  
we paddled  
across  
Drake  
Passage to  
Lawlor  
Island,  
where we  
landed at a  
sheltered  
cove on its  
southwestern  
side, the

site of a popular campsite. This cove sports an unusual massive post, very well preserved, likely used for tying up boats at the old Quarantine Station. Why is it there? Does anyone know?

Our next stop was the polluted northeastern shore of Lawlor Island, facing the community of Eastern Passage and

its fishing harbour. Here we found our richest pickings...By this time we started to spend more and more time watching the free-falling parachute jumpers and the various aircraft of the Shearwater Air Show, which was starting nearby. We had the best seats in the house for the show.

The event officially finished at the small point of Lawlor Island across from McCormacks Beach on the mainland. Here we said our good-byes and promised to meet again at the 2001 event. Some of us paddled straight to our cars, fearing the giant post-Air Show traffic jam, while others took an advantage of the near-perfect paddling conditions and ventured out in their sea kayaks to Devils Island, the outermost of the three Halifax Harbour islands.

All in all, we collected some forty bags of beach litter. A big "thank-you" goes to Mike Tilley of McNabs Island Ferry Company ( 465-4563 or 1-800-ECO-ILND), a.k.a. Captain Redbeard, for picking up our piles of garbage bags with his motor boat in the evening. See you next year!

Dusan Soudek  
October 2000

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Our bestselling guidebook to McNabs and Lawlor Islands ***Discover McNabs Island*** is available in most bookstores, or directly from the society for \$9.95 plus \$3.00 shipping by phoning Cathy at 434-2254 or e-mailing: cathymc@accesscable.net. Also available from us is our \$5.00 18" x 27" ***colour poster*** of Halifax Harbour. Our free brochure/map ***McNabs Island: Park in the Making***, has been revised and will be available again early in the new year.

**Nova Scotia Coastal Water Trail Guidebook** has just been released. The 72-page guidebook, complete with maps, shows sites and lists comprehensive details of all the services and launch sites between Lunenburg and Halifax. McNabs Island, a popular boater destination, is mentioned in the book several times.

The guidebook costs \$20.00 plus \$5 postage and handling and is available from Ecology Action Centre at (902) 429-2202 or Sue Browne at (902) 852-3082, seatrail@istar.ca. For more information visit the sea trail website [www.trails.gov.ns.ca](http://www.trails.gov.ns.ca).

Cathy McCarthy  
October 2000

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## **FALL FOLIAGE TOUR ON McNABS**

On October 15th the Friends of McNabs, in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society and the Halifax Field Naturalists, enjoyed another successful Fall Foliage Tour. One hundred and four (104) people travelled to the island for a Nature Tour led by Mike Crowell and a History Tour led by Royce Walker.

Everyone was disappointed that the lighthouse was not open to visitors this year. Canada Coast Guard recently informed the Friends of McNabs and the Lighthouse Preservation Society that Mauger's Beach lighthouse is contaminated with mercury. The Friends will be urging the Coast Guard to cleanup the site as soon as possible so that Coast Guard employees and visitors can visit the lighthouse without being exposed to environmental hazards.

Catherine McCarthy  
October 2000

## **DINNER & SILENT AUCTION AT ROYAL ARTILLERY PARK**

The Friends of McNabs Island will be holding our third annual Dinner and Silent Auction in historic Royal Artillery Park (across from the Halifax Citadel) on

**Saturday, February 17, 2001.**

Unlike other charity fund raisers, our ticket prices will be kept at an affordable price of **\$30.00 per person**. Last year's dinner tickets sold out quickly, so to avoid disappointment you can purchase your tickets early by calling Victor Dingle at 463-4761. If you have auction items that you would like to donate to this major fund raiser for our society, please call Victor Dingle or Judy Campbell (423-7686).

The Friends would like to thank both the corporate and individual members of our community for their generous support of our second dinner and auction. In all cases, people were very supportive to our cause. Thanks to the following agencies and individuals who were able to donate items.

- ADT Security
- Clean Nova Scotia
- Brass Rail Restaurant
- Car Quest
- Grant Thornton
- Dartmouth Sportsplex
- Halifax Metro Centre
- MacAskills Restaurant
- McNabs Island Ferry
- Anna LeRue
- Murphy's on the Water
- Sally Ravinder
- Secunda Marine The Trail Shop
- W&A Moir's Chocolates
- Bill Mont
- World Wildlife Fund
- Kevin Deveaux, MLA
- Alexa MacDonough, MP
- Nora Tilley
- Atlantic Pilotage Authority
- Parks Canada
- Saint Mary's University Bookstore