

Rucksack Winter 1998

Index

- **NEWSPAPER: "McNABS ERODING AT 'DRAMATIC RATE"**
- **A DINNER FOR FRIENDS OF McNABS ISLAND**
- **ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1998**
- **ON ISLAND PROJECTS**
- **OFF ISLAND PROJECTS**
- **OUTDOOR EDUCATION COMMITTEE**
- **PARK PLANNING FOR McNABS AND LAWLOR ISLANDS**

NEWSPAPER: "McNABS ERODING AT 'DRAMATIC RATE"

This was the headline in the April 6 issue of The Daily News, announcing Dalhousie Department of Earth Sciences graduate student Gavin Manson's lecture on his research on the erosion of McNabs Island, given on April 27 in conjunction with the Friends of McNabs Island Society's (FOMIS) annual general meeting at the Findlay Community Centre in Dartmouth.

Using old maps and aerial photographs, Manson has measured erosion rates on the south end of McNabs Island of between 50 centimetres and three metres annually, with rates of 50 centimetres to one metre near Fort McNab and Strawberry Battery. He was able to relate historical erosion rates to such factors as the rising sea level, increased storm frequency caused by the El Nino phenomenon, and human tampering" with nearby sediments. An abstract of Manson's master's thesis and at least some of his historical photographs will likely be published in a subsequent issue of The Rucksack.

The business part of the annual general meeting was chaired by Cohn Stewart. Catherine McCarthy presented an annual report, published in this issue, and Judith Campbell gave a financial report. We have completed our 1998 business year (January 1 to December 31) in the black, with total assets of \$ 7,397.07. nearly two thirds in the form of non-liquid assets such as unsold books. A copy of Judith's report is available from the FOMIS board of directors and on its web site.

Two resolutions were tabled, discussed, and passed. The first one supported the siting on McNabs Island of a memorial to the victims of the September 1998 Swissair disaster, should this be the wish of the victims families. The second resolution supported expanding the search for funding for a future McNabs Island Provincial Park to the Halifax Regional Development Association, a federal tourism and economic development agency. Needless to say, the Swissair crash memorial was eventually erected on the mainland

near Bayswater, N.S., while potential funding for a FOMIS staff position fell through due to too many conditions attached to the funds available. Judith Campbell, Bill Mont, Catherine McCarthy, and Dugan Soudek were re-elected to the board of directors, in addition to "newcomers" Colin Stewart, Victor Dingle, and Doug Bowes. Welcome aboard!

Dusan Soudek

A DINNER FOR FRIENDS OF McNABS ISLAND

The Officers Mess of the Royal Artillery Park at the foot of Citadel Hill was the venue of a formal dinner organized by the Friends of McNabs Island Society (FOMIS) on February 26, 1999.

The historic building, built in 1814-1816 by the Royal Engineers under the command of Captain William Fenwick, is the oldest of four buildings in the Park, a compound owned by the Department of National Defence. Many military memorabilia from Halifax's history are on display there, including a French 12" mortar captured in 1758 at Louisburg.

A silent auction, organized by FOMIS director Judith Campbell, prior to the meal raised \$450 for the society's activities, while former FOMIS president Royce Walker entertained and educated the guests with an after-inner slide show.

Some fifty guests attended the event, arranged by FOMIS director and army veteran Victor Dingle, a.k.a. The Sergeant. Due to its success, The Royal Artillery Park dinner will be repeated on February 26, 2000,. Tickets which make an excellent stocking stuffer, are available in time for Christmas from Victor at 463-4761 or vsdingle@ns.sympatico.ca.

Dusan Soudek

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1998

The Friends of McNabs Island Society (FOMIS) had many ongoing projects throughout 1998. Among them were island projects such as large scale beach sweeps, summer waste management, trail maintenance, cemetery upkeep, and island tours. Off island, the Friends continued with outdoor education, presentations answering public inquiries, newsletter publications, and meetings with government politicians and bureaucrats regarding the

park status of McNabs and Lawlor Islands.

ON ISLAND PROJECTS

Beach Sweeps

Two large scale cleanups of McNabs and Lawlor Islands beaches and shoreline were held in June and September of 1997. The June cleanup was very successful with 220 volunteers collecting 405 bags of ocean debris that had littered the shores of McNabs. On June 20th a Paddle and Cleanup co-sponsored by Canoe Nova Scotia was held.

The September cleanup was less successful due to poor weather. Only 40 volunteers managed to collect 50 bags of trash before heavy rain cancelled the cleanup. The Friends have been cleaning up the beaches on McNabs Island since 1991. By the end of 1998. we had collected over 5000 bags of trash.

Still, many of the more remote and difficult to access areas of the islands re littered with trash. The majority of the trash collected at the cleanups were plastics, such as broken fish crates and other fishing gear, motor oil containers, and sewage related tampon applicators. Volunteers for the cleanups logged more than 1500 hours in donated time to make the cleanups a success.

Again last year, the Friends decided to forego the traditional beach barbecue following the cleanups. The cleanup on McNabs was assisted by Department of Natural Resources McNabs Island caretaker, Dave Seaboyer. Eastern Passage fishers transported the trash back to the BFI donated dumpster in Eastern Passage.

Catherine McCarthy attended a news conference on marine pollution and beach sweep activities held by Clean Nova Scotia Foundation on August 11, 1998.

Waste Management

In addition to the beach sweeps, the Friends conducted a waste management project for McNabs Island during the summer of 1998. Through an agreement with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Parks Canada, the Friends collected and transported 170 bags of garbage and 60 bags of recyclables from 20 garbage cans located on the island from June to September. Volunteers scraped and painted the cans and chained

and bolted on the lids. In total volunteers for the waste management project logged 300 hours in volunteer time.

In 1998, the old metal outhouses behind Maugers Beach were refurbished. There are now six functional outhouses on the island.

Trail, Fort and Cemetery Maintenance

The Friends continued with the trail maintenance project for McNabs Island, clearing away underbrush and windfalls from approved trails. Work continued on the Green Hill Cove, Cliff, Pond, and Brow Hill Trails in the south end of the island. The Friends commitment to paint the formidable fence at Fort Ives is ongoing. Maintenance continued at the McNabs Family Cemetery with new barbed wire added to the top of the fence. Gravel and sod were placed under the gate to prevent people from crawling under.

Other McNabs Island Events

Our popular Fall Foliage tour which featured a tour of the houses and lighthouse was held on October 18th with 80 people in attendance.

OFF ISLAND PROJECTS

In February Catherine McCarthy and Dusan Soudek met with Peter Underwood, then Deputy Minister of Environment, in anticipation that the Environment Department would be taking over responsibility for provincial parks. It was later decided that Environment would only take over the responsibility for the 31 protected areas and not existing or designated parks.

In April, Catherine McCarthy and Dusan Soudek met with Kevin Deveaux, the newly elected MLA representing Eastern Passage and McNabs Island, to discuss the stalled land use strategy.

As in previous years, the Friends have responded to numerous requests for information about McNabs Island from universities, schools, youth groups, tourist operators and the general public.

Board member Nancy Simovic gave a slide presentation at the annual meeting of the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs in May. In July, the Friends assisted the RCMP Venturers with the planning of their annual Jamboree held in Halifax.

In March, Victor Dingle, Mike Tilley, Catherine McCarthy and Dusan Soudek were honoured at Parks Canada's Volunteer Appreciation Day at Citadel Hill.

Our 1997 Annual General Meeting was held on April 24th in Halifax. Over 60 members attended and listened to a presentation on The Natural History of McNabs Island by Dr. Bill Freedman, an ecologist from Dalhousie University.

On April 24-25, Friends Board Member Dusan Soudek presented a lecture on McNabs at the Future of Halifax's Green and Blue Natural Areas conference organized by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

In 1998, the society published three newsletters in Mar/98, July/98 and Sept/98.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Board Member Nancy Simovic and Barb Mueller, both Dalhousie University Biology graduates, prepared a McNabs Island Kit for the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History which is now included in the museum's school loans program. Nancy and Barb also visited many schools presenting slide shows and information about McNabs Island to over 600 school children.

For several years, the Friends have been requesting a lease from Natural Resources for the former McNabs Island Tea House which would be used as an information and education centre. Finally in November, we received a letter of offer for the building from DNR. The letter of offer sets out the terms of a proposed ten year lease. The terms require the society to pay for a costly survey of the property, as well as an appraisal and insurance on the building. The society would be responsible for renovating the building and well and sewer system, and maintaining the right of way to the site. After seeking legal advice, kindly provided to us pro bono by Fraser MacFayden, (the board has asked for an extension on the letter of offer in order to raise the money for such an expensive project.

PARK PLANNING FOR McNABS AND LAWLOR ISLANDS

On September 19th. the Friends organized a guided tour of McNabs for local politicians so that they could become more familiar with the island. MP Gordon Earle, MLAs Don Chard, Kevin Deveaux, Darrell Dexter. and municipal councillors Bill Stone, Sheila Fougere. Harry McInroy and Bob Harvey enjoyed a great day on the island.

On November 13th, three years after public hearings were held, a land-use strategy on the future of McNabs and Lawlor Islands was finally released. Parks Canada has agreed to transfer all of the federal lands on Lawlor and their federal land on McNabs except for Fort McNab National Historic Site, to the province for the creation of a provincial park. McNabs and Lawlor islands will become a Natural Environment Park with Lawlor given special protection status because of the diversity of bird species on die island. An outdoor education centre is recommended for McNabs Island. Natural Resources and Parks Canada will consider partnering with the private sector, organized groups and individuals for the management and provision of facilities and services on McNabs Island.

Catherine McCarthy