



# The Rucksack

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society

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## Annual Beach Cleanup 2024 by Theresa RolletMcWilliams

On Sunday June 9th, 160 volunteers traveled to McNabs Island in Halifax Harbour to clean up garbage that had washed ashore since last summer.

Approximately 300 bags of garbage were picked up by participants, including:

- broken lobster traps,
- ghost gear marine fishing debris
- (lobster bands, tags and bait bags),
- an assortment of tires,
- lots of Styrofoam and plastic junk,
- parts of a boat's navigation system,
- an old plastic toy gun, and
- a wallet.



Volunteers arrive at Garrison Pier for the 2024 Cleanup

Photo credit: Ian Smith

In total, more than 17,000 bags of garbage and recyclables have been collected from the beaches of McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park and Fort McNab National Historic Site over the past 34 years. The Friends of McNabs Island Annual Cleanup is the longest-running and largest cleanup in the Maritimes!

The most unusual item found this year was a waterlogged wallet with \$5 inside. After the cleanup, we tracked down the owner and gave him back his wallet. He was delighted to get it back after losing it last summer when it fell in the water some distance from where it washed up on the island. (See full story on page 6.)



Sadly, the bulk of the items collected are plastics, which break down into micro-plastics over time, and stay in the environment for centuries. Unfortunately, plastic tampon applicators from the sewage system, and too many Tim Hortons' coffee cups with their plastic liners, continue to litter the beaches.

Our annual cleanup wouldn't happen without the dedication of volunteers and sponsorships from the community. Thank you to all who came out and made this day a huge success.

Loading Garbage on the Captain's Pride

Photo credit: Ian Smith

Friends of McNabs Island Society  
The Rucksack

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We welcome contributions,  
ideas and feedback.

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**2023 - 2024**

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**Not all Heroes Wear Capes**

On August 16th, at the last Boys and Girls Club trip, Dachia Joudrey happened to spot these two folks hauling a tire over the rocky end of Maughers Beach. As the group was rushing past to catch the boat, there was only time to snap a quick photo. Unfortunately, there wasn't an opportunity to get the names of these amazing young men. They told Dachia they have taken all three tires that were for decades embedded in McNab Pond. The tire shown here was headed to a waiting zodiac.

Thank you so much for removing these tires!

Photo credit: Nathalie Brennan

## Summer Staff Wrap Up 2024

### Megan

Working for the Friends of McNabs Island has been a blast! I'm so grateful to Royce, Mike, Nathalie, and Carter for making this role so rewarding. We did a variety of work this summer: studying the history and ecology of the island, doing maintenance on park trails, helping out on Sunday tours with experienced guides, co-leading island field trips with the Boys and Girls Clubs, and so much more!



Summer Staff taking a break.

Photo Credit: Dachia Joudrey

My off-island project revolved around three days of oral history interviews with previous island residents Faye Power, Carl Fader, and George Hurshman. It was a privilege to speak with them about their lived experiences, and to write a bit about their stories. I really hope that the work of collecting and preserving the oral history of McNabs Island continues! I'll be continuing my studies in Political Science and History and these oral history interviews have been a great way to gain experience in qualitative research.

I most enjoyed organizing our August 10th tour of McNabs, when I had the privilege of showing my Dalhousie peers around the island. I looking forward to volunteering at the Fall Foliage Tours this October!

### Carter

My time with the Friends of McNabs has felt like a dream come true! Working on the island has taught me a lot about the rich history of the Halifax area. It allowed me to work outside and gave me the opportunity to meet new people including Nathalie and Megan as well as boat captains and crews. Summer staff had fantastic support from our supervisors Mike and Royce, who offered much helpful guidance.

No two days were ever the same. When we were on the island, plenty of responsibilities such as: trail maintenance, guiding heritage tours with volunteers, guiding private tours, and helping out with Boys & Girls Club field trips, kept us super busy. Off the island, we collaborated on content for social media and worked on our summer projects. I created a Recreation Tour of the island for my project. I found locations that provided talking points about recreation history on the Island. I also presented activities that would benefit the overall fitness and well-being of participants. This job was perfect for me, as a recreation therapy major. The island offers a perfect immersion into a recreation setting. I gained hands-on experience of different populations and age ranges.

The highlight of the summer was giving my family a private tour of the island which they loved! Another huge thanks to all who made this summer possible.

### Nathalie

Who else can say that they took a charter boat to work? Or that they regularly ate lunch in a cemetery with their colleagues? My work with the Friends of McNabs Island this summer was far from ordinary. I had hilarious chats with our charter providers. I got to swim when it was unbearably hot. I also enjoyed midweek 'weekends'. It was certainly a memorable summer.

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I loved the variety of the work we did – community outreach, on-island tours, a bit of ‘gardening’, and some more restful days in the office working on our projects. My summer project was centered around sharing my passion for the geosciences with youth. I came up with two activities for youth groups, one to help them identify different features of the island in geological time, and another to show them how the erosion of drumlins works.

Friends members spent many hours sharing their historical knowledge with me. It was a pleasure to learn from you. I’d especially like to thank Royce Walker and Mike Winslow, our supervisors these past three months. Their support was indispensable. Special thanks as well to the volunteers who drove us around and indulged in ice cream with us.



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### **Brenna brings the Battered Suitcase to Fort McNab**

by Royce Walker

On July 8th I and our summer staff had the privilege of traveling to McNabs Island with Brenna Holeman who writes a travel blog called The Battered Suitcase. Since Fort McNab National Historic Site was her primary interest as an integral part of the Halifax Defence Complex, we went to the fort first. We shared with Brenna an overview of the fort and the connections of Fort McNab with the other sites of the complex, and how it was different and why. Unfortunately, the fog was persisting in the harbour, so the spectacular views from Fort McNab were obscured.

We left the fort, made a short visit to the McNabs family graveyard, then headed to Hangmans Beach via Brow Hill trail and enjoyed our lunch on the cobble beach. The fog had lifted and we had the opportunity to get our bearings with some of the other outer harbour landmarks. Following lunch, we made our way to Maugher Beach and returned to Garrison Pier walking along the shore with more interpretive stops on the way.

Upon arrival at the Teahouse, we gave Brenna a brief tour of our Outdoor Education Centre, followed by conversation in the shade of the trees, cooled by the ocean breeze. It was delightful! There were a number of boats around Garrison Pier, and so we got to meet a few other visitors on the Island.

You can read Brenna’s blog about McNabs Island as part of the Halifax Defense Complex at this URL: <https://www.thisbattered suitcase.com/historical-halifax-visiting-the-halifax-defence-complex/>



### **Oklahoma McNabbs visit McNabs Island again!**

Gary McNabb and his daughter Shelli Williamson traveled 3,700 kms, all the way from Perry, Oklahoma, to join our beach cleanup this year. Gary and Shelli visited McNabs Island in August 2016 and wanted to come back, so they planned their vacation to coincide with our cleanup in June.

Photo credit: Rochelle Owen

## Growing Up on McNabs

Oral History Stories from Faye (Cleveland) Power  
Collected and Compiled by Megan Cooper



Faye in Ives Cove, during our on-island oral history day.  
Photo credit: Megan Cooper

Until the 1950s, there was a vibrant community in the north-end of McNabs Island. Most people lived in small houses along Ives Cove, with no electricity or running water. The Lynch and Conrad families lived in large houses up the hill. These houses are still standing today. Faye Power (née Cleveland) lived further south, down Old Military Road and recounts her memories of that time. Her father, Colin Cleveland, was the McNabs Island lighthouse-keeper from 1932-1957. “It’s sometimes called the Range Lighthouse - but I just plain called it the Cleveland Lighthouse!” she said. The youngest of seven children; she lived there until she was ten years old. A member of the Friends board, Faye loves to tell her family’s stories and show visitors around the ruins of the old lighthouse.

“Dad had cows, a horse, chickens, and some pigs. He used to fish as well and he grew his garden, so the army and the residents would come up to the house and get milk and eggs. Joe Bell’s daughter - he was the lighthouse keeper at Maugher Beach - used to come. And she didn’t know that Dad was a lighthouse keeper, because it wasn’t on the shore, right? It was in the middle of the island. So she told everyone that Dad was a farmer.”

“My mom, Glennie Cleveland, loved to knit, crochet, hook mats, and make quilts. She didn’t need a pattern; she could just look at an item and follow the stitching. When she was making mats, she would cut up old clothing into strips and that was what she used to hook them. Cutting the strips was a pastime in itself. We had a pot bellied stove in the corner of the living room, a day bed beside it, and her rocking chair without arms. She would spend hours crocheting or knitting. Dad would always come feed the stove with coal so Mom wouldn’t get the cotton crocheting thread or the yarn dirty.”

“My father was quite religious and he read his Bible everyday. We went to church by radio (we were Anglican) as there was no church for us on the island. My bedtime stories were read to me from colourful Bible story books, and I loved them. When we moved to Fox Point, Lunenburg County, I went to Sunday school. They put me in the bottom of the class, thinking I wouldn’t have any religious education. It turned out I knew more stories than the teachers and they ended up putting me in the top class!”

“I remember going to church with Geraldine [Hurshman] and Beth Dunsworth, Doctor Dunsworth’s daughter. She came over to the island and spent a week with me. She was Roman Catholic and the priest was gonna be in that week. Geraldine and Beth were going, so Mom said to go. Mom had never been to a Roman Catholic church and wanted me to go see what it was like. The room was really cold, and I can remember that it was in Latin - everything was Latin. You didn’t have a clue what was being said! All of a sudden, Geraldine put her hands in her pockets. It was lost on me, I had no idea. Was it some kind of gesture? I said, ‘why’d you put your hands in your pocket?’ and she just looked at me and wouldn’t say. So I put my hands in my pockets too. I didn’t know what was going on, but they’d put their hands in their pockets, so I put my hands in my pockets.”

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“So after the church was out, I said 'why'd you put your hands in your pocket?' and she said 'my hands were cold!'”

A big thank you to Faye for sharing her family’s stories with such honesty and humour! As part of the Friends of McNabs Island Society continued oral history collection project, we spent a day in July recording video clips at important sites in the north–end of McNabs Island. Thank you to Jackie Halsey for her support.

If you have a connection to the island and would like to participate in an oral history interview, please reach out to [info@friendsofmcnabsisland.ca](mailto:info@friendsofmcnabsisland.ca) for more information.

### Reunited with Wallet Found on Beach Cleanup Day

by Dachia Joudrey

At the Friends of McNabs Island's annual beach cleanup on Sunday, June 9, one of the children helping to clean the Wreck Cove shoreline surprisingly discovered a wallet. Through a little electronic sleuthing, we were able to locate the owner who was very pleased to have it returned. Kevin Wournell says he lost his wallet in August 2023 after he had a boating mishap in his zodiac and was thrown into the water on the Eastern Passage side of the Halifax Harbour. He also says he's been going to McNabs Island since he was a young boy and really appreciates all that the Friends do to maintain the park for everyone to enjoy. Even though the contents have been replaced, he's extremely pleased to have the wallet returned as it gives him peace of mind.

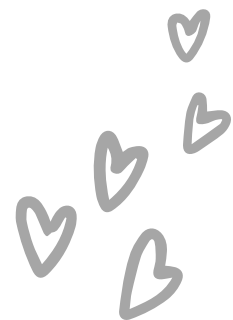


Photo caption: Dachia Joudrey, Board Member, presenting Kevin Wournell with his newly found wallet. Photo credit: L. Carver

### Special thanks to those who made our 2024 Annual Cleanup possible:

- McInnes Cooper
- Butterfield Support Services
- Port of Halifax
- ALNASS Community Association
- Michelin Canada,
- and Source Atlantic

(who for decades has supplied the gloves for the volunteers).



# Summer Field Trips to McNabs with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Halifax

by Dachia Joudrey with photo credits to the Boys and Girls Clubs

This summer, we were very pleased to be able to provide seven outings for youth taking part in the Boys and Girls Clubs from Sackville, Dartmouth North, Dartmouth East, and Spryfield. This was in part, thanks to support from Butterfield Support Services (Halifax) Ltd., our other donors and our members. The weather, although very hot, cooperated and each trip was able to go ahead as scheduled.

The children had great adventures; learning about nature, life on an island, hiking trails, military history and just being outdoors in fresh air for the day. On some trips the children were able to sample wild blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and apples (albeit very sour) from a tree at Fort McNab. Seeing toads and snakes excited them and on one trip seeing a pair of osprey by the old nest at Wreck Cove was a delight. Even children who started out not being so keen had changed their attitude at day's end!

Jessica Newman, the Director of Children's Programs for the Boys and Girls Clubs told us that in their survey to families, children indicated that the McNabs' excursion was a highlight of their summer. Andrea Adams from the Dartmouth East Club says that her group had a fabulous day and are looking forward to going back next year.

FOMIS extends a thank you to the groups, especially Butterfield Support Services, and individuals that supported these outings. Trips like this offer a wonderful opportunity for children to not only learn about history, the natural environment but to be "free range" kids for a day.



## McNabs Fall Foliage Tours October 20th, 2024

(Rain Date October 27th) Time 9:30- 4:30

Join the Friends of McNabs Island Society for the annual Fall Foliage Tours of McNabs Island Provincial Park. See the island in its autumn splendour and participate in a guided Heritage Tour, Nature Tour, Adventure Tour, Coastal Shoreline Tour or a Family Tour. A Hangman's Beach tour based on the characters and setting from Thomas Raddall's book Hangman's Beach is also an option.

Wear comfortable shoes or hiking boots and dress for the weather. The island's trails are rough in some places especially around Garrison Pier. Walking could be difficult for those with mobility issues. Visitors must be able to walk at least 5 km on these tours, but the Adventure Tour is 10-15 km and requires waterproof boots.

Bring a lunch and drinking water, sunscreen and bug spray.

Dogs are permitted but must be on a leash at all times.

Smoking of any kind and the consumption of alcohol are prohibited in the Provincial Park.

**Departure Point:** Meet at Ambassatours (Murphy's on the Water) Cable Wharf 1751 Lower Water Street on the Halifax waterfront by 9:15 am for the 9:30 departure.

**Note:** visitors **MUST** be back at Garrison Pier by 4:00. The boat departs from McNabs at 4:30 for return to Halifax by 5:30 PM.

Everyone (including babies and toddlers who are free) must have a ticket in advance.

Book via eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/972258690917?aff=oddtcreator>

### **Cost of Tickets:**

\$40 Adult non-members of the Friends of McNabs Island  
\$20 children/youth 16 years and younger.

\$30 members of the Friends of McNabs Island  
Babies and toddlers 4 years and younger are free  
(you still need to book a ticket for them.)

For more information on this event contact: [info@mcnabsisland.ca](mailto:info@mcnabsisland.ca)

Annual membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on the calendar year. Your membership includes a year's subscription to the Rucksack newsletter and discount fares to our island events. Members support the ongoing care and development of the Jewel in Halifax Harbour.

The Friends advocate for funding to maintain the environment on the Island and participate in planning for the present and future well being of the Island.

### **Renew Your Membership and/or Make a Donation Now!**

Thank you for your much needed continued support.

Renew your membership with  
e-transfer: [info@mcnabsisland.ca](mailto:info@mcnabsisland.ca)  
directly via our website:

<http://mcnabsisland.ca/join-friends-mcnabs-island-society>

send a cheque payable to:

The Friends of McNabs Island Society  
PO Box 31240, Gladstone RPO  
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