



The Rucksack

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society

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Remembering a Friend

By: Carolyn Mont

Members of the Friends of McNabs Island Society were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Mike Macdonald, who passed away just before Christmas last year on December 19, 2015. He was 52 years old.

We think of Mike at this time of year because for years he led our nature tour at the Fall Foliage Tours. He was one of the biologists who offered Natural Science Tours of McNabs Island. He and Mike Crowell, who were friends and co-workers, had done this on alternate years since the 1990s. In October of 2015, it was Mike Macdonald who led that tour.



Mike Macdonald in the Victorian Gardens at the Fall Foliage Tours 2015

Professionally, Mike was a Terrestrial Ecologist working with Stantec. It was part of his responsibility to look for endangered species on land that was to be developed. With his tremendous knowledge of, and passion for, plants and animals, he was well suited for this. He was always generous in sharing that knowledge.



Mike Macdonald tells two Dalhousie students about a native herbaceous perennial, similar to the popular quinoa, which grows along the shores of McNabs Pond. This photo taken by Cathy McCarthy is prominently featured on the panels of the visitor kiosk.

For many years, he worked with our Friends of McNabs summer students to awaken them to the biological wonders of the island. Part of the students' job is to lead tours on the Island and a day spent with Mike Macdonald was invaluable to them. His love of nature and his love of teaching gave these young people a great start to their summer job. Those who were lucky enough to have had a day on the island with Mike not only learned a great deal they could pass on to others throughout the summer, but they had a wonderful time learning.

On the boat back to the city after the Fall Foliage Tours, we would hear those who went on Mike's nature tour say that they were fascinated by the depth of his knowledge. They learned details of the plants and animals he found for them, details that they would never have found for themselves. He will be greatly missed.

Friends of McNabs Island Society The Rucksack

MEMBERSHIPS: Individual Membership or Newsletter Only is \$20 per year, Family Membership is \$25 per year, Supporting Membership is \$75 per year and Sustaining Membership is \$150 per year. We are a registered charity and accept donations.

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We welcome contributions, ideas and feedback.

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ISLAND UPDATES

Oklahoma McNabbs Visit the Island

In August, Shelli and Kevin Williamson along with her parents, Gary and Jeanie McNabb, travelled to Halifax all the way from Perry, Oklahoma especially to visit McNabs Island. They wanted to celebrate Gary and Jeanie's 50th wedding anniversary on the island and were treated to a guided tour by our summer student, Amber McMunn.

Their McNabb family originally settled in Tennessee and may or may not be descendents of our Peter McNab who bought McNabs Island in 1782.



Gary, Jeanie McNabb and Shelli
Williamson on McNabs August 2016

Mayor Savage Visits McNabs Island



Mayor Savage and Councillors Craig, Karsten and McCluskey were our guests for a guided tour of McNabs Island on June 24th this year.

McNabs Island Kit

Our McNabs Island Kit that we lend out to schools and youth groups has been revised. The Kit follows the school curriculum and has hands-on lesson plans for students from Grades 3 to 11. New materials were added for high school students studying Science 10 and Oceans 11. The Kit is a perfect addition for teachers planning a field trip to McNabs. Contact us if you want to borrow it.

Thanks to our summer students, Benna Keoghoe who started the kit update in 2015, and Alex Miller and Amber McMunn who finished it this summer.

ENGLISH GARDEN ON McNABS ISLAND GETS SOME TLC

By Brian Phelan

Back in May, the Friends of McNabs Island and professional arborists and horticulturalists with the International Society for Arboriculture (ISA - Atlantic Chapter) held another Arboriculture Work Day to continue the work restoring the English Garden in the Hugonin-Perrin Estate. The first work day was held in March 2012.



Volunteers at Arborist Day May 7, 2016

We prepared a detailed work plan, did a site assessment ahead of time, and received a Letter of Authority from Nova Scotia Natural Resources for the work to be done. A work party of fifteen volunteers from ISA-Atlantic and the Friends of McNabs spent a very productive day pruning shrubs and hedge rows, propping up the heritage Copper Beech tree, clearing windfalls and debris from the terraced lawns, and finally, removing some trees from within the foundation of the Hugonin – Perrin home to help preserve and stabilize it.

We were grateful to have the assistance of Mark Moore of Nova Scotia Natural Resources to help haul away brush with his Kuboto tractor. The weather that day cooperated, but just barely; it was overcast and cool and a fog bank rolled in at noon just to remind us that we were on an island at the mouth of Halifax Harbour. There is plenty more work to be done in the English Garden to restore it to its former glory. It's said that the terraced gardens in the Hugonin-Perrin Estate, planted over 130 years ago, once rivalled the Halifax Public Gardens. If you have an interest in gardening and would like to help, please get in touch with us.

Friends of McNabs Island Society receives an Award!

In September, our board of directors' member Brian Phelan accepted the prestigious Harry J. Banker Gold Leaf Award on behalf of the Friends of McNabs Island, from the ISA-Atlantic Chapter. This award recognizes individuals, organizations and communities for either outstanding Arbor Day activities or for outstanding landscape beautification activities for projects which have had a significant impact upon a community or region, usually over a period of several years. Brian, who is a long-time member of ISA-Atlantic, also received a lifetime achievement award from ISA-Atlantic at the recent awards' celebration. Congratulations to Brian for your achievements and for giving new light to the Victorian Gardens on McNabs Island!



Brian Phelan accepts the Gold Leaf Award from David Jollymore, Chapter President, at an awards ceremony held in Oromocto New Brunswick on September 16



McNab's Island 26th Annual Meeting

By Denyse Contrasty

On April 13th, members and guests attended the 26th Annual General meeting at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. Cathy McCarthy recapped the successful 25th anniversary events of the previous year that included a Dinner and Silent Auction in February and an island picnic for 500 people in July.

Long-standing member, Doris Schrader, spoke of the beauty, calm and nature she found on McNabs and how it helped her through difficult times. Doris wanted future generations to enjoy the island as much as she has and presented the Friends with a cheque for \$10,000. After thanking Doris for her very generous donation, Cathy then announced the recipient of this year's Special Friend Award – the staff of the Waterfront Development Corporation.



Doris Schrader surprised us with a gift of \$10,000 at our Annual Meeting. *From L-R:* Royce Walker, Doris Schrader, Cathy McCarthy, Greg Noddin and Faye Power



Waterfront Development Staff Accepted our Special Friend of McNabs award at our AGM. *From L-R* TJ Macguire, Adam Langley, Kelly Rose and Jennifer Angel

Last year Waterfront Development partnered with the Friends to install two new composting toilets on the island, a new floating dock for boaters at Garrison Pier and new trail signs along the island's trails. Jennifer Angel, acting CEO for Waterfront Development, accepted the award which was a framed photo of the Wreck Cove osprey in its nest taken by Rochelle Owen.

Following the business meeting, Royce Walker invited special guest speaker Vincent Leys, a coastal engineer at CBCL, to tell the audience about his research into the breakwater near the Maugers Beach Lighthouse. Vincent did a study on the impact of rising sea levels and storms on the Maugers Beach Lighthouse and adjacent breakwater for the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. While the breakwater will definitely be breached in the future if nothing is done to shore it up, access to the lighthouse at the end of the breakwater will not be impacted as it can be accessed by air for maintenance purposes. Increased beach erosion caused by the breach of the breakwater will likely mean that Maugers Beach sand will move further northward toward Garrison Pier. After many questions from the audience regarding the study and its recommendations, the meeting was adjourned and refreshments served.

McNabs Island 26th Annual Meeting (cont'd)



Seventy-five people attended our 26th Annual General Meeting at Maritime Museum of the Atlantic



Vincent Leys, *left*, discusses his research with Don Forbes at our AGM.

McNabs Island Maugers Beach Lighthouse Then and Now



Maugers Beach Lighthouse c. 1975



Maugers Beach Lighthouse 2015
Photo courtesy of Flitelab and Waterfront Development

More Park Benches - Thanks to CBC's Do Crew

By Joe Shea

Weather-wise the 23rd of April was not a perfect day, but it was an ideal day for installing park benches on McNabs Island. Overcast and slightly cool, a total of eight new benches were installed in various places for island visitors.

This time the work crew did not consist of just Friends of McNabs Island Society volunteers. An eager contingent from the CBC's Do Crew led by Louise Renault of Daybreak Maritimes and Halifax's Information Morning, as well as, three students from Cole Harbour District High School, volunteered their time and energy. Mark Moore from the Department of Natural Resources was also on hand to help us place the benches.

For the most part, the installations went smoothly. Rebar was used in a couple of locations to make the task easier and quicker. Lunchtime coincided with being near one of the two forts. The weather held out and, for the first timers to the island, the views from the forts were wonderful.

A special thanks to the Louise and her Do Crew, to Mark from DNR, and the three Cole Harbour students for making the day a great success.

We hope to install more benches in the future but we'll have to wait until Nova Scotia Natural Resources comes up with an alternative to the benches that their carpentry shop used to make now that the shop has been shut down.



CBC Do Crew and Friends of McNabs volunteers take a rest on one of the benches newly installed on the island



CBC's Louise Renault interviews Joe Shea about work plans for the island.

McNABS ISLAND BEACH CLEANUP 2016

By Jackie Halsey

This was the first time I participated in the annual McNabs Island Beach Cleanup, and what a great experience it was. We left the wharf at Fisherman's Cove aboard A&M Sea Charter's Captain's Pride on a misty Sunday morning in June with the Colby District Girl Guides and two scuba divers.

"Looks like the garbage monster barfed," exclaimed one of our young volunteers, as we pulled into the Natural Resources wharf on McNabs Island. The comment accurately summed up the situation. The area around the wharf in Ives Cove was a mess!

The girl guides, wasted no time getting down to the business of cleaning up. In pairs, they clambered along the coastline picking up multitudes of plastic, styrofoam, junk food wrappers, rope and goodness knows what else. What surprised me most was how many small pieces of Styrofoam there were. If there was this much on the coastline, how much more must there be floating around in the ocean and what a horrendous toll it must take on marine life.

After two hours of cleaning up, we sat in the sunshine eating our snacks and watching the fog drift in and out of the harbour swallowing up the highrises and cranes of Halifax leaving only their tops visible against the bright blue sky. Then it was back to more garbage collecting before heading up to Fort Ives for lunch and a few cart-wheels. Their most interesting find was a snow shovel and a toy yacht made of insulation.



Back on the wharf, the two divers had come up with a haul of surprises from the harbour bottom. Car batteries, massive lengths of rope, glass bottles and two old style televisions. The divers said it wasn't as bad as other years.

The clean up went well on other parts of the island too. In all over two hundred volunteers collected 450 bags of garbage. It took two boat loads to get this garbage back to the mainland! That makes over 12,450 bags of garbage collected from the beaches since the Friends of McNabs started cleaning up the island 25 years ago.

A humongous thank you to all our volunteers for the great job you did in making a tiny part of the planet a better place.



One of the most unusual finds at the beach clean-up was a boxspring hauled off of Hangman's Beach by Graham Carter and his students from École Secondaire du Sommet



Garbage piled up on Garrison Pier waiting to be transported back to Eastern Passage for trucking off to the landfill

McNabs Island by Michael Goodfellow

It's over on that shelf, behind the glass,
the best of any curio I've found.
The trenches cut now slowly fill with ground.
The breech load guns are stopped with dead eelgrass
and here the point where navy ships would pass,
the place where submarine nets ran aground
off Maugers Beach. The waters that surround
the beach are clear. The bottom looks like brass,
but turn it end to end. There's one thing more.
Each plank and tree and brick is of one piece.
Here, battle was another form of peace.
The guns were never fired in the war.
Set up, half sealed, unloaded, come what will,
that's it, held fast inside a bottle.

*Michael Goodfellow lives in Halifax's North End.
His writing has previously appeared in The Rotary Dial and
Canadian Notes & Queries*



Breech loading gun at Fort McNab
(photo credit: Rochelle Owen)



Michael Goodfellow at Fort McNab
(photo credit: Veronica Horsman)

Annual Membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on the calendar year and includes a year's subscription to the society's quarterly newsletter, *The Rucksack*.

Renew your Membership Now!

We thank you for your continued support and welcome your interest!
Renew your membership directly via our website:

mcnabsisland.ca/membership-application

or send a cheque payable to:

The Friends of McNabs Island Society

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The Rucksack is published by the Friends of McNabs Island Society.
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