



The Rucksack

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society
The society is a registered charity: CCRA number 88847 4194 RR 0001

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Spring 2018

McNabs Island: A Photographic Journey of the Five Senses

Join us for our Friends of McNabs Island Society 28th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and presentation on Wednesday, March 21 at 6:30 pm in the Small Craft Gallery of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, on the Halifax waterfront.

Special guest speaker will be photographer Rochelle Owen presenting:

McNabs Island: A Photographic Journey of the Five Senses

Rochelle first visited McNabs Island on a Friends of McNabs Island Beach Cleanup over twenty years ago. In the last four years, she has returned to the island many times to explore, enjoy, and capture the beauty of this island haven so close to the city.

Rochelle learned to develop film in a small high school darkroom from her father, the school's art teacher. Since that time, she has shot and developed photos for a university newspaper, yearbooks, weddings, portraits and environmental publications. Her photos have been exhibited in the Halifax Photography Festival – Photopolis.

Rochelle's photo presentation will highlight McNabs through the five senses of touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. This will be a fascinating presentation that brings McNabs Island closer to us as we celebrate our 28th year on the first day of spring, March 21st.

Hope to see you there!



Rochelle Owen with her camera at Fort McNab National Historic Site



Great Blue Heron
photo by Rochelle Owen

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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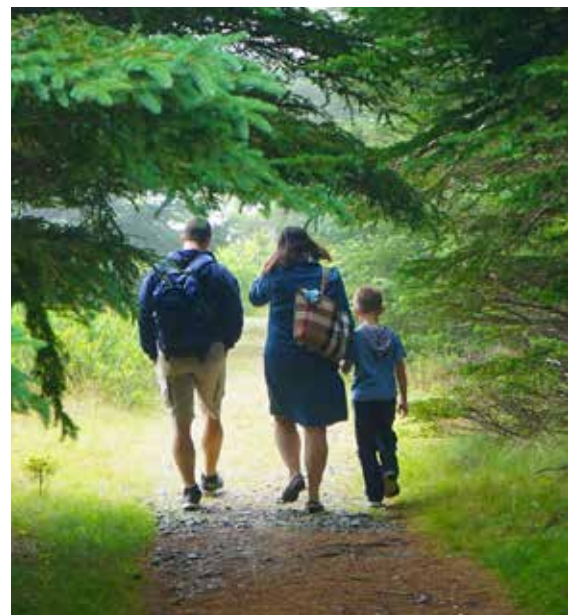
☞ Ian Smith

Funding for Recreational Trails

By Catherine McCarthy

McNabs Island has about 20 km of trails that meander through historic sites and along spectacular coastlines. Unfortunately these trails are considered "recreational" by the Halifax Regional Municipality which means we are NOT eligible for municipal funding for any trail improvements. You might ask, "Why is this important?" Because as a non-profit registered charity, we rely on matching funding to make our projects on McNabs Island happen. Rarely does one funding program fund the whole project. For example, most funding programs with Nova Scotia Communities, Culture and Heritage only fund 33% of the project. It's up to us, as the non-profit group, to raise matching funds to get the project done. These matching funds can't come from other provincial programs; they have to come from federal or municipal programs, or private donations.

When we were able to raise \$500,000 back in 2009-13 for significant trail improvements along Garrison Road, the Colin Stewart and Brow Hill trails, and for the composting toilet and visitor kiosk, the funds came from the federal, provincial and municipal governments and private foundations. Since that time, federal money has dried up; Parks Canada doesn't spend anything on McNabs Island or Fort McNab National Historic Site, even though this historic site is just as important as the Halifax Citadel. ►



A family going for a hike on a McNabs Island trail
photo by J Bradford

Funding for Recreational Trails (cont.)

By Catherine McCarthy

Halifax Regional Municipality has decided NOT to fund what they call “recreational” trails. HRM will ONLY fund trails that are linear commuter trails. These are trails that can be used to take people to school, work or to go shopping. Obviously, no one is going to school or work or shopping on McNabs Island, so we’re left out of significant funding opportunities. We can likely get funding from the provincial Communities, Culture and Heritage for trail improvements, but we don’t have the 66% in matching funding needed to qualify. We want to change this!

For some time, we’ve been working with the Halifax Regional Trails Association (HRTA) to convince HRM to fund recreational community-built trails throughout the municipality. Nine other trail groups within the collective of twenty-three trail groups that make up



The Kiosk on McNabs in 2017
photo by C. McCarthy

HRTA are also shut out of funding because their trails are considered “recreational.” These “recreational” trails are extremely popular with hikers and visitors; they often lead to historic sites, a look-off, a waterway, or possibly a scenic woodland loop trail. A popular trail like the Bluff Wilderness Trail is considered “recreational” and if it were to be built today, it wouldn’t qualify for any municipal funding.

We’ve met with Mayor Savage and CAO Jacques Dubé and the HRM recreation and transportation directors. We’ve submitted a proposal to Parks and Recreation and our proposal is now before the HRM budget committee. We’re asking for \$250,000 for a pilot project to fund “recreational” community-built trails in HRM with a further \$1M in annual funding for the next few years to develop recreational community trails. The Recreational Trails Presentation and Proposal can be found on the Halifax Regional Trails (HRTA) website: hrta.ca/wp/documents/

HRM will be deciding whether or not to fund our Recreational Trails Proposal in their budget deliberations on MARCH 28th. There is a lot of competition for budget funds this year so it is critical that you contact your municipal councilor to ask them to support Recreational Trails. Here’s the link to the list of councilors: halifax.ca/city-hall/districts-councilors.

Even if your councilor doesn’t have trails in the district, it’s important to contact them because they have a vote. The benefits to HRM are tremendous! By partnering with the trail groups like the Friends of McNabs Island, the municipality can receive 100% of the benefits for trail improvements through their 50% investment.

If you have any questions about the trails on McNabs Island, please contact us at info@mcnabsisland.ca or call Royce 902-449-5020 or Cathy 902-434-2254.

Adventures on the Island Part II

by Doris E. Schrader (member since 1991)

(Editor's Note: Part I (1988 to 1994) of Doris' story appeared in the Rucksack Volume Six, Issue 2 December 2017. Part II continues with adventures from 1997 to 2014) By Doris E. Schrader (Member since 1991)

On a cloudy Sunday morning in early August 1997, I was up at Fort McNab and was looking about when I noticed tunnels in a clump of Japanese Knotweed then growing to the northwest of the buildings. I went to investigate and started to crawl into one, when discovering it was too low to have been used by deer, I suddenly remembered someone had told me coyote was on the Island and had been seen a few times since June. I backed out quickly. After eating my lunch up near the Radar building and sun shining I decided to go down the Searchlight Trail. I had only gone a short distance when some further down a coyote with a squirrel in its mouth flashed across the trail. I then heard two quiet YIP YIP and she was calling her two pups to eat.



Old Military Road Oct.'97
photo by Doris E. Schrader

I continued along the trail which was a lovely one mostly of Hardwoods and lots of tall ferns. Juan greatly smashed this. In subsequent years I often saw one or two coyotes, but at a distance. I simply stood still and looked at them until they moved away.



Maugers Beach in the Early 90s
photo by Doris E. Schrader

On a lovely Saturday in 2002, after leaving Fort Ives, I decided to go to rest on a metal swing behind Jack Lynch house, which was used by the then Provincial caretaker (they were off the Island) and I finished what food I had left. I was ready to leave when around the house came two coyotes towards me. They kept trotting this way and that way to see if I would move but I managed to remain still using my visual ability to the max. Finally, after several tense minutes they trotted off towards the other houses. I quickly went out to Forsythe and kept up good speed for Garrison. That day I saw only three people on McNabs - another day of real wildlife experience and NO cellphone - NEVER! Just plain common sense!

During the summers of 1997, 1998 and 1999, I spent a lot of time around Thrumcap Cove, especially later in August and September watching birds. That Cove was used by Junior Seagull and Junior Osprey to practice their flight and fishing skills. Lots of belly landings and awkward landings with parent screaming instructions, etc. Then there were the shore birds resting and feeding on their way from up north to the south. If you sat still long enough the smaller birds (sandpipers, etc.) would come very close to check you out IF YOU DIDN'T MOVE. Oh! The aching muscles! ►

Adventures on the Island Part II (cont.)

by Doris E. Schrader (member since 1991)

The experience well worth it. In those years a few of us followed our “secret” paths on land instead of rocky shore line way. JUAN ended that!

I was on McNabs Island a few times in 2014, but it was in early August that I had my most unusual experience yet. I was exploring the part of Colin Stewart Trail closer to the ocean where for years blackberry vines grew so tall that they hung from trees. You walked underneath and reached up to pick. I went a few steps off trail towards Brow Hill and under remains of tall trees found thick woody stems still in the ground but no signs of any growth. As I was near a sunny patch of grass, I decided to have a drink. As I put my thermos into backpack, I noticed a doe browsing on Brow Hill near where the trail enters the mature forest. I removed my light Tilley hat with left hand and saw doe gazing intently down hill. I turned a bit to my left and met the gaze of buck approaching me slowly. He was not so large (three years?) but his head was showing the “buds”. I find the large brown eyes of deer most luscious-looking, but these were TOO CLOSE!

As he faced me, his front leg to my left rose up and took another step, then up came the right leg and then the left one came up much higher to make a “Λ” which came down forcibly to make a “thud” and he makes a loud “har rmp”. I don’t even blink. Again, he begins with the right leg, then the left leg and after that its the right leg brought up even higher for a “Λ” with a louder “thud” and even longer “harr rmp”. I am thinking “how do you kiss a buck?” when, YES, again up came left leg, then the right leg (had he been in the military?) and up went the left leg even higher, louder “thud” and an even longer “harrrr rmp”. He was scarcely a metre from me so I decided to bend slowly on my left to pick up my Tilley. He turned in a blink and took fast long looping strides up Brow Hill with doe taking fast dainty steps and they entered the forest on the groomed Brow Trail. As I prepared to leave, I then noticed the flattened grass beside me. I had been standing in their space where they had slept the previous night!

Please remember all these experiences happened when I was well into my 60’s, 70’s, and early 80’s without having a cellphone. No rocking chair for me!

CHEERS!



Island Visitors C. 1992
photo by Doris E. Schrader



Young Sailors during June of 1992
photo by Doris E. Schrader



Doris with Royce Cathy Greg and Faye 2016

Timmins Cove Trail – crossing McNabs Island

by Catherine McCarthy

Should we be successful in accessing Recreational Trail funding from the Halifax Regional Municipality, we want to rebuild the Timmins Cove Trail that begins at the Findlay Farm, AJ Davis Pop Bottle Plant and travels across the island to Timmins Cove on the Eastern Passage/Shearwater side of the island. It is nearly 800 metres long, covers different terrain and connects to the Fraser Farm Trail and the Detention Barracks trail in the interior of the island.

One of the most interesting features on the island is at the beginning of the Timmins Cove Trail. The Findlay Farm and AJ Davis Bottling Plant site is always included on our heritage tours and it's a short walk from the Teahouse and Victorian Gardens. This area is very popular with visitors as they can clearly see the ruins of the farmhouse and bottle plant.

The Timmins Cove Trail has severe drainage problems and is wet year-round. It's deeply rutted due to inappropriate heavy equipment that was used to clear the trails following Hurricane Juan in 2003. Right now visitors leap over the ditches and have created new paths around the wet areas. We want to fix this so that visitors can discover the bottle plant that made Pure McNab, a not-so-soft beverage over 100 years ago, without getting wet feet or trampling the ground and creating new trails.

We expect that we will need to do archaeological monitoring in the area beside the bottling plant and farm while any trail work is underway. This was the case when we rebuilt the Colin Stewart Trail near the McNab Homestead several years ago.

Repairs to the rest of the Timmins Cove Trail are fairly straightforward. The trail needs ditching and drainage to keep it dry. Just past the Fraser Farm Trail intersection, a stream crosses the trail in a valley between two drumlins. A culvert or bridge will need to be installed here to keep the trail dry.

Timmins Cove is a favoured spot for paddlers and boaters who cross over from Shearwater or Eastern Passage. Having access to the forts, Victorian Gardens via the Timmins Cove Trail will allow more visitors to access the island from the eastern side of the island where waters are considerably calmer.

We've already applied for provincial funding through a Communities, Culture and Heritage Program but need to raise 66% in matching funding to get the trail rebuilt. Hopefully, some of this matching funding will come from HRM. If you have any suggestions for other sources of funding, please contact us.



Carolyn Mont on a winter's day hike along the Timmins Cove Road photo by C. McCarthy



The ruins of the A J Davis Bottling Plant where "Pure McNab" was made photo by C. McCarthy

McNabs Island Teahouse

By Catherine McCarthy

The Friends of McNabs Island plan to renovate and restore the abandoned Island Teahouse and convert it into an Island Centre that will become a focal point for outdoor education and community activities on the island.

The Teahouse located in the middle of the Hugonin-Perrin Victorian Gardens, overlooks Halifax Harbour and is close to Garrison Pier. It was built in the 1980s by John Jenkins, who started the McNabs Island Ferry Company. The building closed in 1994 and has been empty ever since. The stone shell of the building is sound but the building needs considerable work. We want to bring it up to code, replace the roof, windows and doors and make the building secure from vandals. Once the building is restored, we'll install interpretive panels, and tables and benches for group activities.



The Teahouse in 2017
photo by C. McCarthy

The Teahouse will be available for Friends of McNabs Island outdoor education programming and activities during the spring, summer and fall. Others such as youth groups, schools and community groups that visit the island will have access to the building too.

We're fundraising now to restore the building and if we raise enough money, we'll start the renovations this year. Thanks to financial support from long-time member Doris Schrader and the Sage Environmental Fund, plus in-kind architectural support from Harvey Architecture, we're on our way to raising enough money to make this project a reality. If you can help us with the renovations or assist financially, please contact us.

McNabs Island Events

McNabs Island Beach Cleanup

Sunday June 3 (rain date June 10)

Time 9:30AM – 4:30PM

Celebrate Environment Week and Oceans Day by helping us clean up McNabs Island Provincial Park! Over the past 28 years, our volunteers have collected more than 13,000 bags of garbage and recyclables from the beaches of the island. Wear sturdy footwear; bring work gloves, a lunch and drinking water, as well as, sunscreen and insect repellent. **Two Departure Points:** Halifax: Murphy's on the Water, Cable Wharf, on the Halifax Waterfront and Eastern Passage: A&M Sea Charters 87 Government Wharf Rd, Fisherman's Cove.

Two Departure Locations: Halifax: Murphy's on the Water, Cable Wharf or Eastern Passage: A&M Sea Charters 87 Government Wharf Rd, Fisherman's Cove.

This is a FREE event for volunteers willing to pick up garbage! Donations greatly appreciated as it costs us \$2,500 to rent the boats for this event. EVERYONE must PRE-REGISTER via Eventbrite.ca.

McNabs Island Events (Cont.)

Discover McNabs Island Summer Heritage Tours

July 8, 15, 22, 29, and August 12, 19
Time: 9:30AM – 4PM

Stroll through Canadian history on McNabs Island! Learn about the important role the Island played for the Mi'kmaq First Nations, and the French, and British settlers. Wear comfortable, sturdy footwear; bring a lunch and drinking water as well as sunscreen and insect repellent.

Departure from Eastern Passage ONLY:

A&M Sea Charters, 87 Government Wharf Rd, Fisherman's Cove.

Cost: \$17 (members and children/youth under 16) \$25 (non-members). Tickets go on sale via Eventbrite.ca later this spring.

Fall Foliage Tours of McNabs Island

Sunday October 14 (rain date October 21)
Time: 9:30AM - 4PM

Join the Friends of McNabs Island Society for the annual Fall Foliage Tour of McNabs Island Provincial Park. See the island in its autumn splendor and participate in guided history and nature tours.

Departure from Eastern Passage: A&M Sea Charters 87 Government Wharf Rd, Fisherman's Cove.

Departure from Halifax: Murphy's on the Water, Cable Wharf, on the Halifax Waterfront

Cost: \$17 (members and children/youth under 16) \$25 (non-members). Tickets go on sale via Eventbrite.ca in the fall.

Annual Membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on the calendar year and includes a year's subscription to the society's newsletter, The Rusksack and discounts at our island events

Renew Your Membership Now!

We thank you for your continued support and welcome your interest!

Renew you membership directly via our website:

mcnabsisland.ca/membership-application

or send a cheque payable to:

The Friends of McNabs Island Society
PO box 31240, Gladstone RPO
Halifax, NS B3K 5Y1

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CCRA Number 88 474 194 RR0001

**Visit our website or contact us info@mcnabsisland.ca or mcnabsisland.ca/contact
Faye (902-443-1749) or Cathy (902-434-2254).**

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