



The Rucksack

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society

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Fall 2021

30th Anniversary Island Beach Cleanups

The Friends of McNabs Island held TWO cleanups this fall – the McNabs Island cleanup on September 19th and then the Lawlor Island cleanup on October 3rd. This is the 30th anniversary of our first cleanup!

Since 1991, volunteers have collected more than 16,100 bags of garbage and recyclables from the beaches of this provincial park and national historic site. Our cleanup is the longest-running and largest cleanup in the Maritimes



Top: McInnes Cooper Clean up crew
Bottom: McNabs Island Cleanup

Above: Lawlor Island Cleanup
Photos this page: Ian Smith

On September 19th, 90 volunteers travelled to McNabs Island for our 30th annual Beach Cleanup. The pandemic had canceled the cleanup last year and then postponed the June cleanup to September.

Ghost Gear marine debris which includes rope, fish crates, motor oil containers, lobster bands and tags and 80 lobster traps were hauled off the island. Dozens of tires and large sheets of Styrofoam were also removed.

Interesting items discovered this year include a miniature Sleeping Beauty, an aluminum commercial blender, various old pots, and several patio umbrellas.

The bulk of the items collected are plastics which deteriorate into micro-plastics over time but stay in the environment for centuries. Plastic tampon applicators from the sewage system and Tim Hortons' coffee cups continue to litter the beaches. *(cont. ►)*

Friends of McNabs Island Society

The Rucksack

Web address: <http://www.mcnabsisland.ca>
info@mcnabsisland.ca

Contact Address:

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

We welcome contributions, ideas and feedback.

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Content is for members' interest only.

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30th Anniversary Island Beach Cleanups...continued

On Sunday, October 3, 2021, 50 volunteers paddled or ferried to Lawlor Island in Halifax Harbour to clean up the beaches. Lawlor Island is a 50 hectare island directly across from MacCormacks Beach in Eastern Passage and is part of McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park. The island is an environmental protection zone and has no public access.

Volunteers spent the day digging out tires and collected approximately 300 bags of garbage including 20 lobster traps, a large gillnet and lots of fishing rope.

About 20 kilograms of gillnet and metres of long-line fishing gear were untangled from the trees and rocks along the shoreline and hauled away. Other marine debris collected included lobster traps, tags and bands, bait bags, fish crates and motor oil containers. This marine debris is called Ghost Gear because it keeps on fishing, entangling marine animals and fish long after it is lost at sea.

Large and small pieces of Styrofoam and dozens of tires were hauled off the beaches of the island park. Interesting items discovered at this cleanup include a port-a-potty, a VHS tape, a broken drone and a miniature boxing glove.

Thanks to the many volunteers from the Friends of McNabs Island, Scotian Shores, McInnes Cooper, Canadian Wildlife Federation's Wild Outside youth group, and Shearwater Yacht Club, who picked up garbage that littered the McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park. Support for the cleanups came from Develop Nova Scotia, McInnes Cooper, HRM, Source Atlantic, TaylorMade Tours, A&M Sea Charters, Nova Scotia Natural Resources, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

2021 SUMMER STAFF SUMMARY

by Zach MacMillan-Kenny

Working with the Friends of McNabs this summer was awesome. Having the opportunity to indulge in the amenities of the island was an experience like no other, and as a nature geek, I was in heaven. I had the opportunity to meet plenty of great people and had the chance to demonstrate my leadership abilities through the tours. My fellow summer interpreters and I agree that the nature tours were our favourite ones, but we're biased and did enjoy the heritage tours as well!

Having the freedom to independently work on projects related to our field of study was something I truly admired about this job. With my background in marine biology and ocean sciences, I had the pleasure of gathering the information needed for a new kiosk panel related to climate change, ocean pollution and other human impacts. Additionally, the Friends received a grant from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) that related to ghost gear (abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear) retrieval and education which was an unexpected, but pleasant surprise. This new project allowed me to direct the start of an ongoing educational documentary. I have a passion for photography and videography, so in combination with my love for ocean conservation, this project was perfect for me! I've had the pleasure of working with Jerry Lockett and John Van Gorp, who are both excellent videographers and I met some fascinating conservation scientists while filming interviews.

To find the ghost gear, we all had a wonderful time exploring parts of the island that are rarely visited. We found multiple hotspots of trash and ghost gear along the southern shore of the island which will hopefully be targeted during this year's beach cleanup. The full documentary should be complete by the end of 2021, and it will include the retrieval process, so I am really looking forward to seeing the final product. I'm glad I had the chance to combine my interests to create something for the greater good.

One thing that stood out to me the most during my time here was how fast time went by. I



Summer staff moving equipment
photo credit: Jacqueline Halsey



Students and friend
photo credit: Z. MacMillan-Kenny

remember asking Cathy McCarthy, (Friends of McNabs President) at the start what the most challenging aspect of the job would be, and she simply replied "time". I didn't believe her at first, but it's true when they say that time flies by when you're having fun. The summer has come to an end faster than I would've liked, but I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Friends of McNabs and I'll always remember it.

I hope to be back to volunteer once I am finished my graduate studies in Newfoundland!

Cheers,
Zach MacMillan-Kenny

McNABS ISLAND SUMMER TOURS

Excerpts from Summer Staff, Tour leaders and one enthusiastic young guest!

The summer tours are one of the main offerings of The Friends of McNab Island Society. With the leadership of the Board, summer staff and volunteer guides lead tours throughout the summer. Guests are provided with a wealth of information from both heritage and nature perspectives. The guides are well-informed and prepared to share the richness of history and nature that the island has to offer. Lots of fun was had!

What guides and guests had to say:

August 15th

We had a lovely day on the island for our Nature Tour! It was a beautiful way to finish our time with Friends of McNabs. We landed at Garrison Pier and made our way to the Kiosk, then to the Teahouse. Zach did an interpretation on coastal erosion which is visible from Garrison Road. We headed towards the Wambolt trail and to Wreck Cove. The tide was coming in but we were able to walk the beach and discuss the stories behind the name "Wreck Cove". At the end of the beach we discussed ghost gear and the osprey on the island.

We went to Garrison Road and sat in the shade and breeze to enjoy lunch. Everyone was very content with the decision.

We headed to Fort McNab where Kirstin talked about barn swallows and Zach talked about the guns. The participants checked out some barn swallow nests and a pigeon nest. We took time to explore the Fort and then headed down to Maugers Beach.

We had about an hour left and gave everyone time to go for a swim and cool down. Everyone had a great time swimming and exploring the beach and we slowly made our way back to Garrison Pier along the beach. Everyone was enthusiastic and had a great day on the island.

Zach, Nikko, and Kirstin

July 18th

Hi! I'm Jack, the kid who loved history on today's tour. I really enjoyed it! You're an amazing tour guide, and I learned so much! The SS England epidemic, the inventor of kerosene, and Peter the 2nd were some of my favorite things I learned. Thank you so much again.

Jack

August 8th

We landed at Ives jetty and stayed together for Fort Ives and the houses. We split the group as there were small children and Tricia and I took them down Old Military Road. Blueberries were abundant and so were the bugs. We had lunch at the kiosk and then went to the Teahouse and Hugonin Estate site.

Later, we went to the beach where the children collected sea glass.

Everyone from our tour had a great day."

Dachia



Tour walking on Maughers Beach
Photo: Ian Smith

August 15th

We met at the Kiosk for the island welcome and orientation for the day. Our trip brought us to the Teahouse, gardens and the Hugonin/Perrin house site, and then back to Garrison Road. We continued to the bedrock and along the beach to the breach. Our youngsters had a scavenger hunt to follow so they were on the hunt for seashells. The tide was still rising, but there was still lots of sand to walk on.

Maughers Beach was quiet at the time, about noon, with only a few boats visible. We stopped at the breach for some interpretation and then continued along Lighthouse Road to the shade at the Garrison Road intersection. This gave us the opportunity to talk about the pond.

We decided to stop for lunch at the end of the Colin Stewart Trail near the cobble beach as it afforded a prime location with shade and a breeze. I was surprised at the changes I saw in the beach. The cobbles appeared to have grown in height since last year. The amount of

driftwood on the cobbles where the trail enters the beach was massive, so I needed to do my interpretation from the tree line.

We backtracked to Brow Hill Trail and made our way to the Fort McNab entrance. We visited the graveyard and then walked through Fort McNab. The kids enjoyed the underground rooms, and we had a couple of the classic “WOWS”; as folks saw the view from the 10-inch gun.

We saw barn swallow nests but no swallows, and talked a bit about the birds. By this time, several people were looking for the opportunity to take a dip. We returned to the beach by about 3 pm. Half our group decided to go in the water. By this time, the beach was very busy with 22 boats and lots of people on the beach and in the breach. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day and I think slept well after their adventures.

Royce

August 29th

Lovely weather, and a lovely group made the last Heritage tour of the season an absolute joy. Bethany, Elaine and I worked as a team with Bethany and I sharing the interpretation talks. Elaine did an amazing job of keeping our group of elder participants, three families and a young couple together.

We went straight up to Fort McNab. On the way we talked about the McNab family, the pond, Hurricane Juan and poison ivy. At the fort we spoke about the guns and the barn swallows (there were still a few flying around) and then everyone had half an hour for lunch and exploration time. Before we headed back to the kiosk via the beach, I told the story of the Tribune. I love telling that story here as you get a clear view of the Thrumcap Shoals and the cliffs of Herring Cove where the shipwreck happened.

Due to the older age of the group, we went straight back to the kiosk via the beach. It was about an hour past high tide by then. At the kiosk we split up; half the group came with us up to the teahouse, Hugonin House and Pop Bottle Factory, while others stayed in the kiosk or went to the beach.

Our group then split again with Elaine taking one family up to see the old houses. We had one adorable little girl with us who became really good friends with the Grade 11 teen. She enjoyed the scavenger hunt and looking for sea glass.

During the breaks throughout the day, I talked about our beach cleanups and the hazards of ghost gear fishing debris. People were extremely interested in the topic. There was also a lot of interest in the Fall Foliage Tours.

Jackie

Seals viewed from McNabs
Photo: Z. MacMillan-Kenny



Teahouse Outdoor Education Centre

Royce Walker

The Teahouse Team had three work days in September; the 1st, 2nd and 28th. That is a significant effort! Each trip has been productive in pushing the project forward. September saw significant milestones with the solar power system being connected, transporting all the remaining deck lumber to the Teahouse, and making significant progress with the window shutter installation.

In addition, Gordon Warnica, our project manager, has moved forward our plan for masonry work to begin this fall. He has also worked with Harvey Architecture to pull together an info package for Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR, formerly, Department of Lands and Forestry) for their review and approval.

Inside Carpentry

- Inside carpentry work required for public access is complete and awaiting DNRR approval

Solar Power System

- Gordon Wilkie and three of his students from the NSCC Ivany (Waterfront) Campus, along with Rob Sedgwick of SAGE Energy, are working on installing the solar system and will be back to finish the installation in October.”

Remaining carpentry work

- No change on the remaining carpentry work with the current focus on solar power, the deck and shutters.

Window and Skylight Vandal Screens and shutters

- We’ve made good progress with the window shutter installation under the guidance of Mike Winslow. The drilling into the stone to place



anchors for the shutters went much better than expected. We hope to finish the drilling on the next trip, install the remaining anchors and then the shutters. Work on the skylight screens is ongoing.

Outside deck

- There has been significant progress on the deck construction in September. All the framing is complete, all the lumber is now on the island in the Teahouse, and the install of the decking boards is underway with about 75% of the boards installed. Transporting the lumber was a significant effort which I am glad to have behind us.
- Handrails need to be installed as well after the decking is complete.



Photos: Ian Smith

Support our work by buying Friends of McNabs Island merchandise

These items make great gifts. Our note cards feature a sketch of the Teahouse by artist Emma FitzGerald and our Discover McNabs Island book tells you nearly everything you need to know about the island. Our crests and pins are popular with youth and collectors.



Discover McNabs island
\$20.00



Notecards
\$15.00 for 5-pack



Crest
\$5.00



Pin
\$2.00

Annual membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on the calendar year, includes a year's subscription to the society's Rucksack newsletter and offers discounts for our events.

As a member, you will be supporting the ongoing care and appropriate development of this 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.

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send a cheque payable to: The Friends of McNabs Island Society
PO Box 31240, Gladstone RPO
Halifax, NS B3K 5Y1
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Cathy (902-434-2254).

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If you are already a member, invite your friends to join you. Talk to coworkers. As more people become aware of and support these gems, the better we will be able, together, to take care of them.

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