



The Rucksack

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society

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Representatives of the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre welcome visitors to the island
Photo credit: Cathy McCarthy

the Fall Foliage event. This year's tour selection included the classic heritage tours to each of the forts, a Hangman's Beach tour tracing the background to the well-known Thomas Raddall book, an adventure tour to Thrumcap and two nature tours.

There were military-costumed animators at Fort McNab National Historic Site, and interpreters at both the Teahouse Outdoor Education Centre and in the English Gardens. These are projects that the Friends of McNabs have put in a great deal of work and money into over the years.

Needless to say there were a lot of tired happy faces on the boat journey home. A big thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time, both before and on the day, to make this year's Fall Foliage Tours such a success.

Fall Foliage Tours October 16, 2022 by Jacqueline Halsey

The heavy mist that started the day dissipated and the soft fall-scented air was perfect for walking the trails. This year we were privileged to have six representatives from the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre welcome us to their ancestral island. Dressed in traditional ribbon skirts and accompanying themselves with drums, they sang four songs starting with the sacred Honour song.

One hundred and fifty visitors including several children and four dogs took part in



Liam Caswell & Kelsey Walker
military animators at Fort McNab
Photo credit: Cathy McCarthy

Friends of McNabs Island Society The Rucksack

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We welcome contributions,
ideas and feedback.

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Bluenose Bienvenue
by Jacqueline Halsey

Third time lucky! After two cancellations the annual Bluenose Bienvenue event for military families took place at the Shearwater Sea King Club on October 29th.

It was a bright, crisp day and the Friends of McNabs Island table attracted plenty of visitors. The 3D map, made and donated to “the Friends” by Planning students at Dalhousie University, was a big draw.

Visitors were interested in hearing stories about the island and some had their own stories to share.



Friends of McNabs Island volunteers at Bluenose Bienvenue
(L-R) Marion Lakenman, Mike Winslow, Jackie Halsey and Karen Horne
Photo credit: Cathy McCarthy

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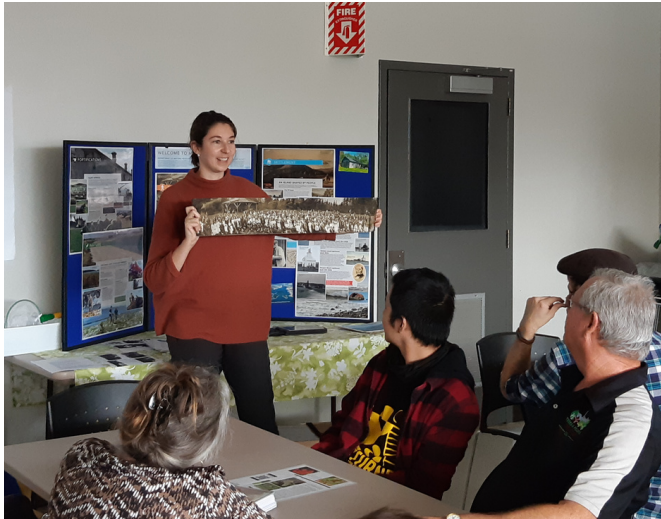
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Tour Guide Appreciation by Jacqueline Halsey

Our Tour Guide and Volunteer Appreciation lunch and workshop was held at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History on November 4th. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of getting together to share ideas and stories about their tour guide experiences on the island. After a delicious pizza, fruit, cookies and apple cider lunch, Cathy McCarthy welcomed and thanked the volunteers for all their efforts. Mike Winslow, the tour guide coordinator, presented the stats for this season. Approximately 35 volunteers took part in 26 tour events. Royce Walker provided an update on the Teahouse Outdoor Education Centre. The next step is the formation of a committee to explore the exciting possibilities of using the space.



Tineke Weld shows a picture of the Imperial Oil Picnic of 1919 to volunteers Photo credit: Cathy McCarthy

Tineke Weld facilitated the workshop part of the afternoon. The focus was on resources available for our tour guides. After some hilarious “favourite noodle” revelations used as an icebreaker, the room split into small groups to talk about personal resources and binders that tour guides had developed for their own tours. The room then came together for a sharing of ideas and information.

A tremendous amount of work goes into the behind-the-scene planning of events like this. A huge thank you goes out to Tricia Stewart for organizing the food and venue. The Society is grateful to Tineke for presenting such an amazing workshop.

If you are interested in training to be a tour guide for next year, please get in touch with us.

NSCAD & the Teahouse Outdoor Education Centre

by Jacqueline Halsey

Although the renovations to the old Teahouse are not totally complete, it is open for public use. Last summer we welcomed the first group to this unique outdoor education space. Twice a week throughout the month of July, students from NSCAD came over to the island to creatively engage with the environment. The 3rd year course, **Island: Material Landscapes**, led by instructor Ali Nickerson, started with historical and environmental tours given by two of our tour guides.

Using the island as a backdrop, the students worked on installations that combined art, landscape, history and the impact of climate change. The final projects were displayed in a site-specific show. Nickerson and the students were full of praise for the experience.



Royce Walker tells Island stories on the Teahouse deck Photo credit: Cathy McCarthy

Fiona visits McNabs Island By Catherine McCarthy

Hurricane Fiona made landfall in Nova Scotia on September 23rd. We were bracing for the worst as previous hurricanes (Juan and Dorian) had left a lot of destruction. The Nova Scotia parks division had closed the park until our volunteers could do an assessment of damage.

With our sold out Fall Foliage Tours happening on October 16th, we were anxious to get the trails cleared as soon as possible. Under the leadership of Brian Phelan, who is a certified arborist, we rallied a group of

volunteers for two trips to the island to clear the main trails of Fiona debris so that the park could reopen before our Fall Foliage Tours.



Hurricane Fiona cleanup volunteers (L-R) Ian Smith, Brian Phelan, John van Gorp, Cathy McCarthy, John Thompson, Peter Langille and Royce Walker.

Photo credit: John Van Gorp

In total about 25 large trees were cleared from the main trails near the Findlay-Farrant Farm and A.J. Davis Bottling Plant, along Garrison Road, the Colin Stewart Trail and Lighthouse Road. Many of the secondary trails are still blocked but that will be a project for another day.



Volunteer Brian Phelan removed a large fallen aspen from blocking Garrison Road.

Photo credit: Cathy McCarthy

Sadly, we did observe that Fiona swept quite a bit of sand off of Maugers Beach. The dunes started to collapse when Dorian washed over the beach in September 2019 leaving deep troughs in the dune system. It's not as dramatic as what has happened to the beaches on Prince Edward Island but it is noticeable to those of us who visit the island often. The beautiful sandy beach, which wasn't there 100 years ago, is changing again.

If you are keen to help out with our trail clearing projects, please get in touch with us.

Childhood Memories of Life on McNabs Island: Lois (Eddy) Weagle by Dachia Joudrey



Lois Eddy Weagle at her home in
Lunenburg Co. NS
Photo credit: Dachia Joudrey

You never forget where you spent your childhood. This is so true for Lois Eddy Weagle who lived on McNabs Island from when she was baby until 1962 when her father moved the family to Tangier on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia. Sitting in her home in Lunenburg County, her face lights up when she recalls her childhood days on the island. She says her family with eight children didn't have a lot of money. Her father, Walter Eddy, was a fisherman and later lighthouse keeper for the Rear Range Lighthouse (1957-59) in the North end of the island. She recalls climbing the lighthouse stairs behind her mother and father to illuminate the light in the evenings.

The family lived in a very small, one storey building with no basement. Lois recalls that in the winter her mother would hang blankets over the doors to keep the heat from the fat, potbellied stove in the living room area. The children all slept in one room with the boys on one side and the girls on the other. Lois recalls that her family had chickens and a vegetable garden. With such a large family her mother was

very busy washing clothes by hand using a scrub board, sewing and mending. Having no cistern, the family used buckets to haul water from the nearby well.

The Eddy house was next door to Gladys Lynch Conrad, sister to Bill Lynch, the famous Maritime Midway King. Gladys had married Ralph Conrad, son of Thomas Conrad who had been the lighthouse keeper at the Sherbrooke Tower, Mauger's Beach.

Lois' most treasured memories are of the Lynch family especially Gladys and her big white house at the North end of the island. Lois recalls helping Gladys tend her flower gardens and that Gladys loved peonies and grew really large ones. Lois remembers burying her whole face in them!

Gladys' nickname for Lois was "Loneless." Lois is not sure why she called her that. Gladys would stand at the fence calling "Loneless" when she needed some help. A special bond developed between Lois and Gladys perhaps because Gladys had no children of her own.

Lois recalls that Gladys' house was a mansion compared with her house; it had a large stairway, dark drapes, huge fireplaces and two large verandahs encircling the house on the first and second floors looking towards Eastern Passage. She and her family would visit at Christmastime as Gladys would put up a big Christmas tree and give them candy and candy canes.

She says Gladys had a telephone and a black and white television which was a luxury at that time. The children were allowed to watch one cartoon program on the TV. Lois' last visit to the island was in 1965 when she stayed with Gladys in the big house. Gladys told Lois she was never leaving the island and she lived there until the early 1980s.

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Gladys passed away in 1985. She was the last permanent resident to live on McNabs Island and according to Lois, Gladys loved it there.

Lois recalls that of the eight children in her family, only one was born on the island due to adverse weather conditions and no medical help. An unpredicted October snowstorm hit the island, so Lois' father had to deliver his own son! Lois says that one of her brothers cut a hole in their bedroom wall to see the commotion taking place.

The baby was named William in honour of a local resident who broke his leg while trying to rouse a nurse who also lived on the island. The next day Lois' mother and the newborn baby were taken by sled to the helicopter landing for transport to the Grace Maternity Hospital in Halifax.

Lois remembers that the Lynch family had their own wharf at Ives Cove and used to go back and forth to Halifax with Smitty who ran the local ferry. She says that in the fall Ralph Conrad would fill his truck with the residents' empty oil barrels and the kids would roll them down the hill at Ives Point. From there a barge would take them to get filled with furnace oil for the winter months. She recalls she and her siblings delivering the daily newspaper to Gladys Conrad and the Lynch family in order to save Smitty from walking up the huge hill from Ives Cove. Soggy Reid, Bill's general manager and eventual successor, would give her father rolls of tickets to go on the rides should they get to the Bill Lynch Shows.



Lois on the rocking horse. Siblings Barry & Shirley in front and Taylor children in the back.
Photo credit: Unknown



Bill Lynch (kneeling) with a Shetland Pony,
Great Dane and an unknown man
Photo courtesy of the Bill Mont Collection

When Lois lived on the island, Bill Lynch's ponies ran free. Lois and her siblings would sometimes ride them bareback. In the fall, the children often helped round up the ponies to get them in the barn for the winter.

She remembers one Shetland pony's name was Tom. She says that while some of the ponies could be wild when they first arrived, they soon became tame. Sometimes they waited at her house door pawing the ground for someone to feed them. Her mother used to give them potato skins.

Bill Lynch had a Great Dane that was so big a Shetland pony could walk underneath the dog. Lois said he used this as an act in his shows. She was happy to see the pony and dog in an old photo and pointed out Bill Lynch straight away.

Lois first went to elementary school on the island in 1956. The school on Old Military Road was close to the Lynch home. It was a one-room school, more like a tar paper shack, with a

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huge potbellied wood stove. It burned down in the late fifties after which, she was transported by government duty boat from Wreck/Back Cove to Hampton Gray Memorial School in Shearwater.

Living on McNabs Island was a wonderful, safe and peaceful place to be. Life was tough at times, yet neighbours knew who you were and looked out for you. She refers to herself and her siblings as being “free range” kids!



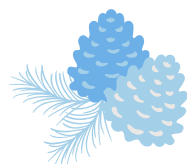
The New Park Management Agreement by Brian Phelan

The newly signed Park Management Agreement between the Friends of McNabs and the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR) is a game changer in the relationship between the Province and the Society. The Society has been working on the agreement for over a year and is glad to report that it has become a reality. Up to this point all the events and projects the Friends have conducted on McNabs Island over the years have been conducted under LOA agreements (Letters of Authority). The Park Management Agreement represents a five-year, non-financial partnership that can be renewed for an additional five years if both parties agree to do so. It also provides for an annual meeting and review at which time either party can make minor adjustments to the scope of work and responsibilities that the Friends are willing to take on.

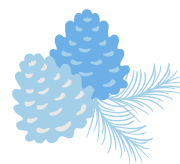
The essence of the agreement has the Province granting a license to the Society authorizing the Society to assume responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the Teahouse building, providing Visitor Services, Outdoor Education experiences, Park Maintenance Activities and Special Projects within the Park. It also makes operation of the Teahouse an exclusive responsibility of the Friends of McNabs Island Society for the life of the agreement.

The Society is required to ensure areas of responsibility are properly maintained in good order and to ensure proper and safe public use of the park and that it is operated in accordance with the requirements of the Act and to the Minister's specifications. All maintenance activities are to be performed in accordance with applicable occupational health and safety standards and provincial park regulations.

The agreement contains a map that highlights the areas that the Society will be taking responsibility for in the form of providing enhanced maintenance. DNRR will continue to provide its current level of maintenance to the park as resources allow. The Society was careful to only take on maintenance of existing trails within 1.5 km of the Teahouse. This can be adjusted during the annual meeting and review process. The Society plans to continue with day volunteer opportunities to provide the enhanced park maintenance identified in the agreement. The Teahouse Outdoor Education Centre use and programming will continue to be refined by our Outdoor Education committee.



McNabs and Lawlor Islands - 20 years as a Provincial Park By Catherine McCarthy



On November 4, 2002, Premier John Hamm and Natural Resources Minister Tim Olive announced the official designation of McNabs and Lawlor Islands as a provincial park. About 100 people gathered in Fisherman's Cove in Eastern Passage that day to watch Premier Hamm make the announcement and unveil a new McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park sign. Premier Hamm told the crowd that his government “made a commitment to Nova Scotians to preserve and protect our environment for future generations.” The Premier went on to tell

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the crowd how significant the islands were to the provincial park system noting the historical and natural features that the Friends of McNabs Island have come to know and appreciate.

A management plan prepared by the government-appointed Park Advisory Committee of which the Friends of McNabs Island is a member stipulated that the islands were to be a natural environment provincial park. The plan was released by the government in 2005 but not much of this plan has been implemented.

Our chief concern twenty years ago was the lack of funding for the island park. Today this lack of funding has meant that most of the improvements to the park are thanks to the Friends of McNabs Island Society's tireless volunteers, donations from our members and a few successful fundraising initiatives and grant applications. Our society has spent close to a million dollars on island maintenance and improvements over the past three decades which includes keeping the island clean by collecting more than 16,500 bags of garbage from the beaches, improving some of the trails, building a visitor kiosk with interpretive signs, installing trail signs and park benches, restoring the Victorian English Gardens, and more recently transforming the abandoned Teahouse into an Outdoor Education Centre.

What do we need going forward into the next decades for the island park? The list is long but some critical concerns for the park include: – better transportation to the island so that it is more affordable and accessible for all Nova Scotians, restoration of the island's trails including Garrison Road, repairs to the 125 year-old Garrison Pier, and stabilization and heritage designation for the historic Davis/Conrad and Lynch houses which have been neglected for far too long.

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.

Members support the ongoing care and 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.

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Thank you for your much needed continued support.

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As more people become aware of and support these gems,
the better we will be able to take care of them.

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