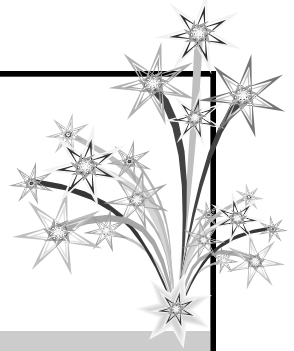




The Rucksack

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



Volume Nineteen, Issue 1

Celebrating 21 Years

Summer & Fall 2011

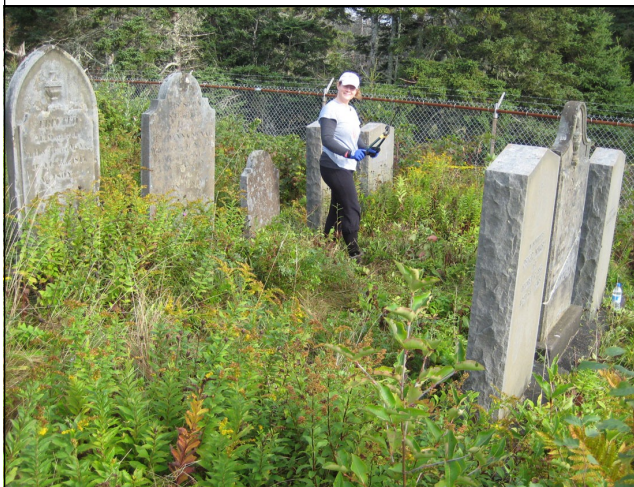
On September 30 at 8:00 AM, nine volunteers headed out to McNabs via New Dawn Charters. Our goal was to anchor the four benches purchased from Nova Scotia Natural Resources, and to clean up the graveyard before our Fall Foliage Tours on October 16.

Brent King, Leopold Sirois, Lyn Underhill, Sally Ravindra, Blaine MacArthur and I from the Friends of McNabs were there for the day, as were Ann Swain, Kim Ottenbrite and Ralph Mayer from Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline who were helping us as part of their Helping Hands Initiative.

When we landed Leopold and Ralph headed for the Teahouse to install the first of four benches and then on to Fort Hugonin and Fort Ives to install the other two located in the north end of the island.

Unfortunately the bench near Fort Hugonin had been moved or stolen and couldn't be found. A fourth bench that was supposed to be installed along the Colin Stewart Trail was also taken. Sources tell us that it is now bolted to a tree at Wreck Cove.

The rest of the work crew headed for the McNab Family Cemetery to clear the brush. No one was allowed on the Fort McNab site while construction work was underway this past year, so the graveyard was quite overgrown. Blaine and Brent took turns using the brush saw and did a great job of cutting the overgrowth, while the rest of us tackled the area around the headstones. We left a couple of small spruce trees, some ferns, wild roses, raspberry and blackberry bushes.



Ann Swain clears brush in the graveyard

You wouldn't believe we could accomplish so much in one day. Impressive work!

After they had installed the two park benches, Leopold and Ralph headed for the Colin Stewart Trail to fix up sections of the new trail that had eroded in the August 8 rainstorm. Brent gave them a hand and they all did a great job!

We finished our work early and walked back to Garrison Pier for pick up by New Dawn. The boat trip back was thoroughly enjoyable. It was quite warm and sunny for the last day of September. As Kim Ottenbrite said, she would have come just for the boat ride. I think I can safely say that we felt a wonderful sense of accomplishment at a job well done.

McNabs Island Helping Hands!

Story & Photos: Faye Power



Ann, Kim, Leopold, Faye, Sally and Ralph pose on the boat. In front is Brent & Lyn, photo credit to Blaine MacArthur.

**Friends of McNabs Island Society
Rucksack**

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

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MEMBERSHIPS: Individual Membership or Newsletter Only is \$15 per year, Family Membership is \$20 per year, Supporting Membership is \$50 per year and Sustaining Membership is \$100 per year. We are a registered charity and accept donations.

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We welcome contributions, ideas and feedback.

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June 5, 2011

Dear Friends of McNabs,

I'm glad I came for the clean-up. On my way to the south end of the island I got side-tracked by a big piece of plastic on the inland shore of McNabs Pond. When I went to pick it up, I realized that the whole shore was just covered in garbage so I concentrated my efforts there. Some of the junk had obviously been there for years as it was half-covered in soil. There was a large tangle of polypropylene rope that I tried to drag out; however some tree roots had grown over a section of it and it was too much for me.

In addition to all the plastic, I was amazed how much Styrofoam there was breaking up into smaller and smaller pieces. This stuff was difficult to see and to get to because it was under bushes and low-lying branches. I think it would be worth asking next year's volunteers to look out for it.

When I was packing up to go back to the dock and looked over the stretch I had been working on, I could see a real difference. I felt good about that. This has been a healthy reminder not to buy stuff in Styrofoam and to try to limit the amount of plastic I use!

You did a very good job of organizing the day and I think that everyone benefited from it. And it helped that we were very fortunate with the weather. The sandy beach (Maugers Beach) on McNabs is beautiful and I can only imagine how fantastic it would be if the harbour water were clean enough to swim there! I look forward to exploring the island more in the future. Thanks for this introduction.

Eleanor

Thank you to our summer students Oksana and Kate!

If you had a chance to visit McNabs this summer, you might have run into two enthusiastic young women who would have offered you a guided tour of the island.

Oksana Atwood, a Nova Scotia College of Art and Design student and Kate van Gorp, a Dalhousie planning student worked for the Friends of McNabs Island from June until September providing guided tours and other related duties. The Canada Summer Jobs program and the Friends of McNabs Island paid for their salaries and expenses.

The guided tours of McNabs were provided free of charge to school groups in June and to groups such as the Dalhousie University Alumni Association, the Dartmouth Boys and Girls Club, and the Deaf Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia in the summer. As expected, the tours were well received and helped to win over many McNabs Island supporters.

Here is what Pam MacCallum of 12 Wing Shearwater had to say about their summer event on McNabs Island hosted by Oksana and Kate,

“Thanks to the outstanding help provided by both Oksana and Kate, the day went off without a hitch, everyone had an amazing time and are looking forward to a return trip next year.”

And Dalhousie Alumni Officer Dawna MacIvor adds,

“Thanks again for all your help in making this possible. It was a great day, and we're looking forward to doing it again next summer!”

When not on the island providing tours, Kate and Oksana worked from an office space donated by NSCAD. And while on the island, they worked from the Jack Lynch house. Travel on the island was quicker and easier thanks to sturdy bikes provided by Ideal Bikes. And a reduced rate for transportation all summer was provided by Taylor Made Tours. Thanks to everyone who made Oksana and Kate's summer jobs memorable.



Dalhousie University Alumni Tour 20 August 2011
Photo: Dawna MacIvor



Keeping McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park Clean

By Cathy McCarthy



Paddle and Clean up Garbage Haul, Sept 2011
Photo: Dave Young

We have been picking up garbage for over 20 years! And still the garbage keeps coming, washing ashore and littering our beautiful provincial park. Since 1991, we have collected 10,130 bags of garbage off the beaches of the islands. The latest haul was brought ashore by 16 paddlers, who participated in our Paddle and Cleanup on September 10.

This year's trash included an assortment of unusual items such as an election sign from Scott Hemming's political campaign, a car seat from a Cadillac, a manual typewriter, a Fischer x-country ski, and various plastic toy action figures. The unusual finds are newsworthy, but sadly most of the garbage is the same old stuff year after year... Tim Horton's cups, which don't break down because of the plastic lid and

liner, old motor oil containers, rope and tires which come from the boating and fishing industry... Styrofoam, which blows in from everywhere including construction sites... and plastic tampon applicators which come from the sewer system. Thankfully, the later should be declining in numbers if the sewage plants work properly.

All of this garbage comes from careless, irresponsible people, who fire their garbage out their car windows, toss their Tims cups in the ditch, or throw their motor oil containers overboard. It swirls around in our grand harbour before landing on the beaches of the provincial park and national historic site.

These cleanups cost us money. The June Cleanup cost us over \$2,000 to transport 260 volunteers from Halifax and Eastern Passage to McNabs. The barge service to move the garbage

off the island and back to Eastern Passage and to the waiting garbage trucks was provided free of charge by Willie Legrow of Edge Marine. Thanks Willie!



DNR Staff help with Beach Cleanup

Keeping McNabs and Lawlor Islands clean has cost us more than \$30,000 over the past 20 years. Your memberships have supported these cleanups all this time. Thank you to the volunteers who donate their time and energy to pick up other people's garbage; your tireless work is most appreciated. And thanks to our members and supporters, your donations and membership dues have paid to keep the islands clean for all Nova Scotians to enjoy!



Peter Stoffer MP for Sackville-Eastern Shore holds up an election sign found at the June cleanup. Photo: Faye Power



Royce Walker and Patricia Manual walking the Colin Stewart Trail

McNabs Island Trail Project Saga

After many delays due to a very wet spring, we were finally able to rebuild the Colin Stewart and Brow Hill Trails. The trail work was difficult because of the reported archaeological sensitivity of the area around the long-gone McNab Family homestead. As a result, we were required to hire an archaeologist to monitor the trail construction and couldn't install drainage ditches along the trail route.

The trail rebuilding was also slowed down by the sabotage of the old bridge that was built by our volunteers nearly 20 years ago along the Colin Stewart Trail. We had hoped to replace this bridge with a new one, but because of the vandalism, the contractors had to install a culvert instead. Taking out the new culvert and installing a bridge would have cost us an extra \$5,000.

The trail had to be built according to Nova Scotia Natural Resources specifications, which meant we had to use gravel for the trail bed instead of woodchips or some other less invasive material. Greendale Resources, the contractor hired for the trail work did the best they could under the circumstances and even contributed many hours of in-kind labour and equipment to the project.

The end result is a trail loop from McNabs Pond along the Colin Stewart Trail to Brow Hill and on to Fort McNab National Historic site. This loop will allow visitors to explore the McNab Family homestead area of the island before going to Fort McNab and returning from the fort via Garrison Road.

McNabs Island Composting Toilet

In addition to trail work, we also installed a Clivus Multrum composting toilet along Garrison Road near Teahouse Lane. This toilet, which is a great improvement over the old outhouse privies, was well received by island visitors. However, the toilet's success has been short-lived. The first problem involved an axe attack when drunken campers wandering around in the middle of the night tried to break down the steel door with an axe, and the second set-back was the heavy rainstorm on August 8, which caused the compost tank to lift up out of the ground due to hydrostatic pressure.

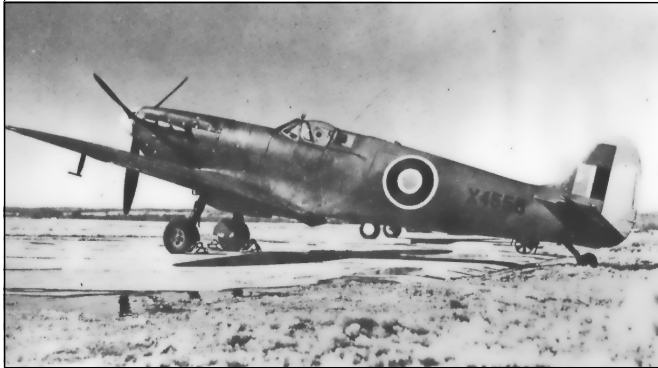
Getting the toilet fixed has taken some time, but we hope that it will be back in operation soon. Eventually, we would like to install more composting toilets on the island. These toilets are easy to maintain and the way of the future. The Clivus Multrum toilet on McNabs is the first composting toilet in a Nova Scotia provincial park.



McNabs Island Spitfire

By Lee Walsh

Photo credits: Mark Peapell collection



Spitfire X4555 just after arrival in Canada at Rockcliffe, Ontario in March 1943

In 1946 with the hostilities in Europe and Japan at an end, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) was expanding its Fleet Air Arm and acquired a number of retired aircraft from the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). Three retired Spitfire aircraft were sent to Halifax with one aircraft being used at the RCN Air Electrical School at HMS Stadacona and the other two possibly being used at the RCN School of Naval Air Maintenance at Shearwater. However a number of photos which surfaced in the late 1980s show retired aircraft being used at the RCN Fire-Fighting Training School on McNabs Island as late as 1955.

First thought to be a damaged or retired Seafire Mk XV, the plane used on McNabs Island is thought to be a Spitfire X4555 that had flown with No. 13

RCAF Squadron from Rockcliffe Airforce Base from 1943 to 1947. After the war, it was transferred to my grandfather's unit, No. 5 Equipment Depot at Moncton, before heading to Halifax. Originally built as a Mark I aircraft, it had a distinguished flying career with No. 92 Squadron at Biggin Hill during the Battle of Britain and was later converted to a Mark VII before coming to Canada.

Recent photos supplied by aviation historian Mark Peapell of Halifax finally confirm the aircraft in this photo is Spitfire X4555 due to the gun ports seen on the wing and the camouflage paint scheme. Mark writes that in the early 1980s, parts of a Spitfire aircraft remained on the island left over from this RCN Fire-Fighting Training School. He found a Spitfire wing that was corroded and heavily singed after being burned numerous times. However, when Mark went back to recover what was left of this Spitfire, it was gone.

What mystery remains today, after interviewing many veterans from the RCN, is what happened to these aircraft on McNabs Island. Did the RCN bury them, did they simply leave the fuselages behind, and how many aircraft were used? Some records survive in Ottawa from this training school on the island, but Mark and I would like to hear from anyone that might have any recollections, photos or first hand accounts of seeing the aircraft remains on the island.

The concrete pump house building in the background of the photo remained on the island until recently. It is unclear if any of the instructional aircraft or parts were buried on the island or if they were taken back to the mainland by the RCN for proper disposal.

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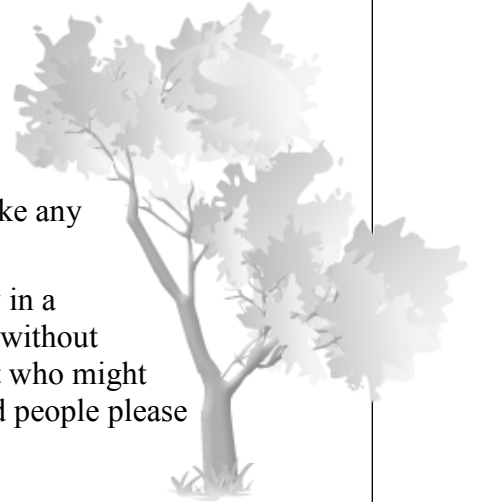
Men foaming down Spitfire X4555 in 1955, at the Fire Fighting School on McNabs Island

WANTED!!!! FORMER MCNABS ISLAND RESIDENTS

The Friends of McNabs Island Society has often been in contact with folk who used to live on McNabs and we have printed many articles about them or by them. Frequently, we are told that these people have lost touch with each other but would love to hear from former friends and acquaintances.

We would like to arrange an opportunity for them to meet, probably during an afternoon in November, before the snow flies. If you are either a former full time resident or among the many former summer residents, we want to hear from you. We won't make any arrangements until we find out how many are able to attend.

This is a project we have talked about for quite a while and are now in a position to follow through on our idea. It cannot happen, however, without participants. If you know of anyone who might be in this group but who might not get The Rucksack, please pass the information along. Interested people please call Carolyn at 477-0187 or email mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca.



Natural Resources Strategy Finally Released

The much-anticipated Natural Resources Strategy was released on August 16. The strategy addresses several issues including mining, forestry, biodiversity and provincial parks. The Minister of Natural Resources, the Hon. Charlie Parker, said that he would accept the recommendations of the steering panel chaired by retired Chief Justice Constance Glube. The panel had listened to Nova Scotians and studied the issue for the past three years.

As for parks, the Natural Resources Strategy devotes eight pages of the report to Provincial Parks. The report recommends many things that the Friends of McNabs Island Society has already been doing. It talks of over-arching goals of shared stewardship, far-sighted planning, protection, education and recreation for provincial parks. The report encourages the establishment of "friends of" groups that will share stewardship responsibilities for parks, and for providing more emphasis on education, something that the Friends of McNabs have been doing for over twenty years.

Still there is no clear indication in the report how the government plans to implement this far-reaching strategy. It is disappointing to learn that there is no new funding for provincial parks.

In fact the report reiterates what we have known all along, that the provincial park system is under-funded. The report warns, "Nova Scotians want more from the parks than the Nova Scotia government can realistically afford to deliver," and...

"We also need to decide such important matters as where to invest taxpayers' funds and what land to divest."

The full report can be read online at www.gov.ns.ca/natr/strategy or contact Nova Scotia Natural Resources at 902-424-5935 to request a copy.



Faye Power and Sally Ravindra take a break on one of the new benches near the Teahouse



Faye Franks (left) visiting from Scotland, toured McNabs with her niece Gloria, who is a member of the Friends of McNabs



VOL·UN·TEER

(vŏl ən-tîr) *noun*

A person who performs or offers to perform a service with no expectation of compensation

The Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on volunteer power, please consider giving a few hours of your time.

Not all jobs take a lot of time, some can be one-time-only help with an event, doing call backs or mailing out the newsletter. Please contact the executive through our email address.

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

Send cheque, payable to:

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Contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome.

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For email updates about McNabs Island, send your contact information to:
mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or visit our Facebook group.

All memberships are renewable by the end of each year. Please fill out the renewal form enclosed with this issue. Your support for McNabs Island and our society is invaluable.

For any membership inquiries contact Lyn Underhill
at mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or 902-444-7482.