

# *The Rucksack*

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society

Volume Twelve, Issue Three

Winter 2003



Breach of Maugers Beach into McNabs Pond

## **Hurricane Juan Hits McNabs and Lawlor Island Provincial Park**

Two months after the hurricane hit the island, there is still no word from the Department of Natural Resources on when McNabs Island will be open to the public again. By all accounts, the islands suffered considerable damage and will not look the same. Winds on McNabs during the hurricane were recorded at 172 km/hour. Photos of the storm damage, courtesy Barry Edwards, can be found on our website [www.mcnabsisland.ca](http://www.mcnabsisland.ca) and throughout this newsletter.

The Department of Natural Resources has posted signs on the three wharfs on the island telling visitors that the park is now closed. However, individuals with their own water transportation still manage to land on the island. They risk being charged by the Department of Natural Resources enforcement officers with a summary offence violation of the Provincial Parks Act which carries a fine of \$215.00.

The Friends of McNabs were forced to cancel the popular Fall Foliage Tours in October. All other group visits to the island have been cancelled. The Friends of McNabs Island Society have not been able to carry out our trail maintenance, outhouse restoration or upkeep of the McNabs Family Cemetery since the storm. The Department of Natural Resources has not given us any indication when the park will be open again.

*(Continued on page 2)*

On November 5<sup>th</sup> the **McNabs and Lawlor Island Provincial Park** Advisory Committee met with Harold Carroll, Director of Parks for the Department of Natural Resources for an update on the storm damage. Here is the list of damage to the island as reported by Natural Resources staff:

1. There was an oil spill near the old fuel storage area off Garrison Road. An 800' long underground pipe was exposed when the storm hit Garrison Road. There is a 200 gallon oil tank buried under the road that will have to be removed. Department of Public Works has contracted out the environmental repair work.
2. Approximately 100 trees fell on the power lines on McNabs Island. Power crews have cleared the main line and power was finally restored on November 15<sup>th</sup> to the main line only.
3. The road to the lighthouse was washed out and McNabs Pond is now a tidal inlet. Apparently the storm breached the south end of the breakwater at Hangman's Beach and the sea rushed into the marsh and pond between Lighthouse Road and Strawberry Hill. The surge broke through the Lighthouse Road at Maugers Beach. Pieces of the breakwater now litter the shore near Garrison Pier.
4. There is considerable erosion along the south end of what was McNabs Pond. The habitat of the muskrat and other wildlife that lived in the pond is destroyed.
5. Garrison Pier, newly renovated last year, has buckled and the decking was ripped off in places.
6. Garrison Road near Garrison Pier is littered with large cobble making it navigable only by foot, or all terrain vehicle and heavy equipment such as a backhoe.
7. There was extensive blowdown of trees on the island. Estimates are that 1/4 to 1/3 of the



Garrison Pier showing heaved deck boards



Damage to the Ornamental Linden trees flanking the walkway

trees were knocked down or damaged. The most extensive damage is in the north-end area between Garrison Road and the Old Military Road near where the old Findlay Picnic Grounds, school and fixed light would have been. The blowdown continued from the start of the Military Road up to the Lynch and Conrad houses. The other large area of blowdown is behind the Teahouse on the drumlin that runs the length of the island between the Timmins Cove Trail and Indian Point. The Fraser Farm Trail runs on top of this ridge and is extensively damaged.

8. Most of the hiking trails maintained by the Friends of McNabs are blocked by uprooted trees and blowdowns. The small bridges that the Friends built on some trails are destroyed. Most of the outhouses maintained by the Friends are overturned.
9. The houses sustained some minor damage as the trees including the majestic Lindens planted by Peter McNab III in the 1840s fell all around them.
10. Many ornamental trees planted by the island's early settlers were uprooted.

The island caretaker, Dave Seaboyer, finally returned to the island on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Natural Resources tell us that all repairs to the roads, trails, outhouses, wharves and houses will be funded under hurricane disaster relief funds. There is no estimate of how much all of the repairs will cost.

The Park Advisory Committee will be allowed to tour the island with Natural Resources staff for the first time on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Following the tour the committee will wrap-up the latest revisions to the Draft Management Plan and submit the plan to the Minister of Natural Resources early in the new year.

by Catherine McCarthy



## McNabs Island - The Aftermath of the Storm



Trees down at the Lynch House



Trees down on the lawn of the Davis House

## Hurricane Juan - September 2003



The breach in Maughers Beach



Tree roots heaving up decking



## Hurricane Juan: The Changing Face of McNabs

(The following is a letter sent by Friends of McNabs member, Dusan Soudek, to update people on the damage to the island in the week after Hurricane Juan. It paints a graphic picture of what the new island looks like. Special thanks to Dusan for taking the time to write this letter and allowing us to use it in the Rucksack.)

I've been watching the changed silhouette of McNabs Island from Halifax all week, and so I simply had to paddle out there today to see the changes caused by the recent Hurricane Juan storm surge and winds. I started out near Dooks Wharf in Shearwater, where the sailing vessel Marr II sits high and dry, and circumnavigated the inner two thirds of the island in clockwise direction.

The supposedly protected northeast shoreline of the island has suffered considerable erosion, as much as ten feet, judging by the newly exposed tree roots. Tree damage wasn't severe here, but many of the younger conifers are bent in the direction of the prevailing wind, and it's unclear whether they will survive. The exposed Farrell's Point was hit hard, with boulders deposited many feet into the forest.

The well-known osprey nest on a power pole at Back (Wreck) Cove was gone, as were all other osprey nests I knew about. Wambolt Trail, the portage to McNabs Pond, had already been cleared of fallen trees by the island's caretaker. The nearby McNabs Pond Trail is impassable due to broken and uprooted white spruces, and the pond itself was the lowest I'd ever seen it.

Yes, McNabs Pond has changed dramatically. After many decades it is tidal again. The storm surge filled it with seawater and breached the 1950's causeway, which had blocked its tidal outlet. So it's good-bye to breeding toads, cattails, and other essentially freshwater creatures. What's left of the pond is held back at low tide by a new sandbar near the outlet stream, and a miniature tidal rapid now exists at the location of the former bridge to Strawberry Battery.

Garrison Pier suffered only minor damage, but the nearby drumlin, near the former Detention Barracks site, suffered nearly 100 % blow-down, perhaps because this is the highest point of the island. I was unable to check the former Island Teahouse site, as there were too many windfalls blocking the way. Long sections of Garrison Road, the main communication along the axis of the island, are now a boulder beach.

The exposed shoreline between Hugonin Point and Ives Point also suffered significant erosion. Ives Point is full of washed-out dead trees, and the concrete sentry building, which had once guarded the military pier here, is gone. But the small causeway here seems to have held. Ives Cove, and the shipwrecks there, suffered only minimum damage.

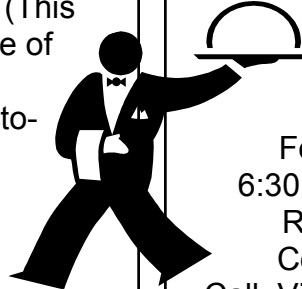
Much of the island's shoreline is full of new plastic litter, the worst I've ever seen. I don't know how the old buildings and the old historical trees further inland fared.....And, this year's blackberry crop is lost; I couldn't find a single ripe berry.



## Eastern Passage Wildlife Festival September 21, 2003

An estimated 300 people stopped by the Friends of McNabs' display at the Wildlife Festival in Eastern Passage on Sunday September 21<sup>st</sup> according to Barry Edwards, co-ordinator for this event. Fourteen Friends answered questions about McNabs and Lawlor islands and encouraged visitors to participate in the upcoming Fall Foliage tour. (This event was later cancelled due to the closure of NS parks within HRM following Hurricane Juan.) Many expressed interest in this October outing and inquired about reliable and affordable transportation for getting to McNabs at other times. It was also indicated that little additional information was available from any government source other than the McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park brochure re-designed by the Friends of McNabs last year.

by Denyse Contrasty



## Notices

### McNabs Island Poster

Our poster has been updated and is available by calling Carolyn at 477-017. The price remains \$5.00 plus mailing.

### Sixth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction

February 28, 2004  
6:30 pm Officers Mess  
Royal Artillery Park  
Cost \$30 per person  
Call Victor Dingle 463-4761  
for tickets. Reserve early as  
this event sells out quickly.

### New Website

The new and much improved website is up and running. Thanks to Friends member and webmaster, Chris Poulin for a great job. Chris has put lots of photos of the damage caused by Hurricane Juan on the new website which will give you some idea of how much of the island was affected. Check it out at:

[www.mcnabsisland.ca](http://www.mcnabsisland.ca)

### The Gift of Membership

With Christmas approaching, please consider giving a Friends of McNabs Island Society membership to friends or family. In addition to receiving the Rucksack and a reduced rate for transport from Eastern Passage, you support this worthy cause with your gift.

## McNabs and Lawlor Islands Park Fund

The Friends of McNabs Island would like to launch a fundraising drive to bring donations to the McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park. Clearly Nova Scotia's newest provincial park has been ignored while donations continue to pour in to rebuild Point Pleasant Park and the Public Gardens. Deep cuts to the provincial parks' budget in recent years have forced the Province to look toward the Park Advisory Committee for partnership ideas to fund the establishment of the new park on McNabs and Lawlor Islands. Now that the park has been so irrevocably changed by Hurricane Juan, McNabs and Lawlor Islands need the help of Nova Scotian benefactors more than ever.

For more details on how you can help, contact Cathy at  
[cathymc@accesscable.net](mailto:cathymc@accesscable.net)



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**Willing to help out?** \_\_\_\_\_

Annual membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society starts on the date of payment of dues 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 money or cheque, payable to :  
**The Friends of McNabs Island Society**

PO Box 31240  
 Gladstone RPO  
 Halifax, NS  
 B3K 5Y1

or phone Carolyn Mont at 477-0187  
 for membership inquiries.



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

Contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome.

Visit our website at:

***www.mcnabsisland.ca***

Phone: (902) 434-2254

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