



# The Rucksack

Newsletter of The Friends of McNabs Island Society

Edited by Anne Marie Feetham

Autumn 1993



*Ives Cove Today*

## **MCNABS ISLAND SITE CHOICE CONFIRMED FOR SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT AND OIL-FROM-SLUDGE REFINERY**

*Dusan Soudek*

The long-awaited report of the Federal/Provincial Environmental Assessment Panel (headed by Dr. Shirley Conover), on the proposed Metro sewage treatment scheme, along with provincial and federal governments' positions on the report, have been released on September 3.

It was a black day for Friends of McNabs Island, as the Conover report recommends the project proceed and supports the choice of Ives Point and Ives Cove (see photo) as the site of an artificial island ("Ives Island"), to house the sewage treatment plant (STP) and the associated oil-from-sludge (OFS) refinery. The artificial island would be about 9.5 hectares, about the size of nearby Georges Island. The report and its 71 recommendations were accepted by the provincial and federal governments.

Dr. Conover's panel was highly critical of the site selection process and noted that the Ives Cove site was chosen "very early in the review process...without adequate public involvement", and that "the not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) syndrome had driven the site-selection process, with inadequate weight having been given to social, cultural and ecological () issues associated with McNabs Island".

An alternative site for the STP/OFS facility, Dartmouth Ocean Terminal in Woodside, was suggested for "serious evaluation" by the Conover panel, but was rejected by the province on economic grounds.

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Every cloud has a silver lining. The panel concedes that the STP/OFS facility would adversely impact a natural park on McNabs Island, and its report has at least 14 specific recommendations with respect to the island, all approved by the federal and provincial governments.

They include: Planning and implementation of a park on the island is to take place "in parallel" to the harbour cleanup project; "public interests" participate in the planning and management of the park; and funds for the park be guaranteed as part of the cost of the harbour cleanup.

Moreover, McNabs and Lawlor Islands are to maintain their parkland designation in perpetuity with restriction to low-impact park and recreation activities. No direct access from the artificial island to McNabs Island is to be permitted until a definite management plan "can accommodate the impacts of increased access", specifically no routine construction or operations access. Odour and noise levels on McNabs Island during construction and operation of the STP/OFS facility are to be kept low, i.e. comparable to standards applicable to residential areas.

More specifically, a new wharf to compensate for the loss of the present Ives Cove wharf is to be built at a suitable location. The artificial island is to be "camouflaged" to "preclude filtered views from the Lynch, Conrad and Fort Ives properties". A "survey and full documentation of previous uses" of Ives Cove is to be undertaken, and the balance of the cove is to be maintained for recreational boating and anchorage.

## **SITE CHOICE (cont.)**

The cleanup project's designer and construction supervisor (Halifax Harbour Cleanup Inc., a crown corporation) is to "enter into an independently mediated, collaborative process with other project stakeholders (... including) harbour users and supporters of McNabs Island () to develop a system for timely and effective stakeholder involvement", to begin immediately.

Finally, the Conover report recommends the sewage treatment system be operated by a separate utility, governed by a board including a representative of harbour users and specifically another director representing McNabs Island.

All recommendations have been accepted by the provincial and federal governments - destruction of Ives Point and Ives Cove is therefore one step closer to reality!

The biggest remaining obstacle to construction is its huge cost, estimated at \$385 million, \$142 million of which remains uncommitted. The scheme cannot proceed until funding for the entire project is in place, as its very nature precludes building the system piecemeal. Recommendation #41 of the Conover panel states that the three levels of funding governments avoid "transferring the burden of costs () to the next generation", i.e. the system may not be financed by bonds.

It is ironic that approval of the project was announced just one day after the province's Finance Minister reported the largest deficit in the history of Nova Scotia (\$471 million, triple the previous government's estimate), warning of dramatic cuts in spending and advising of reduced expectations.

The Conover report, its acceptance by the two senior governments, and the provincial government's refusal to seriously consider an alternative site for the STP/OFS facility, have certainly disappointed directors of the Friends of McNabs Society. We continue to believe that an industrial facility of this type and size should be located at an existing industrial site on the mainland. It should NOT be located at the most visible, the most difficult-to-reach, the most unspoilt, and the most expensive site in Halifax Harbour, next to a planned nature park!

The directors of our society would appreciate comments from members and from the public at large. Where do we go from here?

## **Friends Meet with New Provincial Ministers *Catherine McCarthy***

On July 7th Friends of McNabs Board Members and Tourism Prof. Patricia Glencross, met with Ross Bragg, the newly appointed Minister of Tourism and Economic Development. The meeting was arranged by Ron MacDonald, Member of Parliament for Dartmouth, who has long been a supporter of McNabs Island Park. We gave Mr. Bragg, who has never been to McNabs, a brief overview of the island, its history and natural attributes. We introduced to him the concept of developing the island as an eco-tourism park and the economic development potential to tourism that the idea entails. We asked Mr. Bragg to consider working with the Department of Natural Resources and the Friends of McNabs to develop the Island into a world class urban wilderness park, and prevent any incompatible uses such as the sewage treatment plant from being located there. Mr. Bragg told us that we didn't need to worry about the sewage plant being built on McNabs because there was no money for the project.

Mr. Bragg was open to our ideas and suggested that we meet with Don Downe, the new Minister of Natural Resources as soon as possible. So on August 9th the same delegation met with Don Downe and Barry Diamond, Director of Parks and Recreation Branch. Mr. Downe was familiar with McNabs Island's history and natural beauty and he did not favour McNabs as the location for the sewage treatment plant. Mr. Downe asked us many questions on eco-tourism and our ideas for the Island. He too was interested in the concept of a wilderness eco-park and suggested that the department of Environment and Education become involved in the park planning process. Later we met with Barry Diamond to discuss specifics regarding trail maintenance, the future of the Island Tea House and our involvement with the park planning process. As a follow-up, we'll also be meeting on September 9th with Natural Resources park planner Brian Kinsman.

## **Meeting Announcement!!! - The Future of McNabs Island**

F.O.M.I.S. will host a General Public Meeting for various society representatives and individuals with a direct interest in McNabs Island. Discussions to include the Sewage Treatment Plant project, but will also cover other important Island issues. We're counting on a full turn-out of F.O.M.I.S. members, but extend a welcome to the many other associations that use and enjoy McNabs.

**Wed. Sept. 22, 7-9:30pm  
Maritime Museum of the Atlantic  
Lower Water Street, Halifax  
Info: Cathy McCarthy/424-2254**

**Editorial**

*Anne Marie Feetham*

As a newcomer to F.O.M.I.S., I'm very enthused about its goals and activities, as well as enthralled by the beauty of the Island itself. My own main contribution will be as a facilitator for the publication of *The Rucksack*. My main goal, besides widening it's scope, is to increase society representation in submissions. As in the past, the design, appearance and content of the newsletter will continue to evolve, and I encourage feedback and input on ongoing changes. I particularly encourage any member to contact me regarding submissions especially photographs and historic information. With everyone's help, I believe *The Rucksack* can continue to be a vital and interesting part of the Society, improving communication between members, non-members, associated organizations and the general public.

**Anne Marie/461-4776**

**RECENTLY...**

**McNabs Island Picnic**

Elizabeth Johnson

The 3rd Annual McNabs' Island Picnic on Saturday July 17th was a success despite the misty, windy weather. About 65 picnickers attended and



thoroughly enjoyed the day. With the help of some campers, we were able to extend a tarp onto the patio of the Teahouse so that we could stay moderately dry.

Once again, Pam Wimberly did a wonderful job face painting, while other volunteers ensured that picnickers were well watered and fed. Jennifer and Elizabeth helped coordinate games with the children.

Barry Edwards led a tour around the north end of the island and, thanks to Island caretaker Dave Seaboyer, was able to take the group into some of the homes.

New Friends were able to see more reasons why the Island is worth preserving, for its historic architecture and grounds.

Our captain of the day, Ed Kiley, provided a safe and comfortable journey for all. Our thanks to Ed and to the local businesses who donated game prizes, snacks and beverages for the day. Once again the volunteers did a wonderful job! Now that we have three years' experience at organizing the McNabs Island picnic, it's time to enlist more helpers, and many new improvements for the future have been suggested.

**MCNABS ISLAND CAMP-OUT 1993**

(August 14 & 15)

*Alan Jean-Joyce*

What a weekend! Sunshine, great exercise, good food, good friends, and biodiversity galore! Biodiversity? Yes...and who needs Brazil? (Well...we do, but that's another story). We have McNabs Island, complete with flies (too many types to name), spiders, toads, salamanders, birds, deer, and according to Mike Tilley, bear(s). Not to mention the plethora of plant life. And what does this all have to do with camping?

Because camping allows us the time to stop and enjoy nature. And back to nature is where we were...sort of. Just because we had a nice Tea House to store some of our things in and had the use of the washrooms (Thanks John), doesn't mean we didn't rough it! We slept on the ground. In tents. Actually we all had a really, really good time. On Saturday we split up with some of us just hiking about the island, while others went wildcrafting - gathering blueberries, raspberries, and mushrooms. That evening we ate some of our packed-in food, plus we got to enjoy some of the food harvested by our food gatherers... Yum, Yum.

Saturday night us campers, and the day-trippers, gathered by a fire on the beach for some ghost stories - Aooooohhhh! And some readings from Thomas Raddall's Hangman's Beach - "At the top of the post, a height of two fathoms, a short arm of the same timber jutted at a right-angle, and from it hung the ...(you'll have to read the book), daubed with tar from head to foot."

Around 7pm New Dawn Charters arrived to pick up the day-trippers, which included a young lady from Iceland who, with her two local friends, hiked almost the entire island that day. Before leaving the dock us campers were given a bag full of fresh (and I mean fresh) mackerel. These we devoured the next morning for breakfast - Yum, Yum again. Do you ever notice how the fresh air gives you a great appetite?

## Campout (cont.)

Anyway....Sunday.

What can I say? More sunshine, more food, more fun. We left Sunday afternoon with warm memories of a great camping weekend - right in the heart of Halifax Harbour!

## "Now You Seawall, Now You Don't..."

*Michael Tilley*

Anyone who has visited McNabs's Island may have walked along our seawall and boardwalk to the lighthouse at the end of Maugher's Beach. Both have been damaged over the years by storms and the power of the sea.

Earlier this summer "Friends" member and Island Historian Barry Edwards discovered between 60 and 70 of the 20' timbers had been systematically pried from the top of the seawall! Had the timbers been removed, the structural effectiveness of the wall would no doubt have been lessened. The Coast Guard and Parks Canada were alerted and the timbers were reset and spiked back into place. Although frustrated with development progress on the island and budgetary restraint, Mr. Dan Mullaly of Parks Canada expressed a desire to work with the Province to stabilize or repair the sea wall and boardwalk.

We'll be watching this matter and wish to thank Barry, Mr. Mullaly and Mr. Dave Smith from the Coast Guard.

## UPCOMING EVENTS...

### September Beach Sweep and Island Appreciation Day

Your last chance of the season to help in cleanup efforts! Get off your boring exercise machine and joins us in a Beach Sweep and Island Appreciation excursion! This trip will proceed rain or shine; as there is no rain date, only dangerous weather will force a cancellation. Call **461-4776** from 10:00 am Saturday the 18th 'till 10:00 am Sunday the 19th for a continuous 24-hour recorded update on weather forecast and trip status.

Please note there will be only one trip to and from the Island so be prompt! Upon landfall, the group will enjoy a hike to their favourite spots, picnicking among the trees, and appreciation of the wildlife.

Clean-up is our main focus on this trip but you are of course welcome to wander at will for the day, or join an interpretive walk conducted by Society members!

## Trip Details

**Haligonian III departs**

**Cable Wharf, Sunday, Sept. 19 at**

**11:00am**

**Returns 5:00 p.m. from Garrison Pier**

**Pay at Cable Wharf:**

**\$5 Adult non-members**

**\$3 Members**

**\$1 Children**

You'll need: a good lunch/snack for a 5-hour stay, gloves for trash-handling, jacket in case of rain, and dedication!

We'll provide: Garbage Bags and Dumpster by Clean Nova Scotia, & bottled spring water by F.O.M.I.S.! McNabs provides: fresh air, bird-lovers' bonanzas, and all the blackberries you can eat!

Co-sponsored by: Murphy's On the Water, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Clean Nova Scotia Foundation, and Department of Natural Resources.



### October Fall Foliage Foray

This year our annual Fall Foliage excursion on October 17 carries a special poignancy; it may well be one of the last years to enjoy a pristine Island free of major construction! So we are encouraging everyone to come out and enjoy a beautiful day in the fresh air, surrounded by blazing foliage displays, embellished by wandering wild life and birds. Share the sights and sounds of a wilderness park with friends and family, or wander at will in meandering privacy. (Participation salutes you!)

We are as always interested in suggestions to be made each successive trip better than the last; if you have ideas or skills that can help make our excursion more enjoyable for all, please let us know!

Your B.O.D. is currently searching for the best possible transportation arrangements, as well as firming up the general program for the day; interested parties should watch for details in October or call **Cathy McCarthy - 434-2254** for more info.

### NEWSBRIEFS

*Dusan Soudek*

**The European Copper Beech** tree at the former Hugonin-Perrin estate (beside the Island Teahouse), beloved by generations of tree-climbing kids, looks even more sickly than last year. It had been pruned and fertilized by Natural Resources staff in what looks like a vain effort to save it. Its horizontal branches are in places nearly leafless, despite a temporary fence around it to prevent people from climbing on it.

**On August 29 the Armdale Yacht Club** held its annual Commodore's Picnic at Back (Wreck) Cove near the old wharf. The weather was glorious, the beer cool, and fun was had by all. Forty-seven boats were counted in the cove, including a visiting yacht from far-away Australia! Needless to say, the popular picnic site has no garbage cans, outhouses, or picnic tables.

**Another local boating group**, the Halifax Squadron of the Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons, had its annual picnic at the same site on July 3.

**On August 18** McNabs Island hosted a field trip by foresters and wildlife biologists from 25 countries, taking part in the 21st International Congress of the International Union of Game Biologists in Halifax. Several members of our society acted as guides. They report that the biologists were mostly interested in birding.

**FERRY SERVICE TO MCNABS ISLAND?** This was the first summer in a dozen or so years without a scheduled ferry service to the island, the McNabs Island Ferry Company having gone out of business. Following the reopening of Garrison Pier in late June, a local tour boat company tried to fill Captain John Jenkins' niche using the chartered 88 foot two-masted schooner Scademia (out of St. John's, Nfld.). However, this arrangement broke down within a few weeks, and the brightly painted orange-and-black Scademia left for another charter. At the present time visitors are ferried to the island on an unscheduled basis by the following companies:

- Four Winds
- Captain Eli's Deep Sea Fishing
- Murphy's on the Water,
- New Dawn Charters
- Purcell's Cove Marine (Ed Kiley)

and most likely others! (See phone list on back of newsletter)

### **AND SOME VERY IMPORTANT NEWS!**

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**THE MAP IS OUT!** The new map of McNabs Island, financed largely by the Mountain Equipment Co-op grant, has been available for some time. It was produced by Vern Baldwin, a final-year student at the College of Cartographic Sciences in Lawrencetown, N.S., with input largely by Mike Tilley and Barry Edwards. We are distributing a reduced version of the black-and-white map (scale approx. 1km = 65mm) through the charter companies and yacht clubs. Individual copies retail for the bargain-basement price of \$1.00 plus \$0.50 mailing per shipment. The price drops to \$50/100 for bulk orders. Work on Edition 2 is in progress.

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**1-800-663-2667**

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**Mark Your Calendar!**

DATE	TIME	EVENT
September 19	11:00am - 5:00pm	Beach Sweep/Island Appreciation
September 22	7:00pm - 9:30pm	General Public Meeting
October 17	TBA	Fall Foliage Foray

**TRANSPORT INFO:** You can still enjoy an excursion to McNabs on your own...

- Four Winds 492-0022
- Captain Eli's Deep Sea Fishing 422-3608
- Murphy's on the Water 420-1015
- New Dawn Charters 479-2900
- Purcell's Cove Marine (Ed Kiley) 477-9630

**MEMBERSHIP FORM:**

(please print)

I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for: (Single Adult - \$10 per year)

\_\_\_ New Member(s)                      \_\_\_ Renewal(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (phone)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (postal code)

(Optional) I would also like to donate....

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (time, services, skills or funds)

(suggestions to Society)

Return with your cheque or money order to:

**F.O.M.I.S.**  
**21 Willowdale Dr.**  
**Dartmouth, N.S.**  
**B2V 1B9**  
 (FAX: 465-8708 Dusan)