

McNabs Island Trail Project a Big Success

By David MacDonald, PEng

The Friends of McNabs Island Society has accomplished the most significant trail improvement project since adopting the Island in 1990. In the aftermath of the Hurricane Juan cleanup, the hiking trails on the Island had deteriorated, suffering from poor drainage and rough surfaces.

Last year, the Friends began soliciting various levels of government for funding to undertake a major re-construction to improve the condition of the trail network. Under the leadership of its president, Cathy McCarthy, they were successful in raising **\$271,700**. Trail funding contributors included: the **National Trails Coalition** (\$73,500); **Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection** (\$70,000); **Parks Canada** (\$50,000); **HRM's** New Parks and Playgrounds Capital fund (\$50,000); **HRM Councillors**, Jackie Barkhouse (\$5,500), Dawn Sloane (\$5,000), Jennifer Watts (\$2,000), Jim Smith (\$2,000), Reg Rankin (\$2,000), Russell Walker (\$2,000), Bill Karsten (\$1,000) and Bob Harvey (\$500). The **Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)** contributed an additional \$8,700 and provided engineering specs and staff to oversee the construction project.

As soon as the funding was secured, the Executive selected a project team to begin the construction planning stage of this major trail improvement project. The team consisted of Carolyn Mont, Jon Cusick, Royce Walker, Dave MacDonald, and Cathy McCarthy. Using the trail plan prepared by DNR and approved by the Park Advisory Committee early last year, the committee identified priorities for each trail. It was hoped that along with improving sections of Garrison Road, secondary trails around the Teahouse and the Hugonin-Perrin Estate as well as the Colin Stewart Trail could be rebuilt.

The team met with DNR staff to concur on what construction work should be done to each trail. DNR's position was that improvements to major portions of Garrison Road should be our top priority. DNR drew up draft tender documents and the Friends of McNabs Island called a public tender. With the help of the Rick Draper of the Province's Procurement Services, the tender was listed on the public tenders website. There were six bidders interested in the project and the Friends accepted the lowest bid of \$260,200 from Brycon Construction of Dartmouth. Work started in early December and was completed by mid January 2010. Doug Oliver, DNR's Parks Technician, visited the Island regularly during construction to oversee the work on behalf of the Society.

On your next visit to the island, if you walk north on Garrison Road toward Fort Ives, you'll see new ditches along the road as well as new culverts to improve old drainage problems. Note the road section running along Findlay Cove from the Lynch Road to Fort Hugonin. There is new ditching and culverts along the long hill going from the Lynch Road to the marshland at Findlay Cove. This low area has been raised 18 inches above the old roadbed. Many other sections of Garrison Road on the other side of the Island have had similar ditching work and new culverts installed and finished with new gravel to build up the roadbed. The long uphill section from the Wambolt Trail to Fort McNab has been improved. The section going down to Back Cove has been fixed but not graveled since there wasn't enough money to finish this section.

As we go to print, another work project has started. The federal Public Works, Government Services Canada is removing the petroleum-contaminated soil, old pipeline and pumphouse south of Garrison Pier. Hopefully once this project is finished, this section of Garrison Road will be greatly improved for hikers too.

As the Society enters its 20th anniversary year, the successful completion of this inaugural trail improvement project is a strong testament to its role as committed and conscientious stewards of McNabs Island. It is hoped the Society will be able to continue with similar improvements to more trails on the Island in the future.

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