



McNabs parkland undergoes clean sweep

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

Over 200 bags of garbage were gathered from the shores of McNabs and Lawlor Islands on Sunday.

This brings the total to approximately 4,500 bags of garbage removed from the islands since 1981.

102 volunteers of all ages gathered on McNabs Island for the semi-annual beach sweep organized by the Friends of McNabs Island Society (*Friends*). Another 35 participants gathered on the smaller Lawlor Island.

McNabs and Lawlor Islands are situated in the eastern side of Halifax Harbour. Both Islands are designated as parkland, and are currently in the process of being converted into provincial parks. Parks Canada is planning to convert Fort McNab, on the southern part of the island, into a National Historic Site.

"The amount of garbage is down from the spring clean-up which is good," said *Friends* representative Cathy McCarthy.

The *Friends* have recently set up garbage cans on the island, which have helped reduce the amount of littering. The cans were emptied once a week throughout the summer and a total of 200 bags were removed.

"Certainly we've been making a dent in the garbage," said McCarthy. "It does look more like a park. It's not as messy as before."

Some unusual items picked up on the beaches: a plastic shower curtain, a new pocketknife, a portable toilet, a plastic Daily News box, a dress, underwear, a dustpan, paintbrush handles and something that looked like a cross between a wheelchair and a shopping cart. A bottle with a note inside was also found, inviting the discoverer to a party, but the note failed to say where or when the party was taking place.

As usual, the most common items

found on the beaches were plastic tampon applicators, rope, styrofoam, and condoms. Tampon applicators were by far the biggest and most



The youngest "sweepers" on McNabs. photo by Amanada MacEachern

unnecessary problem. Despite the fact that plastic applicators are not flushable, many women will flush them anyway, perhaps not realizing that they end up in the Harbour or on our shores. The availability of biodegradable cardboard applicators and other alternative products make this problem even more frustrating.

"Many people don't realize that we don't have a sewage treatment plant," said McCarthy. "People should think twice before they flush. It really is a big problem."

None of the sewage coming out of Halifax and Dartmouth is being treated before it is dumped into the Harbour. What you flush down the toilet goes right into the water. Victoria, B.C. is the only other

Canadian city of this size without a treatment plant.

"We wouldn't be getting away with it if we were not on salt water," said Alan Ruffman, voluntary coordinator for the Metro Coalition for Harbour Clean-up.

Every city, village, and town in Ontario is required to treat their sewage, which is being dumped into freshwater. The levels of compliance may vary, but the requirements are still there.

A study began in 1988 led to a proposal for a plant, but it never surfaced.

"We are effectively in the same position as when Edward Cornwallis came into the harbour in 1749 and dumped his bedpan over the side,"

said Ruffman.

The new Halifax Regional Municipality has begun looking into the issue again. They have set up a citizen's committee to advise council on issues such as location of the plant and how to fund it. The committee has had two meetings since its formation and will be meeting bi-weekly until February, at which point they hope to have recommendations for the municipality.

For approximately 25 years, there has been a surcharge on water usage in Metro to create a fund for Harbour clean-up. The current rate is 1.98 cents per cubic meter of water. This works out to just less than a penny being contributed to Harbour clean-up every time you flush a toilet.

BC rainforest slated for clearcut

BY IAN MACKENZIE AND KIM MCKAY

VICTORIA (CUP) — Local environmental groups are outraged by British Columbia's decision to allow clearcut logging in one of the last rainforests left on Vancouver Island.

The B.C. government has given the International Forest Product logging company (Interfor) permission to clearcut in the Klaskish Valley, located on the northwest side of the Island. The rainforest found there is one of only 11 left on Vancouver Island — there were originally 170.

"Watersheds like the Klaskish, the East Creeks, and the Walbran need outright protection given the fact that over 70 per cent of the Island has been clearcut," said Chris Genovali, a spokesperson for the Western Canada Wilderness

Committee.

"We're absolutely opposed to the logging of the Klaskish," added Merran Smith, forest campaigner for the Sierra Club.

Environmental groups are afraid that the use of clearcutting instead of alternative harvesting practices will devastate the area, destroying the habitat of the animals who live there. The rainforest is home to five species of salmon, as well as Roosevelt elk and the endangered marbled murrelet. There is also concern because the terrain in the area is prone to landslides. Clearcutting, environmentalists argue, could exacerbate the situation, causing severe damage to the Klaskish salmon river.

Interfor says, however, that safety is its first priority in the choice of logging techniques, adding that alternative measures are being considered for certain sites. But

their use depends on the biological and economic viability of such approaches.

B.C.'s Ministry of Forestry says it is satisfied that Interfor's logging of the Klaskish rain forest will be environmentally sound.

"I have to be satisfied that the plan will conserve the resources of the area," said Jack Dryburgh, the ministry official who made the decision to allow the clearcutting.

Interfor says it will preserve an area for the marbled murrelet of more than 270 hectares, and leave a 70 hectare winter range for deer and elk. It also intends to protect the salmon population by employing debris from the logging to prevent landslides.

But Smith says these measures are inadequate.

"Ask the average person if they think a little strip of land is enough for a large group of animals to live

on," he said.

There is also concern that Interfor will be cutting too much, too fast. According to the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Interfor will cut its 40 year quota in just six years, leaving the old growth forest open to storm winds and severe damage.

Both Interfor and the ministry say this assertion is not true. Interfor will log a "six year quota in six years," said Dryburgh.

The company adds that it will adhere to the forest practices code, and upon completion of harvesting will deactivate all roads used in the operation and commence tree-planting.

Environmentalists still remain unconvinced that enough will be done to preserve the rain forest.

"This plan of Interfor's is to gut the entire valley," said Smith.

Eco-warrior spends life fighting for nature

BY BRIAN SARWER-FONER

MONTREAL (CUP) — Eco-warrior Paul Watson said it is time humanity got its priorities straight and started treating the planet and its biodiversity with respect.

Watson is one of the founders of Greenpeace and now does work with the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. He spoke earlier this month to students at Concordia University about his activist work on behalf of the environment, and on humanity's degradation of the planet's biodiversity.

Watson said his life was changed forever while he was involved in a Greenpeace action in 1975 to stop a 150-foot Soviet whaling ship from killing eight sperm whales. A harpooned whale, in its final act, jumped within a few feet of the small craft Watson was piloting. He says it engaged him in

direct eye contact.

"What I saw in that eye was understanding, that the whale understood what it was that we were trying to do," Watson said. There was also pity in its eye "not for himself, but pity for us humans, that we could commit such an act of blasphemy. To kill these whales for what? The Russians were killing whales to provide lubricating oil for ICBM missiles. We were eradicating a species to make a weapon that was meant to eradicate our own species."

It was then that Watson came to the realization that "We are insane, absolutely, totally insane."

In 1977, Watson formed the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, dedicated to protecting marine wildlife worldwide. Over the past 20

years the group has been instrumental in the fight against the Canadian seal hunt, drift-net fishing, and tuna fishing operations that harm or kill dolphins.

His actions have involved open sea confrontations with whaling and drift-net ships.

Though he is protected by the UN World Charter for Nature which explicitly states that any organization or individual can uphold international marine conservation regulations, Watson has often been prosecuted for his work.

Most recently he was jailed for 60 days in the Netherlands earlier this year for harassing Norwegian whalers who continue to operate illegally. But his time in prison was well spent: Watson said he was able

to recruit three prisoners to Sea Shepherd while he was incarcerated.

Watson sees the society as filling a special niche within the diversity of the environmental movement.

"We are here for one very good reason: to piss people off. We're here to say things that people don't want to hear, to do things that people don't want to see being done, and hopefully, we're able to provoke some sort of thought on these issues.

"Unfortunately the only way to get attention and reach people is through doing controversial things."

Watson said he considers natural wilderness areas sacred, and likened spectacular natural settings to cathedrals. He feels that the destruction of biodiversity on this planet is the single most important issue of our time, and added that humans haven't done nearly enough to address this travesty.

"Oh, we send letters to politicians, we dress up in animal costumes, or

jump up and down with picket signs, but we don't really fight for it, because if the rain forests were as sacred, important, and valuable to us as a chunk of meteorite in Mecca, or an old wall in Jerusalem, or a piece of marble in Rome, we would literally rip those loggers limb from limb for the act of blasphemy they are committing. But we won't do it because nature is apart from us. We've divorced ourselves from it."

Our alienation from nature precipitates misplaced values, making us a very self-centred species, said Watson.

"We have names for people who destroy anything made by human beings — buildings, art — we call them vandals and criminals. But destroy anything that is part of nature, the works of God, and we have names for people like that too — we call them developers."

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