



The Pitch Pine Post

ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

MALLORYTOWN LANDING, ONTARIO

SPRING 2008

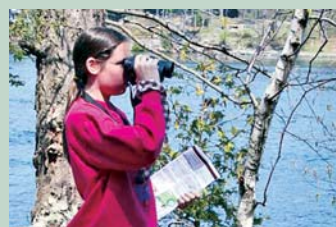
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Smoky Fire ceremony builds relationship with Mohawks

Traditional ceremony is landmark event for Parks Canada

In a unique cultural ceremony that has not occurred with the Government of Canada in more than a decade, Parks Canada and the Mohawks of Akwesasne celebrated a commitment to work together by taking part in a traditional Smoky Fire ceremony in August 2007. The ceremony



Photo: Parks Canada

A traditional Smoky Fire ceremony with the Mohawks of Akwesasne in August 2007 symbolized a new working relationship between St. Lawrence Islands National Park and the community of Akwesasne.



Photo: Lisa Werden

Richard David, Assistant Director of the Akwesasne Department of the Environment, demonstrates the making of traditional black ash baskets during the public celebration on Grenadier Island following the Smoky Fire ceremony.

brought together community leaders from both Akwesasne and the region surrounding St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

The ancient Smoky Fire tradition symbolizes a new working relationship between the Mohawks of Akwesasne, traditional keepers of the islands of the St. Lawrence, and Parks Canada, today's caretakers of St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

After the traditional passing of messages by a runner, commu-

nity representatives and the staff of St. Lawrence Islands National Park joined the people of Akwesasne around the Smoky Fire. Akwesasne spiritual leader and elder Chief Jake Swamp led the ceremony, after which all participants were invited to speak.



Photo: Lisa Werden

The flags of Canada and Akwesasne flew together on Grenadier Island during the two-day Smoky Fire ceremony celebration.

Bringing words of greeting, Grand Chief Timothy Thompson extended "a hand of friendship to everyone on behalf of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne."

See Smoky fire on page 2

Success! Two new eagle nests found in 2007

For the first time in over seventy years, more than one pair of bald eagles have successfully nested on the upper St. Lawrence River. The two new nests are a positive sign for a provincially endangered bird that is still a rare sight in the 1000 Islands.

"These new nests show that we're on the threshold of the bald eagles beginning a recovery here in the 1000 Islands," says Bud Andress, Canadian Co-Chair of the St. Lawrence Bald Eagle Working Group, an international organization devoted to the recovery of the bald eagle in this region.

Dr. Peter Nye, an endangered species biologist with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, agrees. "This discovery is wonderful. We have long viewed the St. Lawrence River as prime bald

See Eagles on page 8



Photo: Ian Coristine/1000IslandsPhotoart.com

Not everyone was happy to see the bald eagles nesting on a New York island. Ospreys and bald eagles traditionally share the same territory, which can lead to occasional disputes and aerial acrobatics. The smaller ospreys (top) object to the eagles, which are known to occasionally "pirate" or steal fish from other birds.

New trail network at Jones Creek

More than three kilometers of trails and boardwalks will be officially open at St. Lawrence Islands National Park's Jones Creek property this summer. Parking and access to the trail network will be available on the north side of 1000 Islands Parkway across from the Brown's Bay picnic area.

See Trail crews on page 3

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The Superintendent Says...

By Jeff Leggo, St. Lawrence Islands National Park Acting Superintendent

The 2008 season begins for St Lawrence Islands National Park with our fourth issue of the Pitch Pine Post. Building on our success in 2007, we are looking forward to another year of activities in the park and local communities. This issue of the Pitch Pine Post will provide you with insight into the park's natural resource conservation program, mainland trail development, the results of the local resident and visitor surveys, and much more. We will soon be completing the park management plan and I would like to thank everyone who provided comments and suggestions during the public consultation last year. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer.

Park management plan moving along

Early in the summer of 2007, St. Lawrence Islands National Park invited the public to contribute to a review in preparation for the release of a new park management plan. This important document will guide the park's direction over the next ten to fifteen years. Many residents and visitors responded through letters and emails and in person at the public consultation open houses held in Rockport and Gananoque.

The park team has compiled those responses and prioritized the concerns and compliments. Based on what we heard from you, some changes have been made to our initial plans: certain ideas have fallen to the wayside, others will be phased in gradually and still other programs will be enhanced. A fact sheet outlining management plan decisions is available upon request.

Together we will ensure that St. Lawrence Islands National Park is a shining example of a special place with great island and mainland experiences for our visitors, that plays a meaningful community role in the

1000 Islands region and that acts as guardian of our incredible natural and cultural resources for all time.

Thank you to those who offered their thoughts and recommendations. The new management plan is expected to be released later this year.



Photo: Brian Morin

Akwesasne Director of the Environment Henry Lickers (left) and Parks Canada CEO Alan Latourelle were two representatives of the communities that met and forged a symbolic bond during the Smoky Fire ceremony in August 2007. The ceremony was followed by celebrations that involved a guided plant walk, traditional dances, food, and more on Grenadier Island.

Smoky Fire joins communities

Continued from page 1

Akwesasne, a community of approximately 21,000, straddles the boundary between Canada and the United States at Cornwall.

Parks Canada CEO Alan Latourelle acknowledged the significance of the ceremony by thanking the Mohawk representatives. "We want to work in the spirit of trust, friendship, and openness. Through your actions today, you've opened your hearts to Parks Canada and the community."

A new relationship between the communities will lead to the integration of traditional knowledge within resource management, visitor experience, and educational programming in the national park. The ceremony follows several years of preliminary relationship

building.

"We at St. Lawrence Islands National Park are changed because of the work we've done with you in the past," Park Superintendent Gord Giffin said to the Akwesasne community members. "We know we're not perfect and we thank you for your support and guidance to help make us better. Together we can accomplish much."

Several other community members, including local mayors, political leaders, not-for-profit groups, local residents and government organizations took the opportunity to voice their support for the relationship.

The formal Smoky Fire ceremony was followed by a day of celebrations open to the public. A free shuttle boat carried visitors to Grenadier Island for a walk highlighting traditional plants, lunch, and a chance to meet with and learn from Akwesasne community members.

The event marked the beginning of a relationship that has continued to grow between Parks Canada and the Mohawks of Akwesasne since last July. At a meeting with Parks Canada during the winter, Henry Lickers of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne remarked, "People will think about the Smoky Fire Ceremony and what happened there for years to come. It allowed us to meet and talk and do good things."

To learn more about the traditional Akwesasne Smoky Fire ceremony, see page 7.

"We want to work in the spirit of trust, friendship, and openness."

Looking Back...



Photo: Parks Canada

60 years ago

Residents near Rockport venture out to examine the wreckage of one of two Harvard Trainer aircraft that crashed in the 1000 Islands during World War II. A second plane, also being used to train pilots out of Trenton, Ontario, crashed on open water on the American side. Both pilots survived.



Photo: Parks Canada

29 years ago

A game of tug-of-war involved pullers and spectators of all ages during the park's 75th anniversary celebration in 1979. Local residents and visitors have been enjoying summer activities at Mallorytown Landing and on park islands since before the park's establishment in 1904.

Video project captures Mohawk stories Trail crews capture great shots

A new program called "Voices of Akwesasne" will open this summer to share stories of Mohawk culture with hundreds of visitors at St. Lawrence Islands National Park's Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre.

Through touch-screen technology, visitors will be able to



Photo: Parks Canada

Cesi Mitchell, a Medicine Woman in the community of Akwesasne, explains how she learned about medicinal plants and shares some of the gathering and preparation techniques in "Voices of Akwesasne".

choose from a variety of short video clips telling traditional and contemporary stories of the Mohawks of Akwesasne, a First Nations community that straddles the international border near Cornwall, Ontario.

Over five days of filming during the past winter, Paul Bruneau and Brad Bonaparte, Project Coordinators from St. Lawrence Islands National Park and Akwesasne respectively, spoke to ten community members and heard stories in both English and Mohawk about Akwesasne's his-

torical and modern connection to the 1000 Islands region.

"One theme that kept coming up was the construction of the Seaway and the changes that it caused for the community of Akwesasne," says Bruneau.

The vignettes will also include stories about turtles, the cycle of the universe, the making of black ash baskets, the St. Lawrence River, medicinal plants, and a variety of other subjects.

Visitors will have the option of listening to some of the stories in English, while others are told in the Mohawk language with French and English subtitles. The English stories will also have the option to be played with dubbed Mohawk, since one of the goals of the project is to contribute to efforts to preserve the Mohawk language.

Akwesasne will have a copy of the final product so that the community's stories and Mohawk language can be shared with younger generations, a project to which community members and elders were eager to contribute.

"We had a great response from the community of Akwesasne," says Bruneau. "Community members were happy to share stories and also to work towards friendships between the community and the park."

"Voices of Akwesasne" will be open to visitors throughout the summer at the Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre. This summer the Visitor Centre will also feature a special travelling exhibit from the Akwesasne Cultural Centre. For more information, please call 613-923-5261.

Continued from page 1

Photos captured by the trail crew this past summer show that patient wildlife watchers will be rewarded when St. Lawrence Islands National Park's Jones Creek trails are opened to hikers this summer.

"One of the highlights for the trail crew was seeing a group of weasels run across the trail in front of them one day," says Jennifer Harvey, trail project coordinator. "We've also seen black rat snakes, beaver, deer, and countless



Photo: Parks Canada

"Frank" the beaver (Castor canadensis) has been spotted several times near one of the new trails that pass by Polly Creek. The trails have been designed to pass through a variety of habitats including beaver meadows and granite ridges.



Photo: Jennifer Harvey

The trail crew spotted this grey treefrog (Hyla versicolor) while trimming branches above one of the trails on the lower Jones Creek property. The trails in that section are completely brushed and will be open to the public this summer.

birds. There's a lot of wildlife in the area."

The park's goal in establishing the trail network at Jones Creek is to allow people to enjoy some of the biodiversity and scenery of the 1000 Islands ecosystem. Much of the 16-kilometre trail network was brushed in 2007 and trailheads, parking areas, signage, and boardwalks are being added later this summer.

For more information about the new trails at Jones Creek, call 613-923-5261.



Photo: Mary Beth Lynch

The next step of the trail project is to develop trails on the park's new Landon Bay property near Gananoque. A trail to Fitzsimmon's Mountain, which will be accessible to visitors only by paddling through Landon Bay, will be opened in 2009.

Mallorytown Landing: An evolving landscape

PAST - From wilderness to recreation



Until the mid-1800s, Mallorytown Landing was part of an extensive wetland system that helped to filter water and provided spawning and nesting areas for fish and waterfowl.



By the late 1990s, the man-made beach had become a health hazard. The hardened shoreline and lack of vegetation left no natural filtering system and E. coli contamination meant the beach was closed more often than it was open.

PRESENT - Bringing nature back



Community members have volunteered their time to help rehabilitate Mallorytown Landing by planting native trees, shrubs, and flowers.



To improve water quality and fish habitat, natural vegetation has been planted in the former beach area. The hardened shoreline was removed and replaced with a more erosion-resistant and natural rocky shoreline.

FUTURE - A natural, meaningful visitor experience



Over time, the trees and shrubs will grow and mature, providing shade and beauty around the parking lot and picnic areas.



The Mallorytown Landing Rehabilitation Project will continue to be a learning experience. Parks Canada is committed to working with the community. What would you like to see here?

To see more images and learn more about the changing landscape at Mallorytown Landing, stop by and visit! The Visitor Centre is open daily from mid-June to Labour Day. A public consultation meeting will be held in the coming months when the park will be seeking your input and ideas on further changes at Mallorytown Landing. Call 613-923-5261 for more information or if you would like to be personally notified of the public consultation meeting.

Photos: Parks Canada

Survey Says...

Nearly 2000 residents and visitors shared their views with park management through two surveys conducted in 2007.

The Visitor Information Program (VIP) survey, conducted on park islands and at Mallorytown Landing during the summer months, is part of a national effort to measure the quality of programs and services offered at all national parks, national marine conservation areas, and national historic sites. The survey results will help guide management and program planning over the next five years.

"We have listened to the comments received through the VIP survey," says Visitor Services Officer Joanne Monteith. "This summer, additional staff will be on the islands to greet boaters and will be concentrating on regular maintenance of facilities such as docks, trails, picnic shelters, and tables."

The Attitudes and Values survey was distributed to regional residents in the winter of 2007 to gain a better understanding of residents' thoughts and perspectives regarding conservation in the Thousand Islands Area. The results of the survey will help direct outreach and education programs in the future. Because the park is so small and fragmented, regional resident support for conservation is essential if the park is to meet its federally mandated commitments to protect the local ecosystem and species at risk.

"The survey revealed that people in the area are very attached to the local environment," says Chris Bellemore, St. Lawrence Islands National Park

Outreach Coordinator. "People want to be involved in improving the quality of the environment, and would like some guidance to make the right decisions."

Both surveys have a 95% confidence level, with a margin of error of + or - 5.0%. Full survey results are available on request. Please call 613-923-5261 for more information.

Visitor Information Program Key findings

- More than half of the visitors to St. Lawrence Islands National Park are from Ontario and more than one quarter are from Quebec.
- On average, visitors spend 5.6 nights in the park.
- 27% of visitors chose to complete the survey in French.
- Only 20% of visitors were visiting the park for the first time.
- Visitors are very satisfied with park staff courtesy.
- Visitors would like to see an increase in the availability of park staff.



Photo: Michael Bruneau

Park interpreter Malina Dockendorff (right) points out an article about road mortality next to a park vehicle displaying a larger-than-life Blanding's turtle as part of a public awareness campaign to help protect turtles and snakes on the region's roads.

Reptile education on the road

The larger-than-life snakes and turtles on the sides of vehicles at St. Lawrence Islands National Park are getting many second glances as they travel through eastern Ontario. The vehicles, used by staff travelling to meetings, programs, and within the park, are meant to increase public awareness of how dangerous roads are for species such as the Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) and eastern (black) rat snake (*Elaphe obsoleta*), both designated as threatened species in Canada.

"We would like people to understand that there are threatened species in their backyard and that they can make a difference in these species' survival," says Chris Bellemore, Outreach Coordinator at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. "Road mortality is a major issue affecting turtles and snakes in the 1000 Islands. We

want to remind people to slow down and, when possible, help these animals cross the road."

Many reptiles in search of nesting sites and food are forced to cross roads that fragment their habitat into smaller and smaller pieces. Studies have even shown that a small percentage of drivers deliberately aim for turtles and snakes on roads.

The awareness campaign designs, based on a similar program that educates the public about bears at Banff National Park in Alberta, include a large Blanding's turtle or eastern (black) rat snake picture and the words "This turtle [or snake] is rare. Drive with care." Vehicles are equipped with fact sheets that staff can distribute if questioned by curious residents and visitors.

For more information about turtles, snakes, and road mortality, please call 613-923-5261.

Successful deer herd management to restore island ecosystem

A tobacco burning ceremony at six o'clock in the morning on January 12 marked the beginning of a joint effort by the Mohawks of Akwesasne and St. Lawrence Islands National Park to restore the forest ecosystem on Hill Island. Park staff and Mohawks worked together to reduce the island's deer population after an in-depth study showed that white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) were having a serious negative effect on Hill Island's forests and the endangered pitch pine.

Before the herd management efforts early this year, the 4.25-km² island, 80% of which is owned by Parks Canada, supported a population of approximately 16 deer per square kilometre. Even populations as low as 8 deer per square kilometre can have a significant negative impact on a forest ecosystem.

From 2003-2007, not one tree seedling of any species was recorded in any of the forest health and regeneration plots

monitored on Hill Island. The island is home to the largest Canadian stand of pitch pine, one of the country's rarest trees. This pitch



Photo: Parks Canada

The overpopulation of white-tailed deer on Hill Island threatens the entire island ecosystem, including the rare pitch pine tree. Herd management measures will allow the island's vegetation to recover.

pine stand and the entire island forest ecosystem are threatened by the overpopulation of deer, who have devoured nearly all plants below the browse line, the height to which a deer can reach.

The park conducted a study in 2006 to measure the effect of the

deer on the ecosystem. "The study found that a severe and sustained deer population reduction was required for plant recovery on the island," reports Josh Van Wieren, an ecologist at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. "An organized herd reduction is the most effective and efficient method of doing this."

With the support of the majority of Hill Island residents and in partnership with the Mohawks of Akwesasne, the park began herd reduction measures early this year. In the following years, the island's ecosystem will be closely monitored and herd management will continue if required.

"The number of deer we have removed should result in considerable improvements to the damaged ecosystems found on Hill Island," says Van Wieren. "Similar efforts being conducted on neighbouring Wellesley Island [New York] are also anticipated to improve ecosystem health on Hill Island."

Values & Attitudes Survey Key findings

- The majority of respondents feel that development and conservation can be balanced.
- Most respondents see the value in wetlands as a key part of the local environment.
- Respondents feel that it is important to protect rare species both in the Thousand Islands area and on their own land, but feel that most people do not understand why rare species are important.
- The majority of respondents are interested in helping to improve the quality of the environment.
- Respondents indicated there is a need for more grants and programs on conservation.

Boaters recommend switch to solar

The weight and noise of gas-powered generators convinced John and Joan Leech of Kingston to switch to solar power six years ago. They haven't regretted the change.

"I would never go back to a generator," says John Leech. "Never. I recommend to everyone that I know out there, if they have a boat that they can mount panels on, to go for it."

The Leeches' boat, Quality Time, is equipped with two hard 75-Watt solar panels measuring 24 by 48 inches and four 6-Volt batteries. This system supplies enough energy to run a refrigerator, lights, microwave, and television. The microwave and TV run off a 1000-Watt inverter, while the lights and refrigerator use the batteries directly.

Leech advises boaters adopting solar panels to buy a minimum of two panels. "I started with one panel and found that in the spring and fall when we don't

have as much sunlight, it doesn't keep the batteries up as much as I wanted," explains Leech. "I ordered another panel and we've had no problems since then."

He also recommends getting a 1500- or 2000-Watt inverter, citing the difficulty he had in finding a microwave to run on 1000 Watts.

The benefits of solar power are many, and not just for the environment. The panels are easy to install, require practically no maintenance, and create no noise (unlike gas- and wind-powered generators). In addition, the fuel – the sun's energy – is free.

The Leeches know of several fellow boaters who have also switched to solar power and are happy with the results. "I know some people who have three or four panels and they run sewing machines and big TVs and more. As far as I'm concerned it's the only way to go if you have a boat you can put them on," says Leech.

For boats without a location to

mount permanent panels, there are also portable solar panels that can be placed on the dock, in the windows, or on the top of the boat. Solar panels are readily available at various boating, outdoor, and hardware stores. The

initial cost for the Leeches' solar panels was approximately \$1400, plus the batteries and regulator. Costs vary depending on the size and type of panel. For more information about solar technology, call 613-923-5261.



Photo: Sophie Borcoman

John (above) and Joan Leech of Kingston switched to solar power on board their boat, Quality Time, six years ago and recommend the use of "green power" to all boaters.

Turtle recovery depends on community involvement and less roadkill

After three years of population and habitat studies on Blanding's, map, and stinkpot turtles in the 1000 Islands region, St. Lawrence Islands National Park's turtle studies are expanding to include a road mortality study and work with local landowners.

"We are working in collaboration with the local landowners on a community approach to ensure healthy turtle populations," explains Chris Bellemore, St. Lawrence Islands National Park Outreach Coordinator. During the winter, a community turtle recovery strategy was developed with the Leeds Stewardship Council and in consultation with local landowners and stakeholders.

"We have determined that a two-pronged approach is necessary to recover turtle populations," says Bellemore. "The messages need to get to drivers on the 1000 Islands Parkway and to local landowners."

The 1000 Islands Parkway is just one of many roads that cuts through significant wetlands, forests, and the Adirondack migration corridor,

creating a major hazard for wildlife. A study in partnership with Carleton University will look at road mortality along the Parkway.

"Road mortality has been attributed to as much as 50 percent of population deaths for certain species," says Ewen Eberhardt, a Parks Canada researcher who is coordinating the project. "It is one

officials can look at ways to reduce wildlife deaths in those areas, such as erecting signs to showcase turtle-friendly driving practices during turtle nesting season.

Landowner involvement

University of Ottawa researchers worked in the park over the past three years to identify habi-

changes they can make to help turtles on their property," says Bellemore. Any waterfront landowners in the area between Rockport, Mallorytown Landing and Grenadier Island who would like to be involved in the project or who are interested in turtles are encouraged to contact Chris Bellemore at the park.

The turtle studies conducted in 2005 and 2006 focused on map turtles (*Graptemys geographica*) while those in 2007 looked mainly at stinkpot (*Sternotherus odoratus*) and Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*). Remarkably little is known about these three species, which are all listed as species at risk in Canada.

"These turtles were tracked throughout the season to reveal information such as where they go to nest and hibernate and what type of habitats they prefer," says Marie-Andrée Carrière, a University of Ottawa researcher who studied the turtles for three years. "This information lets the park work to immediately protect those areas, giving these threatened species a better chance to survive in our river."

This summer, researchers will continue to attach transmitters and track Blanding's turtles to complete the description of Blanding's turtle habitat needs and estimate the population size. Continued monitoring of map and stinkpot turtle populations will allow the park to see whether those populations are increasing, decreasing or stable.

For more information about turtle studies at St. Lawrence Islands National Park, please call 613-923-5261.



Photo: Ewen Eberhardt

Marianne Kelly identifies and marks the location of roadkill along the 1000 Islands Parkway for a road mortality study on the busy roadway. After only two weeks of cycling in early spring, Kelly had already found hundreds of dead animals. Roads are a major threat to the survival the region's five turtle species.

of the major problems for certain species in this area."

Researcher Marianne Kelly, decked out in safety gear, will be cycling the entire length of the 1000 Islands Parkway from April to October, stopping to record and identify all roadkill. With the data collected, researchers will be able to see where the most turtles and other animals are being killed. When the hotspots are located,

requirements for three of the area's turtle species. The study has highlighted the importance of shoreline habitat protection for turtle survival. Because the majority of the land in the 1000 Islands region is privately owned, the participation of local landowners is essential to help keep turtles in this area.

"This summer's turtle work will include home visits for people who want to know what

What we now know about Stinkpot Turtles

- Population size: Possibly 200 along the south shore of Grenadier Island – good news, but the challenge is to keep them there.
- Favourite habitat: Shallow water along the shore, often under boats and docks
- Risks: Loss of shoreline habitat; being hit by boat propellers

Volunteers log nearly 2,500 hours at national park in 2007

From island stewards to local landowners, volunteers donated nearly 2500 hours of time to St. Lawrence Islands National Park in 2007. In organized park programs and as individual volunteers, many local residents and visitors gave freely of their time to help the park achieve its goals of protection, education, and visitor enjoyment.

The work of volunteer Anna Rochon of Mallorytown is an example of a win-win relationship for the park and the volunteer. Since 2004, Rochon and her support worker Valerie Wykes have been volunteering at the park's administration office, assisting with tasks such as photocopying and laminating. Rochon's work saves time for administration staff and at the same time gives her an opportunity to participate in the community, the main goal of the Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement.



Photo: Parks Canada

Anna Rochon (right) has been volunteering weekly at the St. Lawrence Islands National Park administration office with support worker Valerie Wykes since 2004.

"I like to visit with the friendly staff and have made many new friends here," Rochon says.

Island steward program is a success

The nine island stewards who volunteered their time last summer made the initial year of the program a success, doing everything from greeting visitors to taking care of the beach at Central Grenadier.

"The volunteers are doing the job we dream we could do, but can't because of capacity limitations," says Harry Szeto, park warden and volunteer coordinator. "They greatly enhance the visitor experience."

Island stewards put in an average of 15 hours of volunteer work each week greeting visitors, sharing information about the park, local attractions, and issues such as ticks and Lyme disease, and distributing park newsletters.

Long-time boater John McCuaig of Kingston spends most of the summer on his boat in the islands and saw the island steward program as an opportunity to do something to improve the park.

"I've been going down to the islands for so many years," he says. "I saw things that could be improved, met a lot of people, and listened to their comments."

Like other island stewards, McCuaig submitted regular reports outlining issues and maintenance concerns that he and

other boaters noted on the islands.

"The biggest value is the feedback the stewards give us," says Szeto. "Little things make a difference to a visitor. The island stewards are there 24 hours a day and they see things staff don't see because they can't be there often enough."

Island Steward Doug Booth noted that park maintenance staff were responsive to problems brought forward by the boaters. "Boaters are beginning to see we can get things done for them," says Booth. "They appreciate the fact



Photo: Parks Canada

Island steward Doug Booth (right) talks to visitors next to his boat, McKena, on one of the park islands. Nine volunteers gave an average of 15 hours per week to welcome visitors to St. Lawrence Islands National Park in 2007. The Island Steward program will be expanded in 2008. Stewards will be identifiable by their green polo shirts and signs on their vessels.

we [island stewards and Parks Canada staff] are all listening and it gives the program credibility."

The program will continue in 2008 with volunteers in twelve vessels. "I think it's a worthwhile program," McCuaig says. "Most of the people I met were surprised it existed but were very pleased with the program and very happy to get the information."

Citizen Science Initiative adds to ecosystem data

Nearly twenty people representing private property owners and local environmental organizations took part in the Citizen Science Initiative to establish forest and wetland monitoring plots outside of the park in 2007. Because St. Lawrence Islands National Park consists of many separate properties, the park can't effectively monitor the region's ecosystems without the help of local landowners.

"The overall goal is to give people an opportunity to learn more about their properties and to help us monitor the ecological integrity of the 1000 Islands ecosystem," said Oliver Reichl, Project Coordinator in 2007. "Their data doesn't replace ours, but augments it. It gives us a more realistic picture of the health of the entire ecosystem."

Julia and Matt Wills, who have lived in the area for six years, decided to set up a forest monitoring plot on their property south of the 401 because it seemed like an environmentally conscious idea that didn't cost anything except a bit of time.

Park staff provided training and equipment and assisted residents with plot set-up, a task that can be a bit overwhelming. "It took a lot of time to set up our forest plot," admits Matt Wills. "A lot of our trees were fairly small, which meant there were a lot of measurements to do. However, now that we've done the initial

survey, it will go faster."

The Wills look forward to returning to their plot again in 2008 with their children, this time to check soil decomposition rates and tree growth. "It will be interesting to see what has actually happened in the past year," says Matt Wills.

Other volunteer opportunities available

One-day volunteer activities are also offered each year at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. In 2007, local residents and volunteer groups such as Communities in Bloom and the Regional Community Brain Injury Services group assisted with the planting of native wildflowers, trees, and shrubs as part of the park's Mallorytown Landing rehabilitation project.

Local residents can also contribute to ecological monitoring by reporting sightings of rare species anywhere in the region through the Ministry of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Information Centre (<http://nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca>).

For more information about volunteer opportunities at St. Lawrence Islands National Park, please call 613-923-5261.

Reducing waste only makes cents!

What's the best way to reduce garbage? Avoid making it in the first place! Here are a few ways to reduce waste for a greener camping experience:

- When faced with the choice, choose cans over bottles and reusable containers over both – and always recycle when possible.
- Buy bulk! It saves you money, reduces the amount of weight you have to carry and there's little or no packaging to throw away.
- Buy meats and cheese for your picnic from the deli counter to cut down on plastic packaging waste and save money.
- Buy concentrated liquids such as juice or dish soap (phosphate-free!)
- Avoid single-serve items that are generally over-packaged and expensive.
- Remove packaging and recycle it at home before leaving for your trip and store food in reusable containers to save space and minimize garbage.
- Take propane tanks from portable grills back home with you to be refilled or recycled; don't throw them in the garbage.
- Plan your meals carefully to minimize leftovers.

"Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time."

Akwesasne's Voice

Smoky Fire Tradition

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is working in close cooperation with the Mohawks of Akwesasne, a community of approximately 21,000 that straddles the boundary between Canada and the United States at Cornwall. The park recognizes the strong ties that the community of Akwesasne has to the natural world. Richard David, Assistant Director of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Department of the Environment and an "elder in denial," as he likes to call himself, explains the Haudenosaunee Smoky Fire tradition:

In the past the Haudenosaunee (Mohawks are part of the Haudenosaunee) practised "Smoky Fires" whenever they traveled to other Nations and/or Tribes. To begin, the Haudenosaunee would gather their runners and do a Bundling Ceremony. The Chiefs, Clan Mothers, and Faith Keepers would present to the runners the messages that they wanted to deliver. The runners were then asked to repeat these instructions to be sure that they understood the message.

The Haudenosaunee would go to the edge of the territory of those that they wished to visit or have council with. They would stop there and build a fire and would add those things to the fire that would produce

a lot of smoke until the host Nation or Tribe sent out a runner to see what the smoke meant.

Upon arrival of the runner, the Haudenosaunee would explain why they had come. Once the runner was satisfied that he understood the Haudenosaunee's purpose of the visit, he



Photo: Brian Morin

The Smoky Fire that burned at St. Lawrence Islands National Park in August 2007 symbolized a new working relationship between the Mohawks of Akwesasne and Parks Canada.

would take this information back to the leaders of his community. The leaders would convey their response back to the runner and he would return to where the Haudenosaunee had made their smoky fire. The runner would explain the response of the leaders of the host community. If that response were to invite the Haudenosaunee to the host community, the runner would escort them to the community, where they would share a meal with the Haudenosaunee. The messengers would then undo their bundled message sent by their leaders and deliver the message. In many

cases the host community would paraphrase the message that was brought to them to ensure that they were of the same mind. The leaders of the host community would explain their response and a return bundle would be prepared. Sometimes the host would have a social dance to make sure that the runners felt that their efforts were welcome and that their message was understood. Usually at first light the next day, the runners would begin their journey home.

Sometimes, one visit would be enough. Other times, the runners could be instructed to send messages back and the routine would be repeated until Communities/Nations were of one mind. In many cases this would lead to a place where the leaders of both/all the Nations would gather to discuss the situation and work towards a point where all the people were of one mind.

Most, if not all, Indigenous Nations, when faced with a situation that required a decision, discussed it until they were of one mind. Everyone had to be satisfied that their concerns were met before any decision was made.

Akwesasne exhibit at Visitor Centre

Explore the culture of the Mohawks of Akwesasne with this summer's special traveling exhibit "We Are From Akwesasne." Created by the Akwesasne Cultural Centre and the youth of the community, the exhibit is a "window into Mohawk culture," incorporating language, stories, art, music, history, and beliefs. It is also a look at contemporary Mohawk society in Akwesasne. The exhibit will be on display from mid-May to Labour Day at the Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre.

Self-guided trail brochures

Discover the secrets and wonders of St. Lawrence Islands National Park's ecology and history with a self-guided trail brochure as you explore island and mainland trails this summer. English and French brochures are available at several locations. Let us know what you think about the brochures by leaving a comment in the self-registration box or contacting us at ont-sli@pc.gc.ca or 613-923-5261.

Did you know?

Akwesasne is known as "The Land Where the Partridge Drums" because the rapids on the St. Lawrence River sounded like the partridge or ruffed grouse beating its wings, especially in winter when the water pounded against the underside of the ice.

Landowner Profile

Students plant "Trees for Peace" for local landowners

For commuters Dan Potter and Patti Whyte, planting trees on their Front of Yonge property is one way of reducing their carbon footprint and returning their property to its natural state. They were delighted to learn about the Grenville Land Stewardship Council's Trees for Peace Project and, last spring, had more than 1000 trees planted on their land through the program with the help of students from Lyn Public School.

"The Trees for Peace program was definitely a good experience," Potter said. "Kids learn about the environment in school but this was a chance to get out and actually do something."

Grade five student Kyle Darke agreed. "It's fun," he said. "Better than school!"

The field trip may have been fun, but the students also did a lot of work, planting 1010 spruce, oak, pine, and ash trees in an old pasture on the Potter-Whyte property.

Trees for Peace Program Coordinator Joanne Groulx spends the winter making presentations to

local schoolchildren in grades four to eight, teaching about the importance of trees to the environment and water quality. In the spring, those students help with the planting of trees to restore wildlife habitat, build wildlife corridors, and reduce shoreline erosion. Last year, 350 students helped plant more than 10,000 trees in the region.

The Trees for Peace program provides trees and wildlife shrubs to rural landowners at a 50-percent cost subsidy, and also provides volunteers and students to help plant them. Professional staff are also available to meet residents on their property to perform shoreline assessments and make recommendations.

Potter and Whyte have been interested in restoring and protecting their property since they moved out of Brockville in 2003. They chose their property in part because of their wish to look after the provincially significant wetland that covers a portion of their land.

Because of that important marsh habitat, Potter and Whyte

have had to contend with regulations imposed by the Ministry of Natural Resources, the local conservation authority, and the municipality regarding any changes they make to their property, even those intended to help the environment.

Despite the frustrations, Potter said they will continue to work toward good stewardship of their land. "We're thrilled to be here," he said.

To learn more about the Trees for Peace Program as a landowner or teacher, please call 613-342-8528.



Photo: Lisa Werden

Lyn Public School students Amanda Irwin (left) and Celeste Lamothe helped plant more than 1000 trees on Dan Potter and Patti Whyte's Front of Yonge property last spring as part of the Grenville Land Stewardship Council's Trees for Peace Program.

Eagles may be on the road to recovery in the 1000 islands

Continued from page 1

eagle habitat, and have anxiously awaited a nest on the U.S. side. Now, with three nests in fairly close proximity to the river pumping out young each year, we should see the growth of the local population accelerate, which is great."

It is estimated that more than 200 bald eagle pairs nested from the Ottawa River to the lower Great Lakes in the early 1900s. The eagle population crashed in the 1970s as a result of pollution, human disturbance, and loss of habitat. That's when people sat up and began to take notice. Pollution levels dropped through the 1980s and many birds of prey began a slow recovery.

"In 1980 there were zero reproducing pairs in southern Ontario [the region south of Algonquin Park, including eastern Ontario]," says Jody Allair, Project Biologist at Bird Studies Canada. "In 2006 we had thirty-four."

The number of eagles wintering on the St. Lawrence River also improved dramatically through the 1980s and 90s. "We're now at the point where biologists estimate fifty to one hundred eagles now spend the winter along the upper St. Lawrence and eastern Lake Ontario," reports Andress. Those eagles, however, left each



Photo: Ian Coristine/1000IslandsPhotoart.com

The lone eaglet from the second St. Lawrence nest waits patiently for its parents to return with food. Female bald eagles lay 1-3 eggs each year. This second successful nest on the St. Lawrence River, followed by third nest discovered late last summer, is an encouraging sign of recovery for the endangered raptor.

spring to nest in northern Ontario, Quebec, and elsewhere. From 1937 to 1999, not a single pair stayed to nest in the 1000 Islands area of the St. Lawrence River.

"After monitoring the winter populations since the 1980s, there was great excitement at the first nesting pair in 1999," says Andress. "That excitement was renewed when a second nest was found in the spring of 2007 and a third nest in the late summer."

Owners of property on an American island spotted a pair of adult eagles rebuilding an old

great blue heron nest in the spring and reported it to the St. Lawrence Bald Eagle Working Group. The nest was monitored over the summer as the parents successfully raised one eaglet. The third nest, well hidden on a Canadian island, also appears to have produced a couple of eaglets.

Eagles often return to where they were raised once they reach maturity. Because fifteen eaglets have been raised since 1999 at the first nest (located on a Canadian island) and there are a few other nests in upper New York state,

experts have been hoping for several years to find a new nest in the islands.

There is a good chance one of the adults in the new nests may be from the original Canadian island nest. "We do know that the new adult female at the American site is not banded," says Nye. "We have banded nearly all the fledglings from the Canadian nest, so if it were one of those young, we should see those bands on these new adults. We hope to see if the male is banded at some point, and if so, if we can observe closely enough, we could tell where he is from."

People are encouraged to enjoy the sight of the river eagles, but to do so at a respectful distance so as not to disturb the birds, especially near nests. With the help of landowners and conservation organizations, Bird Studies Canada is monitoring all bald eagles nesting in southern Ontario to gather data on nest productivity. To report eagle sightings, especially during the breeding season (March to mid-summer), contact your local stewardship council, Ministry of Natural Resources office, or Bird Studies Canada.

For more information about bald eagles in Ontario, visit the Bird Studies Canada website at www.birdscanada.org.

St. Lawrence eagles are "poster birds" for project

Spirit and Phyllis, two St. Lawrence bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) banded and fitted with satellite transmitters in 2006, have spent the past two years exploring eastern North America from Labrador to West Virginia. Their flights have been very different from eagles banded in other parts of the province and have caused the birds to be dubbed "poster eagles" of Bird Studies Canada's "Destination Eagle" project.

"These results have really surprised us," says Jody Allair, Project Biologist with Bird Studies Canada. "Most of the young birds, especially those from Lake Erie, aren't moving around too much, but these birds [Spirit and Phyllis] have done amazing things."

Sometimes flying hundreds of kilometres a day, Spirit and Phyllis have traveled separately to James Bay, northern Quebec, and through the eastern United States. Both have made brief returns to the St. Lawrence River during their travels.

Spirit's and Phyllis' backpack transmitters were attached for the St. Lawrence Bald Eagle Working Group as part of Bird Studies Canada's project to determine what can be done to help bald eagle populations in southern and eastern Ontario. Recently down-

listed in northern Ontario from a provincially endangered species to a species of special concern, the bald eagle remains endangered in the rest of the province, where human pressures are high and population recovery is slow.

"We're seeing that bald eagle numbers are increasing in the province," says Allair, "but when I look at numbers, it's worrying. The southern Ontario population isn't rebounding as fast as surrounding populations, even those in the nearby states."

One possible reason could be pollution. "We're finding that it's possible our eagles aren't living as long as eagles in other populations," says Allair. "Of sixteen dead adult eagles found between 1991 and 2002, ten had extremely high levels of lead and mercury in their bodies." Since 2002, more adults have been found with heavy metal contamination. "It's quite alarming," says Allair. Despite obvious pollution improvements since the era of DDT, there's still something not quite right.

The goal of the Destination Eagle project is to track seasonal dispersal of southern Ontario's young bald eagles using backpack satellite transmitters that are designed to fall off just before the birds reach maturity at four to five

years. "No one really knows where the young eagles go," says Allair. "Through this project we hope to find out where they might be picking up contaminants."

A third St. Lawrence eagle, "Mary," was fitted with a satellite transmitter in 2007 thanks to funding from an anonymous corporate sponsor to the St. Lawrence Bald Eagle Working Group. Mary headed towards James Bay shortly after learning to fly, but disappeared from the satellite tracking screen in September. Like many young eagles, she may not have survived her perilous first year, victim of an unknown fate.

Since 2004, nineteen Ontario eagles have been fitted with satellite transmitters. Roughly a third of those birds have been tracked for a year or more. This data is useful even if the bird is no longer being tracked. "The first year or two is the toughest for young birds to survive," explains Allair. His team hopes to eventually track twenty southern Ontario birds for three to five years.

For more information and to see an up-to-date map of Spirit and Phyllis' travels, check the Eagle Tracker at www.birdscanada.org. The birds' locations are updated every 3-5 days.



Photo: Bud Andress

Sandro D'addario (right) videos his wife Patricia Anderson with "Mary" the bald eagle, held by Jody Allair of Bird Studies Canada. The couple from Rockport were winners of an eagle banding eco-adventure in June 2007.

Park Facilities: What's happening

Completed in 2007

- ✓ Installation of composting toilets at Batterman's Point and Beau Rivage Island
- ✓ Cleaning and painting of both Georgina Island picnic shelters and replacement of roofing on west shelter
- ✓ Repair of the concrete slab, ceiling and posts and painting of Beau Rivage Island south picnic shelter
- ✓ Cleaning and painting of both Stovin Island picnic shelters
- ✓ Cleaning and painting of interiors of Aubrey south, Constance and Gordon centre picnic shelters
- ✓ Repair and chipping of all trails on Beau Rivage, Mermaid, McDonald and Aubrey Islands as well as west end of Georgina Island
- ✓ Removal of the old warden cabin on Red Horse Island

- ✓ Removal of the unnatural hardened shoreline at Mallorytown Landing
- ✓ Removal of Gate's House and barn foundations, conversion of Gate's House foundation to snake hibernaculum and re-naturalization of property and laneway
- ✓ Stabilization and repair of historic gunboat building pile foundation

2008 Projects

- Install a new floating dock on Main Duck Island in Lake Ontario
- Install composting toilets on Gordon and McDonald Islands and at the new trailhead at Jones Creek
- Repair or replace Mermaid Island dock
- Complete Mallorytown Landing restoration with planting of native trees and shrubs



Photo: Michael Bruneau

- Ongoing repair and chipping of island trails
- Repair concrete slab, posts, and roof and paint Camelot Island picnic shelter
- Continue major fall clean-up and painting of 8 picnic shelters, tables, campground posts, and garbage bins
- Removal of storm damaged trees
- Repair of the Heffernan restaurant veranda at east Grenadier

Kevin Harris checks the attachment of a floating dock at Mallorytown Landing. As soon as the winter ice breaks up, work crews begin to prepare the islands for summer visitors. It takes up to seven people approximately two weeks, depending on the weather, to install the more than 85 floating dock units on park islands each spring. Crews will also be busy cleaning shelters, clearing trails, and removing branches and trees that have fallen during winter storms.

Engineers assess dock safety

Park has concerns about large boats on small floating docks

Several broken dock hinges over the past summer led the operations manager to request an investigation and analysis of the park's small, unanchored 16-foot floating docks by public works engineers. Preliminary examinations have highlighted concerns with the strength of the dock hinges and the size and weight of the vessels tying up to the docks.

The average boat visiting the park has increased in size over the years, a trend that has resulted in competition for dock space on several islands in the middle of the summer. The bigger and higher boats are also more susceptible to being caught and pushed by the wind and current. That becomes a problem on the small finger floating docks, which are usually held in place by two hinges only designed to handle a certain amount of force.

Preliminary recommendations from the engineers are to limit the size of vessels to a maximum of 26 feet in length on unanchored 16-foot floaters exposed to current and wind. Rafting together on these small floaters should be banned altogether. The engineers have provided designs for stronger hinges and are presently looking at viable options for anchoring the floaters. They are also looking at new dock designs and configurations for the future.

"Each dock has to be looked at individually," says Robert Van Rumpt, park Operations Manager. "The dock's safety depends on where it is located. In a sheltered bay, the docks are probably fine, but in a channel, exposed to currents and wind, the docks may not be safe for larger vessels, particularly in high winds or storm conditions."

For more information, please call 613-923-5261.

Eagle recovery work will continue after retirement

Park warden Bud Andress celebrates 37 years of service

Bud Andress' work to help the eagles of the St. Lawrence River will continue after he retires from his post as Senior Park Warden at St. Lawrence Islands National Park this summer. In his thirty-seven years at the park, many of Andress' projects have involved monitoring and managing bird populations, including bald eagles, ospreys, common terns, and double-crested cormorants.

In his retirement, he will continue to work with the Leeds

brought the 1000 Islands osprey population from two pairs in 1992 to close to 100 pairs in 2007. A similar return of the bald eagle is expected to be much more gradual, but might be assisted through platform installation.

"If the habitat is available, and a few platforms are in place, bald eagles may repopulate the area slowly over time, both along the River and inland in Leeds County," Andress explains.

Andress' commitment to the area and its eagles is clear. His entire career has been based at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. From the camaraderie of his early seasons in the general works department, to publishing scientific research papers, writing and delivering training curricula, and being an emergency responder and law enforcement officer, Andress has observed many changes to the Parks Canada organization and the park. His current work with the St. Lawrence bald eagle population is only one of the many projects to which he has devoted his time and his dedication to the project is obvious.

"If we can improve the bald eagle recovery here in eastern Ontario, perhaps, someday, we'll see the eagles downlisted from endangered in southern Ontario," says Andress.

Finding habitat for St. Lawrence eagles

Young eagles looking for a place to nest in the 1000 Islands region may soon have some prime bird real estate prepared just for them. The St. Lawrence Bald Eagle Working Group and the Leeds County Stewardship Council

are building and installing artificial eagle nest platforms with the cooperation of local landowners in both Canada and the United States.

"Human habitation has virtually eliminated bald eagle habitat around most of the western portion of Lake Ontario in both Ontario and New York State," says Andress, past co-chair of the SLBEWG. "Some potentially excellent habitat remains around eastern Lake Ontario and the upper St. Lawrence River, but so far very few eagles are nesting here."

Using GIS (geographic information system) mapping, the project began by looking for preferred bald eagle nesting habitat along the shores of the eastern Lake Ontario and the upper St. Lawrence River. Preferred habitat sites contain suitable forest cover (generally white pine) and are located near water and away from roads and towns.

The results suggest we can expect more eagle nests along the St. Lawrence, especially as more young are fledged in the area. "There appears to be ample suitable, now unoccupied, habitat available to them," says Dr. Peter Nye, endangered species biologist with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Regardless of whether eagles eventually choose the artificial platforms as nesting sites or not, educating the public and raising awareness of the importance of protecting near-shore habitat for rare species like the bald eagle are priorities for the groups organizing the project.



Photo: Parks Canada

Park warden Bud Andress has spent years working on the recovery of the bald eagle along the upper St. Lawrence River. In his retirement, he will continue to volunteer his time to assist with the installation of eagle nest platforms.

County Stewardship Council and the St. Lawrence Bald Eagle Working Group (SLBEWG) on new nest platform projects. The platforms are designed to entice young eagles to establish nests along the upper St. Lawrence River and within the greater 1000 Islands watershed of Leeds County.

Andress was one of three people who initiated the osprey nest platform project that successfully

Wildlife Safety Information

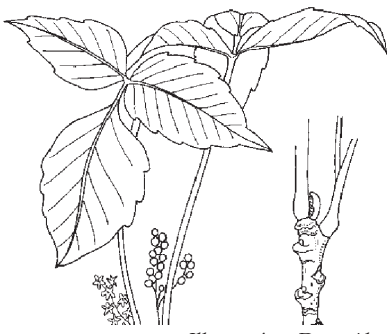


Illustration: Dave Alguire

Poison ivy

This plant can be found in many areas of the park such as Central Grenadier and Mallorytown Landing, usually along trails and in disturbed areas. Poison ivy can grow as low-lying ground cover, a vine or a small bush, and contact with the plant can result in a painful, itchy rash. Remember: "Leaves of three, let it be!"

To stay safe:

- Stay on marked trails.
- When hiking, wear insect repellent containing DEET, long sleeves, pants and hiking boots. Tuck pants into your socks. Avoid wearing sandals or bare feet.
- When you return from a day outdoors, check your body thoroughly for ticks.
- Always keep your pets on a leash and on the trails.
- Never feed wildlife.
- Keep campsites, shelters and docks neat and clean.
- Keep food and all perfumed products (i.e., toothpaste, soap, etc.) in secure, animal-proof containers. Do not keep these items in a tent.



Photo: Brian Morin

Raccoons

Raccoons are opportunistic creatures when it comes to looking for and obtaining food. They are often referred to as the "masked bandits" of the campground. With their agile front paws, they are very adept at opening containers, packages, coolers and even zippers. If fed, they can lose their fear of humans and become aggressive. Seven cases of raccoon rabies were reported on nearby Wellesley Island in early 2008. Keep your food and garbage secure, avoid interacting with raccoons, and report any unusual raccoon behaviour to park staff.

If you find a tick on you:

Remove the tick by using smooth, blunt-ended tweezers to grip the tick body firmly where it enters the skin and pull it straight out. If possible, ensure that the mouthparts are removed since they may cause local irritation and inflammation. Don't squeeze the tick. Don't put anything on the tick, or try to burn the tick off. Apply an antiseptic to the bitten area. Save any attached ticks so that they can be tested for infection. Give the tick to your local health unit for analysis and see your doctor.

Be aware of the symptoms of Lyme disease. If you have been in an area where ticks are found and you develop symptoms, particularly a skin rash that looks like a red bull's eye around the bite and/or flu-like symptoms, medical attention should be sought. If Lyme disease develops, antibiotics are necessary to prevent complications. **If not treated, complications of the heart, nervous system or joints can occur.**

Summer theatre

St. Lawrence Islands National Park will be hosting the popular "Stepping Stones" every Friday evening in July and August. This lively and fast-paced show takes the



Photo: Jim Gathany, Public Health Image Library

Black-legged ticks

Though closely related to insects, ticks are actually a type of mite. Black-legged ticks have eight legs and are very small, ranging from 1-4 mm in length when unfed. Ticks are usually picked up when brushing against vegetation and can attach themselves to bare skin with their mouthparts. Black-legged ticks are present in southern and eastern Ontario and can transmit the potentially dangerous Lyme Disease. Check out the information below on how to protect yourself.

Urban youth will experience park islands

Hundreds of students from Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto will be visiting Georgina Island for a special program to experience a national park environment this spring. In cooperation with Gananoque Boat Line, the park is offering grade 7 to 9 school groups an interactive island hiking experience combined with a boat tour through the 1000 Islands. The main dock of Georgina Island will be reserved for the tour boat weekdays from 8 am to 4 pm from April to mid-June.



Photo: Lisa Werden

Sara Williams of Gananoque searches for a clue during the "Island Quest" hike on Georgina Island. The program, offered in partnership with Gananoque Boat Line, is available to local schools as well as urban youth from Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.

of actors will also be performing shows at Fort Wellington (Prescott), Bellevue House (Kingston), Laurier House (Ottawa), and the Rideau Canal (Ottawa). For more information, visit www.parksplayers.com or call 613-923-5261.

The changing face of Parks Canada

Like the federal public service in general, Parks Canada's employees are, on average, older than other Canadian workers. This trend is beginning to result in large numbers of retirements across the country. St. Lawrence Islands National Park is feeling the effects of this national trend with the retirement of four long-time employees this year and the additions of many new faces among the ranks.

Visitor Services Officer Joanne Monteith began her career nearly 30 years ago.

"When I started working in my early teens in the area tourist businesses, my goal was to have a smile on my face and deal with each person I met as if they were my first encounter," she says. "Most often this approach did not let me down. I will be leaving the Park but will continue to work with the public into the next phase of my life."

Monteith is not alone in plan-

ning to pursue similar work when she retires. Park Warden Bud Andress will also continue his bald eagle work when he finishes his employment with Parks Canada in June (see page 9 for more details).

Rockport native Frank Fitzsimmons gathered a wealth of river and area knowledge in his 29 years of work as an island attendant at the park. Growing up on Grenadier Island, Fitzsimmons has a strong connection to the area and is looking forward to retirement in the 1000 Islands region.

Operations Manager Robert Van Rump is also looking forward to spending more time among the islands. With a background in architectural technology, Van Rump worked in restoration and operational services for nearly 36 years across the country from Halifax to Dawson City. Like many retiring Parks staff, Van Rump acknowledges that one of the best

parts of his career was the opportunity to work in many different parts of Canada.

"There would be a lot fewer problems if everyone could travel or work across the country," he says. "More people would realize what a wonderful, great country we have."

For young Canadians just entering the workforce or experienced workers considering a career change, now is the time to think about work with the federal government. Watch for regular job postings at <http://jobs-emplois.gc.ca>. Full-time high school and postsecondary students can apply for student positions through the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) at <http://jobs-emplois.gc.ca>. To learn more about employment opportunities at St. Lawrence Islands National Park, please call 613-923-5261. Most staffing competitions run in the early spring.



Photos: Parks Canada

Joanne Monteith (top), Frank Fitzsimmons (centre), and Robert Van Rump are just three of hundreds of federal public servants retiring this year. For more information about a career with Parks Canada or other government departments and agencies, visit <http://jobs-emplois.gc.ca>.

Events & Programs

For more information or to pre-register for events, call 613-923-5261 or email ont-sli@pc.gc.ca. All events take place at the Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre (1121-1000 Islands Parkway) unless otherwise noted. Parking fees (\$6.80 per vehicle) apply at Mallorytown Landing from May 16 to September 1. Additional costs are noted if applicable. Seasonal permits are available.

June 14 – **Hill Island Hike** – Come and see how humans and the forces of nature have shaped Hill Island on this guided hike with a National Park Interpreter and a Park Scientist. Meet in the 1000 Islands SkyDeck parking lot on Hill Island. Bridge toll will be charged to access Hill Island. Pre-registration recommended. 1 pm – 3 pm.

Summer - **Jones Creek Trail Network Grand Opening** – Explore St. Lawrence Islands National Park's new trail system at Jones Creek with Visitor Experience Project Coordinator Jennifer Harvey, who will give you a tour of the trails' highlights and a look into the trail planning process. Please contact the park for date, time and location.

July & August – **Nature Kids** (ages 6 - 11), Wednesdays 10:30 - noon.

July & August – **Feeding Times**, Tuesdays and Fridays at 2 pm.

July & August – **Roving Interpretive Programs** are offered on many of the islands throughout July and August on topics ranging from turtles to birds. The schedule of locations and times is posted on the islands.

July & August – **"Stepping Stones"** – Every Friday evening in July and August. This performance will take place at various locations. Call 613-923-5261 for locations. See page 10 for more information about the summer theatre program.

July 1 – **Canada Day** – Come and celebrate Canada Day at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. Enjoy cake, games, face painting and films showcasing Ontario's national parks. 12 pm – 3 pm.

July 19 – **Parks Day – Celebrating Reptiles!** – Celebrate Canada's Parks Day by learning about the wonderful world of turtles, snakes and lizards. Live animal demonstrations by Reptile Rainforest and Save the Snakes. 12 pm – 5 pm.

August 9 – **Naturalists' Day** – Now it's your turn to be an interpreter! Share your love of the environment with others by bringing your nature collections in. Don't want to share? Come and learn from local naturalists instead. 11 am – 4 pm.

September 13 – **Geocaching 101** – Geocaching is a fun game for the whole family. Join us for a one-hour workshop and scavenger hunt that will help you get started on this global activity. Pre-registration required. 12 pm – 4 pm.

September 20-21 & 27-28 – **Art in the Park** – Thousand Islands Fine Arts Association (TIFAA) art exhibit and competition.

October 4-5 & 11-12 – **Fall Colours Studio Tour** – The Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre will be a stop for the Art Colony of the 1000 Islands' Fall Colours Studio Tour.

October 4 – **Explore the Biosphere Family Hike** – Explore the wonders of the Frontenac Arch, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. This family-oriented hike will open your eyes to a truly unique environment. Pre-registration recommended. 1 pm – 4 pm.

October 18-19 – **Nature Art Workshop** – Join textile artist Margot Miller to create your very own nature art! Various techniques in textile art will be explored. Pre-registration required. Ages 14 and up. Material fee will apply. Please contact the park for times and details.

Would you like to learn more about programs and activities at St. Lawrence Islands National Park? Simply send us an email at sli-ont@pc.gc.ca and we will keep you up-to-date on all the park happenings.

Hands-on Nature at the Visitor Centre

Visit the St. Lawrence Islands National Park Visitor Centre for a hands-on look at the natural and cultural history of the 1000 Islands region! Facilities and services at Mallorytown Landing include:

- Picnic shelters & picnic area
- 1.7-km walking trail (800-metres of which is barrier free)
- Visitor Centre with park interpreters, exhibits, live animals, and washrooms
- Playground
- Historic gunboat exhibit
- Telephone
- Parking for vehicles and trailers
- Boat launch
- Overnight docking



Photo: Parks Canada

Hours of Operation

Park Administration Office

2 County Road 5, Mallorytown, ON

8 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday, year round

Mallorytown Landing

Visitor Centre

1121-1000 Islands Parkway

May 16 to June 15

- 10 am to 4 pm Friday, weekends and holidays.

June 16 to September 1

- 10 am to 4 pm Sunday to Friday
- 10 am to 6 pm Saturday

Fees are payable from May 16 to September 1 for all services and until October 13 for vehicle and trailer parking and launching.

Islands

Services and facilities are maintained from Victoria Day to Thanksgiving (May 16 to October 13). Fees are payable during this period. The park does not provide transportation to the islands.

Hiking, day camp, camping at Landon Bay Centre

In partnership with St. Lawrence Islands National Park, the Landon Bay Centre offers a wide range of opportunities for environmental education with an extensive network of walking trails, a scenic lookout of the 1000 Islands, a large meeting hall, and a family campground. A Nature Day Camp for kids is offered throughout the summer with sessions on a different environmental theme each week.

The Landon Bay Centre is located on the 1000 Islands Parkway between Ivy Lea and Gananoque.

To reserve campsites or for more information on educational opportunities offered at the Landon Bay Centre, call 613-382-2719 or visit www.landonbay.org.



Photo: Landon Bay Centre

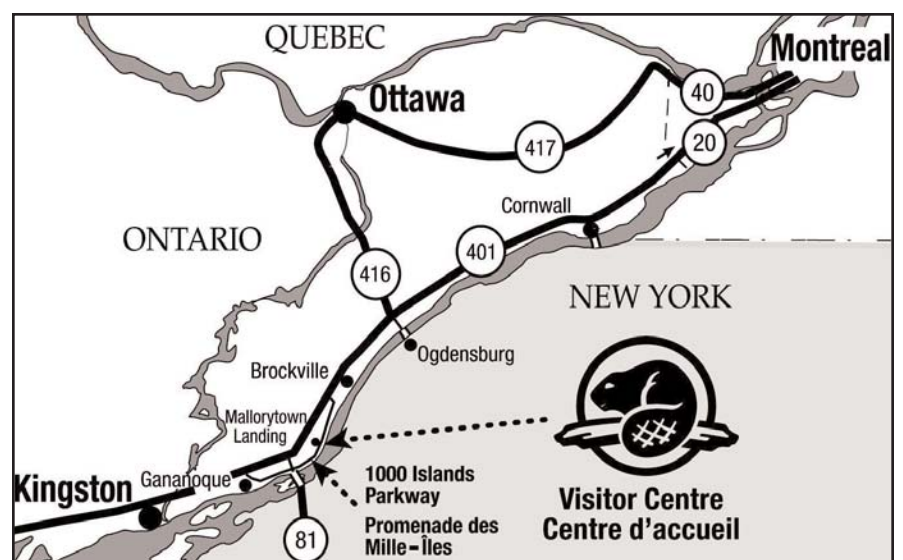
Landon Bay lookout trail.

St. Lawrence Islands - BY LAND

St. Lawrence Islands National Park headquarters and the Mallorytown Landing Visitor Centre are located on the 1000 Islands Parkway between Brockville and Gananoque, Ontario. To get onto the Parkway, travellers on Highway 401 can take exit 685 if coming from Brockville or exit 647 if coming from Gananoque. Exit 675 south will take you directly

from the 401 to headquarters and the Visitor Centre. U.S. visitors need to travel north on Interstate 81 to the 1000 Islands Parkway, then turn east.

The Landon Bay Centre is located at 302-1000 Islands Parkway, approximately 6 km east of Gananoque (6 km west of the 1000 Islands Bridge).



St. Lawrence Islands - BY WATER

There are more than 20 national park island properties in the St. Lawrence River between Kingston and Brockville.

Unless otherwise stated, park islands have docks, privies, primitive campsites and delineated walking trails; most have shelters.

Interpretive programs on a variety of natural and cultural heritage topics are offered throughout the summer at vari-

ous island locations.

The park does not provide transportation to the islands. Water is only available at Central Grenadier and at Mallorytown Landing. Please plan ahead to minimize the solid waste you leave behind in the park.

NOTE: Fees are payable by self-registration immediately upon arrival.

Invasive Species Watch

Invasive species are those that have been introduced to regions outside of their normal range and pose a threat to the health of natural ecosystems, the economy and even human health. Invasive species are one of the top three stresses on ecological integrity at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. Be on the lookout for the following invasive species:



© Environment Canada 2002 Photo by Caroline Savage

Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

Often growing to heights of 5 metres, the invasive European variety of the common reed can greatly reduce the biodiversity of a wetland. When introduced to an area, it quickly dominates, creating large, homogenous expanses.



Photo: Walter Muma

Dog-strangling vine (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*)

This aggressive Russian vine with purplish flowers can grow as much as 1-2 metres in one year, generally along roads, fence lines, and hillsides. Also known as pale swallowwort, the vine threatens rare plant species and is extremely difficult to get rid of.

You can help stop the invasion!

- Wash and dry your boat and fishing gear before moving between bodies of water.
- Drain water from the boat, motor and trailer on land before leaving the site.
- Never release unwanted pets into the wild, and always return wild animals exactly where you found them.
- Plant native species in your garden. Many invasives are accidentally introduced to an ecosystem when imported ornamental plants escape from gardens and into the surrounding area.
- Never transport water, animals, or plants from one water body to another, and remember to empty your bait bucket on land before you leave.
- Do not transport firewood, trees, or lumber from different regions, especially southern Ontario. Buy and burn firewood locally.



Photo: Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*)

This metallic green beetle is a highly destructive insect pest that attacks and kills all native ash trees. For both urban and rural areas, the emerald ash borer is a major economic and environmental threat. It was discovered in southwestern Ontario in 2002 and has slowly been spreading. It has not yet been found in eastern Ontario.



Photo: Elizabeth J. Czarapata

Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

With small white flowers and a distinctive onion- or garlic-like odour, this exotic plant is rapidly expanding in moist areas along roadways and railways, and often invades mature, undisturbed forests. Garlic mustard leaves no room for native undergrowth, kills soil fungi, and prevents the growth of young trees.

VHS

(Viral hemorrhagic septicemia)

This infectious disease is caused by a virus first found in the Great Lakes in 2005. VHS outbreaks can affect large numbers of game and bait fish, especially in the spring. The deadly virus can be spread easily through the water or on infected fish.

"At least 185 invasive species are now found in the St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes. On average, one new species is found every 6 ½ months."

- Jennifer J. Caddick,
Executive Director,
Save The River

St. Lawrence Islands National Park PHOTO CONTEST

Have you taken a fantastic picture of wildlife, plants or people at St. Lawrence Islands National Park? Enter your photo in St. Lawrence Islands National Park's photo contest for your chance to win great prizes and see your photo published on the Parks Canada website and in next year's Pitch Pine Post. Capture the spirit of the park's new Jones Creek property, of the flora and fauna of the islands and mainland, or of visitors enjoying the park, and submit your entries by October 15, 2008. Full contest rules are below. For more information, please contact the park at 613-923-5261.

Official Contest Rules

- Categories:**
 - People in the Park
 - Flora & Fauna
 - Exploring Jones Creek
 - Scenery
 - Junior Snapshots: My View of the Park (taken by photographers aged 15 and under)
- Deadline:** Contest opens at 9 am EDT on May 1, 2008. Entries must be received by 4 pm EDT on October 15, 2008. St. Lawrence Islands National Park assumes no responsibility for any lost, late, damaged, destroyed or misdirected entries.
- Prizes:** Grand prize (1): Gift certificate toward solar panels for your boat or home (\$150) OR gift certificate to Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) (\$150); St. Lawrence Islands National Park fleece jacket and blanket set (\$50); Category winners (5): Gift certificate toward solar panels for your boat or home (\$50) OR gift certificate to Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) (\$50); Runners-up (5): St. Lawrence Islands National Park water bottle and tote bag (\$12). Individuals can only win once.
- Eligibility:** Contest is open to all persons residing in Canada and the United States, except for employees, agents, and/or representatives of Parks Canada, contest judges, and any persons with whom these persons are residing or any member of their immediate family. Photos entered must not have been previously published. All photos must be taken of or from St. Lawrence Islands National Park.
- To enter:** Each entry must have a fully completed entry form attached to the photo. Entry forms are available online at www.pc.gc.ca/sli, by calling 613-923-5261, or at the St. Lawrence Islands National Park office (2 County Road 5, Mallorytown, ON). Any identifiable individuals appearing in the photos must sign a photo release agreement available with the entry form. Entries may be sent by mail or delivered by hand to the St. Lawrence Islands National Park office (2 County Road 5, Mallorytown, ON, K0E 1R0) or submitted electronically to ont-sli@pc.gc.ca. No purchase or participation fee is necessary. If a category is not clearly defined, the judges reserve the right to assign one.
- Format:** Prints must be between 5" x 7" and 8" x 12" and unmounted. Prints may be colour or black and white. Digital images may be submitted as jpeg files via email or as jpeg files on CD. Digital images should be at least 1600 pixels wide and less than 4MB. Digital images may be cropped and colour corrections including black and white conversion are acceptable. The content may not be altered.
- Winner selection and notification:** Winners will be selected by a panel of judges at Mallorytown Landing at St. Lawrence Islands National Park on October 20, 2008. The decision of the judges is final. Winners will be notified by 4 pm on October 31, 2008. Prizes must be claimed by March 31, 2009. The list of winners and winning entries will be published at www.pc.gc.ca/sli by May 2009.
- Other Rules:**
 - By entering the contest, the contestant, or if the contestant is a minor, his/her parent, guardian or tutor, agrees to abide by the official contest rules.
 - Only winners will be contacted. Photos will be returned to contestants who provide a pre-paid return envelope for their entries.
 - All entries become the property of Parks Canada, the organizer. The organizer reserves the right, at its option, to publish any winner's name, city of residence, photograph, statement regarding the contest, as well as any entry submitted, for advertising or educational purposes, without compensation, except where prohibited by law. Personal information will be collected solely for the purposes of this contest and will not serve for any other purpose. By providing this information, the contestants consent to its use for the purposes indicated.
 - The contestants and/or the winners assume full responsibility for any damage or damage claim caused by entering this contest.
 - The prize shall not be transferred, substituted or exchanged for cash or any other thing. The contest organizer reserves the right to exchange the prize at its sole discretion for a prize of equivalent or greater value.
 - The contest organizer reserves the right, at its complete discretion, to cancel or modify the contest in the event that, in the opinion of the contest organizer, the holding of the contest would be prevented for one reason or another, including a technical failure or breakdown, an unauthorized intervention, fraud or any other cause beyond the control of the contest organizer which would compromise the management, security, impartiality, integrity or smooth running of this contest.
 - This contest is subject to all applicable laws.
 - This contest is null and void where prohibited by law. Any dispute regarding the organizing or conduct of this contest may be submitted to the organizer, St. Lawrence Islands National Park, at 2 County Road 5, RR#3, Mallorytown, ON K0E 1R0.



Photo: Lisa Werden

Interpreters including Amanda Davison (above) shared stories and messages of St. Lawrence Islands National Park with more than 2300 boaters and campers on park islands in 2007. With roving prop talks, movie nights, and evening programs, visitors of all ages learned more about the plants, animals, history, and ecology of the 1000 Islands region. Is there a subject you would like to learn more about? Let us know by filling out a comment form and depositing it in a payment box.