



# ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

## The Pitch Pine Post

MALLORYTOWN LANDING, ONTARIO

SPRING 2012



### IN THIS ISSUE



Summer Events.....9



Photo Contest.....9



Species at Risk .....4

Akwesasne's Voice.....8

Facilities & Activities.....12

Facility update.....11

Hours of Operation.....12

Map.....12

Prescribed Fire .....3

War of 1812.....9 & 11

#### St. Lawrence Islands National Park

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## Easy landing for park paddlers

It's a sign of things to come. There's a new symbol on park facility signs depicting a kayak and paddle. The symbol points out landing sites for park visitors who arrive by canoe and kayak and it's a small indication of a much larger plan to make park islands more paddle-friendly.

"We've been talking with tourism businesses and paddling organizations to identify preferred beaching locations with the end goal of making access to the islands easier for paddlers," says Paul Bruneau, visitor services team leader.

These landing sites will be marked with a large sign that is clearly visible from the water. The signs will be put in place over the course of this summer. Having landing sites that are visible from a distance is especially important to kayakers and canoeists

approaching unfamiliar territory under their own steam.

Over the past year, park resource conservation staff has conducted environmental assess-



Photo: Parks Canada

ments of the proposed sites, outlining appropriate locations for beaching access and, in some cases, additional facilities.

"When looking at some of the locations it became clear that a structure would be helpful," says

Bruneau.

By next year, all of the paddle landing sites will be completed and the park will begin putting in place paddling docks or ramps

where needed. The park is working with a dock design developed by local resident Doug Bickerton that has been used at a number of locations in the region.

Like all boaters, paddlers will be able to use other

park docks, where regular docking fees apply. However, they may find that the designated landing sites are more tailored to their needs, and the less expensive beaching fee may suit their pocketbooks.

See PADDLING on page 2

## Peregrine falcons make themselves at home

It's a bird! It's a plane! When a peregrine falcon dives toward the earth at up to 320 kilometres per hour it can be hard to tell. The Latin name of this powerful falcon means wandering, foreign or strange; a fitting name considering that peregrine falcons are found everywhere on earth except polar regions, major deserts, and tropical rainforests.

Unfortunately, the peregrine falcon suffered crippling declines due to the popular pesticide DDT dropping from a population of 7,000 in North America to several hundred in the 1970s.

That's why staff at St. Lawrence Islands National Park was thrilled when a nesting pair was discovered in the Thousands Islands area. Former park staff and avid nature photographer Tom Lusk tipped off park researchers Mary Beth Lynch and Ron Brooks who confirmed it in the spring of 2011.

"We were trying to spot the nest, but the parents spotted us first," says resource conservation technician Mary Beth Lynch. "We



Photo: Tom Lusk

A peregrine falcon brings some fresh kill to its young.

saw one of the birds in the branches of a dead tree keeping a keen eye on us. We didn't get any closer. It was exciting just to see the peregrine falcons and know they'd made their home here."

With a common name like "duck hawk" the conscientious parents likely took advantage of the local abundance of waterfowl

to feed their brood.

"A natural nesting pair is a big deal," reports visitor safety and fire operation specialist Harry Szeto. "Since their nest was successful, they may return this

See FALCONS on page 2





## The Superintendent Says...

By Jeff Leggo, St. Lawrence Islands National Park Superintendent



Hello and welcome to St. Lawrence Islands National Park for the 2012 season. This edition of the Pitch Pine Post is full of interesting new developments for the park, from facility and program enhancements for our visitors to research and discovery in the realm of resource conservation.

Over the course of the winter and spring we have been making a number of improvements to facilities to add to your comfort and enjoyment during your stay in the park. We've been working to uphold the levels of service expected by our long-time boating visitors and improving facilities for new types of visitors such as paddlers. This summer, many of you will have an opportunity to let us know how we're doing in this work by filling out the Visitor Information Program survey. This survey helps us improve our services and programs, so it's important that we hear back from you. I encourage you to take the time to fill out the survey if you are approached by one of our researchers.

In the past year, park staff working in resource conservation have encountered some unexpected and encouraging finds: peregrine falcons making their home in the region, and an abundance of reptile species on the remote park islands of Main Duck and Yorkshire. The drive to learn ever more about the park ecosystem continues this season with ongoing park monitoring and a planned prescribed fire for Camelot Island.

In 2012, park interpretation programs will feature some of this fascinating natural history and, in addition, will take on some of the flavour of wider Parks Canada celebrations commemorating the War of 1812. Be on the lookout for costumed characters – a wandering soldier of the Glengarry Light Infantry and a host of other personalities -- as they bring to life this important piece of river history.

Whether you are visiting the park or simply taking the time to read about it, I hope that you enjoy your time with us.

## Visitor survey important tool in park planning

"How are you doing?" It's often the first question you ask when meeting up with old friends. When park staff welcomes visitors this summer, the first question may be more like, "How are we doing?"

Every five years, the park conducts the Visitor Information Program (VIP) survey, a national tool used by Parks Canada to assess a

site's performance in five key areas: visitation, learning, satisfaction, enjoyment, and meaning. This survey tool also provides park managers with a snapshot of park visitors and feedback on park initiatives, programming, services, and facilities.

Throughout the summer, student research assistants will be approaching visitors on the

## Peregrine falcons

Continued from page 1

spring. It represents a potential for population re-establishment."

While it might be tempting to get a glimpse of the rare pair, residents and visitors are being asked to keep their distance if they encounter peregrine falcons. Between protecting their chicks from predators and hunting down enough food for the whole family, peregrine parents are taxed to the limit. The additional stress of keeping an eye on human visitors would put them at even greater risk.

As of 2011, there were only 3 other confirmed nesting pairs of peregrine falcons in Eastern Ontario, but conservation organizations are hoping that will change. The Ontario Ministry of

Natural Resources, the Leeds Stewardship Council, and the Canadian Peregrine Foundation cooperated in a peregrine falcon reintroduction program from 2001 to 2005, raising chicks on a cliff at Charleston Lake. In order to prevent chicks from imprinting on their human parents, the conservationists used a falcon-like puppet to feed them.

Is the pair nesting in the Thousand Islands distant progeny from the reintroduction program? It's impossible to know as they were not banded.

So what can you do to give the wandering falcon a break? Report sightings to Parks Canada or the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and enjoy the spectacle from a respectful distance.

islands and at the Mallorytown Landing visitor centre to fill out the brief surveys.

"The visitor survey provides us with very valuable information that influences everything from the type of exhibits and publications that we produce, to where we allocate human resources to clean facilities," says product development officer Kim Robinson. "It's a very important barometer of how well we're serving our visitors needs and interests."

The visitor information program also helps to let park staff know how they are doing with regard to providing excellent customer service.

"Feedback and participation helps the park in its efforts to serve visitors, and is very much appreciated," says Paul Bruneau, visitor services team leader. "Should you encounter one of our students at the park this summer, I encourage you to take a few minutes to participate in the survey."

## Paddling

Continued from page 1

"We want to ensure that all visitors have appropriate space and facilities on the islands," notes Bruneau.

When paddlers arrive, they'll find a number of island campsites that were refurbished in the fall of 2011. Another development that will benefit paddlers in the park is a campsite reservation program to be piloted in 2013.

"In 2013, we are pleased to announce that we will be implementing the Parks Canada Reservation Service for some of our campgrounds. Reservations for the 2013 season will be accepted both by phone and Internet," says Parks Canada information and reservation services coordinator Dave Tovell. "This means you will be able to reserve your campsite in advance and relax knowing your experience in St. Lawrence Islands is guaranteed."

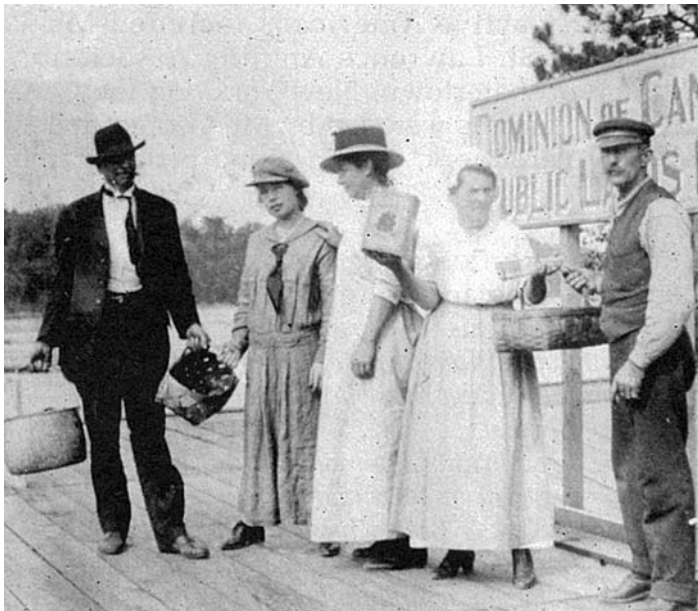
The program will start on a select number of islands, with the possibility of expansion in the future.

"We will be accepting reservations at just a few islands initially. However, some campsites on these islands will still be available on a first-come, first-served basis," says Tovell. "With both visitor and staff feedback we will explore the possibility of expanding this service in the future."

Other improvements to trip planning for the paddling crowd include new sections of the park website offering tips and information to a range of paddlers, from novices heading out for a half-day guided trip, to experienced paddlers who want to do some island hopping for a week or more. For more information on paddling in the park and planning resources, see pages 5 and 12.

## Looking Back...

**The outfits and the boats may have changed, but visitors in the early days of the park and visitors today share the same excitement and pleasure of landing on a park island. Below left, a picture of the Massey family arriving at Georgina Island not long after the park's establishment, circa 1910. Below right, students arrive on Georgina Island for the island adventure program Island Quest.**



Photos: Parks Canada

Photo: Massey Family Collection, Parks Canada

# Fire just one option for promoting pitch pine growth

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. Visitors hiking the Six Nations Trail at Mallorytown Landing might feel like they're in a tale of two forests. On the west side of the trail, just north of Old River Road, charred stumps and limbs cover the ground. On the



Photo: Parks Canada

A fire crew walks the line between a prescribed fire and an area where other methods of promoting pitch pine growth are being tested.

east side, tree stumps are neatly cut and the forest floor is virtually free of debris.

On August 19, 2011, St. Lawrence Islands National Park conducted its first mainland prescribed fire to promote pitch pine growth. The fire was conducted on the west side of the western limb of the Six Nations Trail. In contrast to the fire's apparent destruction, the east side of the trail was treated with "scarification" – physically raking the forest floor to expose mineral soil. The canopy was thinned on both sides of the trail giving the shade intolerant pitch pine saplings a chance to thrive. Park ecologists are comparing the effectiveness of prescribed fire with the effectiveness of scarification and canopy thinning in helping pitch pine seedlings plant their roots.

If the combination of scarification and canopy thinning is effective, this presents a land management option for conservation organizations and regional landowners who want to give pitch pine a leg-up.

Due to its mainland location, the safety of the fire was made a priority. A team composed of Parks Canada fire specialists, volunteer firefighters from nearby communities, and the Ontario Provincial Police ensured the safety and success of the fire. But the conversation about safety began long before the drip torches were lit, says Katie Ellsworth, acting

resource management and public safety specialist.

"By encouraging dialogue about prescribed fires with residents of the area and providing opportunities to address concerns and answer questions, we did our best to ensure that everyone felt confident in the fire program," says Ellsworth.

Josh Van Wieren, a park ecologist, will monitor both sides of the trail this year to determine the relative success of fire and scarification, but he's not the only one with an eye on the post-fire progress.

"Some hikers of the Mallorytown Landing trails have been reporting a quick bounce back of vegetation at the site of the fire," notes superintendent Jeff Leggo. "They're often surprised at how green it is just a couple of weeks later."

Park staff will also be conducting ongoing monitoring of the post-fire regeneration on Georgina Island and Gordon Island. A prescribed fire on Camelot Island is being planned for this summer. Boaters and paddlers are encouraged to check the park website regularly to ensure the island of their choosing is open to visitors.

For more information on prescribed fire, scarification, or fire adapted species contact the park at ont-sli@pc.gc.ca or chat with an interpreter at the Mallorytown Landing visitor centre.

## Record numbers in Grenadier count

On the surface, there was nothing unusual about the May 2011 Grenadier Island Bird Census. The overall species count for the day was 78 -- by all accounts a very average result -- but among those species present, there was something remarkable going on.

Birders that day logged the highest counts on record for ten different species. They saw more Baltimore orioles, black-throated green warblers, eastern kingbirds, ospreys, hairy woodpeckers, northern parulas, common terns, pine warblers, and yellow rumped warblers than ever in the count's 25-year history.

"Spring migration is an especially fun time to be birding," says park ecologist Josh Van Wieren. "Sometimes there just happen to be the right conditions, for example a slight shift in the weather, and you see many individuals of certain species landing on the island."

Volunteer birder Ken Robinson found the May 12, 2011 field trip to Grenadier Island especially interesting for the abundance of migrating warblers.

"I was excited about our sighting of the Cape May warbler, which we rarely see," says Robinson. "Also, the woods were alive with the songs of dozens of American redstarts and the five northern parula warblers that were singing in the mixed forests along the western half of the island."

For some bird species such as osprey, the high count was part of a trend of slow and steady growth. For others, there was a large jump in numbers. The count of 21 scar-

let tanagers exceeded the past record of 16.

In some cases, it was the first appearance for a species. The first orchard oriole and red-breasted merganser were recorded, and the first breeding location on the island for red-bellied woodpeckers was confirmed. Range maps in most birding field guides mark the occurrence in this region of orchard orioles and red-bellied woodpeckers as rare. You would be more likely to encounter these species in northern New York or southern Ontario.

"The red-bellied woodpeckers are being seen increasingly more often, as they are moving their breeding range northward," notes Robinson.

This observation is echoed by park researchers.

"We have been seeing more of these southern species in the park," notes Van Wieren. "Our park monitoring programs provide evidence for that finding."

Van Wieren says that there are many possible reasons for bird species to be expanding their ranges. These changes take place for a variety of reasons, and while the shift may be associated with climate or some other aspect of habitat in the region, there is no definitive answer.

The long-running Grenadier bird count is held every May and is supported by local birders who volunteer their time and expertise. The count is a trove of information that contributes to a greater understanding of long-term trends among bird species in the park.



Photo: Kathleen Burtch

Kim Robinson, Josh Van Wieren, Brent Lewis and Ken Robinson stop to compare sightings midway through the count.

## You may be seeing more of us

The results of the 2011 Grenadier Island Bird Census reflect a trend that has been noted by birders in the region in the past few years. They are seeing more of southern species that have been considered rare here. Here are three species to watch for:

### Red-bellied Woodpecker

Roughly the size of the more common hairy woodpecker, the red-bellied woodpecker has a red nape, brownish body and barred wings.

Photo: Rob Hanson



### Carolina Wren

These birds are "stockier" and a brighter reddish colour than wrens more common to the region.

Photo: Meddaugh Photography



### Orchard Oriole

The male orchard oriole sports a chestnut colour on the body where a Baltimore oriole would be orange.

Photo: Dwayne Murphy



# Classifieds

Reproduction is a tricky business for many species at risk. As with humans, finding a suitable mate is often a matter of being in the right place at the right time – a tall order in and of itself. The process is further complicated for species at risk when you factor in specific habitat needs, isolation caused by habitat fragmentation, and other hazards and disturbances. It's difficult to start a family if you're homeless, the "girl next door" is not so close when she's on the other side of a highway, and mating animals don't have the option of putting out a "do not disturb" sign.

You can help their chances of success in producing and raising offspring by leaving key elements of habitat intact and, more generally, being aware that in spring and summer many species are on the move to find a mate or a nesting site. The next time you help a turtle across the road or brake for a snake, you just might be playing Cupid.

## SAR Personals



Photo: Greg Page

**Looking (and listening!) for love.** Flirtatious female, just back from the Andes, seeking a monogamous male who has established a large territory and is committed to "full-fledged" parenting. Come whisper in my ear and we'll settle into our own lovers' nest.

*Mature hardwood forest is breeding territory for cerulean warblers when they return from their winter sojourn in the Andes of South America. Large, mature deciduous trees serve as perches from which male cerulean warblers woo their mates with song. Males have been observed following and softly singing to their partners while choosing a nesting site. Habitat degradation is the main threat to this species. Preserving tracts of hardwood forest can help to protect cerulean warblers' summer breeding habitat, while buying shade-grown coffee promotes land use in South America that supports these birds in their winter habitat. Cerulean warbler status: Endangered.*



Photo: Scott Gilliingwater

### May-December Romance

Large, mature lady, 12, seeks mate half her age and size. I enjoy long walks on the beach, particularly if they end at a nice nesting site.

*Turtle species such as the northern map turtle take several years to reach sexual maturity, with females maturing at a slower rate, so the loss of egg-laying females can be devastating to turtle populations. Females are much larger than their mates. They seek out open, sunny, sandy locations to lay their eggs. Shoreline development that destroys sandy nesting habitat close to water has the potential to force females to travel further to find suitable nesting sites, putting them at greater risk of encountering hazards such as predators and road traffic. Northern map turtle status: Special Concern.*



Photo: Parks Canada

**Ssssseeking Ssssstranger.** It's been a long hibernation! Male ratsnake seeks a long, slim stranger to twine tails this April. Pass through my territory and sniff out my signature scent.

*Gray ratsnakes often seek mates far from their winter homes (hibernacula), locating them by scent. Keep an eye out for snakes on the move on roadways or when mowing the grass at home. Rotting logs and stumps are preferred nesting sites, so leaving these undisturbed on your property can help the local gray ratsnake population. Gray ratsnake status: Threatened (Great Lakes/St. Lawrence population).*

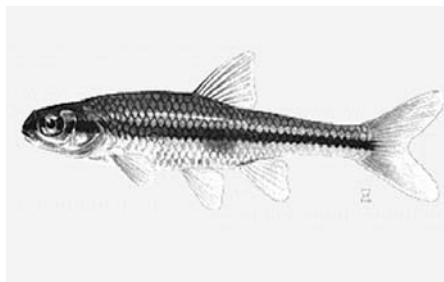


Illustration: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation\*

**Golden boy ready for spring fling.** Bridle shiner male interested in very short-term relationship. Ladies, check out the pecs! Catch this opportunity before it slips away!

*Bridle shiners live only 2 years and spawn only once in their lifetime. During the spawning season, males change colour, turning bright yellow or gold on their lower sides, and they develop nuptial tubercles (small bumps) on the head, nape and pectoral fins. Bridle shiners prefer clear streams, lakes and slow-moving rivers with an abundance of aquatic vegetation. Removal of aquatic vegetation and any disturbance that muddies the water of a stream can hinder the bridle shiner's ability to reproduce. Bridle shiner status: Special Concern.*

\*Illustration was prepared by Ellen Edmonson and Hugh Crisp as part of the 1927-1940 New York Biological Survey conducted by the Conservation Department (the predecessor of today's New York State Department of Environmental Conservation). Permission for its use is granted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.



Photo: Joe Crowley

**Lonesome lizard longs for love.** Sometimes I feel like there's no one out there for me! I'm approaching middle age and would like to meet someone before my white stripes have faded to brown. I'm hoping there's a female out there who will provide a warm and caring home for our little ones.

*Sighting a five-lined skink in Ontario is a rare occurrence. The Great Lakes/St. Lawrence population is designated special concern. Elsewhere in the province, there are four or five small, isolated populations in southwest Ontario that are endangered. Young five-lined skinks have very distinctive markings. Their bodies are greenish black in colour with five cream coloured lines, and they have bright blue tails. These colours fade to a bronze colour as the skink ages. Females incubate their eggs and guard their nests. These lizards make their home in large, rocky outcrops near a permanent source of water. They are very vulnerable to changes in this habitat that deprive them of shelter and water. Five-lined skink status: Special Concern.*



Photo: Jerry Eisner

**Hoping love will find me.** I'm shy -- I rarely get out of the cattails -- but that doesn't mean I'm not interested in meeting someone. If you think you'd like to get to know me, try calling sometime.

*This small, secretive member of the heron family makes its nest near open pools in large marshes. The least bittern's "reclusive" ways make it a challenge to monitor, with researchers relying less on sight and more on sound to detect this bird by its call. Destruction of marsh nesting grounds is the greatest threat to this species. Least bittern status: Threatened.*

### Million-dollar views in the Thousand Islands at rock-bottom prices!

Campsites are like open-air cottages available to any Canadian with the desire to visit. Peruse through our listings to pick the perfect campsite for you and your family and enjoy one of the essential Canadian pastimes this summer.

#### Stay cool on the west end of Aubrey

This beauty has an open concept with fabulous views of Lake Ontario and a fresh westerly breeze blowing mosquitoes into oblivion. With genuine migmatite floors and tons of natural light, this site is perfect for the modern family that wants to get away from it all. Steps away from a dock in a calm cool bay – great for swimming! Recent upgrades to area include modern composting toilet.

#### Fully equipped for your enjoyment

For the civilized camper, Central Grenadier boasts a sand beach, manicured grounds, and electricity-equipped bathrooms. Sunny campsites are clustered in a tightly knit community perfect for families. Recreational field gives little legs room to run. Historic buildings and cultural sites on the island provide opportunities for excursions. Abundant wildlife viewing opportunities.

**For detailed information about camping on park islands, see our website [www.pc.gc.ca/sli](http://www.pc.gc.ca/sli) or call the park at 613-923-5261.**

#### Romantic hideaway on North Grenadier

Privacy is the keyword for this tucked away gem. The rustling cattails of a pristine coastal wetland shelter these sites from the hustle and bustle of the river. The only interruption you're likely to get is the singing of the frogs at dusk. Cathedral ceiling of mature hardwood trees. Massive stone stove on site, decorative.

#### Peace and a premium site on Mulcaster

Tucked among mature pines and mixed hardwood, these peaceful locations offer some of the best campsites and a scenic view of the Navy Islands. Share a sunny swimming rock with map turtle neighbours and enjoy wildlife viewing opportunities galore. Granite floors never go out of style! Deepwater swimming. Gorgeous network of trails at your disposal.



## Parks Canada paddling destinations offer pleasing mix of nature and culture

The natural beauty of Ontario's northern lakes have long held a place in the hearts of avid canoeists and kayakers, but paddlers seeking a mix of nature and culture would be hard pressed to find more appealing locales than Parks Canada's paddling destinations in eastern Ontario. St. Lawrence Islands National Park and the Rideau Canal blend beautiful natural landscapes and historic settings, offering up a fresh scene around every bend.

Getting there is half the adventure when you paddle to the islands of St. Lawrence Islands National Park. En route you'll see the rugged landscape and impressive summer estates that make the Thousand Islands famous. On guided excursions, paddlers in the park have an opportunity to recreate some of that Gilded Age splendour with luxury options such as a gourmet lunch on an island or "camping with a butler," as Globe and Mail reporter Catherine Dawson March termed it when she visited the islands by kayak last summer. Experienced guides take care of every detail, from introductory lessons to snack breaks.

"We are excited about providing ever-improving facilities for paddlers that meet their needs and expectations. With these improvements we are hoping that we will see more paddlers visiting the park," says visitor experience manager Sophie Borcoman. "The park is also fortunate to have outfitters in the region that provide safe access to the islands for those who are new to paddling."

For novices, island clusters such as the Admiralty Islands near Gananoque offer readily accessible adventure. For experienced paddlers, more far-flung

groupings of islands, each with their own particular atmosphere, offer a great variety of paddle routes that may be extended into a trip of several days. The Thousand Islands Water Trail [www.paddle1000.com](http://www.paddle1000.com) provides maps for 9 full-day and half-day routes that connect for the option of a longer trip. These maps identify access points, trip times and lengths, potential hazards, and points of natural and cultural interest.

Visit the park website [www.pc.gc.ca/sli](http://www.pc.gc.ca/sli) for information about island campsites, facilities, services, links to regional outfitters, and other planning information.

The Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, stretches 202 km from Kingston to Ottawa. This 180-year-old heritage canal continues to operate much as it did when it was completed in 1832 by the British military, with 24 lockstations linking a series of lakes, rivers and canal cuts. The canal offers a number of natural paddling environments -- lakes, rivers and wetlands -- that showcase the beauty and diversity of the two large watersheds of the Cataraqui and Rideau River systems. Between Kingston and Ottawa, paddlers will encounter Class 1 wetlands, open lakes and channels set in sandstone and limestone plains, the rocky outcroppings of the Frontenac Arch, charming villages, and the parks and monuments of Canada's capital.

"Jones Falls Lockstation is a great example of this diversity," says interpretation officer Don MacKay. "It's located in the heart of the Frontenac Arch and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It features rugged granite outcrop-



Kayakers on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa.

Photo: Ottawa Tourism

pings rising above the shorelines. At Jones Falls a once-raging 2-kilometre set of rapids that carved itself through the area was tamed by the construction of four large sandstone locks and a 60-foot high, 350-foot long stone arch dam."

The canal route is dotted with communities as appealing as the waterway landscape. Like the canal, they have preserved their heritage flavour.

"Many of these communities grew up around the canal, so their histories are closely linked. You see that close connection in the many summer festivals that celebrate this canal heritage," says promotions officer Kerry Fitz-Hardy.

These communities provide a range of amenities for paddlers, from campgrounds to gourmet dining. The canal itself permits camping at most lockstations with paddling docks and modern bathroom facilities. When touring the canal, paddlers can opt to use the locks for a fee or portage around them. Recently, the Rideau Canal has made putting in and out at lockstations much easier with the construction of 75 new docks

designed specifically for paddlers. Portage signs indicate safe paths for portage around the lockstation if locking through isn't your cup of tea.

For information, visit the Rideau Canal website at [www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca). For additional information on paddling the Rideau Canal, visit the Rideau Heritage Route website ([www.rideauheritageroute.ca](http://www.rideauheritageroute.ca)) or [www.rideau-info](http://www.rideau-info).

This year the Rideau Canal is launching a new Voyageur Canoe Program operating out of Jones Falls Lockstation, 35 minutes north of Kingston. The 13-person voyageur canoe will glide on the cool, clear waters of Sand Lake on either 1-hour (\$7.30 per person) or 3-hour (\$22.00 per person) excursions looking at the ecology, geology and rich history of this area. Tours will take place daily depending on weather and number of participants. Groups, individuals and schools can book trips by contacting Don MacKay at 613-561-2660 or [don.mackay@pc.gc.ca](mailto:don.mackay@pc.gc.ca), or visit the blacksmith shop for registration. Enjoy a day of paddling the beautiful waters of the Rideau today.

## Geocaching: The fun is in the finding

Hiking trails bring families, friends and communities together to explore nature, keep fit, and share fun experiences. If that's not enough motivation, the increasingly popular activity of geocaching is adding a layer of intrigue to hiking at St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

Geocaching is an activity that involves finding hidden containers called "caches" using clues and coordinates. With a Global Positioning System (GPS) device in hand, visitors can hit the Jones Creek trail with the purpose of uncovering a geocache, recording the visit on a log sheet, and returning it for other geocachers to discover.

"It's an interesting way to enjoy the outdoors, a hike with a challenge if you will" says veteran geocacher Lib Mendonca, who has found thousands of geocaches.

To help visitors get in on the worldwide treasure hunt, a new

program called "Get Me Geocaching" will be launching this summer at the park visitor center in Mallorytown Landing. Visitors will learn about the park's natural wonders and cultural treasures using a GPS unit, free of charge. The program will provide visitors with the technical skills to use a hand-held GPS device and the experience of following waypoints and coordinates. Visitors can test their newfound knowledge by locating hidden geocaches within the park's trails.

Two caches on the four-year-old Jones Creek trail as well as several others scattered throughout the islands connect visitors with naturally and culturally significant areas they may have otherwise missed.

"I've been to places, even locally, that I would've never seen before, met great friends, gotten lots of exercise and spent some exceptional quality time with my



A GPS unit in use at Mallorytown Landing.

Photo: Parks Canada

family," says avid geocacher Mark Earle.

For independent cache hunting with a portable GPS, visitors can go to [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) to create a free account and user name. They can then retrieve coordinates to locate caches within the park. Geocaching apps are also available online that allow a smart phone user to locate caches within an area. A long-time geocacher known online as "Binrat" says simply, "Geocaching is

very addictive and you are always wondering where the next one will take you."

If you are looking for a new hobby or have an itch for adventure, visit Mallorytown Landing this summer and learn a new way to explore St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

For more information about parking fees, trail maps, visitor center hours, or the geocaching program please contact the park at (613) 923-5261.

# You can help stop the spread of invasive plants

Invasive plants are introduced, non-native species that disrupt the balance of natural ecosystems. Ecosystems made up of a variety of native plants are being compromised by the presence of these invasive species.

Plants are considered invasive by a combination of factors, which include a high seed production and the ability to establish quickly in dense colonies. They generally have the ability to spread through root systems and come back quickly after being pulled or cut. Invasive plants also have a high tolerance for

various growing conditions and lack natural predators.

Be on the lookout for these invasive species. If you'd like to learn more about how the park is managing invasive plant species, you can see resource conservation technicians in action in late June when they will be monitoring and removing invasive plants on Hill Island. They're happy to answer your questions and offer tips about identifying and controlling these plants. Call the park at 613-923-5261 for more details.

## Distance no barrier to species on Main Duck and Yorkshire

They say no man is an island. As it turns out, sometimes it's even hard for an island to be an island. Despite the relative isolation of islands, new plants and animals inevitably land on their shores and make a home for themselves.

Two of the most isolated islands of St. Lawrence Islands National Park, Main Duck and Yorkshire, have been of interest to park ecologists in part for that reason. Park staff Josh Van Wieren and Mary Beth Lynch began monitoring the hard-to-reach islands in 2010 and 2011 to establish a baseline of ecological data that they could track over time. They were also curious about the isolated nature of the islands and its impact on invasive exotic species, species at risk, and species that are most affected by human disturbance.

"Dog-strangling vine (an aggressively invasive plant) is bad on Main Duck but Yorkshire is relatively free of invasives," reports Josh Van Wieren, park ecologist. "There hasn't been as much disturbance on Yorkshire in terms of visitation and settlement because it's a harder island to access."

Park ecologists' number one priority is to control the plant. On Main Duck, where it has spread extensively, this means containing it and preventing spread. On Yorkshire, it could mean eliminating it entirely, resulting in an almost pristine island.

Problem species aside, the islands had some very positive discoveries in store. Along with a number of rare plant communities, the team of park researchers were pleased to find an abundance of turtles and snakes on the islands. These are animals whose declines on the mainland are often linked to human actions: being hit while crossing the road, being killed out of fear or disgust, or losing crucial habitat. The remoteness of Main Duck and Yorkshire Islands works to their benefit.

Park staff and a team of researchers led by Queen's University's Dr. Stephen Loughheed are exploring the possibility that the isolation of garter snakes and water snakes on Main Duck Island have produced new species or subspecies.

Then there are the truly singular discoveries, like the stinkpot turtle found on Main Duck. Stinkpots are not strong swimmers and prefer shallow, weedy water. How this small turtle made the 20-kilometre trip through the unpredictable waters of Lake Ontario from the nearest stretch of mainland is a mystery. None of the team's island surveys revealed a companion.

"He may be just a lone guy living out his days," says Van Wieren.

But who knows, maybe the winds of chance will send him a friend. After all, no man is an island.



Garlic mustard in bloom.



Early leaves of garlic mustard.

Photos: Rod Krick, Credit Valley Conservation

### Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

Garlic mustard is an herb that can be found in various environments with dry to moist soils. When identifying garlic mustard, look for leaves with sawtooth edges in an elongated heart shape with prominent veins. If you pull off the leaves and crush them they give off a garlic sent. The flowers of garlic mustard are white with four petals and will be found in clusters. The seeds are small (less than 1 millimetre), round and black. These seeds are found in pods that resemble bean pods.

### Why is it invasive?

When garlic mustard invades an area it covers the forest floor, which leads to low diversity in these areas. Garlic mustard outcompetes some tree seedlings and can tolerate low light levels. Garlic mustard has been known to take over areas of high disturbance like trails and roadsides. Garlic mustard spreads at an average of 6 metres every year.

### What can you do?

When you locate garlic mustard, hand pulling is an effective way of removing small plants. Be sure to get the roots. Dispose of the plant by drying it in a paper bag and then burning it. You can also cut the flower stalk once it has grown but before the flowers have opened, as this will prevent the formation of seeds. Garlic mustard may produce a second flower stalk once the first has died off, so you should monitor the plant after you have cut back the flower stalk.



Photo: Rod Krick, Credit Valley Conservation

### Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

Common reed is from the grass family and can be identified by its broad leaves that are more than 1 centimetre wide. The flower head of common reed is dense and broom-like. Stems are rough and have a hairy band where the leaf meets the stem. During the summer season the flower heads are brown in colour. Common Reed is most commonly found in moist to wet soils in wetlands, roadside ditches and water-courses.

### Why is it invasive?

Common reed grows very densely, creating an almost fence-like structure. Common reed lowers water levels, chokes out native wetland plants and creates unsuitable habitat for nesting waterfowl. A single plant can produce up to 2,000 seeds, many of which will create new stems in the next season.

### What can you do?

Prevention is the best method to stop the spread of common reed. Though it can be purchased in garden centres it is recommended that you avoid this plant altogether. You may think that you have it contained in your backyard garden or around your pond, but the seeds are transferred through wind and water. Please help reduce the distribution of this invasive species by not planting it in the first place.



A lone stinkpot turtle was found on Main Duck Island.

Photo: Parks Canada



A researcher examines a white-footed mouse to remove ticks to be tested for disease. The mouse was under anaesthetic and was later released at the trap location where it was captured.

Photo: Parks Canada

## Tick study tracks HGA

Tick researchers are doubling the value of their field work by checking for evidence of another tick-borne disease in the Thousand Islands region.

The blacklegged tick, the species that transmits Lyme disease to humans, is established in eastern and southern Ontario as well as other regions in Canada, including New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, southern and southeastern Quebec, and southeastern Manitoba. For three years, the park has been working with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the University of Guelph, and the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre to study the presence of bacteria that cause Lyme disease in blacklegged ticks and the small mammals on which ticks feed. The study helps the park assess visitors' risk of exposure in the park and also gives an indication of the prevalence of the bacteria in the wider Thousand Islands region.

"In 2009 and 2010, we collected hundreds of nymphal and adult ticks from 12 sites in the Thousand Islands region," explains Lisa Werden, the graduate student who led the research team last summer. "The ticks were sent to the Public Health Agency of Canada laboratory in Winnipeg to be tested for two types of bacteria that can cause human disease."

In addition to the testing for the agent of Lyme disease, ticks were tested for bacteria that cause human granulocytic anaplasmosis (HGA). Typical symptoms of HGA include: fever, headache, chills and muscle aches. While these are similar to early symptoms of Lyme disease, in the case of Lyme disease people may develop neurological and arthritis problems if the disease is left untreated. Infection with HGA is most often a flu-like infection that resolves without any treatment, but some people can get seriously ill, particularly individuals with pre-existing medical problems.

"With anaplasmosis (HGA), most people exposed to infected ticks would develop only a mild illness that is self-limiting, and most people would not associate exposure to ticks with the flu-like illness," says Robbin Lindsay, a researcher with PHAC.

Overall, less than five per cent of ticks collected by researchers in

2009 and 2010 were infected with the bacteria that cause HGA. Infected ticks were found at eight of the 12 woodland sites in the park where ticks were collected by dragging cloth along the ground. At some sites, the percentage of infected ticks was higher than the average in the Thousand Islands: nine per cent of adult ticks on Thwartway Island and 12 per cent of nymphal ticks on Hill Island carried the HGA bacteria.

"We don't have enough data to analyze the changes over time because we only have two years of data so far - so it's hard to say confidently if the numbers are going up," says Werden. "What we do know is that the bacteria that causes HGA is present in blacklegged ticks resident to the Thousand Islands region, and they are less often infected with the agent of HGA than the Lyme disease bacteria."

Robbin Lindsay says that the risk for HGA is currently low, but the PHAC still has an interest in tracking the presence of the bacteria over the long term.

"The risk of being bitten by a tick infected with the HGA bacteria is relatively low and most likely in the small number of geographic localities where blacklegged ticks are established, like the Thousand Islands region. However, as ticks spread across a much broader geographic area, the number of potential exposures to infected blacklegged ticks is anticipated to rise," notes Lindsay, who recently co-authored a report in the *Journal of Applied Ecology* that documents the expansion of the blacklegged tick's range into the most densely populated areas of southern Canada. The report predicts that the range of this tick species will expand at a rate of approximately 46 kilometres per year.

Precautions to avoid infection are the same for HGA and Lyme disease, as detecting ticks or avoiding them altogether is the key. Staying on trails, wearing light coloured clothing, using insect repellent containing DEET and checking your body for ticks after spending time outdoors are all recommended. People who experience flu-like symptoms and suspect that they may have been bitten by a tick should promptly seek medical attention. Individuals with pre-existing medical conditions should take particular care.

## Lyme disease is preventable

Lyme disease is a bacterial disease and is caused by a bite of an infected blacklegged tick. The infected tick needs to be attached for 24 to 36 hours before it is able to transfer the bacteria. Recognizing the symptoms of Lyme disease is very important. A red rash may appear within 3 days to several weeks following the bite; a bull's-eye rash may be present in the area of the bite. You may also have a fever with the rash. Symptoms of the disease may include fever, headache, fatigue, muscle and joint pain. These may disappear within 10 days, but if left untreated, Lyme disease can progress and affect the nervous system, joints and the heart. If you have been bitten by a tick and are developing symptoms of Lyme disease, consult your health care provider.

When heading out into the park it is important to stay on the trails, wear light coloured clothing, and use an insect repellent containing DEET. Removing the tick(s) quickly is important in preventing Lyme disease. Ticks do not attach immediately. Taking a shower after hiking and participating in outdoor activities is a

good way to remove unattached ticks quickly from your body. If it is not possible to shower it is important to check your body and clothing for ticks after spending time outdoors. Have someone else check areas on your body that you cannot see for ticks. Washing the clothes you hiked in will also remove any ticks that maybe on your clothing.

Should you find a tick that has become imbedded, do not squeeze the tick or try to burn it off or put anything on it. Use tweezers and grasp the tick by the head as close to your skin as possible and pull it straight out, gently but firmly. Thoroughly clean the bite area with an antiseptic.

Remember also to check your pets for ticks. Pets are also at risk of developing Lyme disease if bitten by an infected tick. Consult your veterinarian regarding prevention, treatment strategies and more information on how Lyme disease can affect your pet.

**Submitted by Kim McCann  
Senior Public Health Inspector  
Leeds, Grenville and Lanark  
District Health Unit**



Photo: Parks Canada

Blacklegged ticks. Left to right: nymph, adult male, adult female, engorged adult females

**Ticks** Blacklegged ticks (also known as deer ticks) are present in eastern Ontario and can transmit Lyme disease and other illnesses.

### Protect yourself:

- Use insect repellent containing DEET.
- Stay on trails.
- Keep your dog on a leash.
- Wear light-coloured pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- **Check yourself for ticks.**  
Ticks are very small and bites are usually not felt.
- Remove an embedded tick immediately with tweezers. Grasp it firmly as close to your skin as possible and pull straight out.  
Ticks must feed for 24 hours before transmitting the bacteria that cause Lyme disease.
- Know the signs of Lyme disease (circular rash, fever, headache, flu-like symptoms) and seek medical attention if they appear.

### For more information:

- Government of Ontario INFOline: 1-877-234-4343
- Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000
- [www.pc.gc.ca/sli](http://www.pc.gc.ca/sli)
- [www.ontario.ca/lyme](http://www.ontario.ca/lyme)



# Akwesasne's Voice

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is working in close cooperation with the Mohawks of Akwesasne, a community of approximately 12,000 that straddles the boundary between Canada and the United States near Cornwall, Ontario. The park recognizes the strong ties that the community of Akwesasne has to the natural world and the Thousand Islands as traditional Haudenosaunee territory. The park works with the community of Akwesasne to incorporate its voice in interpretive programming. The Mallorytown Landing visitor centre is home to a series of video vignettes that explore the traditions, rituals, and contemporary culture of the community. The series, entitled *Voices of Akwesasne*, also features the music of The Ahkwesahsne Women Singers. Learn more about this inspiring group of women in the following article, reprinted with permission. It first appeared in the publication *Akwesasne: A Special People in a Special Place*, Vol. 2 #2.



From Left to Right: Elizabeth Nanticoke, Angie Mitchell, Katsitsion:ni Fox, Maxine Cole, Theresa Bear Fox, Teioswathe Cook, Margaret Peters, Iawentas Nanticoke, Yvonne Peters and Jean Square. Photo:

## Kontiwhenhawi: "They Are Carriers of the Words"

In Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) culture, singing societies such as the Ahkwesahsne Women Singers perform at socials and community events, and therefore hold a valued place in their communities.

The Ahkwesahsne Women Singers were formed in 1999 by four inspired, and inspiring, women: Bear Fox, Katsitsionni Fox, Elizabeth Nanticoke and Iawentas Nanticoke. The women were driven by the need to protect and preserve the Kanienkeha (Mohawk language), traditional Kanienkeha:ka (Mohawk People) customs and stories, as well as the oral traditions that are passed down from grandmother to granddaughter. It was founded on the principle that songs are the easiest way to pass on the language and culture to future gener-

ations.

Blessed with beautiful singing voices, the women put their talents and their messages together to form a singing group that would write and perform traditional Kanienkeha:ka songs. Since the group's inception, the Ahkwesahsne Women Singers have brought their beautiful and powerful music to the community of Ahkwesahsne.

Their popularity has quickly spread beyond Ahkwesahsne to surrounding communities. However, when asked to perform away from the community the singers decided on a name for the group. The name they selected, Kontiwhenhawi, means "They are carriers of the words," a name very appropriate for the group, as the main purpose of Kontiwhenhawi's songs is to convey mes-

sages of love, peace, and a good mind.

The singing group grew to include 11 women, although guest singers are often asked to perform. Their main group of singers, including the four original members, now consists of Yvonne Peters, Maxine Cole, Jean Square, Nettie Thompson, Margaret Peters, Kawannahente Cook, and Teioswathe Cook. Depending on the day, the group may be comprised of three singers at one time or as many as 13 for another.

Members of the group are in various stages of their lives—grandmothers, mothers, aunts, daughters, sisters and cousins. They are teachers, environmental researchers, social workers and students. They take time out of their personal and professional lives to assist their community whenever

possible. The women also volunteer for fundraising activities and provide assistance to individual community members when asked.

Aside from singing Haudenosaunee social songs, some members of Kontiwhenhawi are songwriters, though they work with Elders and fluent speakers from Ahkwesahsne to ensure the correct usage and spelling of words. These songs contain their own messages that they believe are important for the Mohawk people to know and remember. Their songs honor our Elders, Kanienkeha:ka teachers, Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, and Grandfather Thunder.

Kontiwhenhawi is committed to continuing the traditions of our ancestors and preserving our language and culture through their beautiful songs and inspiring efforts.

## Ecopassages tested in roadkill study

Since 2008, St. Lawrence Islands National Park has been investigating animal road mortality on the 1000 Islands Parkway. It's a very visible project and many drivers of the parkway have stopped to chat to the cycling researchers over the years.

In 2009 and 2010 drivers saw another visual element: black drift fences along sections of the road. Masters student Lyn Garrah, with the help a number of assistants, explored whether these fences could reduce roadkill by encouraging animals to travel through culverts that run under the road.

Garrah compared incidents of roadkill along fenced and unfenced sections of road. Motion sensor cameras were also set up at the mouths of some culverts to verify whether animals were actually using them. Although some results are inconclusive, Garrah identified clear patterns that will be useful to the park and to concerned drivers.

Garrah positioned the fences where there was driveway-free

roadside for 100m on either side of a culvert so she wouldn't block anyone's access to the road. Due to the number of driveways that access the parkway, her choices were somewhat limited and she wasn't always able to install them at previously identified areas of high mortality or "hotspots." With less animal traffic at the sites of



Reptiles and amphibians weren't the only travellers in the ecopassages. Photo: Queen's University

her fences, there wasn't enough information to indicate that the fences made a difference.

"It can be tricky to encourage animals to use ecopassages, particularly cold-blooded animals like snakes, frogs, and turtles," says Emily Gonzales, acting bioregional monitoring ecologist. "A sunny open road is inevitably

more attractive than a cold dark tunnel."

Design improvements, such as grated roofs that let in light, can make ecopassages more appealing.

Since the studies began, 12,899 roadkilled frogs, snakes, turtles, birds, and mammals were counted by researchers, revealing clear patterns.

"With four years of data I was able to analyze roadkill as it is influenced by season, traffic, temperature, precipitation, and location," says Garrah.

All four factors had an influence. The numbers of turtles, snakes, and frogs all had seasonal spikes as well as hotspots on different sections of road.

"Watch for turtles in May and June, frogs in late July and early August, and snakes in September and October," Garrah advises.

Roadkill hotspots are near large wetlands so keep a close watch when passing Gray's Beach, Landon Bay, Ivy Lea, Thompson's Bay, and Jones Creek.

As many drivers have noticed, short-term changes in temperature and precipitation also influence road mortality rates. Frogs

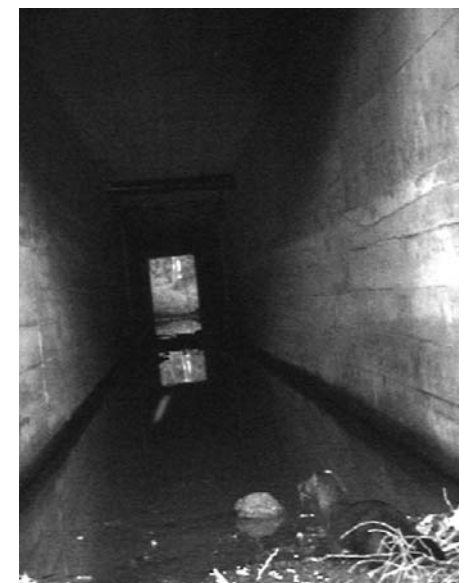


Photo: Queen's University  
A mink ponders a passage under the 1000 Islands Parkway.

come out in droves on warm, wet nights. Snakes and turtles move en masse during a warm spell in spring and autumn when they're travelling to and from nesting and hibernation sites.

"Drive cautiously, particularly at high risk times and locations, and if it's safe to do so help a turtle or snake cross in the direction it's headed," says Garrah.

If you come across a reptile or amphibian, dead or alive, you can help scientists keep track of species ranges and populations by reporting it to the Ontario Herpetofaunal Atlas at [www.ontario-nature.org](http://www.ontario-nature.org).



## Park's lineup of summer events highlights War of 1812 bicentennial

Parks Canada has a lot to celebrate: the distinction of being the first system of national parks in the world, a vast network of natural and cultural treasures, a strong relationship with the Aboriginal peoples of this country and, of course, historical milestones like Parks Canada's 100th birthday and the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

Last year, special events in the park commemorated the establishment of Canada's national park service 100 years ago. In 2012, events will take on the flavour of an even more distant era, with costumed interpreters bringing to life the story of the War of 1812.

War of 1812 "soldiers" will join the ranks of interpreters in the park this summer, part of a larger undertaking to mark the bicentennial at Parks Canada sites in Eastern Ontario.

Parks Canada interpreter George Muggleton will be leading a troop of re-enactors who will be taking part in War of 1812-themed events at a number of locations, including St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

"We're going to be representing the Glengarry Light Infantry and also we'll be doing demonstrations as an artillery crew," says Muggleton.

When the student interpreters start in May they will be diving into some intensive training to prepare for a demanding summer schedule

of events throughout Eastern Ontario.

"I'm looking forward to being on road and getting these students trained up," says Muggleton. "It's going to be a bit like the War of 1812 experience for them – there's going to be drilling and then we'll be on the move."

The War of 1812 theme will be woven throughout the park's traditional summer events. As in years past, the park will mark Aboriginal Day and Canada Day with special activities.

Last June, park staff and visitors celebrated Aboriginal Day at Mallorytown Landing with music, dance, and storytelling from a travelling troupe of Mohawk performers. Visitors also enjoyed traditional First Nations food; buttery bannock bread, strawberries, and Labrador tea. For Canada Day park interpreters launched Xplorers, Parks Canada's new children's program at Mallorytown Landing with adventure storyteller Deborah Dunleavy. Her theatrical and interactive style was a treat for the ears followed promptly by a treat for the taste buds when park staff served up slices of Canada Day cake.

Along with these events, in 2011 St. Lawrence Islands National Park took part in the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Annual Unity Picnic at Brown's Bay.



A young picnicker at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines celebration meets a Parks Canada "tree frog."

Photo: Parks Canada

On the third Saturday in July, thousands of Canadians with ties to the islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines gathered at Brown's Bay to reunite with friends and family. Many of these picnickers, like most Canadians, hail from urban centres and don't have easy access to national parks, so Parks Canada served up opportunities to try out kayaking, hiking, and family programs.

"We decided that if we couldn't get some of these urbanites to national parks, we'd bring national parks to them," says Marianne Kelly, heritage interpreter.

Marcia Farell, an organizer with the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Toronto, says the association is very impressed with activities offered by Parks Canada that day, particularly how they involved the whole family.

Check out page 12 to find out what events to look forward to in 2012 or contact the park at [ontsli@pc.gc.ca](mailto:ontsli@pc.gc.ca) or 613-923-5261. For more information on the movements of the travelling troop this summer, contact Fort Wellington: [ont-wellington@pc.gc.ca](mailto:ont-wellington@pc.gc.ca) or 613-925-2896.



Photo: Parks Canada

### Parks Canada Xplorers

Xplorers will encourage discovery through fun and recreational activities specifically designed for children aged 6 to 11 and their families. When they arrive at St. Lawrence Islands National Park, children will receive an Xplorers activity workbook to help them guide their visit. Once they have completed at least three activities, they will receive a certificate and souvenir as tokens of their success.

## Visitor Centre gets injection of life

They creep, the crawl, they compost! Bugs are a source of endless fascination and this summer they will inhabit the Mallorytown Landing visitor centre. Live and mounted insects ranging from the familiar to the exotic make up a special exhibit on loan from the Montreal Insectarium. This exhibit invites families to take a new look at insects and their many shapes, colours and adaptations to discover their ingenuity, originality, strength and fragility.

Visitors to the centre in 2010 and 2011 may have had the opportunity to meet Willow, a gray ratsnake. The gray ratsnake is Canada's longest snake species

and a threatened resident of this region. In 2012 visitors can make the acquaintance of Willow and another rare animal: the common musk turtle. A shy species, this turtle evades the eyes of humans by hiding under lily pads near shore. It gets its charming name from a tendency to excrete a musky substance if it feels threatened. However, this hand-sized turtle is habituated to humans and happy to meet you.

In addition to the live animal and insect exhibits, a new permanent exhibit will liven up the visitor centre walls this year so drop by and pay a visit. Check out the hours of operation, location, and special events on page 12.



Photo: Parks Canada

The visitor centre playground adds fun to a riverside picnic.

### Entertaining a crowd?

The park's Mallorytown Landing visitor centre is the perfect spot to host family picnics, reunions, and other get-togethers this summer. With picnic facilities that seat 280, big brand new charcoal burning barbecues, full washrooms and plenty of parking, the site has room for your large group -- all in a beautiful riverside setting. There's plenty of space to spread out, and plenty to do in the visitor centre for young and old alike, with new exhibits and live animals of the region on display. Our helpful visitor centre staff is there to help you enjoy your day. Talk to them, or call the park at 613-923-5261 to arrange your gathering.

## 2011 Photo Contest Winners

To celebrate Parks Canada's 100th Anniversary, the photo contest theme in 2011 was "People in the Park." This winning entry, "Four Days Four Grannies," was photographed by Sacha Curtis at Mulcaster Island. Congratulations to all the winners. To see all the photos or learn how to enter this year's contest, visit our website at [www.pc.gc.ca/sli](http://www.pc.gc.ca/sli)



## Parks Canada in Eastern Ontario

### Laurier House National Historic Site

335 Laurier Avenue E.  
Ottawa ON K1N 6R4  
Tel: 613-992-8142  
E-mail: Laurier-House@pc.gc.ca

### Rideau Canal National Historic Site

34 Beckwith Street S.  
Smiths Falls ON K7A 2A8  
Tel: 613-283-5170  
E-mail: RideauCanal-info@pc.gc.ca

### Fort Wellington National Historic Site

370 Vankoughnet St.  
Prescott ON K0E 1T0  
Tel: 613-925-2896  
E-mail: ont-wellington@pc.gc.ca

### Bellevue House National Historic Site

35 Centre St.  
Kingston ON K7L 4E5  
Tel: 613-545-8666  
E-mail: Bellevue.House@pc.gc.ca

### St. Lawrence Islands National Park

1121 1000 Islands Parkway  
Mallorytown Landing ON K0E 1R0  
Tel: 613-923-5261  
E-mail: ont-sli@pc.gc.ca



The Rideau Canal is a chain of beautiful lakes, rivers and canals winding 202 km from Kingston, at the head of Lake Ontario, to Ottawa, Canada's capital city.



Laurier House commemorates two of Canada's most notable prime ministers, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Rt. Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King.

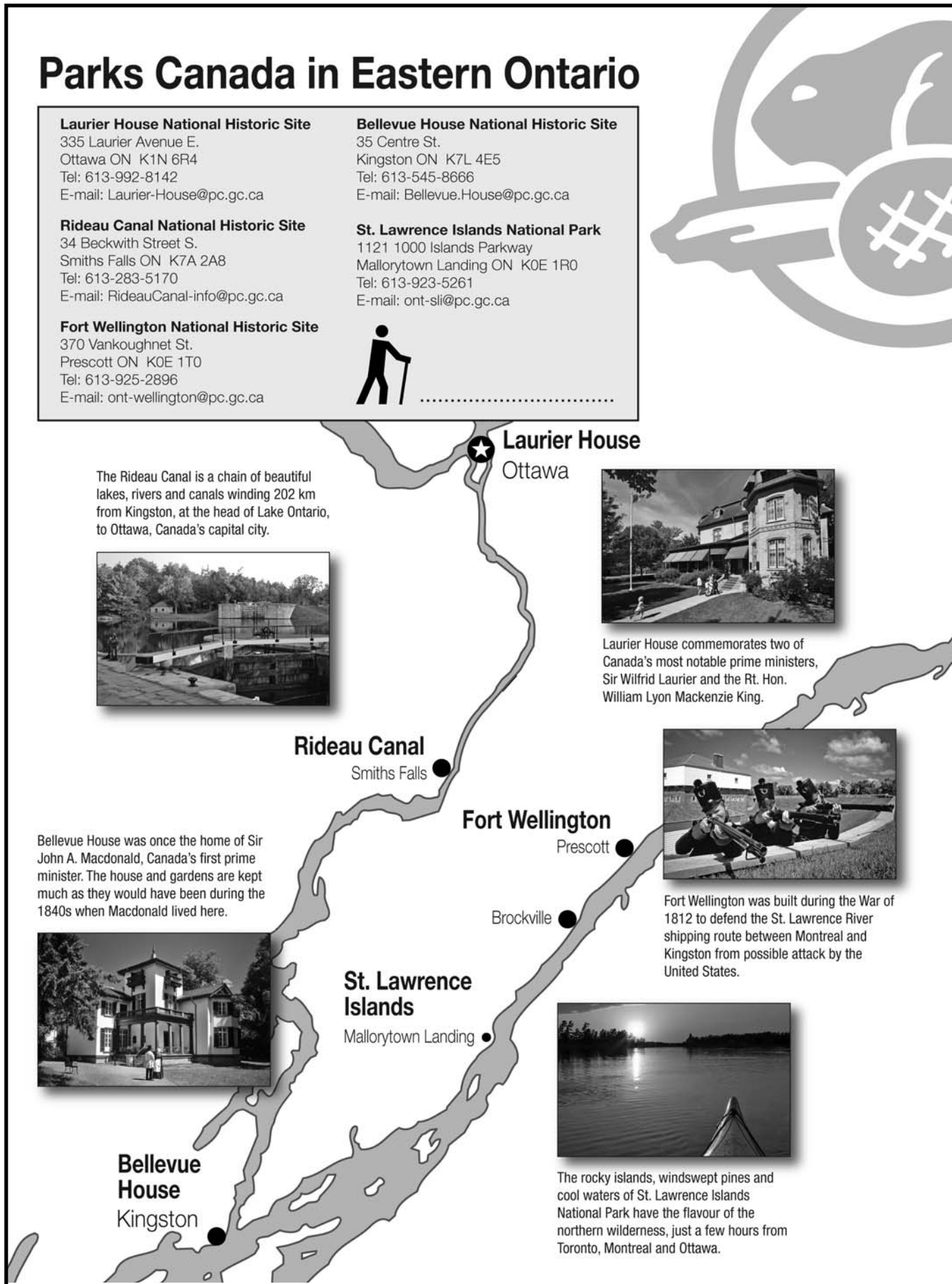


Fort Wellington was built during the War of 1812 to defend the St. Lawrence River shipping route between Montreal and Kingston from possible attack by the United States.



The rocky islands, windswept pines and cool waters of St. Lawrence Islands National Park have the flavour of the northern wilderness, just a few hours from Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.

Bellevue House was once the home of Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister. The house and gardens are kept much as they would have been during the 1840s when Macdonald lived here.



## Gunboat makes successful move to Fort Wellington

On August 4, 2011 the 1812-era gunboat wreck that had been on display for over 40 years at Mallorytown Landing made a successful journey to its new home at Fort Wellington National Historic Site in Prescott.

After careful planning and preparation by engineers, underwater archaeologists, conservation staff, and expert movers, the gunboat was ready for its 40-kilometre journey by land. A customized box was constructed around the boat to protect it from the elements during transportation and then for at the fort while the new building was being constructed.

The boat was raised out of its old location by hydraulic jacks and then winched out manually from the boathouse building and onto a flatbed for transport to the fort.

With an Ontario Provincial Police escort and conservation staff monitoring the move, the boat moved slowly down the 1000 Islands Parkway, County Road 2, and through the downtowns of Brockville and Prescott to Fort Wellington. The moving crew then took another day and a half to lower the boat into its new position in the building foundation. Construction was then able to proceed around the boat. In January of 2012, the box was taken off the boat, and a new cradle has been constructed to stabilize the boat and allow for better viewing.

Over the course of this work, Parks Canada conservation staff and underwater archaeologists have been monitoring the boat. Humidity and temperature readings have been taken throughout the process and will continue in the new building.

Exhibit planning has also occurred throughout this process to tell the story of the gunboat, the role gunboats played during the War of 1812, and the role the fort played to protect Upper Canada. The gunboat provides a wonderful opportunity to connect the fort with the river in a way that has not been done before.

Come and view the gunboat in its new home!

The fort opens its new visitor centre doors to the public on May 19 and is open daily from 10:00am to 5:00 pm until September 30, admission fees applies.

### Custom-built home

Left, the exhibit room in the new Fort Wellington visitor centre was built up around the gunboat once it was set in position on the building's foundation.



### Heading downriver

Right, the gunboat is transported on a flatbed along the 1000 Islands Parkway. A special crate was constructed to stabilize the boat for the move.





# Wardens focus on river presence in 2012 season

With two years under their belts, the three park wardens that provide service to St. Lawrence Islands National Park – Chris Earl, Michael Ellsworth, and Travis Halliday - are eager to get back on the river.

“There was a steep learning curve during the summer of 2010,” says Travis Halliday, park warden supervisor, “so we were better prepared for 2011.”

Last summer, the park wardens balanced four to five days per week of river patrol with mandatory training, administrative duties and patrols on the Rideau Canal and mainland properties of the park. Hence, their operations had to be strategic. In July and August, the busiest months of the visitor season, they focussed their efforts on ensuring visitors all had a safe and enjoyable visit.

“Park regulations help visitors share the islands respectfully and fairly,” says Sophie Borcoman, visitor experience manager. “Not everyone is comfortable with unleashed dogs, and it’s not fair if some visitors are paying fees to

support park facilities and others are not.”

In the spring and fall when there are fewer island visitors, park wardens focus on resource protection such as preventing illegal hunting and illegal ATV use that put the wildlife and cultural resources of the park at risk.

The work of a warden is certainly interesting, reports Halliday, “Any one patrol is unpredictable and depends heavily upon what is happening on an individual island. We might start patrol with the aim of reaching the Admiralty Islands and get waylaid by an issue on Grenadier Island.”

Halliday’s aim for 2012 is to have increased coverage of the river. Park wardens began joint patrols with the Ontario Provincial Police last season and Halliday hopes to build on that partnership this year. Sharing information with island attendants also helps wardens be as efficient as possible.

“Compliance with regulations does seem to be improving,” reports an optimistic Halliday, “and that’s what we’re hoping for.”

## PARK FACILITY UPDATE

### Completed in 2011

- ✓ Several new docks on islands including Milton and Gordon.
- ✓ New ramps at some docks on Beau Rivage, McDonald, and Georgina.
- ✓ Installation of several large communal fire pits on park islands.
- ✓ New metal firewood boxes on McDonald, Beau Rivage, Central Grenadier, Camelot, Georgina, and Milton.
- ✓ New picnic tables and large barbecues at Mallorytown Landing.
- ✓ Boat launch improvements and new dock at Mallorytown Landing.

### Your fees at work

### Park takes a detailed look at visitor services standards

Looking after the details is often the difference between good service and great service. St. Lawrence Islands National Park’s visitor services team is using a new maintenance standards assessment tool to track those details. The service standards monitoring system was put in place last season. Island attendants will be rating the state of facilities from top to bottom, from the length of grass on park green spaces to the structural integrity of picnic shelter chimneys. The ratings will be done as part of the attendants’ regular island rounds throughout the summer. These regular reports will be verified with six assessments by the visitor services team leader over the course of the season. The information will be reviewed on an annual basis and used to determine the best allocation of visitor services resources over the years to come.

In addition to maintaining facilities, maintaining good relationships with park visitors has always been a goal of park visitor services staff. Last year the park began distributing special comment cards to island kiosks. These “smile cards” encourage visitors to let park management know when island attendants or other Parks Canada staff have gone the extra mile to make visitors’ experience memorable.



Illustration: Parks Canada

A soldier of the Glengarry Light Infantry.

### A different kind of uniform in the park

In 2012, St. Lawrence Islands National Park will commemorate the bicentennial of the War of 1812 through special on-site programs and events. A costumed interpreter will take part in programs highlighting the St. Lawrence River as an important supply route and water highway during the War of 1812 and remembering the region as a borderland and battleground where residents of Upper Canada fought to hold the line at the border of Canada and the United States.

The student interpreter will assist with programs such as Island Quest, a hike program offered on Georgina Island for Grade 7 and 9 students in May and June. This year Island Quest includes learning elements related to the War of 1812 and linked to Ontario Grade 7 history curriculum.

The War of 1812 interpreter will conduct interactive, roving interpretation programs on park islands and will also be present at the Mallorytown Landing visitor centre throughout the summer as a component of special events, particularly Aboriginal Day and Canada Day.

## Firewood restriction in effect

**Firewood must be purchased in the park from self-serve bins or park staff. Do not move firewood into or out of the park. Firewood purchased in the park can be transported between any park islands, with the exception of Cedar and Milton Island.**

Protect your island forests from the emerald ash borer, an invasive insect that can be spread in firewood. A single piece of infected firewood can kill thousands of trees. The park will provide access to certified firewood for park users with the addition of new metal firewood boxes on some islands where campfires are permitted. The new firewood boxes will be available on McDonald, Beau Rivage, Central Grenadier, Camelot, Georgina and Milton. If the firewood program is a success it will be extended to other park islands.

## NOTICE: Area Closure

Entry and travel is prohibited on the shoreline trail between the west dock and the picnic shelter on West Grenadier Island.

This prohibition is to ensure recovery and protection of a threatened species listed in schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act.

## Fees hold steady another year

A fee freeze for all Parks Canada sites continues to be in effect. Visitors to the park can expect to pay the same fees for services and facility use that they did during the 2011 operating season. The fee freeze, established in 2008 and continuing until 2013, is aimed at helping the tourism industry and local economies.



## Pontoon Boat

The park now has a brand new 4-stroke outboard pontoon boat that will save the park money on gas and maintenance and at the same time enable the extension of our working season on the islands. How was this accomplished within an environment of shrinking budgets? We sold our old, inefficient, high maintenance work scow and with the proceeds entered a new era in fleet operations. An added bonus is that we were able to close a diesel fuel storage tank located on the water.

## Facilities

### Mallorytown Landing

- Visitor centre with live animals, hands-on exhibits, Aboriginal stories, children's activities
- Outdoor exhibits and artwork
- Playground
- Interpretive programs
- 2-km trail with easy and moderate hiking loops
- Boat launch
- Picnic area
- Scenic river views
- Geocaches
- Garbage & recycling pick-up

### Jones Creek trails

- 12-km trail network of easy to difficult trail loops
- Wildlife viewing
- Lookout points
- Scenic wetland boardwalk
- Geocaches

### Landon Bay Centre

(Operated by the Barbara Heck Foundation)

- 7-km trail network
- Scenic lookout
- Playground
- Geocaches
- Picnic area
- Campground
- Pool

### Islands

- Docks & mooring buoys
- Composting toilets
- Walking trails
- Campsites (12 islands)
- Picnic shelters (14 islands)
- Scenic river views & wildlife
- Garbage & recycling pick-up (Hill Island at Battermans Point, Central Grenadier, McDonald, and Beau Rivage)
- Beaches (Central Grenadier and Thwartway)
- Geocaches (Grenadier)
- Potable water (Central Grenadier only)

## Hours of Operation

### Mallorytown Landing

May 26 to June 8

- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekends and holidays.

June 9 to September 3

- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday to Monday.

Fees are payable from May 26 to September 3 for all services, and until October 8 for vehicle with trailer parking and launching.

### Jones Creek trails

Open year-round. Parking fees apply year-round.

### Landon Bay Centre

(Operated by the Barbara Heck Foundation)

Open year-round. Parking fee for Jones Creek and Mallorytown Landing covers trail use at Landon Bay May 26 to September 3. Separate fees apply for other services and off-season use. For more information visit [www.landonbay.org](http://www.landonbay.org).

### Islands

Services and facilities are maintained from Victoria Day to Thanksgiving (May 19 to October 8). Fees are payable by self-registration.

### Park Administration Office

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, year round.

**To learn about fees & for more information contact:**

**613-923-5261**

**[ont-sli@pc.gc.ca](mailto:ont-sli@pc.gc.ca)**

## Events & Programs

For more information or to pre-register for events, call 613-923-5261 or email [ont-sli@pc.gc.ca](mailto: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 and Jones Creek from May 26 to September 3. Additional costs are noted if applicable. Seasonal permits are available.

### May 26 – Visitor Centre opens for 2012

- Meet Canada's longest snake species and smallest turtle as well as other animals native to Ontario. A travelling exhibit from Montreal's Insectarium features live exotic and native insects. Cook lunch on one of our new barbecues and explore outdoor exhibits on Mohawk culture and the stories of local residents who make a difference in our ecosystem.

May 26 – **Doors Open Ontario** - Take advantage of the cultural and natural places in Ontario's backyard during Doors Open Ontario. Visit St. Lawrence Islands National Park's visitor centre at Mallorytown Landing or take your friends and family on a hike at our trails at Jones Creek or Landon Bay. Vehicle parking fee does not apply during Doors Open Ontario.

June 23 - **Aboriginal Day** - Celebrate National Aboriginal Day at St. Lawrence Islands National Park's visitor centre. Discover more about Canada's Aboriginal cultures on the dazzling shores of the St. Lawrence River in the Thousand Islands, a traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee people. Bring family and friends or meet some new ones in a family friendly afternoon of music, games and activities from 12 to 3 p.m.

July & August – **Feeding Time** – Learn more about what the animals in our ecosystem are eating and how they find and consume their food as we feed the visitor centre's summer residents. Saturdays at 2 p.m.

### July and Aug. – Roving Interpretation

Watch for War of 1812 interpreters on the weekends as they rove through the campsites and docks of national park islands to share the stories of St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

### July 1 – Canada Day Celebrations

– Celebrate with us at the visitor centre with cake, games, face painting and films showcasing Ontario's national parks. Activities from 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. Vehicle parking fee does not apply on Canada Day.

### September 14-16 & 21-23 – Art in the Park

- View original art inspired by the beautiful Thousand Islands at the Thousand Islands Fine Arts Association (TIFAA) art exhibit in the Mallorytown Landing visitor centre.

### October 6 – Hill Island Hike

– Participate in an off-trail guided hike through the national park's nature preserve on Hill Island to learn more about the scientific research taking place in this protected area of the park. Meet in the 1000 Islands SkyDeck parking lot on Hill Island. Bridge toll will be charged to access Hill Island. 1 – 3 p.m.

### October 14 – Photo Contest Entry Deadline

– Capture the beauty of St. Lawrence Islands National Park during your visits and enter your photos in our annual photo contest. Contest details and entry forms available at [www.pc.gc.ca/sli](http://www.pc.gc.ca/sli).

## How to Get to St. Lawrence Islands NP

St. Lawrence Islands National Park's mainland trails, visitor centre, and administration office are located on the 1000 Islands Parkway between Brockville and Gananoque, Ontario. The 1000 Islands Parkway is accessible from Highway 401 exits 647 to 685 and from the United States via the 1000 Islands International Bridge.

**Mallorytown Landing visitor centre, trails and boat launch:** 1121-1000 Islands Parkway (401 exit 675).

**Jones Creek Trails:** 1000 Islands Parkway, 6 km east of Mallorytown Landing (401 exit 675 or 685).

**Landon Bay Centre:** 302-1000 Islands Parkway (401 exit 647)

**Administration Office:** 2 County Road 5 (401 exit 675).

**Islands:** More than 20 island properties in the St. Lawrence River between Kingston and Brockville. The park does not provide transportation to the islands.

