The Pitch Pine Post

Spring 2012

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 assessments 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 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 summer.”

See FALCONS on page 2
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 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 you ask might 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 park’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.

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.

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.

Paddling

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

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 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 Kaitie 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-sl@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 76 – 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 sight 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 scarlet tanager 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.

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 mape, brownish body and barred wings.

Photo: Rob Hanson

Carolina Wren

These birds are “stockier” and a brighter reddish colour than wrens more common in the region.

Photo: Miodolla Photography

Orchard Oriole

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

Photo: Dwayne Murphy
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 design with fabulous views of Lake Ontario and a fresh westerly breeze blowing mosquitoes into oblivion. With genuine mignatte 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. Sunning 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/si or call the park at 613-923-5261.

Romantic hideaway on North Grenadier
Privacy is the keyword for this tucked away gem. The rustling cat-tails 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 neighbors and enjoy wildlife viewing opportunities galore. Granite floors never go out of style! Deepwater swimming. Gorgeous network of trails at your disposal.

Sssseeking 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), located 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).

Golden boy ready for spring flying. Bridle shiner male interested in very short-term relationship. Ladies, check out the peas! 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: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation*

*Illustration was prepared by Ellen Edmonson and Hugh Chrisp as part of the 1977-1940 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.

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 and mature skinks have very distinctive markings. Their bodies are greenish black in colour with five cream colour lines, and they have bright blue tails. These colours fade to a bronze colour as the skinks age. Females incubate their eggs and guard their nests. These lizards might 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: Parks Canada

Photo: Joe Crowley

Illustration: Parks Canada

Photo: Scott Gillingswater

Photo: Greg Page

SAR Personals

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. Even if they identify their potential mate 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.

Looking (and listening!) for love.
Flirtatious female, just back from the Anedes, 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.

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.

Golden boy ready for spring flying. Bridle shiner male interested in very short-term relationship. Ladies, check out the peas! 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 Chrisp as part of the 1977-1940 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.

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 and mature skinks have very distinctive markings. Their bodies are greenish black in colour with five cream colour lines, and they have bright blue tails. These colours fade to a bronze colour as the skinks age. Females incubate their eggs and guard their nests. These lizards might 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: Joe Crowley

Illustration: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation*

*Illustration was prepared by Ellen Edmonson and Hugh Chrisp as part of the 1977-1940 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.

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 sightings 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.
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 could 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 the opportunity to experience 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 Dowse 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 St. Lawrence Islands or 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 provides maps for full-day and half-day routes that connect for the option of a longer trip. These maps identify access points, trip times and potential hazards, and points of natural and cultural interest.

Visit the park website 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 waterway 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 13 wettal 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. “When you launch into the pool of the Frontenac Arch and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It features rugged granite outcropings 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, 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.

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

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 ($7.50 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, 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 increasing popularity of activity 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.

“Loco is 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 local, that I would’ve never seen before, met great friends, gotten lots of exercise and spent some exceptional quality time with my family,” says avid geocacher Mark Earle.

For independent cache hunting with a portable GPS, visitors can go to 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 “Bin-rat” 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.

Photo: Ottawa Tourism

Kayakers on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa.

Photo: Parks Canada

A GPS unit in use at Mallorytown Landing.
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.

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.

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.
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 (HGA), 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 yourself for ticks are also important to check your body and clothing 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 may be on your clothing.

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

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

Protec 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. If you notice a tick, remove it immediately with tweezers. Grasp it firmly as close to your skin as possible and pull it straight out, gently but firmly. Thoroughly clean the bite area with an antiseptic.

For more information:
• Government of Ontario INFOline: 1-877-234-4343
• Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000
• www.ppc.ca/sli
• www.ontario.ca/lyme

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 (HGA), 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 yourself for ticks are also important to check your body and clothing 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 may be on your clothing.

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

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

Protec 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. If you notice a tick, remove it immediately with tweezers. Grasp it firmly as close to your skin as possible and pull it straight out, gently but firmly. Thoroughly clean the bite area with an antiseptic.

For more information:
• Government of Ontario INFOline: 1-877-234-4343
• Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000
• www.ppc.ca/sli
• www.ontario.ca/lyme

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 (HGA), 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 yourself for ticks are also important to check your body and clothing 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 may be on your clothing.

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

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

Protec 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. If you notice a tick, remove it immediately with tweezers. Grasp it firmly as close to your skin as possible and pull it straight out, gently but firmly. Thoroughly clean the bite area with an antiseptic.

For more information:
• Government of Ontario INFOline: 1-877-234-4343
• Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000
• www.ppc.ca/sli
• www.ontario.ca/lyme

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 (HGA), 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 yourself for ticks are also important to check your body and clothing 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 may be on your clothing.

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

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

Protec 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. If you notice a tick, remove it immediately with tweezers. Grasp it firmly as close to your skin as possible and pull it straight out, gently but firmly. Thoroughly clean the bite area with an antiseptic.

For more information:
• Government of Ontario INFOline: 1-877-234-4343
• Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000
• www.ppc.ca/sli
• 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 Akwesasne 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.

Kontiwennenhawi: “They Are Carriers of the Words”

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

The Akwesasne Women Singers were formed in 1999 by four inspired, and inspiring, women: Bear Fox, Katitsionni Fox, Elizabeth Nanticoke and Iawenta Nanticoke. The women were driven by the need to protect and preserve the Kanienhk:ka (Mohawk language), traditional Kanienhk:ka (Mohawk People) culture, and to celebrate 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 generations.

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 Kanienhk:ka songs. Since the group’s inception, the Akwesasne Women Singers have brought their beautiful and powerful music to the community of Akwesasne.

Their popularity has quickly spread beyond Akwesasne 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, Kontiwennenhawi, means “They are carriers of the words,” a name very appropriate for the group, as the main purpose of Kontiwennenhawi’s songs is to convey messages 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, Kawennahente 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.

Aside from singing Haudenosaunee social songs, some members of Kontiwennenhawi are songwriters, though they work with Elders and fluent speakers from Akwesasne 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, Kanienhk:ka teachers, Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, and Grandfather Thunder.

Kontiwennenhawi 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 an unusual visual element: black drift fences along sections of the road. Masters student Lyn Garrah, with the help of 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 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 animal-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.

“For 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 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.ontariornature.org.
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 open 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.

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 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 ont-wellington@pc.gc.ca or 613-925-2896.
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 5:00pm until September 30, admission fees apply.
**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.

**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.

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.

**Pontoons**

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.

Your fees at work

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.

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 Ellisworth, 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 enjoy their visit,” 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.”

**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.

**Pontoons**

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.

**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**

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.
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 Bean 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. weekdays 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.

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.

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 (1221-1000 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 how they feed the visitor centre’s summer residents. Saturdays at 2 p.m.

July and August – 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 visit and enter your photos in our annual photo contest. Contest details and entry forms available at www.pc.gc.ca/sli.

To learn about fees & for more information contact:
613-923-5261
ont-sli@pc.gc.ca

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: 1221-1000 Islands Parkway (401 exit 673).

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.