

Outer Island Project (OIP) 2015 Season Report –White Squall

Overview

White Squall and key community partners have been involved in campsite rehabilitation and installation of wilderness thunderboxes on the crown islands of Georgian Bay in the Parry Sound region for over 15 years. As in 2014, we had to partly shift focus to the southwest coasts of Franklin Island as that area was not looked after well and gets considerable visitation. We also spent time on Huckleberry Island as sites there were needing attention. Our main target area was the outer islands from Cathcart group north to Big McCoy. The stewardship work was completed primarily by using a motorboat and on one occasion by canoe. Throughout 2015, two White Squall staff visited sites on Franklin, Lenice, Big McCoy, Green, Snake, Lally, Cathcart, Dart, Gaspar, Jess, Huckleberry and Stapley Islands. Franklin Island has well over 20 sites to visit, Big McCoy has 6, Green Island has 3 and all other Islands typically have one or two. On all sites visited, garbage was picked up, bagged and removed by boat.

Campsites/Boxes Checked & Garbage Pickup

June 28	Big McCoy SE site, middle south shore, southwest & northern sites
June 28	Big McCoy – checked two campsites for possible new boxes
June 29	Green Isle eastern shore middle site – will need changing midsummer
June 29	Green Isle western campsites
June 29	Checked Raper and Goodkey Islands for new sites
July 4	Wall Isle – west side – garbage picked up
July 22	Checked all sites on Snake Island, garbage removed – sites ok
July 29	McCormick Island – Shawanaga Inlet – sites checked, garbage removed
Aug. 6	Stapely Island – all sites checked, garbage removed
Aug. 12	Dart Island – garbage picked up, all sites checked
Aug. 26	Green Isle – box relocated on NW corner
Sept. 30	Henrietta Point – large quantity of garbage from bear incidents
Sept. 30	Southwest coast of Franklin – garbage pickup, boxes checked
Oct. 5	Lenice Island – both sites checked, garbage removed
Oct. 5	Deadhead Bay Sand Site – garbage removed
Oct. 29	Huckleberry Island – Totem Pole Bay – checked 3 sites, garbage removed
Nov. 7	Gaspar and Jess Island – site checks, garbage removed

New Thunderboxes & Re-locations & Firepit Removal

June 28	Big McCoy Isle – SW site – box relocated
June 29	Green Island – northwest corner campsite – relocated, big firepit removed
June 29	Green Island – Centre site – reconditioned and flagged
June 29	Green Island main eastern campsite – large firepit & garbage removed
June 29	Green Island – west shore campfires x 3 removed/cleaned
July 4	Wall Isle west campsite – relocated box
July 4	Cathcart Isle – box relocated
July 29	McCormick Island – new box /site installed
Aug. 12	Dart Isle – north site – new box installed with flagging
Aug. 6	Stapely Island – box relocated, firepits removed
Aug. 26	Green Isle – box relocated on NW corner, firepits removed, garbage
July 22	Snake Isles – southern box relocated, firepits removed, garbage picked up
Sept. 30	Henrietta Point – new thunderbox, firepit removed
Sept. 30	Henrietta Point – second box relocated
Oct. 5	Lenice Island – centre box relocated, firepits removed
Oct. 5	Deadhead Bay Sand Site – box relocated
Oct. 29	Huckleberry Island – Totem Pole Bay – relocated box, garbage removed
Nov. 7	Jess Isle – west of Gaspar – relocation
Nov. 7	Gaspar – box relocated, one pit removed

Thunderbox Construction

We contracted Peter Wassermann to build 7 boxes out of pressure treated plywood. Using this method, a box can be built for about \$120. We are very lucky that Peter is still willing to do this but it's a stopgap measure. The most durable ones are made of cedar and would be over \$200 to build – out of range for our current budget. We need a lot more support to help us build these boxes.

Public Education

At various times during the summer, our staff had conversations with campers about island stewardship. On one occasion, an entire family who has visited Stapely for many years thanked us profusely for the stewardship effort. Without exception there was strong support from users. Beyond that, individual groups reaffirmed their commitment in minimizing impact and cleaning up sites they encounter. There are many examples of paddlers going out on their own and contributing to the overall effort which is really encouraging. Local businesses are engaging customers in conversation about the fragility of the islands and what they can do to protect them. Several provincial paddling clubs have been in touch with their membership, emphasizing the importance of treading softly in this biosphere land and waterscape.

Stewardship Boat

White Squall's boat and motor are getting older ☹. We can do a lot in a short period of time and are quite efficient, but there is no budget line for a replacement. At the moment, we are using our son's boat with his permission – with an agreement to maintain it, but down the road, this needs to change. Perhaps an outside organization could work towards securing one and loan it to us for the summer period. This needs to be addressed to enable us to carry on safely and efficiently in years to come.

Project Cost

Two Staff /Day x 12 Days	\$3750
Boat Rental, Gas, Maintenance	\$1500
Insurance	\$250
Equipment & Tools	\$250
Box Construction	\$840
Total	\$6590

Community Partners

Georgian Bay Land Trust	\$1000
Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve	\$1000
West Carling Association	\$500
Great Lakes Sea Kayak Association	\$250
Ontario Sea Kayak Centre Fundraiser	\$1850
Individual Donations from squall customers (derived from snow hikes, test paddles and demo days)	\$1740
The Milligans	\$250
Gillys	free launch
Total	\$6590

Summary Note

We are heartened by the state of the islands despite increased visitation, particularly on Franklin Island. But we draw attention to the fragility of the coast and adjacent archipelago if campers and visitors continue to use fires as regular practice in periods of hot, dry conditions. Over many years of observations this is the key contributor to campsite impact. The involvement of so many organizations and individuals in the stewardship of this corner of the biosphere is heartening to see.

Respectfully Submitted

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