

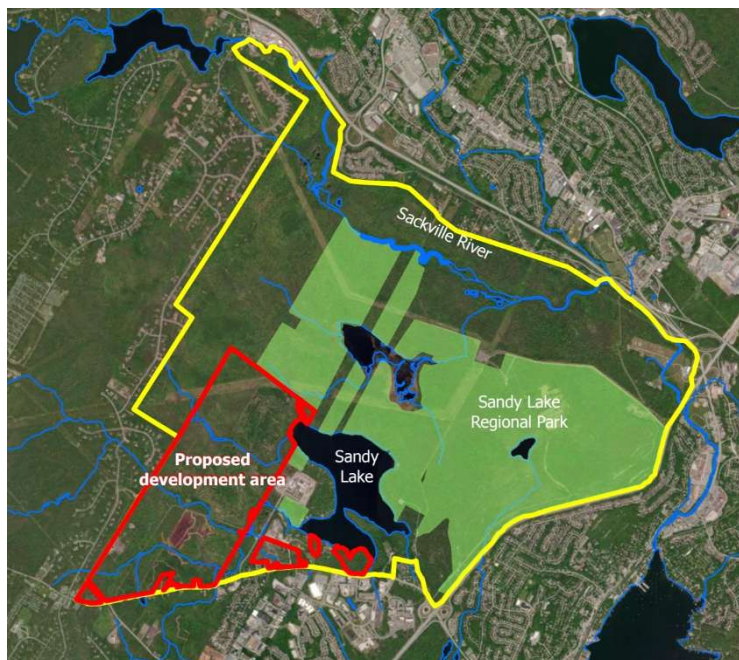
Sandy Lake – Sackville River Regional Park is at risk from housing development



Sandy Lake photo by Skyline Studio

It is remarkable that we still have large, wild places like Sandy Lake (Bedford) and the Sackville River so close to Halifax's urban centre. However, **the Province put Sandy Lake-Sackville River at serious and immediate risk by putting it on a fast-track list for housing development.**

The rich and diverse Sandy Lake Regional Park has been planned since 1971, when it was **chosen by a joint municipal-provincial-federal program as an exceptional ecological unit for both wilderness protection and recreation**, worthy of preserving for all time. That hasn't changed.



So far, 1,100 acres of the area is protected as Sandy Lake Regional Park (light green area in adjacent map), but **housing development in the wilderness next to the park threatens to damage the existing park (red line on map)**. The three main tributaries that feed the lake are within the area proposed for housing development. **The Sandy Lake – Sackville River area functions as an ecological unit. It is a key area for wildlife corridors and is invaluable as an intact, interconnected wild area with huge capacity to help with the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. The area of still-wild land around the park should be protected (yellow line on map).**

The area provides citizens with excellent opportunities to reconnect with nature and lead healthy lifestyles through swimming, hiking, dog walking, snowshoeing, and more. It is home to over 99 nesting bird species, 11 diverse habitats with 8 Species of Interest and 16 species at risk, including wild Atlantic Salmon, and more, all nestled among some of Nova Scotia's last remaining old growth Acadian forests.



A 2013 clear-cut of 300 acres near Sandy Lake showed how sensitive the lake's water quality is, as seen in the ongoing water tests and the rotting remnants of wood chips that were carried into the lake despite the forestry regulations. They are still there in 2025, affecting water quality. Scientists tell us that even with precautions required by regulations, more cutting, more pavement, and houses in the lake's watershed, would inevitably tip the lake water quality, bringing further habitat degradation and potentially increasing beach closings at Sandy Lake beach from algae blooms. See "A Tale of Two Lakes" to learn more about the risks to the lake: <https://tinyurl.com/5x2xzbpt>

The Sandy Lake - Sackville River Regional Park Coalition of 30 groups has been working to protect the remaining 1,700 acres of watershed between the Hammonds Plains Road and the Sackville River, long identified for protection as park (more than the current park), before it is too late. **But the provincial government's Task Force on Housing in HRM instead picked the Sandy Lake area as one of the places to fast-track for potential housing development.** This would damage the ecosystem right through to Bedford and Sackville and could also increase flooding downstream in the Bedford and Sackville River area. Yes, Nova Scotia needs more houses, but it makes no sense to put them in an area needed to protect this precious Regional Park that counters climate change and preserves biodiversity. Putting 8,000 or more housing units in the Sandy Lake area would also lead to more traffic on the already congested Hammond Plains Road.

The facts are in. We need the political will to do the right thing.

We ask you to please stand up for Sandy Lake and Sackville River! Please do all you can to generate a clear message to the Province.

- Order a lawn/window/balcony sign to post on your property.
- Send a message to the Minister for housing and the Premier, asking that the Sandy Lake Special Planning Area be removed from their housing development list and instead protected as park.
- Learn more and join our list to receive news.

All of these actions can be taken with the help of our campaign website: www.sandylakecoalition.ca