



Sandy Lake -Sackville River Regional Park Coalition News: August 2026

Update on our special request for financial help, plus

Dear Coalition partners,

This is an enthusiastic and heartfelt thank you to all Coalition groups and individuals who have responded so generously to our call for funding to obtain an independent legal opinion on the options that may be available should development be permitted adjacent to Sandy Lake.

We are past the $\frac{3}{4}$ mark! (The cost of obtaining the legal opinion is \$2,500.)
A few more donations will put us over the top.

We have now engaged a legal advisor for study and advice that will help us better understand the legal landscape and identify potential avenues available to the campaign. (Reminder: this is not a lawsuit.) With these results, we and other Special Planning Areas will be better positioned to respond thoughtfully and strategically if development approvals advance.

Please help through a financial contribution of any size. Donations are being handled by the Ecology Action Centre and will only be used for this Sandy Lake campaign. **If you're able to contribute, you may do so [online](#), or reply to this email and we'll provide details on how to make a donation by cheque or in-person.**

Charitable tax receipts will be provided to individuals who donate at least \$15, and transaction receipts are available for organizations.

This decision was prompted by “Early Earthworks” having begun in the smaller red area in the middle of the illustration below. This is most disturbing because this feels like “building at all costs”.

- a. A recent reply from the Province states they are still awaiting final studies (including the missing Land Suitability information and potential impacts on flooding in Bedford and Sackville). How can this proceed when all the information is not yet in?
- b. The Province assures us that all the normal processes are being followed, but we have identified and reported many examples of this not being so.
- c. Our communications with HRM indicate that by June 26, HRM was still assessing the developer’s application for such siteworks before making recommendations to the Province. But, the siteworks had already begun early in the summer and are ongoing.

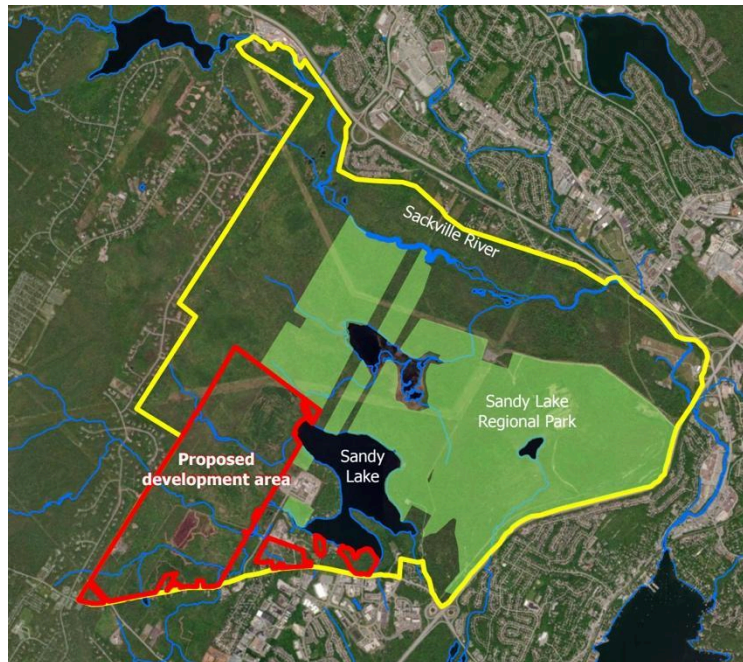


More News:

1. The What We Heard Report from last fall’s Open House and public process is online.
<https://engagehalifax.ca/sandy-lake-special-planning-area>
Do you see your feedback reflected in this report? Let us know of concerns.
2. Good news! HRM purchased one of the 2 small cottage lots near Sandy Lake Beach! Please thank your councillor and ask to have HRM acquire the other one soon. These inholdings have posed significant challenges to park operations with vandalism and fire risk. Having them become part of the park is a big gain.
3. Bad News. Fifty acres of land along the right side of Smith’s Road have been sold again. We had worked hard to have the city reacquire them for the park. These 50 acres were part of Sandy Lake Regional Park until quietly being traded in 2013 to Sobeys in exchange for 2 acres of underwater area at Mill Cove. Sobeys just sold them to a gas station developer. Interestingly, the covenant prevents building a gas station there, so we do not know what is planned. Part of it adjoins the Exit 3 interchange, as seen in the map below in the deep “V” in the yellow outline, to the right of where the park entrance road, Smith’s Road, exits Hammonds Plains Road. **The**

plot includes the Jack Lake parking lot and trail heads. They had been prime park access lands. Park users will miss them.

Overview:



On this map, the area currently at risk from housing development is marked in **red**. **Green** is existing Regional Park. Yellow is the boundary needed to protect the ecological unit that is the park, lakes and rivers. Note that the 3 tributaries which feed the ecosystem through to the Sackville River are in the red areas.

So much is at stake if houses are built in the system's headwaters – the health of Provincial Treasured Wetland Marsh Lake is at as much risk as Sandy Lake, 37 years of effort by the Sackville Rivers Association to return the wild Atlantic Salmon to the watershed, the area's outstanding biodiversity, old growth forest stands, highly used research locations for universities, a beautiful natural lifeguarded beach, and more.

This prime recreational, educational and cultural hot spot was identified in 1971 as an important unit to be preserved for all time. Citizens have never stopped working toward that goal.

Where was the intelligence in slicing off the headwaters and zoning them for housing? It puts everything of value at risk.

Thank you for your continued commitment to protecting Sandy Lake. Together, our Coalition of 35 organizations has built a united voice for protecting Sandy Lake and Sackville River, and the wilderness that surrounds them.

We have almost reached the fundraising goal!

With gratitude,

Karen Robinson and Walter Regan, Co-Chairs
Sandy Lake – Sackville River Regional Park Coalition Steering Committee
sandylakecampaign@gmail.com