

Park Land Acquisition at Sandy Lake, to 2019

At Sandy Lake, there is a strong history of park land acquisition by the municipality and city. Attached is a map of all city-owned park land up to 2019. This is what we know:

c.1974, Mrs. Pender (widow of Pender sawmills owner) offered a gift of ~500 acres west of Sandy Lake if the park would be named in her late husband's honour. Ira Settle, County Warden, reportedly wanted the taxes from the Twin City Dairy's proposed move to Sandy Lake instead, and vetoed the 3-way vote (city, municipality, Province). In 1986 she offered to sell the same lands to Bedford. Again, she was turned down. (They became Armco's 550 acres, and now Clayton's. Armco clear-cut 300 in 2013.)

In 1983, although the Province decided not to proceed with any of the 7 regional parks, the local areas decided to do it themselves. Mayor Cosman championed the park idea still, but Bedford Council rezoned the area for development. To preserve the area in hopes that a park plan would evolve eventually, Sept 26, 1983, Council passed the zoning bylaw to restrict any new construction to a minimum 5-acre lot on a publicly serviced road that is publicly serviced as of October 1991. This zoning protected the lake from in-fill development ever since, however developers began to buy up land.

Bedford continued to purchase land around Sandy Lake toward this future park purpose:

1985, July 22, a 50/50 Province and Town purchase of \$700,000 worth of land from McCulloch and Co. 236 acres for Sandy Lake Park (not sure which parcel), and 61 for Admirals Cove Park.

1992, 6 acres given to Bedford by Farmers Dairy specifically for public parkland, March 9. The 6 acres included the roadway and underground pipe to the lake, and a covenant required that the land be used only for public parkland, no buildings, and no travel over the lands or parking or motor vehicles of any kind.

1986 CMHC gave ~1000 acres Jack Lake to the province. **The public housing development they were planning for Jack Lake would not happen because of the need for 2 expensive highway interchanges and for extensive mitigations required to prevent environmental damage to Jack, Sandy and Marsh lakes.** (Jack Lake Environmental Report, 1986)

In the 2006 First Regional Plan, Sandy Lake is listed as Urban Settlement area. **The Province gave the ~1000 acres, minus 50 acres, at Jack Lake to the municipality. A successful lobby by Sackville Rivers Association and others made the Jack Lake lands a Regional Park.** It remains identified as park today, but is not being managed as an active park.

2013, the city gave/traded Sobeys/Crombie 50 acres of the Jack Lake lands (~across from the BMO) to protect Morris Pond. Thus, the city unfortunately traded out park land to protect other park land without the community knowing.

At the September 15, 2014 meeting of North West Community Council, a petition was received from the Sandy Lake Conservation Association requesting that the municipality expand the park lands surrounding Marsh Lake and Sandy Lake to create a regional park and wilderness area. Staff responded with an Information report to Community Council indicating that planning and land acquisitions for the Regional Park were continuing, and directing community efforts for the park into the Halifax Green Network Plan.

2015 Oct HRM purchased 160 acres from Armco. Most developers' lands west of Sandy Lake were not included in the staff conceptual map, only the 160 to be acquired. Also, private residents' properties were also excluded.

“In keeping with the Regional Plan, the Marsh Lake lands are highly desired for regional park purposes...” “...This land will serve as a positive move to protect and preserve high value ecological lands associated with the Sackville River Corridor.” (Item No. 8.1 Halifax Regional Council, Oct 6, 2015)

The map created for that 160-acre acquisition, known as the 2015 Conceptual Map, is understood to be the map in use in 2018-on for considerations for land acquisition. The community is concerned because it was drawn for a specific purpose and the ecologically important lands west of Sandy and Marsh Lakes are not included.

2018, an internal reportedly discusses future acquisitions for the park.

2019, Sandy Lake is a line item along with Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes in the city's Capital Projects Budget.

Map of park land at Sandy Lake-Sackville River as of 2019:

