

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

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 – for Spring 2024.**

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. And now it has huge capacity to help with the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.



The three main tributaries that feed the entire system are within the area slated for housing development.

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

Science reports 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, increased traffic on Hammonds Plains Road, and more flooding in Bedford and Sackville flood plains. See 'A Tale of Two Lakes': <https://tinyurl.com/5x2xzbpt>

The Sandy Lake - Sackville River Regional Park Coalition of 30 groups has been working to protect the remaining 1800 acres of watershed between the Hammonds Plains Road and the Sackville River, long identified for protection as park (more than the current park) for future generations, before it is too late. See 'The Sandy Lake Ecological Features Assessment' by McCallum, 2022: <https://tinyurl.com/tf5dsu79>

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 serves a growing city, counters climate change and preserves biodiversity. The facts are in. We need the political will to do the right thing.

Can you help? Go to this page to order a lawn/window/balcony sign to post on your property and to send a letter to the Premier: <https://www.sandylakecoalition.ca/copy-of-about>

Learn more at www.sandylakecoalition.ca and: <http://www.versicolor.ca/sandylakebedford>