

November 11, 2023

Hello Mr. Premier, Mr. Lohr, and all Provincial MLAs

We in the Sandy Lake-Sackville River Regional Park Coalition are sending this letter and three attached documents to encourage each of you to look closely at the Sandy Lake SPA and recognize that housing at Sandy Lake is a terrible idea. In 1971, the three levels of government, and with the work of federal biologists, chose its highest use. As planned, the municipality zoned it P-park because the watershed was all part of a valuable functioning unit. Most of that unit is still functioning, but that unit is now at serious risk from the Province's plan to allow a major housing development in the previously P-zoned watershed.

We as citizens have the task of raising the awareness of the importance of taking Sandy Lake off the province's Special Planning Areas list and correcting a major error in judgement that was made when Bedford Town Council voted by a narrow margin in 1982 to change the zoning of about half of the fully-functioning ecological unit for future housing instead. They did that without the benefit of biologists who could have told them the consequences of such an act.

Developers now own key lands that influence the overall health of Sandy Lake Regional Park, and they will need fair compensation of some kind. However, the area indeed still has a higher purpose than to be used for housing, even now in the face of our housing crisis.

We know we need to build more housing, here and nationally, but there are other options, even among the 23 options of that 3-tier list of areas that were being studied by the city.

It concerns us to hear the province use phrases such as "finding the balance between environment and housing". That sounds reasonable on the surface, because compromise is an important part of democracy. However, this is an area that operates by the Laws of Nature which do not recognize property lines that humans make. Building more housing in this watershed, especially in the previously park-zoned sensitive watershed that contains the 3 main tributaries, will affect the system right through to the Sackville River.

It is also concerning to hear that the outdated, refuted, concept of NIMBY comes up in communications with this government. Over 30 organizations representing many thousands of informed citizens recognize the science of Sandy Lake and know the importance of preserving this area. While the lake's water quality is showing signs of effects from pollutants, it does not yet have serious algae blooms that plague many city lakes. Once the housing risk is removed, it would be quite uncomplicated to walk it back to health to preserve for the long term its outstanding ecological values, including the wonderful Lions Club Beach. Of further concern is the fact that building in this watershed will negatively affect flooding in the Sackville and Bedford flood plains.

Much like the Cogswell Interchange Mistake that is being reversed, the Sandy Lake Mistake of 1982 can be, and needs to be reversed soon. It will take commitment to find and create the win-win, but it is not too late.

We sincerely request that you take whatever steps are necessary to preserve this entire valuable ecological unit to serve the needs of the province and the growing city far into the future. Please remove it from the SPA list, and let us celebrate this achievement together.

Sincerely,  
Karen

*Karen L.H. Robinson*

*And Co-chair, Sandy Lake - Sackville River Regional Park Coalition of 30 groups, Walter N. Regan*

*President, Sandy Lake Conservation Association (SLCA)*

*SL-SRPCoalition website: [www.sandylakecoalition.ca](http://www.sandylakecoalition.ca)*

*SLCA Website: [www.sandylake.org](http://www.sandylake.org)*

*Sandy Lake Ecological Features Assessment, McCallum, 2022:*

*<https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/220712rc15110.pdf>*

*RP+10 2 Submissions: <https://www.sandylakecoalition.ca/rpsubmission>*

*And 3<sup>rd</sup> RP Submission Oct 24 2023: <http://sandylake.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Sandy-Lake-SRRPCoalition-RPsubmission.pdf>*

*Natural Wonders Avian Species report: <http://sandylake.org/avian-and-species-at-risk/>*

*Park Planning Study: <http://sandylake.org/sandy-lake-sackville-river-regional-park-2020-planning-study-2/>*

*Sandy Lake and environs website: [www.sandylakebedford.ca](http://www.sandylakebedford.ca)*

*Summary of A Report on the State of Sandy Lake February 23, 2021:*

*<http://versicolor.ca/sandylakebedford/waters/lakes/sl-report-summary/>*

*Deep Water Oxygen Levels in Sandy Lake Fall to Precarious Level, June 2023:*

*<http://versicolor.ca/sandylakebedford/2023/03/21/deep-water-oxygen-levels-in-sandy-lake-bedford-ns-fall-to-precariously-low-levels-19mar2023-19mar2023/>*

*also updated: <http://versicolor.ca/sandylakebedford/waters/lakes/sl-report-more-details/critique-of-predictions-lack-of-follow-up/>*

*Ducks Unlimited WESP Wetland Reports: <https://sandylake.org/ducks-unlimited-wetland-assessment-report/>*

*Ducks Unlimited Marsh Lake video 2022:*

*<https://www.facebook.com/AisforAdventure/videos/150950111235044/>*

*Nova Scotia Crown Share and Legacy Trust Wildlife Corridor Charette Report:*

*<http://sandylake.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/WildlifeCorridorCharretteReport.pdf>*

*A Tale of Two Lakes: <https://tinyurl.com/5x2xzbpt>*

*SL-SRRP pamphlet: <https://www.sandylakecoalition.ca/why>*

*Drone video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJwTLlYIbZg>*