

Sandy Lake 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 is putting the Sandy Lake - Sackville River area 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. That hasn't changed. But an area smaller than originally envisioned is being protected as park. Expanding the park to its originally envisioned size is needed to keep the existing park healthy in order to continue to serve both human needs and natural values.



The area already provides citizens with excellent opportunities to reconnect with nature and lead healthy lifestyles through swimming, hiking, dog walking, and more. It is home to over 99 nesting bird species and at least 16 species at risk, including wild Atlantic Salmon, all nestled among some of Nova Scotia's last remaining old growth Acadian forests. But these features are at risk, in part because the three main streams that flow into Sandy Lake are within the area proposed for housing development. **Expanding the park instead of building next to it secures the larger area for people and nature to thrive and has huge capacity to help with the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.**

Scientific reports tell us that even with precautions required by regulations, more tree cutting, more pavement, and houses in the lake's headwaters would inevitably damage the lake water quality, bringing further habitat degradation and increased beach closings at Sandy Lake. We would also see increased traffic on Hammonds Plains Road and more flooding in Bedford and in the Sackville River floodplain. See "A Tale of Two Lakes" <https://tinyurl.com/5x2xzbpt> and "The Precarious State of Sandy Lake - Report to The Premier, Oct 1 2024" <https://sandylake.org/news-2/> for the details of how the lake is at risk.

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) for future generations, before it is too late. **It makes no sense to put houses 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 and Mother Nature need the province to see that this park is an exceptional asset to service the park-and-nature-related needs of new homeowners and long-term residents alike. We ask the province to choose to save it and put the needed homes in a different place. Then we will all celebrate together!**

Can you help? Go to this page to learn more, order a lawn/window/balcony sign to post on your property, or to send a letter to the Premier: <https://www.sandylakecoalition.ca>