

Understanding how the Stantec Report missed the mark: Links to The Stantec Land Suitability Assessment of Sandy Lake, plus important critiques Oct 30 2025

This document is to help clarify the accompanying paper called 'Main issues with the background studies completed by Stantec for the Sandy Lake Special Planning Area', October 2025, which was written by the Sandy Lake – Sackville River Regional Park Coalition (SL-SRRPC) and provided to the HRM development planning staff working on the Sandy Lake file.

First, for your reference if desired:

The Stantec Land Suitability Assessment (LSA) of Sandy Lake Special Planning Area (SPA) was released by the Province on May 16 2025. It is made up of 5 sub-reports:

1. Summary, Stantec LSA Report Sandy Lake, released May 16 2025:
https://hdp-ca-prod-app-hfx-engage-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/9817/5527/1951/cb7d080ee349934d76776f46d4157d3e_Sandy20Lake20Summary20Report.pdf
2. Land Suitability Analysis, Stantec LSA Report Sandy Lake, released May 16 2025:
https://hdp-ca-prod-app-hfx-engage-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/7317/5527/1954/78231d0b45e1b984761ea71cb21442f3_Sandy20Lake20Land20Suitability20Analysis.pdf
3. Watershed and Stormwater, Stantec LSA Report Sandy Lake, released May 16 2025:
https://hdp-ca-prod-app-hfx-engage-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/7817/5527/1958/284aef783adb871294e69fbf0623ac82_Sandy20Lake20Watershed20and20Stormwater20Management20Study.pdf
4. Lake Servicing Study, Stantec LSA Report Sandy Lake, released May 16 2025:
https://hdp-ca-prod-app-hfx-engage-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/8517/5527/1950/de6cd3edc7f2092ce8025a122f405e56_Sandy20Lake20Servicing20Study.pdf
5. Transportation Study, Stantec LSA Report Sandy Lake, released May 16 2025:
https://hdp-ca-prod-app-hfx-engage-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/9917/5527/1960/3dbcd91a4cfa3e6a37431334ebbbd5ee_Sandy20Lake20Transportation20Study.pdf

Here is the link to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Sandy Lake part of the Stantec Report: <https://procurement-portal.novascotia.ca/tenders/HRM-22-373>

RFP Number: 22-373, , Date Issued: October 6, 2022

Pages 17 - 26 and pages 40 - 42 are most relevant for Sandy Lake.

RFPs (Request for Proposals) are the documents that describe what the successful bidder will have to include in their work in order to complete the contract. In this case, the contract was to study the 5 aspects above about 4 of the proposed Province's Future Growth Areas - Sandy

Lake, Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes (called the Highway 102 Corridor by the Province), Morris Lake, and the Akoma Lands.

The Sandy Lake – Sackville River Regional Park Coalition steering team compared the requirements listed in the City’s Request for Proposals (RFP) to the contents of the final Stantec Report’s 5 sections on Sandy Lake.

Note: HRM staff confirmed that the RFP text is the same as in the final contract. This is important because we were unable to see the contract, to compare directly to the contract. **This is also important because much that was required by the RFP was not done in the Stantec Report.**

Also see:

The many reports and information relevant to making a solid decision regarding whether to develop or not to develop that were left out of Stantec’s report, despite the fact that they were sent to Stantec either by the scientists who conducted the studies or by the SL-SRRPC. Note that the RFP required Stantec to include resources provided by SL-SRRPC and the Versicolor environmental website. The well over 20 “missing documents” have been sent again to the Provincial Housing Task Force and HRM to inform correction of this situation after-the-fact, and are contained in this dropbox until this matter is resolved:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/atrlmdpl9up4ag3fioxfi/ADBGT9WVEmbWS2fdUvt-cEc?rlkey=9rk7ist8yvkyho1sqzdyozsx&e=1&st=qr6y0ukq&dl=0>

A further essential critique:

On July 25 2025, Dr. David Patriquin released his response to the Minister of Housing re: the Stantec May 2025 Sandy Lake Land Suitability Analysis water section, finding it “deeply inadequate”. <https://versicolor.ca/sandylakebedford/2025/07/25/community-studies-for-sandy-lake-bedford-ns-special-planning-area-ignore-critical-data-on-water-quality-23jul2025/>

Click on “view documents” at the end of the post to see Dr. Patriquin’s July 25 2025 letter, comments, and notes, or see these direct links:

Letter: <https://versicolor.ca/sdocs/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/PatriquinLetterSandyLake18July2025.pdf>

Comments Document: <https://versicolor.ca/sdocs/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/PatriquinSandyLakeComments18Jul2025.pdf>

Notes: <https://versicolor.ca/sdocs/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/PatriquinSandyLakeNotes18Jul2025.pdf>

We suggest you read all 3 sections as each contains new and important information.

The omission of this data casts doubt on the quality of any conclusions over whether to proceed or not with development.

Most importantly, Stantec says their report has deficiencies. Stantec advised that more study is needed on at least 20 topics including the floodplain study. Stantec honestly reported that they were unable to complete all surveys and ground truthing they normally would because of time shortage and the 2023 floods and wildfires.

We ask why they were not given the time they needed to do such a pivotal task. So much is at stake for the lakes and lands that support Sandy Lake Regional Park and for home and business owners in the floodplains of Sackville and Bedford. Yet, the Province's development process is requiring HRM planners to accelerate their processes. This speed puts real evaluation at risk and consequently the entire Sandy Lake-Sackville River area at risk.

The above information should help reader's understanding of the Coalition critique '**Main issues with the background studies completed by Stantec for the Sandy Lake Special Planning Area**', October 2025. (There were other omissions/errors that can be of focus later if need be.) The critique accompanies this document you are reading.

It is not too late to save Sandy Lake, but the first step is to factor in all of the available information so that a solid and defensible decision is made.