

## From the 1971 and the 1979 MAPC reports

Around 1971, biologist P.B. Dean was hired to assess the Metro Dartmouth/Halifax region to identify special areas to be preserved for all time as the cities grew. The municipal and provincial joint project called upon federal biologists to assist in the assessments. The team chose 7 areas, each area was unique and outstanding. These were the “must saves”.

Why was the Sandy/Marsh lake/Sackville River area chosen to be one of Metro’s 7 “jewels in the crown” to preserve for all time? Why is it special?

Dean’s report, Natural Environment Survey, classified Sandy Lake and Marsh Lake as Category 1: “...consists of natural assets that are unique in the Halifax-Dartmouth area or important on a regional or provincial scale. This category includes important wildlife habitats and ecologically rich or fragile areas.” The Sackville River as a Category 4 area “of high recreational or environmental value.” p.6.

*“Since this lake and its surroundings comprise one of the finest landscape units in the metro area, a large parcel of land has been suggested to protect the lake from adverse development and so that public access and use may be assured. This lake was designated Class 3 for recreation in the Canada Land Inventory Recreation Capability Survey and as such received the highest rating of any inland site around the metro area.” P. 49.*

*“This area should be reserved immediately for public use before it is irreparably damaged by adverse developments ... Since the land need not be developed (for park) immediately, considerable flexibility is available in bargaining with owners. It should be emphasised that this is a prime park land – nature reserve site in an excellent landscape setting.” P. 50.*

The lakes include a large marsh lake and a deep "blue lake" (rather than a brown “tea lake” like most in this part of NS) that flow into the Sackville River. This large section of the Sackville River watershed hosts a wide variety of significant natural elements all in one place, including multiple habitats and an impressive variety of species. Overall, the area was identified for its outstanding biological assets and for its relating recreational, and educational potential.

By 1979 MAPC had a conceptual plan including both the "active park" portion and a protective natural buffer around the park lands. Watershed to the west of Sandy and Marsh Lakes, the west part of Jack Lake lands, DND lands, and a large part toward Webber Lake were included in the protected area.