

Sandy Lake Regional Park

A magnificent old forest, wildlife and recreation park protecting the Sackville River flood plain and located between the thriving communities of Bedford, Sackville, Kingswood and Hammonds Plains

"I view Sandy Lake and environs as they were viewed in 1971: an asset to all of Halifax municipality, indeed to the whole province. I see it as a very special place, complementing not replicating other major natural assets of Halifax."

Halifax naturalist/Trails volunteer

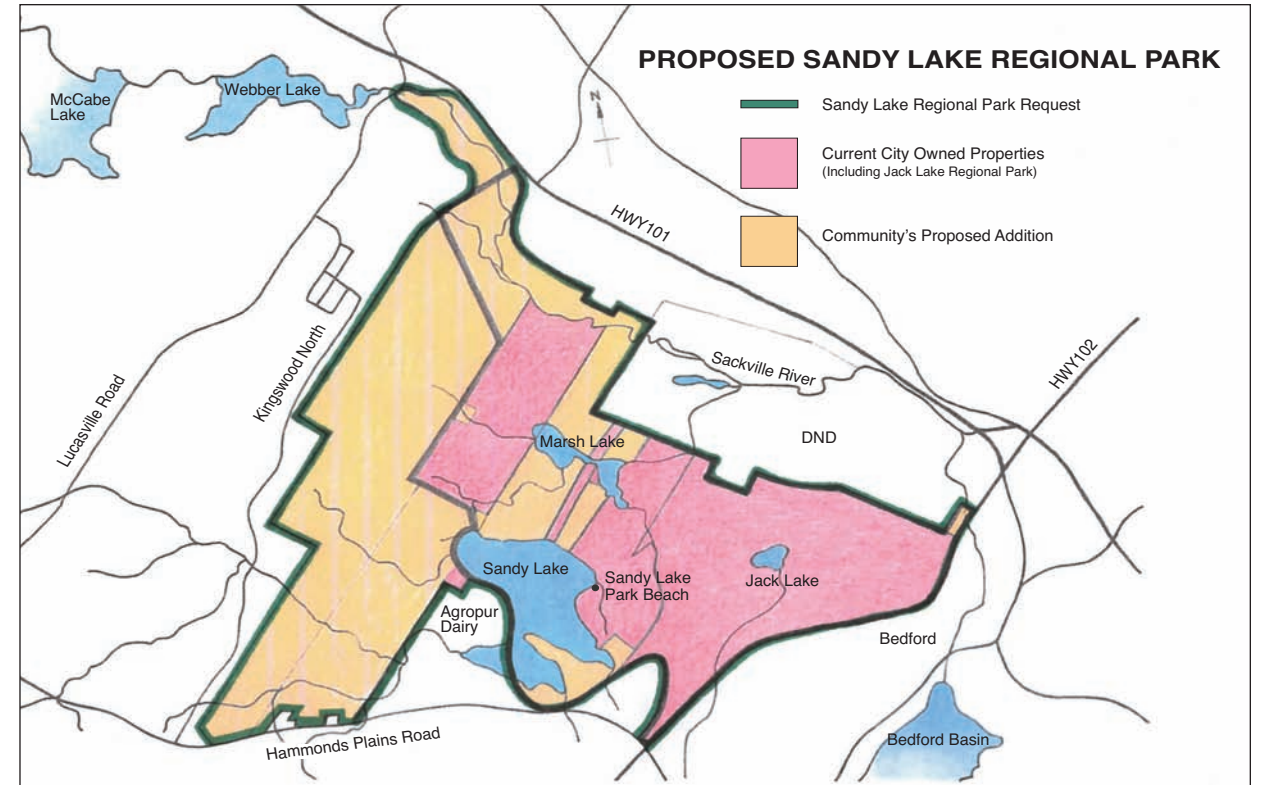
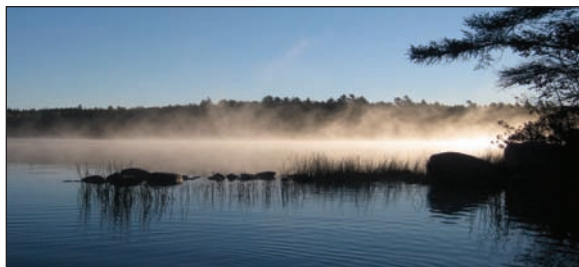
Unfinished business:

Help us expand the existing park to protect this irreplaceable natural area. Time is running out.

The proposed **Sandy Lake Regional Park** is two thousand acres of rich ecosystem that stretches between the Hammonds Plains Road and the Sackville River encompassing the lands and rivers of and between Sandy, Marsh and Jack Lakes and the Sackville River. It has been recognized for nearly five decades, provincially, municipally and locally, and in multiple reports and studies, to be a special landscape worth protecting. Community efforts plus some twists of fate have allowed these lands to remain largely in good condition, and other twists of fate have caused protective processes to fall short.



In 1971, the Sandy Lake area was selected as one of seven unique "jewels in the crown" of Halifax region – priority areas to be protected for their ecological richness and for community education and recreation. Plans were developed for the **Sandy Lake Regional Park**.



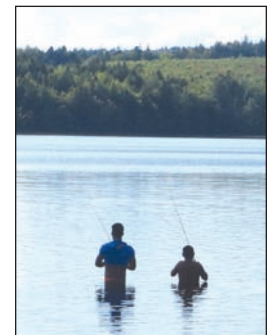
In 2006 the HRM-owned Jack Lake lands together with the Lions Club Beach on Sandy Lake were identified as lands for the Jack Lake Regional Park which is still to be formally designated. Those lands have their own special attributes and should remain protected, but about 1000 acres of the critical Sandy Lake to Sackville River corridor remain unprotected. Citizens have worked since the 1970s to protect this area and to finally achieve a comprehensive **Sandy Lake Regional Park**.

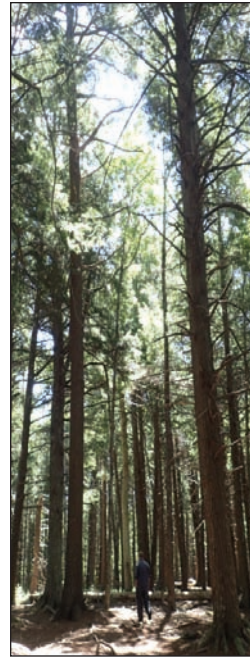
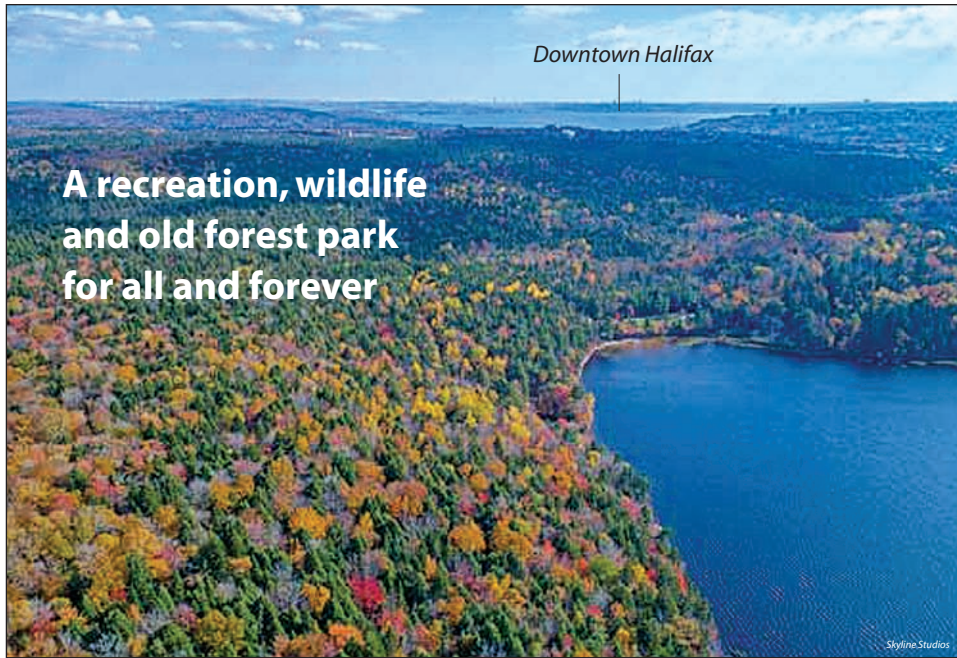
Time is Running Out

Housing development has been on a parallel path and is close to overtaking the park goals. We need concerted action from HRM to ensure that this jewel will be preserved for generations to come. There will likely never be another chance to preserve this stunning area for the long-term benefit of the entire city and province.



1000 acres are already under protection. Much of the remaining 1000 acres are under intense development pressure.





- **Sandy and Marsh lakes** are bordered by rich drumlins that support magnificent mixed, multiaged Acadian forest with significant old-growth stands, some trees over 200 years old, and striking "pit and mound" topography.
- **Sandy Lake** is a popular location for research for schools, universities and community. Aquatic studies point to deterioration in oxygenation and increased salt loading of the lake since the 1970s, related to urbanization and some clearcutting. Significant further settlement within the Sandy Lake watershed would make the lake inhospitable to the migratory fish, reduce wildlife diversity, as well as increase flooding downstream. The **Sandy Lake Regional Park** would guard Bedford from increased flooding by protecting the Sackville River flood plain.

Expanding the Park

Priorities for Land Acquisition

Sandy Lake and the Sackville River area are under intense development pressure. Over six hundred acres west of Sandy and Marsh Lakes are slated for development. The **Sandy Lake Conservation Association** and the **Sackville Rivers Association** have been working together to advocate that these lands not be developed and that a collaborative process be established with HRM and stakeholders to explore alternative measures. Recently, the Sandy Lake Regional Park Coalition has formed to support these efforts.

The **Sandy Lake Regional Park Coalition** is a group of organizations which support the urgent objective of protecting this area for future generations before it is too late. Current members:

- SLCA (Sandy Lake Conservation Association)
- SRA (Sackville Rivers Association)
- Agropur Cooperative Dairy Bedford Plant
- Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails
- Canoe/Kayak Nova Scotia
- Ecology Action Centre
- Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust
- Friends of McNabs Island Society
- Halifax Field Naturalists
- Halifax North West Trails Association
- Nova Scotia Bird Society
- Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society
- St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
- The Turtle Patrol
- WRWEO / The Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail

To discover more about the forests and surface waters of Sandy Lake & environs, visit

[www://versicolor.ca/sandylakebedford/](http://www.versicolor.ca/sandylakebedford/)

Discover how you can support this project. Visit our website for updates, to learn about trails, or to get your organization involved.

www.sandylakecoalition.ca



Sandy Lake Conservation Association
sandylake.org sandylakecoalition.ca

- **Landscape connectivity:** The whole sweep of forest provides an essential wildlife corridor at the neck of the Chebucto Peninsula, north to the Sackville River and the mainland — an important link to be preserved by the Green Network Plan. Endangered mainland moose have traditionally inhabited the area, and they continue to be sighted. The Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources considers the proposed **Sandy Lake Regional Park** as "important mainland moose habitat."
- **Trails :** The area proposed for **Sandy Lake Regional Park** is already used unofficially by citizens of HRM for multi-recreational purposes through a network of existing trails. Currently, a wide variety of outdoor activities are conducted on these lands, including mountain biking, bird watching, swimming, paddling, fishing, dog-walking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, to name a few; the power lines are popular corridors for ATVs.

- **The Sandy Lake watershed** is the largest sub-watershed of the Sackville River and hosts populations of seagoing American eel, Atlantic salmon, gaspereau and speckled trout. The integrity of this system is critical to the Sackville Rivers Association's efforts to revive salmon in the Sackville River system.
- **The wetlands** bordering Sandy Lake and Marsh Lake and along much of Peverill's Brook leading to the Sackville River host a complex, healthy ecosystem that includes large populations of amphibians and reptiles.
- **The diverse wildlife population** includes over 100 species from the mighty osprey to the tiny ruby-throated hummingbird. Loons, otters, frogs and snapping turtles inhabit the lakes and the woodlands are home to bobcats, barred owls, many warblers, wood turtles, deer, ermine, fox and mink.