



Annual Report 2023-2024



Sackville Rivers Association Annual Report 2024

A message from our President



Restoring and Protecting the
Sackville River



Creating Recreational
Opportunities



Encouraging Stewardship
through Education and
Outreach

Over the past year, the Sackville Rivers Association has remained dedicated to conducting fieldwork in and around the rivers, maintaining trails, engaging in educational initiatives, community outreach, and advocacy efforts. Our primary goal remains the restoration and sustainable management of the Sackville River and its watershed.

The wildfires and floods of the past year have given us direct understanding of how climate change affects the Sackville River and its surrounding area. To mitigate these impacts on river ecosystems, we're focused on implementing adaptation strategies. These include restoring riparian buffers, improving floodplain management, and adopting water management practices. As part of our river management efforts, we regularly monitor water quality, evaluate siltation levels, remove debris causing fish passage blockages, and employ electrofishing techniques to identify fish species. Additionally, we closely track salmon populations and sizes at the fish ladder.

The July flooding caused significant damage to both trails. Repair work on the Bedford Sackville Connector Greenway was undertaken by the province, while HRM took charge of restoring the walkway on the Sackville Greenway. Furthermore, HRM added an accessible walkway to the Sackville Greenway at the Lions Club in March this year. Additionally, HRM replaced a vandalized 30-year-old SRA tree with a new one. Our efforts in collecting data on the BSCG through pedestrian and bike counters have shown high usage. We've also organized various events such as a bike rally and clean-up activities.

We persist in fostering relationships with diverse stakeholders, encompassing government agencies, local communities, NGOs, businesses, and recreational users, to cultivate partnerships and consensus on river management matters. Our approach involves advocating for policies, conducting public outreach campaigns, and amplifying our presence on social media platforms.

To continue our work, we need to secure funding from government grants, private donors, and other sources to support the organization's programs and initiatives. This might involve fundraising campaigns, grant writing, and developing partnerships with philanthropic organizations and corporate sponsors.

None of this work would have been possible without the direction and help of our coordinator, directors, and volunteers. We are grateful for the steadfast support of our local HRM Councilors, Provincial MLAs and Member of Parliament.

Ann Angelidis

River Restoration

*A primary goal of the SRA is to protect, restore and remediate the Sackville River and its watershed
We recognize that healthy river systems are good for people and for the environment*

Highlights

2023

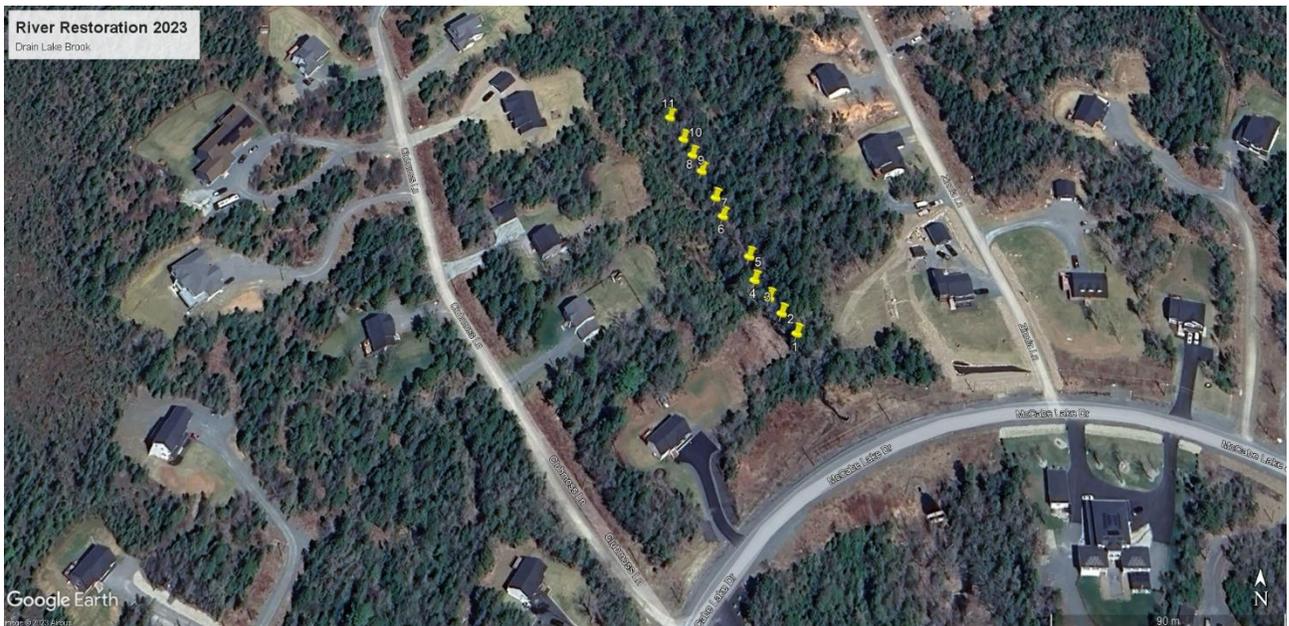
- As part of River Restoration 2023, work in Drain Lake Brook included the installation of rock sills and deflectors for habitat restoration, the removal of garbage and debris jams to increase flow and fish passage.
- 22 Structures in total were installed in Drain Lake Brook (11 rock sills and 11 deflectors) at 11 sites in the community of Indigo Shores. This work in a reach of approximately 140m of brook restored approximately 320m² of fish habitat. Work took place in the reach above McCabe Lake Drive.
- This project will benefit the entire Sackville River Watershed by increasing the overall productivity of the watershed – the Sackville River and its' many feeder brooks. All the work planned was outlined in the SRA Sackville River Watershed Restoration Plan (SRWRP). The SRWRP is the SRA's current guiding plan for restoration

work on tributaries on the Sackville River.

- This project was made possible by funding from Adopt-a-Stream, Service Canada Summer Jobs, Echo Foundation, Susan and Graham Smith Foundation, the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation, EcoAction, Student Summer Skills Incentive and the McLean Foundation.

Fishway

- 2023 was a challenging year for our salmon counts at the Sackville River Fishway, with drought conditions largely drying up the Sackville River at the fishway in the spring, followed by a severe flood event in July – only 7 salmon in total counted (all grilse) before the July 21st flood damaged the fishway/counter, taking it out of operation for the remainder of the year.



2024

- For 2024 our restoration efforts will continue on Drain Lake Brook.
- Funders for this project (so far) are Adopt-a-Stream, Service Canada Summer Jobs, Student Summer Skills Incentive, Echo Foundation, Susan and Graham Smith Foundation, the McLean Foundation, and the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Volunteering

- The last cleanup that we have done was a cleanup along the Little Sackville River behind Riverside Estates in April to celebrate Earth Day 2024 – thanks to all who came out!

Recreation

To promote access to the Sackville River and its watercourse

SRA is responsible for the following trails: **Fort Sackville Walkway, Bedford Sackville Connector Greenway** and the **Sackville Greenway**.



Highlights

- Maintenance of our trails - thanks for support by HRM Parks, HRM – Active Transportation, and SRA volunteers.
- There was considerable damage done to both trails due to the flooding in July. The province repaired damages done to the Bedford Sackville Connector Greenway. HRM repaired damages done to the walkway on the Sackville Greenway.
- We continue to collect data on the BSCG through pedestrian and bike counters.
- The accessible walkway to the Sackville Greenway at the Lions Club March was completed this year by HRM. They also planted a new 30 year SRA tree that had been vandalized.
- HRM continues to consider taking over the BSCG. This will remove a significant financial burden.

The following events were hosted in support of our trails:

- **Family Cycling Event** – June 25, 2023
33 attendees – included an education and outreach component for the river. Great support from local businesses and support groups (Recycle your Cycle, Sportwheels, Lions Club, HRM – Active Transportation, Bike NS).



Shareholder Engagement Through Education and Outreach



To raise awareness about the Sackville River and other watersheds through public outreach and education.

One key to a sustainable future is a well-informed populace who value the natural environment. The SRA works towards that goal by providing educational opportunities on topics relating to environment for young and old alike.

Highlights

- **Fultz House** We participated in the Fultz House Family Fun Day through games and invertebrate observation
- Our **Dinner Auction** was a great success once again. We appreciate the support we consistently receive from our MP, MLA'S and city Councillors.
- SRA had a great time participating in activities during the **Sackville Business Association's Snow Days**. Kids enjoyed our "Feed the Fish" game and our very special **Photo Booth**. People were also able to participate in the viewing of "Atlantic Salmon – Lost at Sea."
- We held another successful **Flea Market** in February. All proceeds went to continue our restoration and protection of the Sackville Rivers.
- Our **Earth Day Clean-up** of the Little Sackville River was a huge success. Over 50 residents of Riverside estates joined forces with SRA volunteers to clean over ½ tonne of garbage from the river...including a fridge and a hot tub!
- The annual **Spring Duck Run Race** took place on May 4th with a Star Wars theme! 61 businesses sponsored over 103 corporate ducks while 500 family ducks vied for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes.
- **Millwood High school "Green Team"** hosted an aquarium and raised brook trout from eggs to the fry stage. Classes ranging from grade 9 science to grade 12 biology made regular observations of the developing trout. We assisted students in releasing approximately 300 trout into the Little Sackville River in late April.

- **Halifax Regional Plan**
 - We attended multiple information pop up sessions, met with city planners, and read 300-page document.
 - We presented a response to HRM strengthening the language and timelines around: Wetland protection, Riparian buffers, Floodplains, Watershed management, Wildlife corridors.

- **HRM Environmental and Sustainability Committee** We stressed the importance of the following:
 - floodplain mapping; prevention/reduction of future development in flood prone areas; “Best Management” and “Low Impact” development practices; Flood Protection Infrastructure

- **Nova Scotia Wilderness Areas Protection Act**
 - We recommended specific parcels of provincial Crown lands to be considered for designation under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, including potential expansion of the Sackville River Wilderness Area.

- We were very active on **Social Media** this past year, reaching over 10 000 people in April alone.

- We held **Information Sessions** on:
 - The flood and its impact on the trails and river
 - Viewing of the Documentary film: Atlantic Salmon – Lost at Sea

