



Annual Report 2024-2025



Sackville Rivers Association

Annual Report 2024

A message from our President

Our mission is clear and rooted in purpose:

The Sackville Rivers Association exists to restore, enhance, and protect the environmental health of the Sackville River Watershed for present and future generations.

We do this through river restoration projects, promoting recreational use of the watershed, delivering educational programs, and encouraging community stewardship.

At the core of everything we do is a simple but powerful goal: **to protect—and where necessary, restore—the environment of the Sackville River watershed.** And this isn't just about preserving a beautiful place to walk your dog or snap a photo. It's about safeguarding a living, breathing system that supports wildlife, nurtures biodiversity, and plays a vital role in our community's health, wellbeing, and resilience.

But here's the thing—we can't protect what people don't know about, don't experience, or don't understand.

That's why our **second key objective** is **to raise awareness about the Sackville River and other watersheds through public outreach and education.**

And our **third objective** is to **promote access to the Sackville River and its watercourses.**

Because when people get out on the trails, fish or kayak the river, go birdwatching, or just spend time by the water, they're more likely to develop a personal connection. And that connection—more often than not—leads to a deeper appreciation of why we need to protect these spaces.

Now circling back to that first objective: restoration and protection. A lot of this work is invisible to the public eye. You can walk by a restored stream and never realize the number of volunteer hours or technical knowledge it took to make it healthy again.

That's why **education** is such a huge part of our mission.

Whether we're visiting schools, setting up booths at community events, running workshops, or just chatting with folks out on the trails—we're always working to raise awareness. Not just about the river itself, but about the bigger environmental challenges we're all facing together: climate change, pollution, habitat loss, invasive species, and more.

And we don't stop at just sharing facts—we aim to **spark curiosity and inspire action.**

When a kid learns how rivers support life or how wetlands act like giant water filters, something shifts. They start to see nature differently.

When an adult learns that their backyard connects directly to the larger watershed, they start thinking twice before dumping anything down the storm drain.

That kind of shift? That's how we build stewards—people who care enough to take action, speak up, and get involved.

Some of our best moments this past year came from those little “aha!” moments—when someone suddenly *gets it*. When they realize the Sackville River isn't *just* a nice place for a walk, but a critical part of a much larger ecosystem that we all depend on.

That's why over the past year, we've put a big focus on **education**—and I'm proud of what we've accomplished together.

Highlights from the Year:

- **The River Walk with Sackville Library** was a real standout. We got people outside, walking the water's edge, learning about invertebrates—the tiny critters that play a huge role in river health. People were genuinely amazed by how much life is right there beneath the surface.
- We screened the documentary "*Atlantic Salmon: Lost at Sea.*" It gave folks a better understanding of just how far these fish travel and how many challenges they face—not just in our rivers, but out in the ocean. It reminded us that local action really can have global impact.
- We hosted a **public presentation on cyanobacteria**, showing how everyday choices—like over-fertilizing lawns or letting grass clippings wash into drains—can have major consequences downstream. And that kind of information? It empowers people to take responsibility for their habits.
- We've kept a steady presence at **information booths**—whether it was at the Bedford Players, Kinsmen events, the Dinner & Auction, or the always-fun **Duck Race**.
- We've taken folks on **trips to the fish ladder**, continued to grow our **social media** presence, and behind the scenes, we've made some great strides, too:
 1. We're **upgrading the office** to better serve our growing needs.
 2. We've been **streamlining our data** systems, moving more online, making it easier to track and share the impact of our work.
- And of course, we've had **multiple meetings with all levels of government**—advocating for support, pushing to keep the health of the watershed on the agenda, and making sure that environmental protection is treated as a long-term, non-negotiable investment.

Restoration Work

And yes, **river restoration** remains a cornerstone of what we do.

It goes far beyond picking up litter. It's about healing habitats, improving water flow, supporting native species, and making sure the river can thrive not just now, but 10, 20, 50 years from now.

But again—**none of that sticks without education**. If people don't understand why we're doing it, they won't value it, and it won't last.

So, we'll keep education front and center in everything we do.

We'll keep connecting people to nature, to knowledge, and to each other.

Thank you all for your continued support, your time, your energy, and your love for the river. Let's keep learning, keep teaching, and keep working together to protect something that truly matters.

Here's to another great year ahead!

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

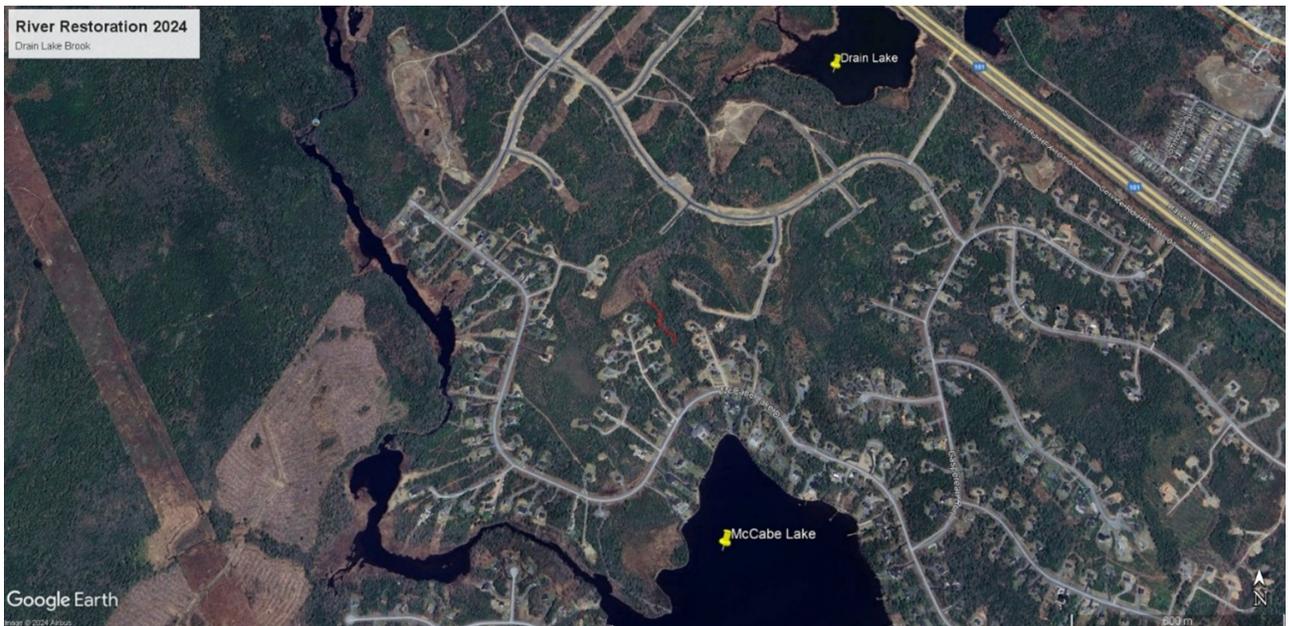
2024

- As part of River Restoration 2024, 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.
- 35 Structures in total were installed in Drain Lake Brook (17 rock sills, 17 deflectors, and one side-channel blockage) at 18 sites in the community of Indigo Shores. This work in a reach of approximately 190m of brook restored approximately 420m² of fish habitat. Work took place in the reach between Bondi Drive and 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, Student Summer Skills Incentive, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, RBC

Community Grant and the McLean Foundation.

Fishway

- 2024 was again a challenging year for our salmon counts at the Sackville River Fishway, with continued low water conditions on the Sackville River at the fishway in the spring as well as continued cleanup efforts at the fishway related to the flood of July 2023 - 23 salmon in total counted for 2024



2025

- For 2025 our restoration efforts are continuing to work on Drain Lake Brook, both below and above Bondi Drive.
- 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, the Halifax Foundation, the Bass Pro Outdoor Fund, and the Joan Feynman Climate Change Fund

Volunteering

- The last cleanup that we had done was a cleanup along the Little Sackville River and the Sackville Greenway in April to celebrate Earth Day 2025 – thanks to all who came out! There will be more scheduled cleanups to be announced for this summer.