

Please call **1-800-565-2224** or
the Halifax Regional Police or RCMP detachment at
902-490-5020
to report illegal activities in our watershed areas.

Volume 13 Issue 1

Lake Major Watershed Newsletter

To learn more about
Halifax Water's Source Water Protection Program
please visit: halifaxwater.ca/protected-water-areas or
call our Customer Care Centre at **902-420-9287**.

Fall 2021

Protecting Our Source Water

Halifax Water is legally obligated, by provincial legislation, to protect and carefully manage defined watershed areas that supply a vital drinking water resource for approximately 376,000 people. This includes the lands, lakes and watercourses around Pockwock Lake, Tomahawk Lake, **Lake Major**, Bennery Lake, Chain Lakes and Lake Lemont.

This newsletter is dedicated to outlining how and why the Lake Major Watershed *Protected Water Area* and its regulations were formed and how you can help us protect it into the future.

Lake Major Watershed Area

Lake Major is the designated primary drinking water supply for the communities of North Preston, Westphal, Dartmouth, Eastern Passage and Cole Harbour. Lake Lemont is the designated emergency back-up drinking water supply for these communities. The Halifax Water Protected Water Areas and Lands map on the attached page illustrates the designated Lake Major Watershed *Protected Water Area* boundary in red. All the water within the Lake Major watershed boundary flows into Lake Major; and all the land and water activities that occur within this boundary can affect the quality of the drinking water supply source. To help protect the source water supply, the lands, roads and trails within the watershed area are not for general public use, except for those mandated as such by the province and HRM.

Water Supply Network Evolution

Through amalgamation of the Halifax Regional Municipality in 1996, Halifax Water became the owner and operator of the Lake Major and Long Lake water systems. Approximately 10 years later, Halifax Water recognized that the aging Long Lake water treatment plant needed to be replaced. Plans for its replacement and construction of a new water main to connect North Preston to the Lake Major water supply were conducted in 2009. This water distribution change meant Long Lake was no longer the primary water supply to North Preston. However, it did not change Long Lake's importance to the health of the watershed area as it is an important tributary to Lake Major. Therefore, protection of Long Lake remains critically important to the health of the Lake Major watershed as a drinking water supply area.

Increased Activities and Risks to Drinking Water

There has been a noticeable increase in recreational and other activities in all of our watershed areas in recent years. To improve public awareness of permissible watershed activities, Halifax Water has updated and replaced signage. This is in addition to maintaining gates, using remote cameras and other security measures to deter activities that are illegal and could potentially put the quality of the water supply at risk. Under provincial legislation, Halifax Water is responsible for implementing and enforcing the regulations

applicable to each watershed and the bodies of water that are within them. The regulations on what is permissible, prohibited and restricted in each of Halifax Water's protected water areas, with respect to recreational activities, are outlined in the table on the attached page. These regulations help Halifax Water fulfill its legislated responsibility to protect the drinking water supply.

Revisiting Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area Regulations

When the Lake Major Watershed Working Committee (see history on opposite page) was established in 1978, there was an understanding that there would be room for negotiation and compromise if the regulatory situation should change. Furthermore, Halifax Water recognizes that since Long Lake is no longer the primary water supply to North Preston, there are regulatory inconsistencies within the Lake Major Watershed *Protected Water Area (PWA)* that need to be addressed. As a result, Halifax Water has begun the process to review the regulations to rectify the inconsistencies while providing the best drinking water quality protection possible to the watershed and its customers. As part of the process in updating and creating consistent regulations for the Lake Major Watershed, public consultation is required.

Please stay tuned to learn how you can get involved to bring the regulations up to date while maintaining protection of the community's drinking water supply.

History of Lake Major as a Water Supply Source

Lake Major was identified as an important drinking water supply source for the Halifax-Dartmouth region in 1950. In 1978, the Lake Major Watershed Working Committee was formed as a local planning advisory committee to make recommendations on land use in the Lake Major watershed to fulfill the watershed protection requirements and to protect the rights of the citizens living within the communities affected by a regulated watershed area. At that time, the City of Dartmouth and surrounding areas in Halifax County were using Lake Major and Long Lake as their water supply and wanted to regulate the land use in the area.

Based on the communities impacted, the Working Committee included representatives of the province, the City of Dartmouth, County of Halifax, the Black United Front and representatives of the communities of North Preston, Lake Major and East Preston. This group was tasked with preparing a Watershed Management Strategy and a Community Development Plan.

Lake Major Watershed Advisory Board

One of the tasks was to create the Lake Major Watershed Advisory Board (LMWAB), which was formed based on the membership of the Working and the Joint Action committees. The LMWAB was designed to operate as a forum for watershed management policy recommendations and to allow interaction between regulating agencies, including the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Nova Scotia Department of Environment. The LMWAB continues to operate and is instrumental in guiding the Lake Major watershed protection policies. The current Chair is Spencer Colley, who represents the community of East Preston on the Board.

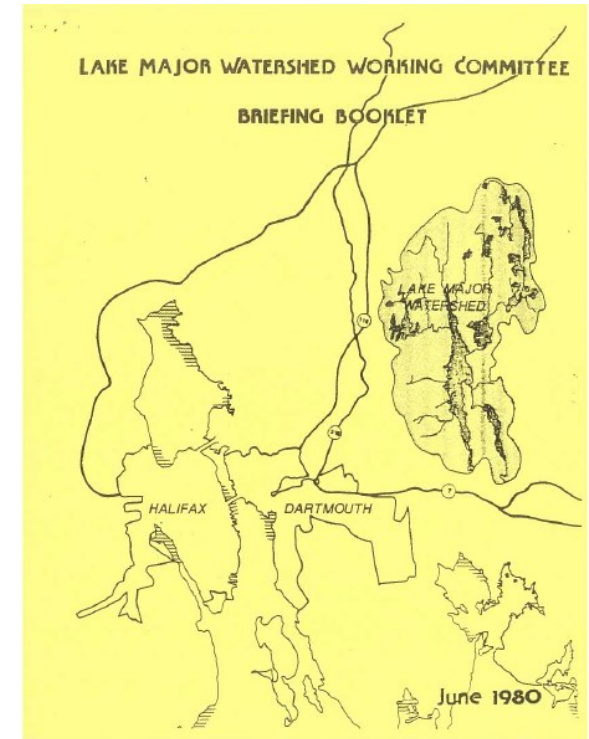
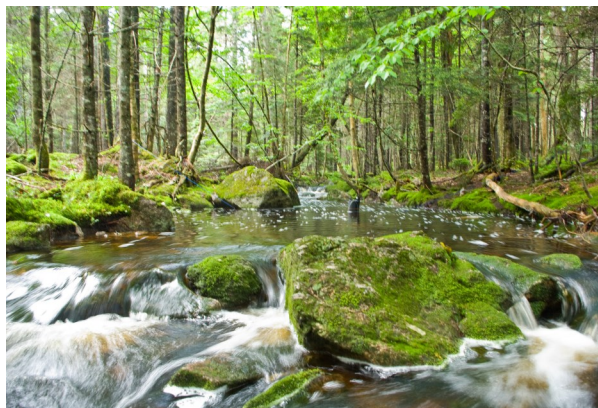
Identifying Water Supply Risks

As part of formulating regulations to protect the water supply, the Working Committee identified the following risks:

- inadequate or poorly maintained septic systems
- road and highway de-icing agents and dangers of accidental spills
- **recreational use of lakes and shorelines**
- garbage dumps
- agriculture
- rock quarrying and mining
- forestry operations
- construction work
- development pressures on watershed lands

Based on these risks, regulations were formulated by the Working Committee. The Lake Major watershed area boundary was subsequently delineated and designated a *Protected Water Area (PWA)* by the Province of Nova Scotia on April 8, 1986. This designation authorizes the Minister of the Environment to prohibit or regulate any acts that may impair the quality of the water supply.

For a complete list of the regulations for the Lake Major Watershed *Protected Water Area* please visit <https://www.halifaxwater.ca/protected-water-areas> or contact Halifax Water at **902-420-9287**.



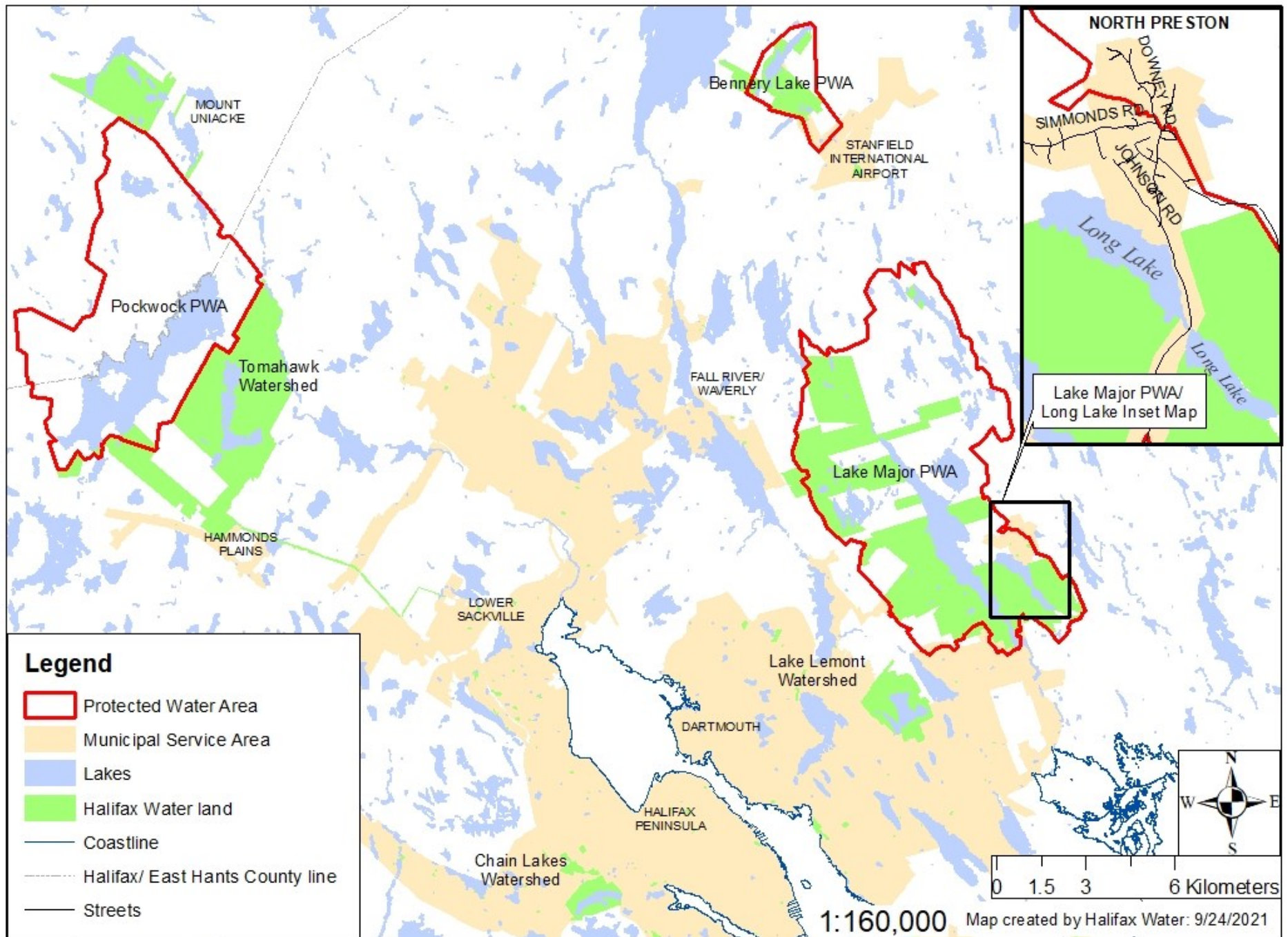
Map and Table References

On the following 2-page attachment are a **map** and a **table** that show the following:

The Map illustrates Halifax Water's *Protected Water Areas (PWA)* and lands for the **Lake Major**, Pockwock, Bennery Lake, Chain Lakes, Lake Lemont and Tomahawk watershed areas. The areas outlined in red on the map are the *PWA* boundary areas, which Halifax Water is legally responsible for managing. The green sections depict the lands owned by Halifax Water. Together, these critical lands help protect the drinking water supplies for Halifax Water.

The Table depicts prohibited, restricted and permitted **recreational activity** in each of Halifax Water's *PWAs*, according to provincial regulations. Please visit <https://www.halifaxwater.ca/protected-water-areas> for more details.

Halifax Water Protected Water Areas and Lands



* This map is for informational purposes only and should not be used for legal, engineering or surveying purposes.

Table of Recreational Activities Prohibited, Restricted and Permitted in Halifax Water’s Protected Water Areas

Recreational Activity	Protected Watershed Area		Lake Major		Pockwock		Bennery	
Communities Served	Dartmouth, Eastern Passage, Cole Harbour, Westphal, North Preston				Halifax, Bedford, Sackville, Fall River, Waverley, Timberlea		Halifax Stanfield International Airport and Aerotech Park	
Water Body	Lake Major		Long Lake		Pockwock Lake		Bennery Lake	
Boats, Canoes, Kayaks (or any other vessel)		Boat motors are restricted to 9.9 hp or less.						
Fishing		Restricted to beyond 100 m of Lake Major water supply plant intake.						
Hunting								
Swimming		Restricted to beyond 100 m of Lake Major water supply intake.						
Docks/Wharves		Requires NSECC approval.						
Off-highway vehicles (e.g. ATVs and snowmobiles)								Restricted to landowners' own property.
Camp Fires		No open fires from April 15 to October 15 inclusive, except barbecues and fireplaces designed for cooking or heating purposes. No open fires on lake ice.		No open fires from April 15 to October 15 inclusive, except barbecues and fireplaces designed for cooking or heating purposes. No open fires on lake ice.		No open fires from April 1 to October 31 inclusive.		No open fires except barbecues or fireplaces designed for cooking purposes at a residential dwelling.
Tree Cutting								
Trail Building								
Littering								

Prohibited

Restricted

Permitted

For more details please visit <https://www.halifaxwater.ca/protected-water-areas>