

The Contaminated Village of Harrietsfield

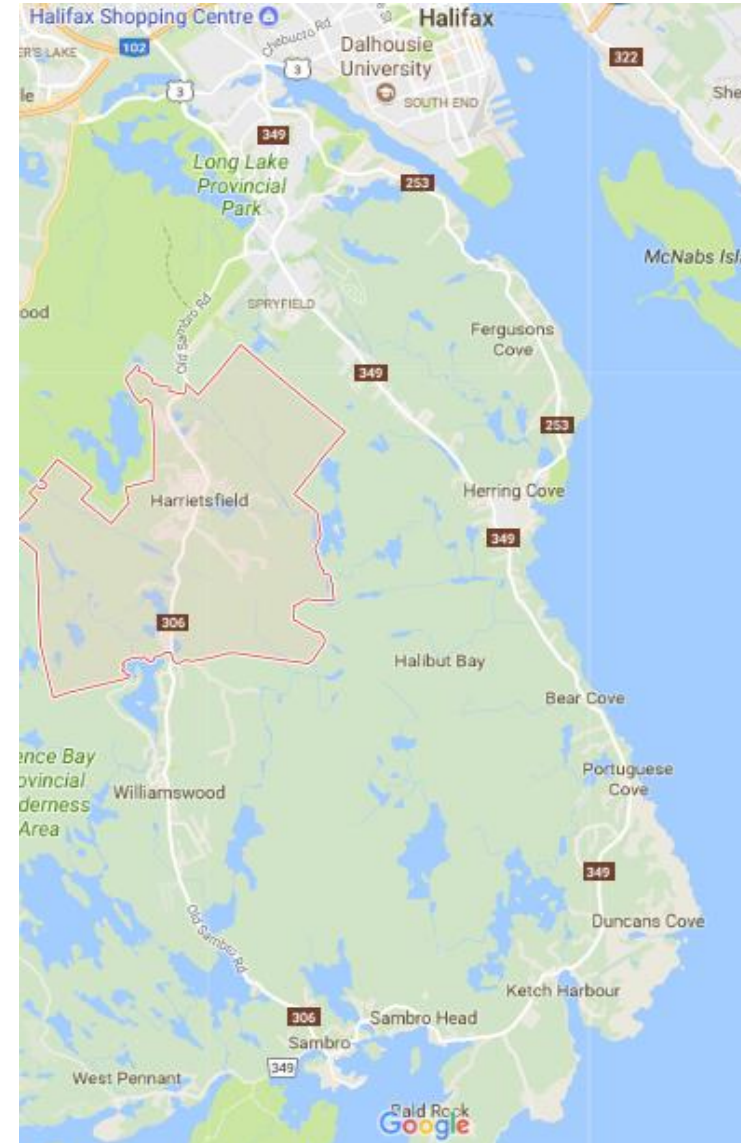
OUR BACKYARD HISTORY Background and Recommendations
Presentation to the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
Halifax Regional Council

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Discrimination

Of the 17 communities identified in the plan A, only Harrietsfield and Williamswood are not located on the ocean. This long standing association with the sea remains important to the plan A for a number of economic, environmental, and recreational reasons. Now it is important the environmental impacts to the Harrietsfield Williamswood communities are addressed in the MPS.



- 2 environmental impacts in the last 37 years have contaminated 83 wells in the Harrietsfield & Williamswood community with heavy metal levels above the Canada's Guidelines for Safe Drinking Water.
- Leaching Collection system has not emptied for 13 years with a plume estimated 250 L/ day or 1 million gallons of Lechate!



- We know of 83 homes with contaminated drinking water. Cancer and diseases in people and their pets are steadily climbing. Our elementary school has been on bottled water for 37 years.
- Our two lakes Sheas and Moodys have high levels of aluminum and iron. The first home in our community is 650 meters from city water.
- It will be 4 years in Oct that St Pauls Church in the next community has been supplying a outdoor water tap for residents to fill up their water jugs.

1980s

- In **1981** residents were given a court order to stop drinking their water after 40 wells were contaminated with uranium during Nova Scotia uranium exploration. This included the Harrietsfield Elementary School.
- The Uranium Task Force the first in the world was formed to study the uranium impact to communities water supplies.
- 40 homes were delivered bottles of water for ten years until the NSE raised the level amount of uranium considered a health risk. From 0.01 to 0.02.

1990s

- In **1995** Municipal government became engaged in a Pollution Control Study in Harrietsfield & Williamswood.
- Pg 23 of the Planning District 5 Municipal Planning Strategy.
- Study recommendations were not carried through. Municipal meeting records are not transparent as to why this reasons.

2000s maintenance / monitoring

- **2001** bylaws and policies were changed to allow a RDM C&D recycling processing facility to operate in a residential area.
- In **2003** 43 wells within 500 meters of the RDM Construction and Demolition Processing Facility had levels of heavy metals above the Canadian Guidelines for safe drinking water.
- In **2004** the company was permitted to bury 120,000 tons of non recyclable C&D debris in a capped cell on the site in a residential area.

9 years of unaccounted tonnage

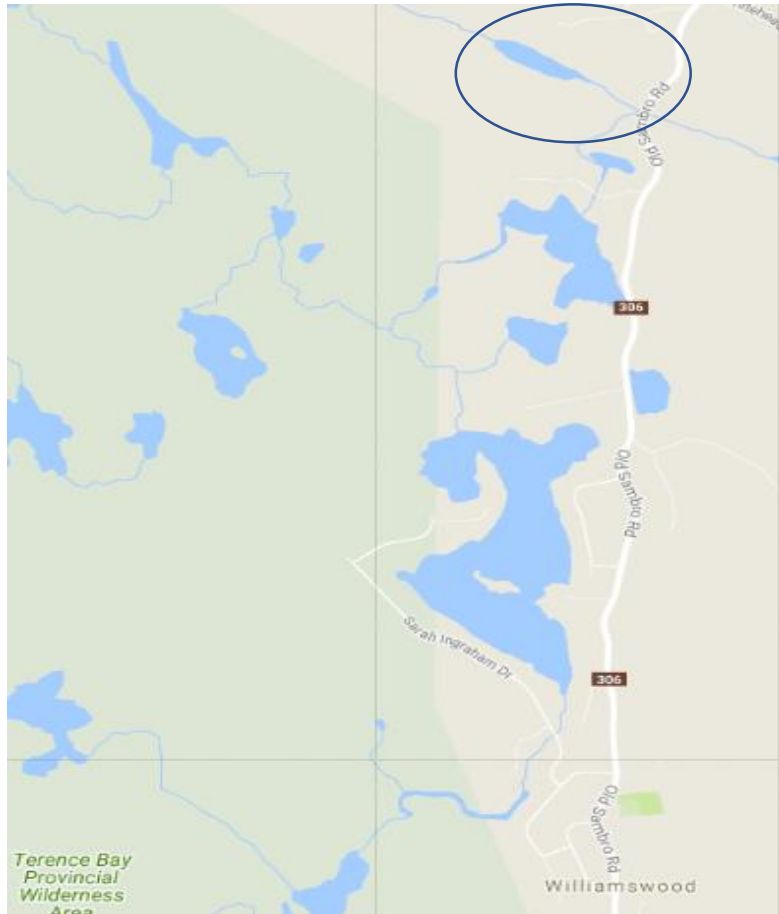
- Since **2010** The operators of the RDM companies have not complied with two Ministerial Orders from the Nova Scotia Environment minister. The companies have not complied with the HRM BY-LAW L-200 respecting licensing of construction and demolition material recycling and disposal operations.
- (8)(1) All loads of C&D material processed material or residue arriving or leaving a transfer station, C&D Processing facility or a C&D Disposal Site shall be weighed and records shall be kept of all loads. In 18 years these companies have only recorded 9 years of tonnage receipts.
- Plans for Cap site have been LOST!

Tab 143 Aug 2010 Incorporated Review

- “HRM at present indicated that they are not interested in applying the Environmental Controls mentioned in the by-laws and Administrative Order 27, citing these controls are for other sites not labeled as processing or recycling facilities”

Now that this site is closed, is HRM interested in understanding what is on the closed C&D site? 14 km from city hall the contaminated Village of Harrietsfield remains a community impacted by air, groundwater, and the stigma (‘business as usual’). With appropriate checks and balances not taking place, no lessons learned, what is the present conditions of the RDF site in this neighbourhoods backyard?

Freshwater connection to Wilderness area



- Sheas Lake directly behind the site had heavy metal readings over the Canadian Guidelines for Freshwater life.
- 18 homes including Sheas Lake were put on a water monitoring program for 12 years.

Present conditions

- Now 2017 we know there is a growing and moving plume of contaminated water leaching from the site into several wells. The plume is mobilizing the uranium in the granite and contaminating more wells.
- Presently 8 homes have had water systems installed due to this growing plume.

Greater understanding required of contaminated water pathways



- Groundwater influences for schools are not understood (reference 2+ year old photo)
- Compensation towards 8 residential units is not enough
- Municipal Leadership can lead integrated partnerships for groups: Academic, Community, Non-Profit can help identify what is a burden to homeowners

Recommendations to Council

- For over a decade buried waste has not received monitoring: we recommend to council: regular testing of existing monitoring wells using community and academic partnerships
- A written waste reduction work plan must be created outlining strategies for reducing, reusing and recycling waste generated from Construction and Demolition debris.
- Municipal Water extended to residents for HOMEOWNERS
- Community consultation and signage is recommended for transparently communicating environmental impacts that are present in the contaminated soil, air and water