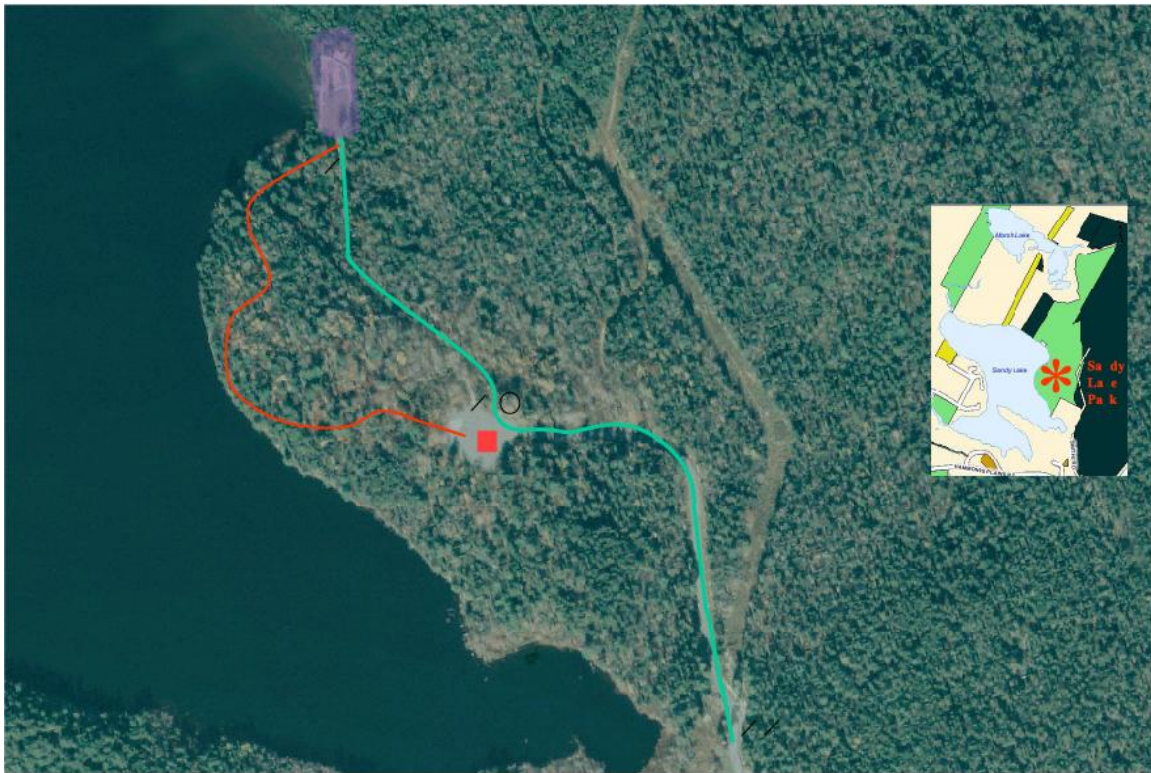


**Sandy Lake Park
Off Leash Area Cleanliness Monitoring Results
April 28, 2008**

Background

A key goal of the Off Leash Park Areas Strategy is to ensure off leash areas are clean and free of dog waste. Monitoring for compliance with this goal is the responsibility of the HRM Interdepartmental Off Leash Strategy Committee.

Sandy Lake Park was monitored on Monday, April 28. Small survey flags were placed beside locations in the park where owners had failed to clean up dog waste. The off leash trails (green-seasonal, red-year round) in the park were surveyed. The public beach (purple shading) where dogs are prohibited was also surveyed.



Sandy Lake off leash trails and beach

Like many HRM parks, Sandy Lake is not maintained over the winter. The park gate is locked in November and there is no access to the parking lot (red square shown above) until May. As a result Sandy Lake is only frequented by a small group of dedicated dog owners who park their cars outside the entrance gate. Fifteen (15) flags were used to mark locations where owners had failed to clean up after their dogs. All dog waste surveyed was located adjacent to the seasonal trail. No dog waste was found in the year

round off leash trail area. It was evident that some of the waste was left during the winter but most had occurred recently.



Flag at base of tree in Sandy Lake Park



Year round off leash trail at Sandy Lake Park

The flags were to have been left in place at the park until Thursday, May 1 to alert the general public to the health hazard and to remind dog owners of their responsibility to pick up after their pets. However, shortly after the survey was completed, a group of responsible dog owners arrived at the park and were sited cleaning up the flagged deposits.

Although Sandy Lake was one of the cleanest parks to be surveyed there is one issue that is of concern. Dogs are prohibited from the public beach at all times for environmental protection, public health and safety reasons however it was apparent that this directive was being ignored. Although no feces were found in the children's play area sand adjacent to the lake, it was evident that many dogs had urinated there.

Recommendations

Overall, the park achieved a high degree of cleanliness that should be celebrated by the responsible pet owners that visit the park. The park will be monitored again in the near future to establish whether dog owners are obeying "No Dogs" signage posted at the public beach.

The survey of the park has provided the Interdepartmental Off Leash Strategy Committee with a baseline to measure ongoing compliance by dog owners. If, after additional monitoring, it appears that dog owners are continuing to exercise dogs in the beach area, the Committee may decide to consider revoking dog related privileges in the Park by invoking Section 3.4 of the Strategy.

3.4 Discretionary Park Redesignation Process

At its discretion, the Committee may revoke an on leash or off leash area designation and impose a “No Dogs” designation in a park or sportsfield where dog owners chronically fail to follow the “Stoop and Scoop” provisions of the Dog By-law. The Committee may also choose to apply a “No Dogs” designation in a park or sportsfield where chronic user conflicts or environmental impacts cannot be resolved. The Committee will prepare an information report to the responsible Council stating its concerns and its intention to redesignate the affected park. This will be accompanied by a published public notice (14) days before the “No Dogs” designation is scheduled to take effect. On a semi-annual basis, reinstatement appeals will be considered by the Committee.