

Executive Summary

In 1990, the main stem of the Lamprey River in Durham and Lee was designated into the New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Program. In 1996, this section was designated as a National Wild and Scenic River. In 2000, the Wild and Scenic section was expanded to include much of the main stem Lamprey in Newmarket and Epping. In 2011, the entire Lamprey River and five of its major tributaries (Little, North, North Branch, Pawtuckaway, and Piscassic rivers) were designated into the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program.

The State of New Hampshire has formally recognized that water does not respect town boundaries. What happens in one town, in one neighborhood, on one parcel, affects others around it. The 2011 designation marked the first time an entire watershed system was effectively protected as a single unit by the State. The fourteen towns with a connection to the Lamprey were unanimous in seeking this designation. The Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee (LRAC or the Committee) is the State appointed local advisory body and includes representatives from Barrington, Brentwood, Candia, Deerfield, Durham, Epping, Exeter, Fremont, Lee, Newfields, Newmarket, Nottingham, Northwood, and Raymond.

The Lamprey and its tributaries have outstanding ecological, historical, and recreational value. The main stem of the Lamprey is also a public water supply. These resources contribute greatly to the area's economy. One of the main duties of the Committee is to craft an advisory management plan to protect those qualities that earned inclusion of the rivers in the state rivers program. This plan is intended to guide the Committee's own work, recommend actions for municipalities, highlight opportunities to work with other groups concerned with river issues, and provide information for concerned citizens. Cooperation among concerned parties will result in better outcomes toward watershed-related goals than any one entity alone can realize.

This management plan builds on the work from the original management plan from 1995 and the revision from 2007. The Committee will continue to address issues identified in the past:

- water impairments, loss of wildlife habitat, and negative impacts on the natural and scenic qualities of the rivers that result from development of river corridors and adjacent areas
- getting buy-in from landowners to engage in good land stewardship practices that protect the rivers and associated habitats
- keeping the public informed and engaged about the rivers through educational programs and materials and recreational access

- promoting the ecological health of the rivers through support of wildlife research and municipal or state policies that result in enough clean water for aquatic and riparian life

In addition to issues previously identified, this revision seeks to address several major issues that have arisen in the watershed in the past several years, including the following:

- many new residences built or planned in Lamprey River towns leading to an increased demand for public water
- a significant increase in the amount of paved and other impervious surfaces ¹
- the paradox of droughts that challenged public water suppliers and river habitats and severe floods that caused significant damage
- state listing of sections of Great Bay and the Lamprey River as “not meeting” water standards for fishing, recreation, and aquatic life
- increased need for LRAC to identify and employ various lines and methods of communication with town officials and developers in all fourteen Lamprey River towns

¹ Since 1990, the amount of impervious surfaces in the Great Bay watershed has increased by 120% and the population has grown by 19%, PREP, 2013 State of the Estuaries Report.