

Focus Areas and Working Groups of the Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee (LRAC or the Committee)

The following synopses highlight the seven key focus areas of the management plan revision that are explained later in more detail:

Enough Clean Water (Refer to page 16 for more detail.)

The worth of a river to people and wildlife is largely defined by the amount of water that flows in the river and how clean the water is. Diligent monitoring and safeguarding of the water in the rivers will always be a priority. The Committee will continue its role as a watchdog, tracking the results of water tests being conducted by various groups and reviewing and commenting on development proposals to avoid or minimize degradation of the river. Although much of the water in the rivers is clean at present, problems do exist. Meeting the needs of wildlife, habitats, and people while addressing the growing human population and increasingly developed landscape will be challenging in the near future.

The main stem Lamprey is one of two rivers chosen by the NH Dept. of Environmental Services for a pilot instream flow management plan. The amount of water in the river has been studied extensively to meet the natural minimal needs of fish. A final, state-issued management plan whose goal is to assure at least minimal flows for wildlife needs will be released in the near future. Protecting clean water is more than protecting against pollution; it also involves ensuring an adequate flow.

History and Archaeology (Refer to page 23 for more detail.)

The Committee believes that a community's sense of place depends in part upon knowledge of its history. The Committee has worked hard to help residents connect with their rivers through videos, historical activities, and informational kiosks. The Committee will continue to conduct research and document the history of the rivers, including funding professional work and collecting and preserving important documents.

Land Protection and Conservation (Refer to page 26 for more detail.)

LRAC has partnered with towns, land trusts, and other organizations to permanently conserve about 2700 acres of land and more than 13 miles of river frontage using Wild and Scenic partnership funding. Land protection will continue to be a key focus of the Committee's work, especially in the Wild and Scenic River towns of Epping, Lee, Durham, and Newmarket. Because of ecological research done in the past decade and the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan,

LRAC now has an even better understanding of which lands are most critical for protecting wildlife on the Lamprey. In the next five years, LRAC will undertake new work with town conservation commissions and other organizations to support land conservation efforts, extending information to residents and riverfront landowners on why and how to protect the Lamprey River corridor for the future.

Outreach and Public Education (Refer to page 29 for more detail.)

The Committee strives to be “the local voice for the river” and to help others to become its advocates as well. In the past, this has included working with local schools, developing curricula, creating informational brochures and DVDs, posting signs at river crossings, conducting workshops, hosting educational events, and bringing displays to various public venues. The Committee’s recently revamped website, www.lampreyriver.org, serves as a hub of Lamprey River resources. In the coming years, LRAC’s important outreach work that promotes enjoyment and protection of the Lamprey rivers will continue.

Project Review (Refer to page 32 for more detail.)

The Committee is charged with reviewing all projects requiring a state or federal permit that could impact the Lamprey or its tributaries. With input from members from each of the fourteen towns, the Committee also closely follows river-related local issues such as proposed developments or changes in regulations. In many instances, comments from the Committee will lead to cooperative efforts among the town, the developer, and state and federal regulatory agencies that result in improvements to projects, making them more protective of the rivers and their corridors.

Recreation and Public Enjoyment (Refer to page 35 for more detail.)

To connect residents to their rivers, LRAC has helped to develop public access and parks at several sites along the Lamprey. The Committee plans to expand these efforts to include the tributaries. Increased recreation has many challenges that must be considered: some sections of the rivers are inaccessible, some are on private land, and others are overused. The Committee plans to proceed cautiously so recreational use will reflect its “tread lightly” philosophy toward providing for public enjoyment that does not degrade the rivers.

Wildlife and Ecology (Refer to page 38 for more detail.)

The Lamprey River and its tributaries have maintained most of the healthy, diverse habitat types that made them eligible for protection under both the state and federal river programs. In the next decade, LRAC will continue to work to maintain these unspoiled natural areas through research, land conservation, careful review of development proposals, measures to control invasive species, restoration of fish passage, and assuring adequate water levels in the river. The Committee will encourage Lamprey towns to establish standards that protect clean water and habitats of the rivers. Efforts to inform landowners how to maintain the ecological value of the rivers to a wide variety of plants and animals will continue.

The following seven sections comprise the details of the plan outlined above, including goals, accomplishments, and key future actions. The plan is deliberately ambitious, representing a full menu of initiatives seen as desirable, rather than a commitment to accomplishing all in the next decade. In many instances, successful collaboration will be essential to the accomplishment of the plan's identified goals and actions. The Committee often will play a supporting role to others who possess the necessary expertise, staff, authority, or resources to get a particular job done.