

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION



What can dragonflies teach us about the river? Photo by RC Grimsley.

Background

For over 20 years, the LRAC has tried to “speak for the Lamprey River and its tributaries” and has created brochures, press releases, videos, public displays, a website, books, educational curricula, and guides for teachers. The LRAC representatives have presented programs to the public and provided testimony to support legislation that protects the Lamprey River and its watershed.

Education and outreach activities are viewed as vital underpinnings of resource conservation. The LRAC’s efforts seek to engage the public in appreciating and protecting the river-related resources: clean, abundant water, wildlife, scenic beauty, historic and archaeological features, and recreation. These resources depend on an informed and appreciative public.

Goal

Engage people of all ages to appreciate and protect the resources and services provided by the Lamprey River and its tributaries and the surrounding landscape using a variety of educational media and experiences.

River Profiles



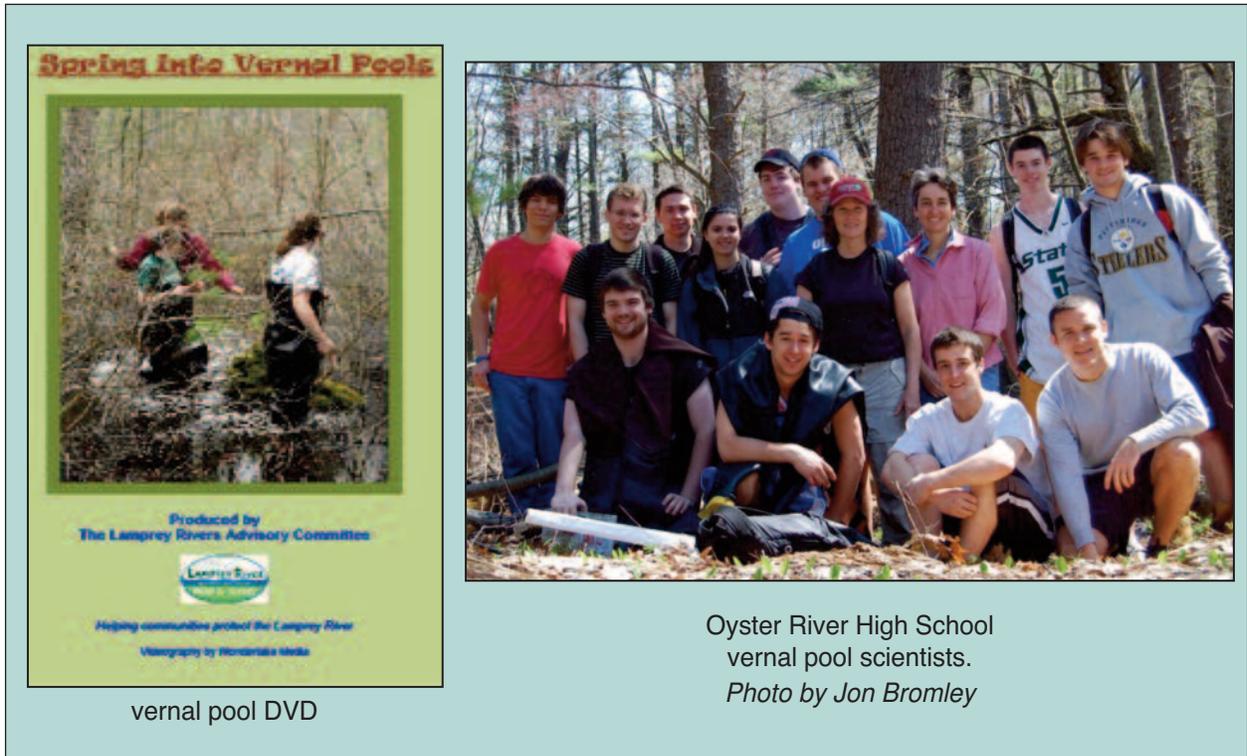
*Photo by
Southeast Land Trust*

How can educators excite children and other teachers to learn more about the natural environment and how people have always used it to advance their culture? I have always believed that an effective way is to provide a framework that includes exploring that environment through in-class study buoyed up by guided local field experiences. Elementary school teachers often receive only one course in science education and very little in terms of local history. I wanted to experiment with the idea that the local environment and history of development could act as a “living laboratory” for study of a watershed.

Back in 2000, I secured a grant and found two fourth grade teachers who were willing to develop a curriculum for that grade level. Debbie McNelly and Doug Hoff used their expertise as teachers to develop 7 mini-units that explored local history and water quality monitoring of the Lamprey River. Members of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee shared their knowledge of local history and geography and guided teachers and students in learning river water sampling techniques using simple equipment. Students were encouraged to do research on chiefs of the local Native American tribes, settlers who came to New Hampshire mainly to reap the economic benefits derived from the natural resources, local people who built mills and factories, and other notables. The teachers encouraged the children to make drawings of individuals and inventions, posters urging protection of the river, and poetry. Many were printed as examples in the curriculum. A video on the history of the watershed was also an integral part of the curriculum. A field trip was the crowning activity. By the end of the field trip, children, parents and teachers were becoming interested in further exploration of the Lamprey River watershed.

Sixteen years and a few revisions later, it is still exciting to me to welcome children, parents and teachers each year to discover their “sense of place” along the Lamprey. Participants leave my history walk with an appreciation of the “gifts” of the Lamprey River’s natural resources, such as rushing water used for power and wood and clay for building a new nation. They also better understand the legacy of Native Americans, colonists, and more recent residents who made the watershed what it is today.

Sharon Meeker, Outreach and Education Workgroup chair



vernal pool DVD

Oyster River High School
vernal pool scientists.
Photo by Jon Bromley

Key Accomplishments

- Developed (1990) and updated (2012) The *Lamprey River Curriculum* for elementary, middle and high school students. Actively assisted schools with field trips.
- Published the *Lamprey River Watershed Guide* as a means to introduce the river to the public and encourage a “Tread Lightly” ethic. (1990)
- Worked with community members to write and publish *The Story of Peter Little Bear, A Lamprey River Adventure* (2004), a story that describes life along the Lamprey in the late 1600s through the eyes of an Abenaki boy. It can be used to supplement the curriculum or as a stand-alone book.
- Produced seven professional-quality videos and made them available to local libraries and town cable channels, the LRAC website, and You Tube:
- *River Story: The Lamprey River Through History Part 1, 2, and 3*
 - o [Streamwalk](#)
 - o [Wiswall’s Mills: A Short History Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)
 - o [The Lamprey River Tour: Mary Blair Park](#)
 - o [Spring into Vernal Pools](#)
 - o [Connecting Lives on the Lamprey Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)
 - o [Reflections on a River](#)
- Created, updated, and continue to maintain www.lampreyriver.org.
- Partnered with regional planning commissions, land trusts, and other organizations to provide documents and workshops promoting stewardship, land protection, sport fishing, and public enjoyment.

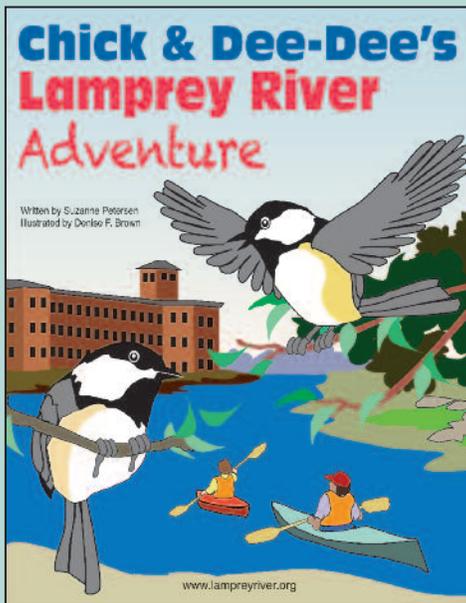
- Contracted a specialist to bolster education and outreach efforts.
- Partnered with New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to host “Herring Aid” events during the spring run.
- Published *Chick and Dee Dee’s Lamprey River Adventure* to introduce children and their families to the river’s history and ecology.
- Sponsored “Hike It, Bike It, Like It” recreational series to engage residents about history and ecology of the river.
- Partnered with towns to create and install five informational kiosks at riverside areas.
- Developed a Lamprey Rivers Junior Ranger program and guide book.
- Created a Small Grants Program that provides seed money for education and outreach projects that help implement management plan objectives:

year	Small Grant title or goal
2009	Conservation Outreach to Landowners Wiswall’s Mill: A Short History DVD Mary Blair Park and Streamwalk DVDs Mapping of Historic Mills
2010	Nitrogen Pollution Outreach and Making Rain Barrels Library of Invasive Weed Removal Tools Deerfield Community Trails Development
2011	Pilot Project for On-site Septic System Outreach Connecting Lives on the Lamprey River DVD Revision of The Lamprey River Curriculum
2012	Identifying Dams to Improve Fish Passage Planning for Mary Blair Park History Trail Planning for Mary Blair Park Natural Playground
2013	The Lamprey River Big Tree Tour Brochure “Stream of Conscience” Art Installation Reflections on a River DVD
2014	Bio-inventory and Stewardship Plan for the Rothwell Reserve
2015	Improving Canoe Access Study Watershed-wide Stream Clean-up Removal of Invasive Weeds at Rothwell Reserve Identifying Stormwater Retrofits pilot program
2016	Rain Garden Demonstration Lamprey River Splash and Dash kayak race and boat parade

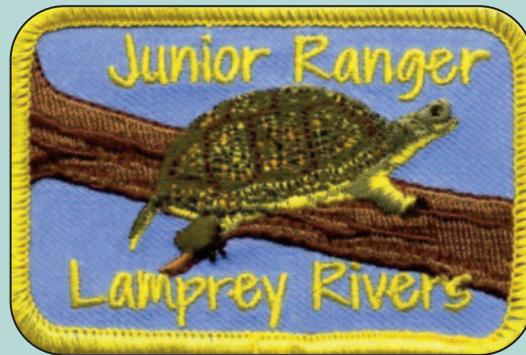
Key Future Actions

- Create a continuing education program for committee members and extend it to the public when appropriate.
- Expand, whenever appropriate, outreach and education efforts to all Lamprey River towns.
 - o Continue to inform the public, town governments, and state and federal partners about LRAC activities and achievements through written annual reports, newsletters, and events.

- o Continue to promote consideration of the Wild and Scenic Rivers program for the upstream towns.
- o Continue to fund and guide the position of LRAC outreach and education specialist.
- o Partner with schools to offer science-based field trips.
- Enlist the help of others to inform the public about the rivers and the committee's work.
 - o Continue to develop close partnerships with regional planning commissions, land trusts, and conservation organizations by inviting members to speak to the committee on specific subjects and investigating projects that could be co-sponsored, e.g., public tours of conserved land, film festivals.
 - o Continue to support Small Grant outreach projects that support management plan objectives.
 - o Continue to inform the public about issues that threaten wildlife and habitats, such as invasive weeds and water quality impairments.



book cover



Junior Ranger patch

By the Numbers: Outreach and Education

Item Description	Count
students participating in the <i>Lamprey River Curriculum</i>	~ 960
<i>The Story of Peter Little Bear</i> books distributed	~ 900
professional-quality videos produced	7
website visits per month	~ 500
DVD viewings on-line	> 3,300
presentations or workshops per year	4 or 5
“Herring Aid” events co-hosted	3
“Hike It, Bike It, Like It” events per year	3
research reports published or shared per year	2 or 3
informational kiosks installed at riverside areas	5
Small Grants awarded	23
Small Grants awarded per year (average)	2.9
dollars awarded through Small Grants	\$90,530
average amount awarded through Small Grants	\$3,936
<i>Chick and Dee-Dee’s Lamprey River Adventure</i> books distributed	60
Lamprey River Junior Ranger badges awarded	25