Welcome to the Lamprey Rivers

The Lamprey rivers are comprised of six rivers: the main stem Lamprey, Little, North, North Branch, Pawtuckaway, and Piscassic. From Northwood to Newmarket, these rivers connect fourteen towns.

These rivers have flowed through thousands of years of human history yet still remain largely undeveloped.

The rivers and the land that drains to them offer remarkably diverse habitats, from forests to open fields, and from large wetlands to rushing rapids. More than 160 species of birds, more than two dozen species of fish, threatened reptiles, and rare mussels live in or along the rivers.

Historical and archaeological sites attest to cultural significance. Vestiges of a seasonal camp that dates back 8,000 years represent one of the earliest and most important archaeological sites in New Hampshire. Over 100 mills once dotted the landscape and remains of several can still be found. Mill foundations and other structures at and near Wiswall Falls in Durham and the huge textile mill district in Newmarket are both listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Recreation on the rivers offers beautiful scenery, excellent fishing, miles of paddling opportunities, and quiet trails for walking.

The rivers offer many resources and we are among those resources. The future of the rivers largely depends on how we use them today and plan for growth tomorrow. We will become part of history. Read on to learn more about the rivers and enjoy this beautiful setting.

Mills of various sizes were built at almost every set of falls along the main stem Lamprey River and its tributaries. Several became centers of local commerce and supported relatively large settlements.

Shown here: Newmarket Mills

Jerry Monkman,eco-photography
Recreation on the River
Healthy river corridors offer many kinds of recreation for all seasons: swimming, fishing, and boating in summer; cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and skating in winter; and enjoyment of wildlife and natural beauty all year long.

When you come to the rivers, please “tread lightly” and leave no trace of your presence. Quiet visitors are often rewarded with glimpses of otters sliding down river banks or great blue herons stalking fish or frogs in the sedges.

Lamprey River Watershed
The Lamprey water that flows into Great Bay in Newmarket comes from six rivers and the land of fourteen communities.
The diverse habitats along the rivers provide exceptional birding in scenic surroundings.

PHOTO BY DICK LORD, LRAC

Visitors please:

- Carry out whatever you carry in.
- Respect private property and seek permission to visit posted land.
  - Keep livestock gates closed.
- Respect wildlife by keeping your distance.
- Obey state law by traveling not more than 5 MPH when in a motor boat.

Although some public access points occur along the rivers, most access is through private land. The continued generosity of landowners depends on your sensitive use.
**State Protected**

The entire Lamprey River and five of its major tributaries (Little, North, North Branch, Pawtuckaway, and Piscassic rivers) are included in the New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Program. This program recognizes the state’s outstanding rivers and affords some extra protections. Designation required the support and approval of each of the fourteen towns that drain to the Lamprey.

**Federally Protected**

The lower 24 miles of the main stem Lamprey River in the towns of Epping, Lee, Durham, and Newmarket are also designated into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This section supports “outstandingly remarkable” resources in ecological integrity, anadromous fishery (fish that migrate between fresh and salt water), and historical significance.

Reflected in the Wild and Scenic designation is an appreciation that this river remains an unspoiled natural resource despite its proximity to the Boston metropolis and a growing human population in southern New Hampshire.

**Local Action**

Both the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program and the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Program ask each town to nominate up to four citizens to serve as volunteers on the Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee. Members represent the various ways that the rivers are used locally: municipal government, agriculture, landowners, conservation, recreationists, and business. The main duties of this committee are to create an advisory rivers management plan (available at www.lampreyriver.org) and to comment on proposed projects that are within a quarter mile of the rivers.
What the Committee Does for the Rivers

- Educates and informs residents.
- Permanently protects natural land.
- Advocates for clean, abundant water.
- Promotes wildlife research and habitat protection.
- Helps protect historical sites.
- Reviews development projects.
- Improves low-impact public access to the rivers.

What We All Can Do for the Rivers

**Protect the water.**
We all need to find ways to use less water for ourselves and our lawns. Reduce or eliminate lawn fertilizer. Plant native vegetation rather than exotics. Pump out your septic system every 2-3 years. Pick up your pet’s waste.

**Protect the soil.**
Keep a wide area of natural vegetation next to streams and wetlands. Respecting set-back distances will reduce erosion, keep the water cool in summer, and help wildlife.

**Keep the water on site.**
Storm water is dirty. Roofs and pavement do not let rainwater soak into the soil, forcing it into storm drains or straight to a waterway. When more water filters through deep soil (lawns don’t count) the result is more ground water and less pollution in streams.

**Focus on prevention of problems, not clean up.**
Strong preventive regulations benefit everyone. Trees and shrubs clean water much more effectively, longer, and at a lower cost than mechanical means. Support local efforts for low-impact development and reducing the amount of pavement.
Further Information

Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee
Lamprey River
c/o 203 Wadleigh Falls Road
Lee, NH 03861
(603) 659-5441
Sharon Meeker, outreach chair
s-meeker@comcast.net
www.lampreyriver.org

Lamprey River Watershed Association
c/o 43 North River Road
Lee, NH 03861
www.lrwa-nh.org

Bear-Paw Regional Greenways
Land Conservation
63 Nottingham Road
Deerfield, NH 03037
(603) 463-9400
www.bear-paw.org

Southeast Land Trust
Land Conservation
12 Center Street
Exeter, NH 03833
(603) 778-6088
www.seltnh.org

Strafford Rivers Conservancy
Land Protection
P.O. Box 623
Dover, NH 03821-0623
(603) 516-0772
www.strafforddriversconservancy.org

Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership
Protection and Enhancement of Great Bay
UNH, Nesmith Hall
131 Main Street
Durham, NH 03824
www.prep.unh.edu

Landscaping at the Water’s Edge:
An Ecological Approach
A Manual for NH Landowners and Landscapers, available from
http://extension.unh.edu/resources/

UNH Stormwater Center
www.unh.edu/unhsc/

National Park Service
Wild and Scenic Rivers Program
15 State Street
Boston, MA 02109
(617) 223-5191
www.rivers.gov

NH Dept. of Environmental Services
29 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03302-0095
(603) 271-3503
www.des.nh.gov

Septic System Tips
NH DES produced a video that describes what a septic system is, how it works, and how homeowners can make it last.

Rockingham Planning Commission
Land Use Planning, Community Assistance
156 Water Street
Exeter, NH 03833
(603) 778-0885
www.rpc-nh.org

Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
438 Dubuque Street
Manchester, NH 03102
(603) 669-4664
www.snhpc.org

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Land Use Planning, Community Assistance
150 Wakefield Street
Rochester, NH 03867
(603) 994-3500
www.strafford.org

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