

Outreach and Education



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

Background

For over 20 years, the Committee “that speaks for the Lamprey rivers” has created brochures, press releases, videos, public displays, an internet presence, educational curricula, and guides for teachers. Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee (LRAC) members have given testimony and presented programs to the public to support legislation that protects the rivers.

Education and outreach activities are viewed by the Committee as vital underpinnings of resource conservation. The Committee’s efforts seek to engage the public to appreciate and protect the outstanding resources of the rivers: clean, abundant water, wildlife, scenic beauty, historic and archaeological features, and recreation. These resources depend on an informed and appreciative public. Enjoyment of the rivers in a manner that preserves the resources must be a part of the Committee’s efforts.

The segment of the main-stem Lamprey River from West Epping to Newmarket is designated as a National Wild and Scenic River and receives funding through the National Park Service. Some residents of upstream communities have indicated an interest in achieving Wild and Scenic River status for their sections of the river. Educating the public about the rivers and the benefits of the Wild and Scenic Rivers program will be essential in helping them achieve that goal.

Goal

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

Accomplishments

- Developed (1990) and updated (2012) The Lamprey River Curriculum for elementary, middle and high school students.
- Commissioned The Story of Peter Little Bear, A Lamprey River Adventure, a story that describes life along the Lamprey in the late 1600s through the eyes of a native boy (2004). 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.
- Created, updated, and continue to maintain the LRAC website: 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.
- Developed portable displays, brought them to local events, and used them as a platform for informing participants about LRAC and the resources of the rivers.
- Created a Small Grants Program that provides seed money for education and outreach projects that help implement management plan objectives.
- Contracted a specialist to assist with education and outreach efforts.

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.
 - Continue to inform the public, town governments, and state and federal partners about LRAC goals and achievements through written annual reports.
 - Distribute quarterly newsletters to all towns. Include town halls, libraries, and schools.
 - Update all brochures to include the entire river and the tributaries.
 - Continue to promote consideration of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Program for the upstream towns.
 - Continue to fund and guide the position of LRAC outreach and education specialist.
 - Partner with high schools to offer vernal pool science trips.
- Offer information and programs to a wider audience.

- Publish wildlife articles in media with wide public appeal and distribution.
- Add at least one outreach component per year in conjunction with the working groups that are engaged in land protection, recreation, history and archaeology, water resources, and wildlife.
- Offer guided support for The Lamprey River Curriculum to be used by at least two schools each year and provide support to teachers to continue to offer it in subsequent years.
- Enlist the help of others to inform the public about the rivers and the committee's work.
 - 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.
 - Continue to support Small Grant outreach projects that support management plan objectives.
 - Continue to inform the public about invasive, non-native species that threaten wildlife and habitats, particularly Japanese knotweed.