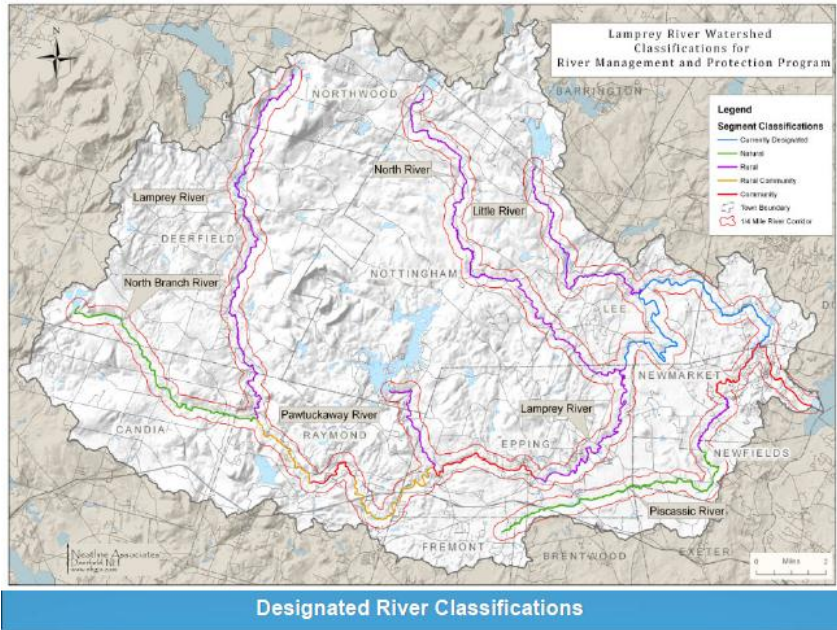




**Lamprey River Advisory Committee
Annual Report FY 2011 (Oct. 1 – Sept. 30)**



The LRAC had another busy and productive year. Of key importance was the addition of the full river and five tributaries (North Branch, Pawtuckaway, North, Little, and Piscassic Rivers) into the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program. Following several years' worth of work and unanimous support from all the Lamprey River watershed towns, Governor John Lynch signed HB149 into law on June 7, 2011. As a result, the committee will be expanded to include representatives from all fourteen towns in the Lamprey's drainage area. These representatives will create a single river management plan to guide growth and decisions throughout the watershed. They will also have the opportunity to comment on all projects proposed for the river and its tributaries. Inclusion of the full river and its watershed into the NHRMPP represents a solid recognition that water does not respect town lines and that all towns must share responsibility for the sound management of this valuable resource

Land Protection: Acting with partners such as the Southeast Land Trust, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, town conservation commissions, and others, the committee continued to provide expertise and funding to protect an additional 670 acres of ecologically significant land along the river, bringing the total protected to 3917 acres. One project in Epping was particularly significant, protecting 531 acres with several different types of wetlands and critical habitat for a species of endangered turtle. The

Beaudette conservation easement in Durham offered the LRAC its first opportunity to work with the town to protect a strategic parcel.

Education and Outreach: The subcommittee was again very active in reaching out to the public to inform and encourage wise use of the river's resources. DVDs that were produced last year and in 1999 were distributed at no charge to libraries, cable access channels, and conservation commissions within the Lamprey's drainage area. An improved and more user-friendly website for the public, www.lampreyriver.org, was created and nearing completion for public release. This website will replace the website that was originally created in the 1990s. In spring, the sub-committee hosted a free public symposium discussing 1.) river erosion hazards and 2.) how changes in climate and land use are resulting in more frequent and more severe flooding. The event featured current research being conducted primarily along the Lamprey River corridor. In April, the sub-committee partnered with students at Oyster River High School to study local vernal pools. The students presented their findings to the community at the end of the school year.

For the third year, the committee funded three small grants up to \$5000 each to creative and worthwhile projects. One grant supported the development of a pilot program to survey and educate landowners about septic systems. Given that most landowners along the river have private septic systems and that Great Bay is federally listed as impaired for nitrogen, the project resulted in practical steps that landowners can take to prolong the effective life of their systems and improve the quality of water treatment. Another grant was used to produce a DVD about the whole river and how water connects all the towns and people in the area. The third grant was used to fund a revision and update to the Lamprey River Curriculum. The revisions improved the science sections and included more technology so that students can study the whole river and better share data.

Wildlife and Ecology: This year the sub-committee began a partnership program with NH Audubon to monitor dragonfly populations along the river. The purpose was to inventory not only the dragonflies themselves, but also use them to determine the level of environmental integrity and water quality. Such research is an increasingly common method of using biological indicators to determine key systemic changes in aquatic systems. The sub-committee also funded a study by Mark West to inventory and assess floodplains along the river. Floodplains provide critical habitat to many species and help to buffer the effects of flooding. The sub-committee also continued to fund research by NH Fish and Game on the river's tributary fish populations as part of a two year study.

Last year the sub-committee funded a mussel survey by Ethan Nedeau. The results of the study were largely discouraging. Although healthy populations of rare mussels have been found along the Lamprey in studies completed in the recent past, these mussel populations are now significantly impaired, probably due to flood-related scour and burial. On a more positive note, common mussels are still abundant and are helping to keep the river's water clean.

History: The sub-committee partnered with a Durham committee to create and install an informational kiosk at John Hatch Park. The Kiosk provides a historical timeline and offers an example of what was once common along the river: the story of a mill and the people who owned and worked in it. Up-river in Lee, the sub-committee provided support for research on the Glidden-Towle House at Wadleigh Falls. This research was used to support inclusion of the house on the NH State Register, a program of the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources.

Recreation: After procuring land and filing for appropriate permits, the recreation sub-committee was able to fund and complete work on the Wadleigh Falls canoe launch in Lee. This launch area is the first and only public launch along the river in Lee. A kiosk and signs will follow. The sub-committee also partnered with Newmarket to create an informational kiosk for Schanda Conservation Park. The kiosk combines the history of the tidal portion of the river with information about low-impact recreational opportunities.

Water Quality and Quantity: The sub-committee has long supported the monitoring efforts of the Lamprey River Watershed Association to test and report water quality data, and that tradition was continued in 2011. With severe reductions on state support for water quality monitoring, LRAC funding ensured that years of data were not interrupted. Results were reported to the Volunteer River Assessment Program and are available at NH Dept. of Environmental Services.

Project Reviews: The committee reviewed and commented on several projects that were submitted to the state. Among the most significant were the Wiswall fish ladder in Durham and the Lamprey River Instream Flow Management Plan.

Utilizing the Wildlife Action Plan and the Coastal Conservation Plan to augment the updated LRAC management plan land protection priorities, the committee will continue to be a strong presence in multiple, on-going efforts to protect and conserve land along the Lamprey River. The LRAC plans to fund small grants again in 2012. Partnering with the Lamprey River Watershed Association and others, the LRAC will continue to support knotweed eradication efforts, research, volunteer water quality monitoring, and outreach efforts. Recent scientific investigations show that nitrogen loading (coming mainly from run-off from the land and failed septic systems) are problems for the river and the Great Bay Estuary. The LRAC plans to continue to promote a watershed approach to those problems in addition to more intensive outreach to the four towns represented in the Wild and Scenic portion of the river.

2011 LRAC members included:

Durham: Bill Hall, Jim Hewitt, Richard Kelley, Dick Lord

Epping: n/a

Lee: Sharon Meeker, Kitty Miller

Newmarket: Sara Callaghan

Specialists:

Laurel Cox, land conservation

David Viale, land conservation

Suzanne Petersen, outreach and education

National Park Service: Jim MacCartney

Durham Conservation Commission Liaison: Steven Burns

Contact: www.lampreyriver.org

Respectfully submitted by

Sara Callaghan, Chair,

Lamprey River Advisory Committee