

Newsletter Winter 2020



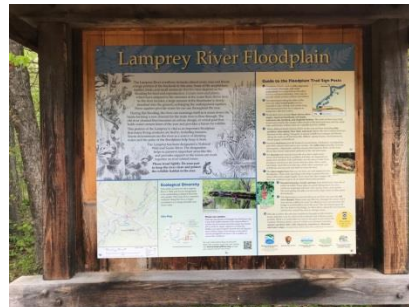
Tilton Park Signage and Floodplain Trail Improvements

The residents of Epping have a new jewel along the Lamprey River to explore at Tilton Conservation Area on Route 87. In 2018, the town highway department improved the parking lot so that vehicles can safely park and turn. Over the summer of 2019, volunteers cleared the flood plain trail of excess brush, installed new sign posts, and built three new bridges so walkers can explore this area (outside of spring) without muddying their boots or the trail. At the parking area, a canoe launch sign was installed. Last but not least, the main kiosk panel was enlarged and reconfigured to incorporate the former trail brochure. Keeping paper brochures at the kiosk was always challenging; now visitors can simply snap a photo of the trail details and have them while walking the trail. The Epping Conservation Commission and volunteers put in many hours of work at the park and the result is well worth visiting. The Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC) was happy to provide funding and support for this interesting project.

photos by Sandy Goodspeed



new bridge #1



new kiosk panel



new sign

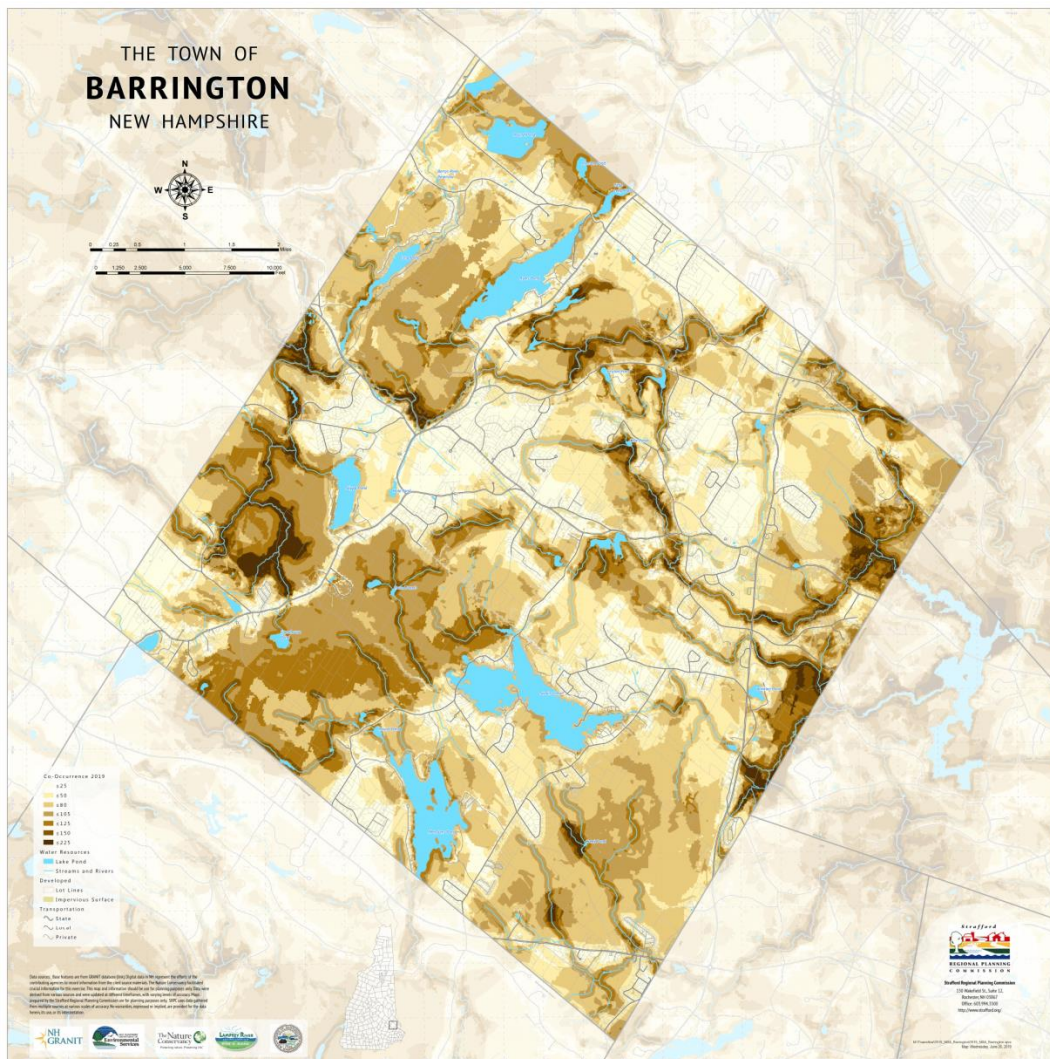
Lamprey River Curriculum

Since 2000, the LRAC has offered a social studies and river science curriculum for fourth grade classes. It was updated in 2011 to match New Hampshire state learning standards. Students learn about local historical people, places, and industries at school and complete the unit with a science-based field trip to the Lamprey River. During the field trip, students do basic water quality tests, determine how fast the river is flowing, look for animals that help to assess the health of the river, and observe geologic and man-made features that reflect how people use the river. Students and parent chaperones always come away with a much richer appreciation of how complex and beautiful the river is.

The curriculum is free (download at www.lampreyriver.org under the “education” tab). LRAC is happy to help and support teachers as they prepare students for the field trip and will provide activity leaders during the field trip. All elementary schools in the Lamprey River watershed are welcome to participate with LRAC support. *There is no charge for this support at the school or in the field.* For more information, please email info@lampreyriver.org.

Barrington Co-occurrence Conservation Map

In 2018, the LRAC awarded a grant of \$5000 to the Barrington Conservation Commission (BCC) to update and expand its ability to identify and prioritize areas in town where conservation efforts should be focused, either through permanent land protection or land use decisions. The final products were ready in fall 2019.



The darkest areas mark where conservation is most critical and effective.

Eight natural resource variables were identified and weighted by the BCC:

- soils
- water resource conservation focus areas
- wetlands and riparian (riverfront) habitat
- wildlife focus areas per the NH Wildlife Action Plan (2015)
- connectivity to other priority land
- conservation focus areas identified in the Land Conservation Plan for New Hampshire's Coastal Watersheds (2006)
- other surface and groundwater resources
- climate change resiliency and connectedness

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) created maps for each of the eight variables above and overlapped all to create a co-occurrence map. Existing conservation land was added as a final layer. Seven conservation hotspots were identified that will serve as priorities for the BCC in the next ten years. All maps are available on the Town of Barrington website.

The SRPC also created regional unweighted and Barrington-weighted co-occurrence maps that other towns in Strafford County can utilize as-is to inform conservation decisions. The process and data layering can easily be modified by the SRPC to suit individual town priorities. If towns have in-house GIS professionals, they can use ARC Map or ARC Pro to tweak the criteria weighting to customize maps to suit their needs. Towns in Rockingham County can also take advantage of this work with minimal additional cost.

Based on the process and end results, the Barrington Conservation Commission recommends other towns to use the unweighted map as a good starting point, but the real value will come with local fine-tuning.

Help Wanted: A River of Volunteers

The Lamprey River Advisory Committee is looking for a few good people who want to be a voice for the Lamprey River and its five major tributaries. The committee meets monthly on the third Tuesday evening. Each Lamprey River watershed town is allowed up to four representatives. Many interesting and relevant projects are being planned. Get in the flow and come be a part of the action! Applications for nomination are available at <https://www.lampreyriver.org/join-up>.



Welcome to Thompson Forest

Good things come to those who wait; habitat creation, trail work, and signage at the 54-acre Thompson Forest in Durham are now complete. The last project completed is likely to be the first thing that visitors notice: the informational panel on the kiosk. Although the kiosk frame has been up for two years, the folks responsible for designing the main panel had to wait for Mother Nature.

When the Thompson Forest was put into conservation in 2016 (including funding support from the LRAC), significant, and sometimes ugly, work had to be done. The abandoned cow pasture was overgrown with invasive weeds and needed to be cleared and replanted with native plants and saplings that would be beneficial to wildlife. The property was not pretty that first year. The next summer, it looked slightly better, but still not picturesque. This past summer, the old field bloomed into radiant color and buzzed with pollinators. The new panel captures and celebrates some of that rebirth.



Dick Lord (left) talks with participants at the panel unveiling.
LRAC funded the kiosk and the panel.
Photo by RC Grimsley

The kiosk panel was officially unveiled on Nov. 16, 2019. Ellen Snyder, the land conservation steward for Durham, and Dick Lord, long-time LRAC member, offered remarks before Ellen led the group on a guided tour. The group learned about the wildlife management plan, invasive plants that are being removed, and why structured brush piles are important. Participants walked the 1.2 mile scenic trail and visited the river-side picnic area on the Lamprey River.

Despite the chill in the air, all participants came away with warm regards for this new haven for people and wildlife.

Community Grants Awarded for 2020

Each year, the LRAC awards grants for projects that help fulfill the goals of the *Lamprey River Management Plan*. The following grants have been awarded so far for 2020 and we look forward to sharing the results with partners and local residents:

- Raymond Conservation Commission: Wetland inventory and mapping for prioritization of protection
- UNH Water Quality Analysis Laboratory: Developing nitrogen budgets for segments of the main stem Lamprey River
- Lee Conservation Commission: Trail improvements and signage for Little River Park
- Coruway Film Institute: Creation of two videos featuring naturalist David Carroll

The LRAC accepts proposals throughout the year. For more information about the Community Grants program, please visit <https://www.lampreyriver.org/about-us-small-grants-program>.

Cavity Trees: Filling a Wildlife Need

Healthy trees are aesthetically pleasing to people and help serve the needs of nature, but when trees have lost limbs, become hollow, or died, that does not mean they do not support life. On the contrary, trees with cavities and other scars are often even more important for wildlife. As trees suffer lost limbs, lightning strikes, or attack by insects, decay sets in and pockets form. Over time, these cavities provide essential shelter to a wide variety of animals, from tiny wrens to wood ducks and even black bears. The greater the variety of cavity sizes in an area, the greater the chances are that a variety of wildlife will use them.



great horned owl in tree cavity
photo by Laura S. Bicknell

According to the NH Cooperative Extension, cavity trees account for less than 10% of standing trees in our forests. When these trees are cut down and removed, woodpeckers, owls, wood ducks, and many others lose critical real estate.

For wildlife in the Lamprey River watershed, much of the most important real estate is along the riparian buffer, or the wide swath of land adjacent to the river. Protecting cavity trees is important everywhere, but more so along the wildlife-rich corridor along the river. Whenever possible, please leave cavity trees alone and do your part to protect the wildlife that makes the Lamprey River so special.