



**Lamprey River Advisory Committee
Annual Report FY 2021 (Oct. 1, 2020 - Sept. 30, 2021)**

About the Committee:

The Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC) is comprised of volunteer representatives nominated by the towns of the Lamprey River watershed and appointed by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). These volunteers serve as liaisons to NHDES and have two main duties: 1) Create a river management plan that protects or enhances the values for which the river was designated for extra protection under the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program under RSA 483 and 2) Review and comment on development or redevelopment project applications for the quarter mile corridor that parallels each side of the main stem Lamprey River and five designated tributaries and that require a state permit such as a wetlands, shoreland, or alteration of terrain permit.

The LRAC also serves as a partner to the National Park Service to protect and enhance the “outstandingly remarkable values” for which a 23 mile segment of the main stem Lamprey River was designated by the U.S. Congress as a National Wild and Scenic River. As part of this partnership, the LRAC receives funding from the National Park Service (CFDA # 15.962 National Wild and Scenic Rivers System) to support its activities.

For more information about the Lamprey River and the LRAC, please visit www.LampreyRiver.org.

FY2021 Summary:

The novel corona disease, COVID 19, continued to cause disruptions across the United States and around the globe. This situation imposed many new challenges, curtailing most in-person meetings and outreach. Despite these obstacles, good progress was made that will help fulfill goals of the management plan going forward.

An unusually rainy July provided relief from a two-year drought and allowed the river to have sufficient flows heading into fall.

Outreach:

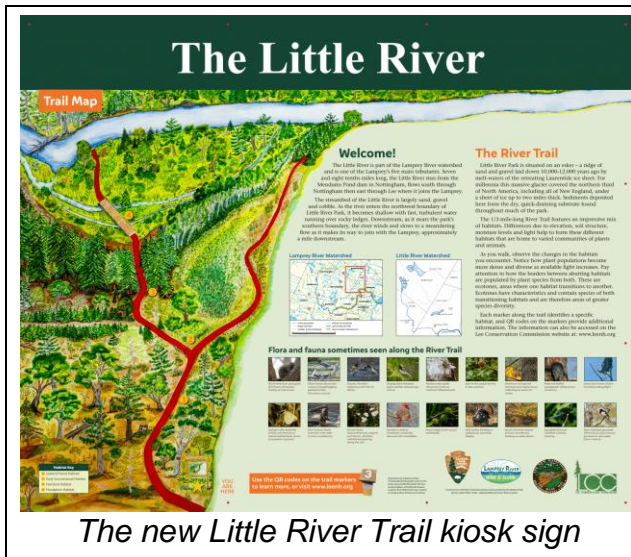
- Good progress was made on revamping the committee's website, www.LampreyRiver.org, and the new site should be ready to go live in the fall of 2021. The new site is designed to be more user-friendly and more adaptable to a wider range of devices.
- Quarterly newsletters were posted on the website and provided to all towns in the watershed.
- Heading into summer, limited outreach activities were resumed:
 - Members of the Newmarket Sunrise Sunset Center viewed *Spring into Vernal Pools* and then had a guided field trip to a vernal pool complex in Newmarket.
 - Families at a local campground learned the basics of water quality, aquatic invertebrates, and turtles.
 - Senior citizens through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) were offered a presentation and car tour of the key stops along the lower Lamprey River.
 - Members of the Newmarket Sunrise Sunset Center were given a presentation on salt marshes and then a guided walking tour on a salt marsh in Rye.

Project Review:

The committee reviewed and commented on 22 projects that required wetlands, shoreland, alteration of terrain, or a combination of permits from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). The LRAC does not have the authority to grant or deny permits, but NHDES must consider these comments which help to ensure that projects have as little impact on the rivers as possible.

Recreation:

- With on-going COVID 19 concerns, people continued to spend significant time outside exploring the river and visiting local parks and conservation areas. Although the LRAC offered no guided paddles or purely recreational walks, local people requested and used the newly updated *Explore the Lamprey River* map and guide and the new paddling access guide.
- Work at the Little River Park nature trail in Lee continued. A new kiosk was built last year and an interpretive panel, below, was installed this fall.



The new Little River Trail kiosk sign

Artwork was done by Lee resident Catherine Fisher. The maps help visitors understand where they are in relation to the Little and Lamprey rivers. The many pictures are examples of the breadth of animal and plant life in the area. Next up: QR code markers on the trail to provide more detail about the habitats along the way, two bridges, and an Aldo Leopold bench by the river for rest and viewing. The project was funded by a community grant from the Lamprey River Advisory Committee.

Water Quality:

- Volunteers with the Lamprey River Watershed Association continued to do basic water quality testing this summer. With the help of LRAC funding, we have uninterrupted data sets that began in 1990.
- UNH scientists received funding for two important research projects in 2021:
 - Aging equipment at Wiswall Falls in Durham was replaced and upgraded. This equipment tracks several water quality indicators such as nitrate, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and pH every fifteen minutes, providing details about chemical fluxes that can help to add clarity for management purposes. These data will be streamed live for community access in the near future.
 - Several popular public access points were studied for potential pathogenic bacteria. Total bacterial counts were taken and sources were defined, such as whether the source of the bacteria was human. Results will be available in late fall of 2021.

Wildlife and Ecology:

The LRAC awarded a research grant to a UNH master’s degree student who mapped the locations of invasive Japanese knotweed and will study its impact on river bank erosion compared to natural vegetation. She hopes to use her findings to create a numerical model that can be used to predict erosion on other rivers.

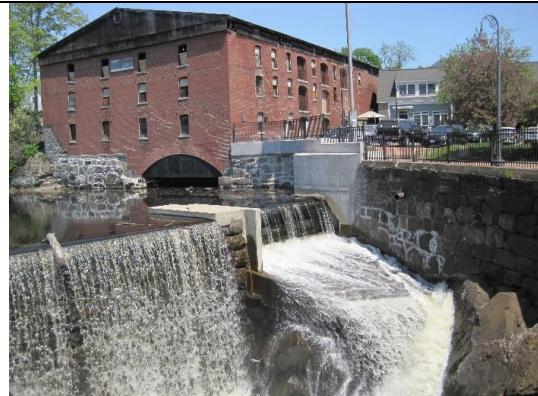
Other Lamprey River News:

To address safety issues, the Town of Newmarket began repairs and improvements at the Macallen Dam in September of 2020. Key changes included a higher and reinforced wall on the south side of the dam, improved floodgate control on the north side, and aesthetic improvements to the NH Fish and Game Department staging area at the top of the fish ladder on the south wall. The dam and staging area are among the most visible sites along the river and the annual

Herring Aid event is held here every year. We look forward to a safer dam and engaging people in a more welcoming setting.



North side: The old flood gate during pre-construction draw-down. Sept. 1, 2020



The new flood gate. May 19, 2021. During a flood, the gate folds down to allow extra flow.



South side: Pre-construction drawdown complete. Damage to the wall is visible between water and upper concrete. Sept. 7, 2020



The overall height of the reinforced south wall is about 4 feet higher than it was. New stairs leading to the fish ladder holding tank are visible. New fencing has been installed. Nov. 18, 2020

Future Plans:

- The updated and expanded website will be used to connect residents and visitors to the river.
- The updated recreation maps will be distributed to local libraries, recreation departments, camp grounds, and visitors to local fairs.
- Working with the Lee Conservation Commission, recreational and conservation improvements at the Lee Canoe Launch will be investigated.
- Community Grants up to \$7500.00 will be awarded to worthy local projects that help to address issues identified in the *2013 Lamprey River Management Plan*.
- Project reviews will seek to protect the natural resources of the Lamprey River and its tributaries amid mounting pressure to accommodate commercial and residential development.
- The process of revising the *2013 Lamprey River Management Plan* will begin.