

Executive Summary

This 2025 update of the [1995 Lamprey River Management Plan](#) and subsequent revisions reflects changes in the river and its watershed, but also a deepening understanding and level of involvement with on-going river issues on the part of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC or the Committee).

Three legislative acts have taken place since the writing of the original [1995 Lamprey River Management Plan](#). In 1996, the US Congress designated an 11.5 mile-segment of the Lamprey River in Lee, Durham, and part of Newmarket under the [National Wild and Scenic Rivers System](#). This was followed in 2000 with the addition of 12 miles in Epping. In 2011, the entire Lamprey River and five of its major tributaries (North Branch, Pawtuckaway, North, Little, and Piscassic rivers) were designated into the [NH Rivers Management and Protection Program](#). This represented the first time in New Hampshire that an entire watershed system was effectively protected as a single unit.

Many other changes have taken place in the watershed in the past several years:

- Residential and commercial development has resulted in a significant increase in the amount of paved and other impervious surfaces.
- Climate change has continued to drive the paradox of floods that cause significant damage and droughts that challenge public water suppliers to meet the demands of their users while leaving enough water to preserve the rivers' habitats.
- Sections of Great Bay and the Lamprey River have been federally listed as "impaired", in violation of the Clean Water Act.
- The Newmarket Wastewater Treatment Facility significantly reduced its discharges of nitrogen into the tidal portion of the Lamprey River.
- Upgrades at the Epping Wastewater Treatment Facility proved problematic and resulted in releases of partially-treated wastewater into the Lamprey River for several years during cold months. The problem seems to be resolved at this time, but significant upgrades are needed.
- Land protection goals from the [Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership](#) were met in the Lamprey River watershed. As of January 2025, the LRAC has provided significant funding to help provide permanent protection to approximately 3,843 acres and 19.1 miles of river frontage using Wild and Scenic River partnership funding.
- The NHDES [Lamprey River Water Management Plan](#) from 2013 was tested and proved successful. Initial data from the tributaries have been gathered and will be assimilated into the overall Lamprey River watershed plan.

Organizationally, LRAC membership has grown from four to fourteen towns. The Committee and its member towns have established more extensive and sophisticated working relationships with other organizations to help realize watershed-related goals.

The Committee has concentrated efforts in several main areas since the [2013 Lamprey River Management Plan Update](#):

- Through the project review process, we have submitted comments on proposals to develop or redevelop river corridor lands that can result in the loss of wildlife habitat, degradation of water quality, and negative impacts on the river's natural and scenic qualities to NHDES and towns.
- We have cultivated awareness of and appreciation for the Lamprey River through educational programs and materials for all ages.
- We have worked with partners to provide information about protecting the river at recreational access points and to make physical improvements for both people and the river.
- We have promoted the ecological health of the river by working with governmental agencies, the University of New Hampshire, and others to research wildlife presence and movement, sources of bacterial contamination, and emerging threats.