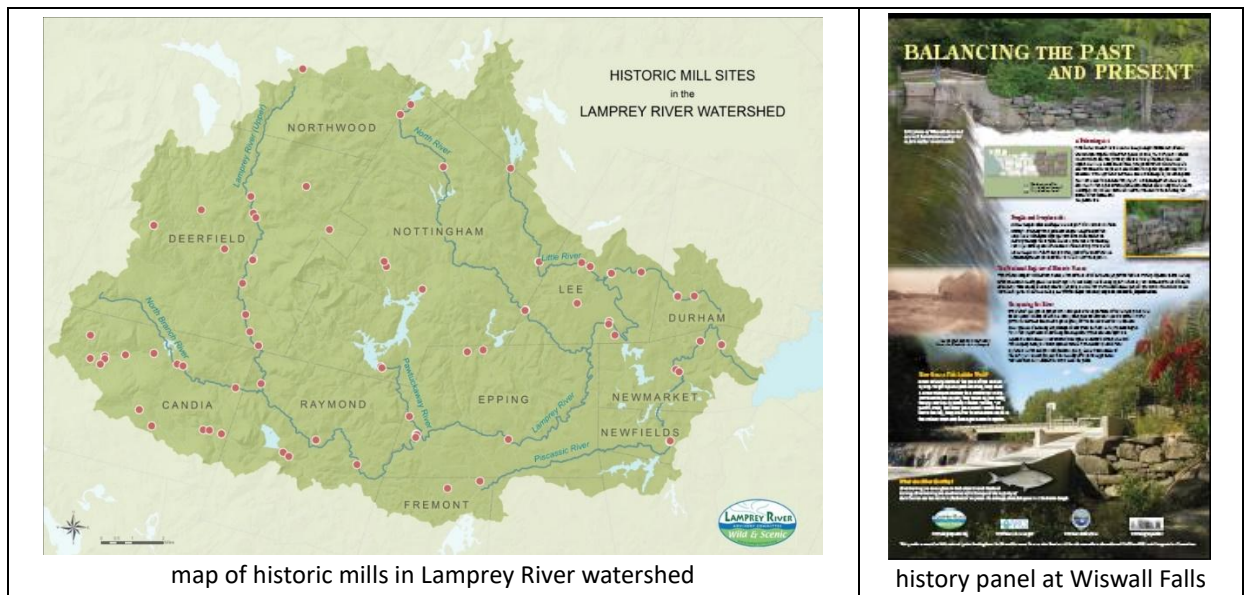


History

Goal

Help local citizens understand the historic and cultural importance of the rivers in this region and encourage a deeper appreciation of their own sense of place in the on-going history of the rivers.



Background

People have long recognized the valuable resources that the Lamprey River and its tributaries provide. Early Indigenous peoples left evidence of a campsite in Lee that University of New Hampshire archaeologists can date back at least 8,000 years and modern Indigenous people continue to utilize the river. European settlers were drawn to the rivers as an energy source and they built mills there as early as the 1660s. Over the years, more than 100 mills processed timber, grain, cloth, paper, wallpaper, leather, shoes, and iron agricultural tools to supply local and regional needs. The largest mill on the Lamprey was the Newmarket Manufacturing Company founded in 1822. It controlled dams as far inland as Northwood. At one time, this mill housed the largest weaving room in the world. River valleys supplied brickyards with extensive deposits of glacio-marine clays that were left following the last Ice Age 11,000 years ago. Epping still sits atop a vast deposit of such clay.

The historic resources of the Lamprey were recognized by both the State of New Hampshire and the U.S. Congress as reasons for designating the Lamprey River for protection. The National Park Service's 1995 Draft Report to Congress cited the "outstandingly remarkable" archaeological resources of the Lamprey, thus warranting protection through the National Wild and Scenic River designation. The *Lamprey River Resource Assessment* (1994) lists more than

thirty historical sites, including two (Wiswall Dam area and the mill district of Newmarket) that are on the *National Register of Historic Places*. Other sites include hotels, camps, bridges, railroads, churches, and homesteads as indicated on maps and in several historical publications.

Understanding the cultural history of the rivers can help landowners, newcomers, and the general public to develop an appreciation of the rivers. Although many river resources have not changed significantly over time, the focus of *human use* has diversified over the years. Recognition of the historic uses is needed if people are to be expected to assist in protecting the rivers, especially as newcomers settle in the communities along the river.

Key Future Actions

- Assist towns to implement planned historic activities at river parks.
- Partner with historical committees to help local citizens understand and appreciate the importance of the rivers in human history of the region.
 - Partner with local historical societies to arrange events at historical sites.
 - Identify and encourage protection of historic and archaeological resources on a site-specific basis, using methods such as signage, barriers, or easements.
 - Work with the recreation workgroup to include historic features on the proposed middle/upper river map and guide.
- Work with towns to develop river-based historic and cultural resources, if not completed already.
- Engage local residents in discovering and conserving local history to help promote a “sense of place.”
- Fund or seek funding for professional research on the archaeology and history of the rivers. Report findings on the website and in appropriate media, presentations, etc..
 - Study and document archaeological sites along the rivers in addition to those in the Wadleigh Falls area.
 - Partner with Durham to study Packers Falls history and possibly create a kiosk for the site.
- Work with Indigenous scholars to improve understanding and recognition of Indigenous history and on-going presence in LRAC materials.
- Work with UNH to develop a set of guidelines for working with Indigenous people.
- Work with the Newmarket Historic Association to promote understanding of the history of the Newmarket Mills and their impact on the Lamprey River watershed, including establishment of flowage rights and construction of Mendum's Dam and other impoundments, and their use to manage flow at Newmarket.

To view past History Accomplishments, click [here](#) or go to Appendix C, page 54.