

Newsletter Fall 2026



The Lamprey River Has Been Wild and Scenic for 30 Years!

November 12, 1996. On that date, the U.S. Congress came together to approve the designation of the Lamprey River into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, 11.5 miles from Lee to Newmarket. (Another 12 miles in Epping was added in May 2000.) While it is difficult to imagine the members of the US Congress agreeing on anything these days, this designation sent a clear message that the Lamprey River is exceptional, not only to local people, but to the entirety of the United States. In addition to clean water, the Lamprey River possessed three “outstandingly remarkable values”:

- exceptionally varied ecology and intact habitats
- significant history and archaeology (including the oldest documented Indigenous campsite in New Hampshire)
- a robust anadromous fishery (including river herring, American eels, lampreys, and shad).

This newsletter is a celebration of the past thirty years and a bit of forecasting into the future. Some articles, with some light updating, have been shared before. Others are a compilation of highlights.

The Lord of the Lamprey River

**Memories from Long-term LRAC Member, Dick Lord, Durham
(Originally shared in 2021)**

When I was eleven years old in 1957, my parents and I moved to our new home beside the Lamprey River, just down from Packers Falls in Durham, NH. I spent my boyhood hopping on rocks across the stream, harassing bullfrogs, and otherwise getting to know and love all the creatures who made the river their home. While away for college and for a few years as an aerospace engineer, I was always drawn back to the Lamprey and subsequently made career choices that continued to let me live in my childhood home, now for more than six decades.

As a founding member of the Lamprey River Watershed Association in the early 1980s, I helped get the river designated first in 1990 as one of New Hampshire’s first state protected rivers, and then in 1996 as one of the first rivers in the National Park Service’s Wild & Scenic Partnership Rivers Program, and became one of the first members of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee, which serves for both state and national programs.

As someone who gets to see the Lamprey every day as I look out my windows, I have felt a lifelong obligation to support the efforts to preserve and protect the natural beauty of the river.



Dick Lord and one of the kiosk panels at Wiswall Falls in Durham he helped to design

I am now in my 34th 39th year of serving on the Lamprey Advisory Committee and am proud to see my contributions bear fruit helping to lead the development of informational kiosks at a number of sites, and actively participating in improving recreational access, developing maps and public information programs, wildlife inventory studies, archaeology surveys and the preservation of over 3,500 acres of land within the watershed. Our ~~quarter-century~~ 30-year partnership with the National Park Service has been very fruitful, indeed, and made many wonderful projects possible. It has been a joy to be part of this effort for over four decades, and I hope to continue to participate for as long as I am able.

Community Grants

The Lamprey River Advisory Committee members have been active participants in protecting and studying the special nature of the Lamprey River. The Small Grants Program, later renamed as the Community Grants Program, has been a key feature of engaging community groups to participate. Beginning in 2009 with funding for several videos and historical maps, the grants program continues to engage local partners in protecting and improving the Lamprey River and its watershed. To date, the LRAC has provided funding for 48 innovative projects in 8 towns and the wider watershed.

Exploring and Protecting the Landscape



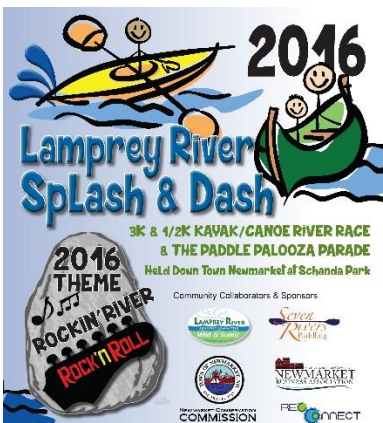
Invasive Weed Removal Lending Library
This man is using a weed wrench to remove an invasive tree. This tool-lending library is now housed at the Southeast Land Trust.



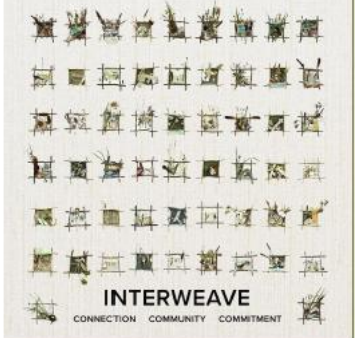
Lamprey River Big Tree Tour

This grant included an inventory and directions to some of the biggest and best trees in the lower four towns.

Recreational Offerings and Improvements

 2016 Lamprey River Splash & Dash 3K & 1/2K KAYAK/CANOE RIVER RACE & THE PADDLE PALOOZA PARADE Held Down Town Newmarket at Schanda Park 2016 THEME ROCKIN' RIVER ROCK n ROLL Community Collaborators & Sponsors: Lamprey River Water Association, Seaside Kayaks, Newmarket Recreation Commission, RECconnect SAT. AUG. 20th 10:30AM 12:00PM QUICK-IN 1 DAY OF REGISTRATION OPENS THURSDAY RAISE CRAFT & BOATS FOR THE ROCKIN' RIVER ROCK n ROLL WALL PAPERING - 2016 JULY 10th 10:00AM 3K RIVER RACES & 1/2K KID RACE SPLASH & DASH AWARDS CEREMONY 3:30PM Like us on Facebook for more event details Register online @ www.newmarketrec.org Newmarket Rec. Splash and Dash event	 public kayak racks have been provided at three launch sites in Newmarket  improved signage for canoe access	<i>Trail Improvements at Wiggan Farm Conservation Area (Newmarket)</i>  old walkway  new walkway
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Community Art Projects

 Stream of Consciousness (Durham) This project invited participants to consider the worth of water in their lives and create a "stream" of watery sentiments.	 Wiley House Central Park Mural (Newmarket) This beautiful mural was based on community input and is literally framed with photos provided by town residents.	 Interweave (Newmarket) Participants were asked to consider history, nature, and their connections to people through time. These mini-looms are on display at several public areas in town.
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Ecological Management



Wildlife Habitat and Land Stewardship Plan for the Rothwell Reserve (Lee)

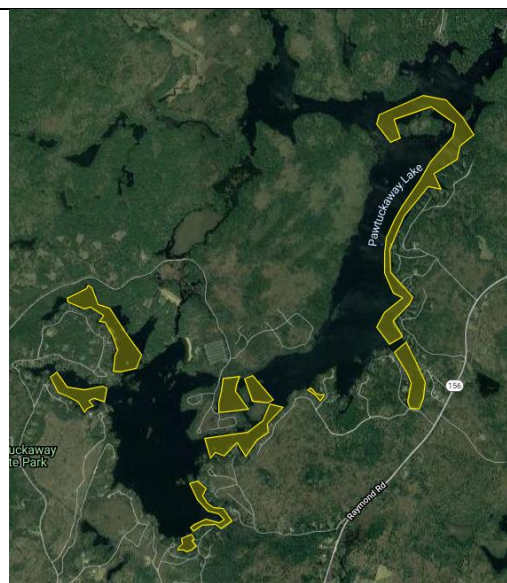


Doe Farm Forest Management Plan Update (Durham)

Pilot Projects



Soak up the Rain Demonstration Rain Garden (Newmarket)



Areas of Pawtuckaway Lake searched by grant-purchased side-scan sonar as part of invasive milfoil control project

Water Testing and Flow Management



Instream flow data logger

The Lamprey River was one of the first rivers in NH to have an instream flow management plan. You can access current data at [Instream Flow | NH Department of Environmental Services](#). LRAC's grant ensured that the public can access flow information for all five tributaries.

A few of the many signs and information panels that have been created for LRAC-funded access projects



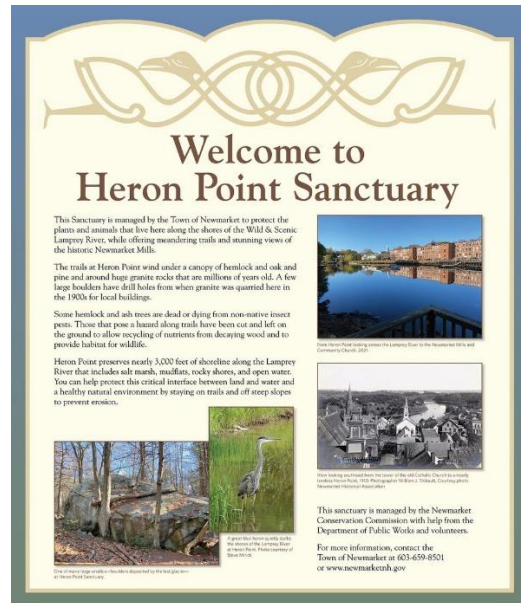
Thompson Forest kiosk panel (Durham)



Little River Trail Enhancements and Kiosk (Lee)



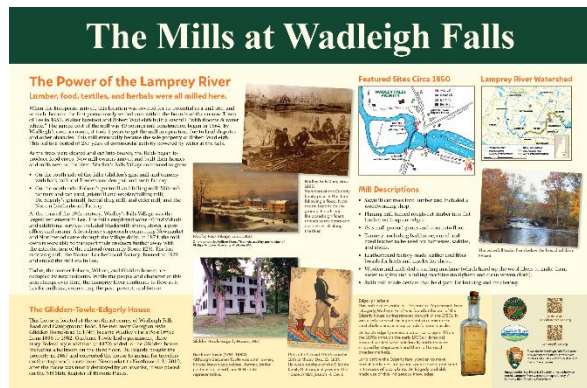
Kiosk sign at Route 87 bridge floodplain trail (Epping)



Kiosk sign at Heron Point (Newmarket), part of trail enhancement and signage project



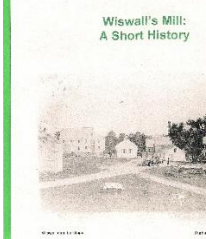
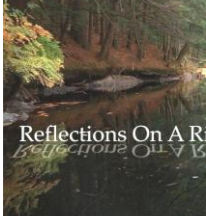
Indigenous History at Wadleigh Falls (Lee)



Mill History at Wadleigh Falls (Lee)

Videos Galore!

We have created a wide selection of river-related videos to enjoy. Whether you like local history, nature, civic engagement, or getting to know artist-author-naturalist David Carroll, we invite you to spend some time in our video library on-line. Just click the blue You Tube links below.

	<u>River Story: The Lamprey River Through History</u> Take a journey through time as you travel the Lamprey River from its headwaters at Betty Meadows Pond in Northwood to its end at Great Bay in Newmarket. Go fishing, enjoy the wildlife, step inside a mill, paddle a canoe, jump in for a swim, and learn about the ice harvesting trade.
	<u>Lamprey River Tour: Mary Blair Park</u> Mary Blair was a beloved teacher from Epping. The park that bears her name is a great place to begin an exploration of the Wild and Scenic Lamprey River.
	<u>Wiswall's Mill: A Short History</u> Wiswall's Mill was one of Durham's largest industrial areas from the mid to late 1800s. The story of the mill and its people are part of the history of the Lamprey River.
<u>Streamwalk</u> Many volunteers generously give their time and expertise to help local communities and the state understand the condition of the Lamprey. Streamwalk volunteers literally walk the river's edge, noting problems such as invasive Japanese knotweed and impaired culverts. They also see a beautiful river that flows through their lives and towns. Do you think you could be a potential Streamwalk volunteer?	
	<u>Reflections on a River: 30 Years of Protecting the Lamprey River</u> Since 1983, volunteers have worked to protect the rich resource that flows through our communities. The Lamprey River Watershed Association successfully pursued state recognition for a section of the river and later the entire watershed. The Lamprey River Advisory Committee successfully pursued federal recognition. Watch and be inspired!

[Connecting Lives on the Lamprey River](#)

Water is our most valuable natural resource. More than anything else, the cumulative actions of people throughout the river's drainage area will determine whether our water remains an asset to humans and wildlife. Meet some of the folks who work today to protect the river's future.



[Spring into Vernal Pools](#)

Join us as we explore vernal pools, spring-time wet areas that dot NH's forests and floodplains. Learn about some of the cool critters that rely on these pools and how we can protect them.

[David Carroll: A Life with Turtles](#)

New Hampshire artist and author reflects on his naturalist career. Turtles are central to his story and inspire his advocacy for the protection of wild places that should be kept wild.

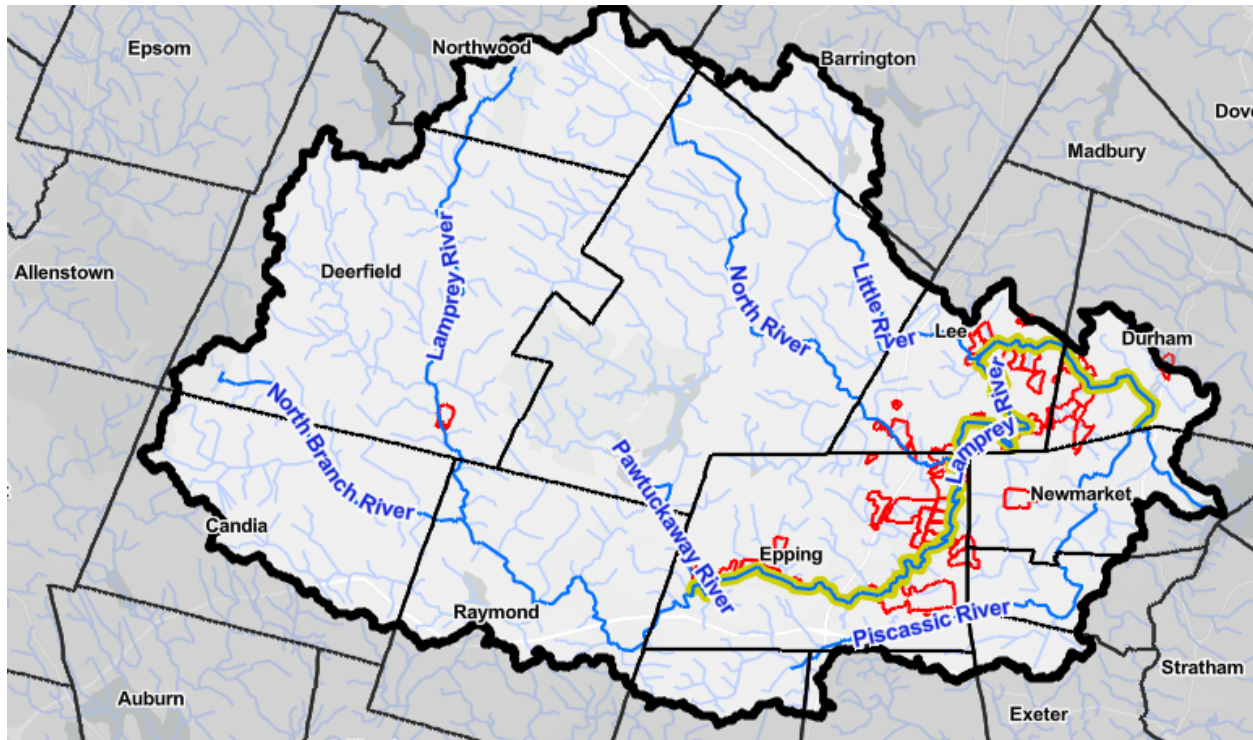


[David Carroll: Beyond Conservation to Preservation](#)

David uses wood turtles as a way to show that the land that is the most valuable and in need of protection can also be the most complex. Much of the Lamprey River is especially suited to wood turtles and other species that rely on floodplains. He stresses that conserved land should not always become "open space" for human recreation.

Land Protection

One of the greatest achievements that the LRAC has been able to effect is permanent protection of significant natural areas along the mainstem Lamprey River, and more recently, its tributaries. These sites provide critical habitat, protection of clean water, and more. Many of these projects offer public access. All are owned or managed by conservation commissions, land trusts, or natural resource entities and were made possible through voluntary partnerships with local landowners. As of October 2025, the LRAC has contributed a total of \$5,192,557 to provide permanent protection for 3,860 acres and 19.1 miles of river frontage since 1996. This funding has helped to secure matching funds from federal, state, local, and private funders. These project costs total \$22,546,759, meaning that the LRAC has provided about 23% of total costs. The LRAC has committed funds for three new projects that will be finalized in 2026 and 2027.



Map highlighting (in red) land protection projects that have been funded in part by the LRAC.

Research along and in the Lamprey River

Change, as we all know, is a constant in life. A condition that exists today might not have been the same some time ago or might not stay the same in the future. The Lamprey River is fortunate to have a team of volunteers, partners, and scientists who take water quality samples, conduct wildlife surveys, and investigate historical sites. In some cases, we have records that date beyond the 30 years of Wild and Scenic Designation. With National Park Service funding, we have been able to support rigorous research comparing parameters over time, as well as minute-by-minute research to discern the fine details.

Water Resources:

- trend analyses for nitrate concentration, dissolved oxygen, pH, toxic metals, specific conductivity, total *E. coli*, turbidity
- stream crossing assessments for each town
- continuous instream flow data loggers for two tributaries
- assessment of dams in the Lamprey River watershed
- causes of Woodman Brook turbidity
- bacterial tracking at recreational sites
- Raymond wetlands inventory and prioritization
- enhancing long-term and real-time monitoring of Lamprey River nutrient chemistry, oxygen, road salt and pH for UNH research

History:

- mapping mills of the Lamprey River
- Sullivan Falls industrial archaeology
- Wiswall Falls history
- Wadleigh falls history

Wildlife and Ecology:

- worsening erosion caused by Japanese knotweed
- acoustic bat survey
- freshwater mussel survey
- Barrington ecological co-occurrence mapping
- mapping and bioinventory of floodplain wetlands
- survey of odonatan (dragonflies and damselflies) of the Lamprey River
- tributary fish surveys
- American toad novel pathogen

Community Engagement: The Key to Safeguarding Our "Outstandingly Remarkable" Lamprey River

The Lamprey River Advisory Committee strives to engage and enlist community support in much of what we do. Whether it is offering a presentation to adults, leading families on a field trip, meeting the public at local festivals, or getting up-close with nature on a paddling excursion, we want to help connect local people to their river. The more people can experience the river and make a connection to it, the more likely they will be to want to protect it today and into the future.

Have you used any of our resources or joined us for an activity? We have been here to help you enjoy your river for 30 years and plan to be here for you in the future.

