

Fall Newsletter 2011



Expanded Lamprey River Advisory Committee

On June 7, Gov. Lynch signed House Bill 149, adding the entire Lamprey River and five of its major tributaries to the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program. Although the river in Lee and Durham has been in the program for more than twenty years, the other towns along the river were slower in offering their unanimous support for inclusion of the full river. Now that they, too, are on board, the Lamprey and its drainage area will be defined by its natural boundaries, not arbitrary political boundaries. Thank you to all the volunteers who made this happen.

The nomination to the program does not bring any funding to the river, but it does mean that representatives from the entire length will be engaged in creating a river management plan that will help guide decisions and activities that affect the river. The representatives will also have the opportunity to review and comment on all proposed projects that might impact the river, regardless of the town where the project is proposed. The new representatives will join seasoned members of the current LRAC beginning in September. Being able to view activities in the context of the full river should go a long way in protecting and managing the valuable resources of our Lamprey River.

New Canoe Launch at Wadleigh Falls



Photo by Dick Lord

The Lamprey River Advisory Committee is pleased to announce that Lee now has its first public canoe launch. New granite steps will more safely allow paddlers to traverse the rather steep embankment and should withstand the erosive force of spring floods. The parking lot will accommodate four to five vehicles.

The committee has planned a grand opening celebration on Oct. 15 from 1-3 p.m.. Canoeists will enjoy a nice paddle upstream and then let the river do the work of bringing them back.

Given limited parking at the site, some additional parking will be available nearby. Participants are asked to sign up by contacting Sharon Meeker at 659-5441 or

s-meeker@comcast.net. All canoeists will need to wear an approved PFD (personal floatation device) and supply their own canoe and paddles. Rain date is Oct. 16.

2011 Small Grants Program

Three small grants were awarded this past summer to individuals who had wonderful outreach proposals. Cindy Jupp-Jones is finishing her video that will visually tie together the whole river. Deb McNelly, recently retired teacher from Mast Way School, is revising the Lamprey River Curriculum. She is adding historical material to help students study the full river and is beefing up the science and technology components.

The grant awarded to Bambi Miller of the Strafford County Conservation District is winding down. Bambi created a pilot program that addresses one of the issues making water everywhere less clean: septic system malfunction. She led a public workshop to educate landowners about septic systems and then offered personalized site visits to review septic system care and advise homeowners how to keep their systems functioning well. She found that people had many common problems that are easily addressed:

- Know where the septic system is located in your yard. Consult your town hall if necessary. Keep the area free of shrubs and trees.
- Pump out the septic tank regularly. A tank full of oily scum or heavy sludge does not work.
- Do not use the toilet or sink as a garbage can. Do not dispose of medications or personal hygiene products in the toilet. Dispose of cooking grease by putting it with regular trash or burying it in soil away from the septic system. Do not put cat litter down the toilet. Use easily biodegradable toilet paper and avoid brands that are quilted or treated with lotions.

Healthy septic systems are critical if we are to have a healthy river. For more information and a free brochure, visit www.straffordccd.org.

Schanda Conservation Park Kiosk

With funding from the LRAC, committee members joined forces with the Newmarket Conservation Commission to create a kiosk for the park on Newmarket's waterfront. The newly completed kiosk highlights Newmarket's rich history and natural resources, as well as conserved land in town. The next time you are "milling around" in Newmarket, stop by the park and see how the past and present have come to coexist.

Dragonfly Research

Funded by a grant from the LRAC, the NH Dragonfly Project has come to the Lamprey. Over the course of the summer, researchers visited several sites along the Lamprey and documented the presence of living specimens and molts (exuviae) that were cast off when aquatic dragonfly and damselfly larvae left the water to begin their adult, flying phase.



Photo by J. Lambert

The researchers found many species and were thrilled to find several rather rare species, such as the Maine snaketail, left. Other surprises included American rubyspots and eastern least clubtails. The insects are not only diverse and interesting to observe, but their presence (or absence) reveals a wealth of ecological data that indicate important environmental conditions, such as clean, cold water versus warm or polluted water.

Road Salt, Now?

Yes! The best time to prepare for a winter storm is well before. Road salt has traditionally been used to fight ice on pavement, but salt is harsh on cars and can cause chronic water pollution. Freshwater fish and other aquatic life cannot tolerate salt. Further, salt is infiltrating groundwater supplies; some private wells in the area are showing increasing levels of sodium. For people with high blood pressure, this poses a direct health risk.

In 2009, the LRAC partnered with several other environmental groups and sponsored a road salt workshop. Individuals from municipalities, NH DES, maintenance companies, and NH DOT shared their concerns and issues. The LRAC funded a videographer to record the workshop, entitled "The Road Less Salted". The DVD has been donated to all local libraries and most municipalities. If you would like to understand the issues and be part of the solution, please watch the DVD. The LRAC also has a limited number of copies available for lending. Contact Sharon Meeker at s-meeker@comcast.net.



*Helping communities protect and enjoy the Lamprey River
through resource protection, research, and education.*