

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2010



Land Protection:

The land protection sub-committee continues to be very busy helping land-owners through the process of protecting their land through the use of easements and conservation restrictions. Several properties that are key to the continued health of the Lamprey are in process.

History:

The bridge reconstruction project at Wiswall Falls was given a face-lift by the committee when it voted to fund the facing of an additional abutment wall visible from John Hatch Memorial Park. The walls will be faced with stones removed from the former center piling. These stones are historically significant and will appear on three walls from a total of six. These facings will greatly add to the beauty and authenticity of this historic area. In addition to funding the facing for one of the abutments, the committee maintains a strong presence on the Town of Durham's Wiswall Historic Interpretation Committee.

Outreach and Education:

A three-part series of free presentations exploring how the Lamprey flows through our lives in terms of both time and place will commence with Native American stories with Anne Jennison followed by a light meal featuring Native American dishes on February 13. The second will feature the industrial focus of the river as seen through its many dams and mills, with a date in March to be determined. The third will focus on the recreational and scenic uses of the river that currently define the primary role of the river. The anticipated program date will be in April.

A guided winter walk will be offered free to the public on January 30. Animal tracks and adaptations of plants and animals will be identified and discussed, and participants will be encouraged to look for other signs of winter life along one of the Lamprey's conserved properties.

Students at Newmarket Junior-Senior High School will embark on a project to become junior stewards of the river through a joint initiative with the committee. One project that might be pursued is dragonfly monitoring. Stay tuned.

Projects:

The recipients of last fall's mini-grants offered preliminary results to the committee in December and were well received. We look forward to imminent completion and sharing with the public.

Bambi Miller of the Strafford County Conservation District presented an updated database of all property owners and land statistics for properties located both within the Lamprey's watershed and in Strafford County. She shared contents of mailings sent to property owners that explained how and where to seek technical and financial assistance designed to improve and protect their land (and the river) for the future.

Anne and Jim Deely of Neatline Associates presented GIS information and maps documenting the location of many previously unmapped dams and mills along the main Lamprey River and several of its tributaries. For four focus sites, they also submitted necessary documents to the NH Division of Historical Resources.

Paul Gasowski of Wonderlake Media showed one of his newly produced videos, "Lamprey River Streamwalk". The video takes viewers along as two volunteers walk a stretch of the river and document problems, such as invasive Japanese knotweed patches, erosion, storm culverts that dump directly into the river, and unvegetated river-side areas. The coordinator of the Streamwalk program also speaks about why this program is so important and how towns can use this information. Paul continues to refine videos on Mary Blair Park in Epping and an interview with turtle expert David Carroll.

Curt Mackail presented substantive research on the mills at Wiswall Dam and the issues that defined the lives of the people who lived and worked there. His research is being incorporated into a "Ken Burns"-style documentary.

Congratulations to the chair of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee, Sharon Meeker (right), who was selected to receive the 2009 Evelyn Browne Award by the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The award is presented annually to someone who has made a significant contribution towards the protection and conservation of the Great Bay Estuary. The Lamprey River is the most significant contributor of water to Great Bay, and Sharon's work on behalf of the river (as well as many other projects) extends well into Great Bay and beyond.

