

## Newsletter Winter 2014



### Help Wanted



*Protecting one watershed and six rivers in fourteen towns.*

Each town in the Lamprey River watershed area is allowed 4 appointed representatives. Openings currently exist for all towns except Durham and Lee. If you live in Barrington, Brentwood, Candia, Deerfield, Epping, Exeter, Fremont, Newfields, Newmarket, Northwood, Nottingham, or Raymond, please consider lending your skills and passion to protecting the Lamprey for today and the future. Contact Sharon Meeker at [s\\_meeker@comcast.net](mailto:s_meeker@comcast.net) for more information.

### Assaulted by Salt

Salt, sodium chloride, has always played an important role in human culture. It flavors and preserves food. It has many industrial uses. In Roman times, salt was so prized that soldiers were paid in part with salt, a salary.

But today is today and salt is easily obtained. It is just about everywhere people live, work, and play. Processed food is full of salt and we often need to avoid too much of it in our diet. In cold places like New England, salt is also lurking in the water and land. Normally, salt on land and in inland areas is a rare commodity. Salt is necessary for life, but in large quantities, salt is toxic to most organisms.

Salt scattered on roads and parking lots to melt ice dissolves in water and goes wherever water goes. As water runs off roadways, it flows into ditches, onto lawns, and down storm drains. When that water is salty, it still follows the same routes. It ultimately soaks into groundwater or flows into streams. Once salt is present in the water, it stays there. Desalination is very expensive and is not an option.



photo from epa.gov

Salty run-off is a big problem in winter. In spring, rain and snowmelt carry lots of salt into water bodies as expected, but there is so much water that the concentration of salt is lower. The worst time for salt contamination of streams often occurs in summer. Salty water that soaked into soil and groundwater in winter and spring is slowly released into streams.

The flow of streams in summer is often low anyway, but in warm weather, more water evaporates, leaving more salt behind. Animals that live in fresh water can be poisoned and killed.

The Environmental Protection Agency and the NH Dept. of Environmental Services regulate the allowable concentration of chloride in streams. In many samples taken along the Lamprey River, those concentrations have been exceeded. In fact, *the amount of salt in New England streams has increased 2-3 times since the 1940s. This trend follows the increase in pavement in the area.*

What is being done to reduce the amount of salt applied to winter roads and still keep drivers and pedestrians safe? Many towns in the area have sent their snow plow drivers to UNH's Technology Transfer Center to learn strategies that reduce the amount of salt by maximizing the timing and type of salt application onto roadways (rock salt versus brine solution). The NH legislature recently passed RSA 489-C that limits liability for private parking lot owners and snow plow operators if they learn and apply best practices for salt application.

We all can help by not relying on or expecting salt to solve all our slippery winter situations. Salt does a poor job of melting ice once ice has built up. If you have an ice build-up on your driveway, sprinkle some clean sand for traction. The best thing to do, however, is to SLOW DOWN when driving, avoid driving in the snow unless it is absolutely necessary, and wear footwear that will give you better traction on snow.

Too much salt is not a good thing. We can certainly be more healthy with less salt, and so will Mother Nature.

### **2013 Small Grants Wrap-up**

Since 2009, the Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee has funded grants up to \$5000 for creative projects that help to spread the word about our wonderful river. The Small Grants were awarded to three talented recipients in the summer of 2013. They showcased some fantastic work in October.



Kevin Martin and the NH State Big Tree Champion black gum.

Kevin Martin is a big fan of big trees. He used his grant to write and publish a Guide to the Big Trees of the Lamprey River. In October, Kevin led an enthusiastic group to view many of the Lamprey's big trees. These trees are not just big; most are county or NH state champions. It was great to walk through public areas and suddenly gaze upon a really big specimen in its habitat. Although Kevin won't be leading another tour in the near future, anyone can retrace the route by using the guide available at <http://www.lampreyriver.org> under the multi-media center, brochures. For those interested in exploring the Big Trees elsewhere in New Hampshire, Kevin has written a book that will be available at local bookstores and libraries soon.

The Lamprey River Watershed Association and Breakaway Media produced a video that documented 30 years of volunteer work for and along the Lamprey. Key movers shared their experiences on how they were able to secure protection for the Lamprey at the state and federal levels and then succeed in getting protection for the whole watershed. The story is powerful and beckons everyone who cares about the rivers to maintain the momentum. The video can be viewed at <http://www.lampreyriver.org/multi-media-videos-reflections> or at your local library.

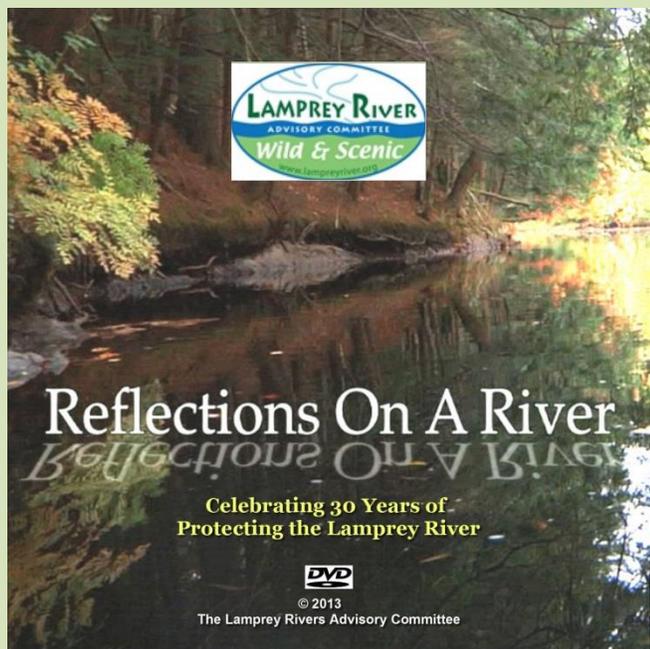


photo by Art for Water

Christine Destremes of Art for Water is passionate about water. She builds awareness of water issues and then has her audience participate in an art project that helps to spread the message that water is so much more than H<sub>2</sub>O. In October, Christine met with students at Oyster River



The Lamprey River "Stream of Conscience" at the Durham Public Library.

High School, Mast Way School, and adults. Each participant was given a scrap of sturdy paper and was asked to write or draw what water means. The result was a Stream of Conscience that was installed at the new public Library in Durham.

To learn more about Art for Water, please visit <http://artforwater.org>.

*"Water: so simple, so everything."  
Stream of Conscience participant*

Lamprey River Small Grants will be offered again this year. If you want to help raise awareness of the river and have a cool idea, please contact Sharon Meeker, outreach subcommittee chair, at 659-5441 or [s-meeker@comcast.net](mailto:s-meeker@comcast.net).

### Otters in our Waters



[http://www.nps.gov/romo/naturescience/river\\_otter.htm](http://www.nps.gov/romo/naturescience/river_otter.htm)

While some people complain about winter, the local river otters make the best of a good situation. At times, these playful critters quite literally slide through life.

River otters are the largest members of the weasel family found in New Hampshire. They can weigh between 11 and 31 pounds and grow from 25 to 40 inches in length. They have thick, water-repellant brown fur, webbed feet, and a powerful tail for swimming. They have agile paws that are also sensitive to touch. Their thick whiskers help them to navigate under water and on land. For food, river otters eat mostly fish, but they also partake of crayfish, mussels, amphibians, or turtles if the opportunity arises. Like all weasels, river otters have long, slender bodies and are excellent hunters.

Although they are fairly common, few people are lucky enough to see river otters in action. These sleek hunters are active during dawn and dusk and spend much of their time in water-side burrows out of the view of humans. They hunt mostly underwater and rest in burrows. Winter time, however, offers a few more opportunities to see these critters as they walk, run, bound, or slide over ice or snow near the river or beaver dam impoundments. Some lucky outdoors people

might get to witness younger otters engaged in a session of practice wrestling or chase with their siblings.

River otters generally live 8 or 9 years in the wild. They have few natural predators in the water, but on land, they can be preyed upon by bobcats, coyotes, dogs, and red foxes. Most river otters die from human-caused factors such as road-kill, trapping, illegal shooting, or from an accumulation of toxins that were eaten by the fish that were later eaten by the otters.

To make sure river otters and many of our other wild critters enjoy a positive future, NH wildlife biologist Eric Orff concludes, "we must protect and preserve more of the large wooded habitat blocks in New Hampshire, especially those along our rivers and streams. We must link these areas with wildlife corridors along our rivers by protecting the riparian corridor at streams' edges. Recent studies show that protecting a greenway 300 feet wide along our rivers and streams could maintain nearly 80 percent of the state's diversity of species -- including many of our wily weasels." That "otter" be pretty easy... give them their space and they will continue to make our rivers truly special.

### **Looking Ahead**

The following meetings and events are open to the public. Please join us and learn more about what is happening along the Lamprey!

- Jan. 10, all day, Lamprey River Science Symposium, UNH. Register at [https://www.events.unh.edu/RegistrationForm.pm?event\\_id=15969](https://www.events.unh.edu/RegistrationForm.pm?event_id=15969)
- Jan. 14, 7 p.m. Wild and Scenic subcommittee meeting, Lee Safety Building
- Jan. 23, 7 p.m. full Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee (LRAC) meeting, Epping Town Hall
- Feb. 11, 7 p.m. Wild and Scenic subcommittee meeting, Lee Safety Building
- Feb. 27 7 p.m. full Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee (LRAC) meeting, Epping Town Hall

### **2013 Lamprey Rivers Management Plan Now Available**

After many months of creating action plans and gathering comments from towns, the public, and interested partners, the Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee is pleased to announce that the 2013 Lamprey Rivers Management Plan is ready for distribution and action. Copies will be given to the library and town hall in each town. The plan is available at [www.lampreyriver.org/2013managementplan](http://www.lampreyriver.org/2013managementplan).

