

Fall Newsletter 2014



Epping Summer Recreation Graduates First Junior Rangers



"The Lamprey River is more than a river. We are all one big watershed." -- Dillin

"A long time ago, there was a paper mill, but it burned down. They used to make a lot of paper." --Emma

"Mussels help to keep the waters clean." --Ayden

"In the old days, they didn't have electricity, so they cut ice out of the river to keep food cold." --Robbie

Some of the participants in the pilot Junior Rangers program.

This summer, a group of dedicated participants in the Epping Summer Recreation program learned a lot about the Lamprey River. They covered such topics as watershed geography, history, recreational safety, wildlife, floodplains, and pollution. They learned through maps, videos, animal sampling, plant and animal identification, a field trip to Mary Blair Park, a stormwater tour of the school grounds, tying knots, quiz games and races, and their own artwork. Each Junior Ranger received a patch, personalized certificate, and a folder with key facts, pictures, and maps. Congratulations to all for a job well done!

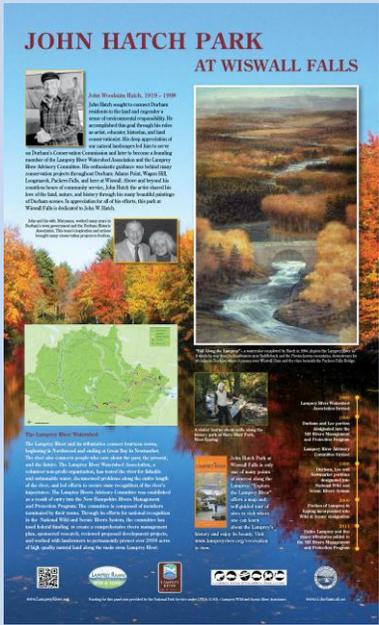
Junior Ranger: Independent Study



For those who would like to be a Junior Ranger on their own schedule, a separate program exists on-line that will guide participants through many of the exercises that the Epping Recreation kids followed. For details, please visit <http://www.lampreyriver.org/for-fun-junior-rangers>.

I step outside and the chilly air tightens the skin on my bare arms. Summer has ended all too quickly, and some of the leaves on the trees have already started to burn with the colors of fall. Fall colors.... so bright and intense and beautiful. It's like nature is trying to fill you up with color, to saturate you so you can stockpile it before winter turns everything muted and dreary.
~Siobhan Vivian, *Same Difference*

Wiswall Falls Kiosk



Wiswall Falls in Durham is a beautiful, quiet place right on the Lamprey River. The peaceful setting masks a rich history that once served as an industrial hub that included a paper mill. The site today currently includes granite foundations, a fish ladder that reestablishes natural fish passage along the river and a detailed kiosk.

The kiosk has four panels. The first two cover the industrial history of the site. The third covers balancing current environmental need and historic preservation. The newly added fourth panel is a dedication to John Hatch, artist and historian who gave generously of his time and talent to improve the Lamprey River and surrounding area. Wiswall Park is a great place to visit, but if you can't get there from where you are, you can get there from here:

<http://www.lampreyriver.org/parks-wiswall>

The Nature of Crows and Ravens

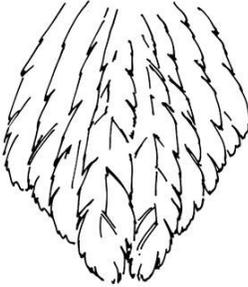
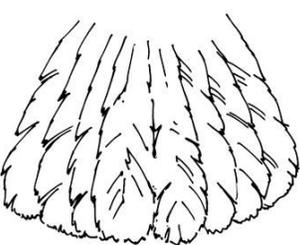
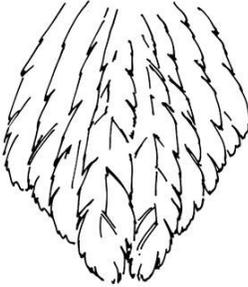
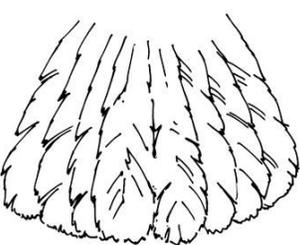
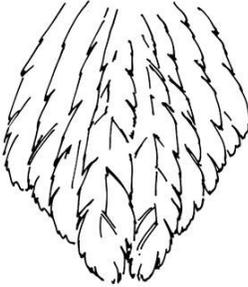
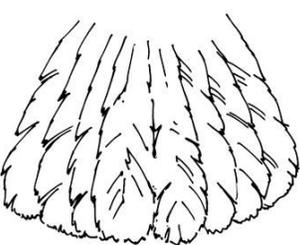
Edgar Allan Poe's famous raven says, "Nevermore, nevermore", but ravens and crows have been a presence for people forever and probably will be ever more. Why are people so fascinated by these birds? Are they evil, omens of death, tricksters and teachers, or just big, black songbirds? Mythology about crows and ravens is pervasive across cultures, but with these birds, fact is much more interesting than fiction.



image from wdfw.wa.gov

The Real Raven and the Cunning Crow

Ravens and crows belong to the bird family Corvidae which also includes jays, nutcrackers, and magpies. They exist on every continent except for Antarctica. New Hampshire has one species of raven and two species of crows: American crows and fish crows. All are all black and all are technically songbirds.

<p>The ravens are by far the largest and have a more shaggy appearance. They prefer dense forest and are rare in cities. Fish crows are the smallest, but telling them apart from American crows is difficult until one becomes familiar with the different calls and behaviors of the two species. Both ravens and crows have a large repertoire of calls and use these calls to communicate.</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Raven</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Crow</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="padding: 5px;"> <p>Ravens have wedge-shaped tails and crows have fan-shaped tails. wdfw.wa.gov</p> </td> </tr> </table>	Raven	Crow			<p>Ravens have wedge-shaped tails and crows have fan-shaped tails. wdfw.wa.gov</p>	
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Ravens and crows are exceptionally intelligent birds. They can discern individual human faces. They can share information with other crows, such as the presence of dangerous places or predators. They often act as sentinels when another crow is feeding, warning of on-coming cars or other dangers. They are curious and can make use of simple tools, such as sticks for probing crevices.

Family Life and Social Life

Crows and ravens live an average 7-8 years in the wild, although one rare bird lived 29.5 years. As is common with other birds, many baby crows never live to leave the nest. Although nests are built by both males and females, incubation of eggs is performed solely by females. Because males and females look the same, observation of nesting and reproductive behaviors is the only reliable way to determine a crow's sex in the field.

Ravens and crows are very social. They frequently form foraging flocks. In areas with a large supply of food, these flocks may number in the thousands. Flocks of any size help to provide safety and, at night, warmth. Gatherings of crows or ravens are poetically called "murders," although scientists prefer to call them what they call other bird groups, flocks.

The (Perceived) Dark Side of Ravens and Crows

Ravens and crows are intelligent birds. They observe us humans and take advantage of opportunities we provide to them. These birds are capable of hunting their own food, but it is often easier for them to scavenge. They know that food is abundant following a battle or by the roadside. They watch us and know many of our habits. They communicate in ways that we cannot always understand. They gather in large groups and their calls can be loud and unnerving. At times they mock us, using our own words against us or attempting to turn our territories into their territories. Aboriginal mythologies frequently portray these birds as tricksters. European lore often associates them with the devil; however, the more you learn about them, the more you will respect crows and ravens as a rich part of our cultural and natural heritage.

Project Review

Local river advisory committees, such as the Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee, are charged by the state legislature and the New Hampshire River Management and Protection Program with three main responsibilities:

- Create, and implement if possible, a river management plan.
- Inform and advise the commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) on issues along the river that could affect the values or resources of the river.
- Evaluate projects along the river that require a permit from NHDES.

The Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee completed the revision of [The Lamprey Rivers Management Plan](#) in November of 2013. Representatives keep their eyes and ears open for issues along the river and report them to NHDES as needed. The final responsibility, project review, is ultimately the most effective tool for keeping the rivers in good condition. Through this process, problems are largely identified before they occur and the river is kept in good condition. Preventing problems is much more effective than trying to correct problems.



River advisory committees routinely review projects that require one or more of the following NHDES permits: alteration of terrain, wetlands, dredge and fill, or shoreland protection.

The review of a project includes many factors: adherence to state and local zoning regulations, presence of steep slopes, presence of rare plants or animals, presence of rare habitats or ecological communities, proximity to surface or ground water, adherence to best practices in engineering and hydrology, site plans, pre- and post-construction erosion controls, operation and maintenance plans, stormwater management, and other considerations as necessary. Once the full project has been reviewed, comments are generated and letters are sent to NHDES, the town planning board and conservation commission, and the applicant.

A river advisory committee cannot approve or deny a permit, but its comments must be considered. The Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee (LRAC) has built a solid reputation with NHDES and its comments are taken seriously. In many instances, NHDES has required changes to project plans to reduce the risk of degradation to the river based on LRAC's comments. These comments protect not only the river, but also generally protect the applicant from future issues. Project review is a very tangible way that the advisory committee is making a positive and lasting difference for the Lamprey Rivers and all who live nearby. New members are welcome! Call Sharon Meeker at 659-5441 for details.