

# Welcome to the Lamprey River

The Lamprey flows 49 miles from the hills in Northwood to Newmarket and then out to Great Bay. It encompasses a remarkable diversity of habitats: forests, fields, quiet backwaters, rushing rapids, wetlands, and sandy river banks.

The river can be enjoyed in a variety of ways. This map highlights sites that are significant to this river and the guide provides access information and suggests how you can enjoy and help to preserve each site. Kiosks at many sites provide additional information. Enjoy!

## How to See and Enjoy the Lamprey River

You can see the Lamprey River from a car, a bicycle, or a canoe. If you want to paddle on the river, this guide also indicates where public access areas are.

### By Automobile

If you want to drive as close to the river as the roads allow, the route is highlighted in orange on the map on the back. All of the stops described in the guide can be found on these roads.

### By Bicycle Route on Roads

The river route can be followed by bicycle in a day with a few rest stops along the way. Another option is to plan bike trips through a few towns and allow time to explore the town centers or some of the walking trails. Note that most trails are closed to bicycles.

### Walking Trails

Land conservation efforts have resulted in many beautiful trails that are open to the public. Several trails that are mostly along the Lamprey River are highlighted, but many more can be explored. Town conservation commissions and local land trust websites can provide more information.

### Paddling Trips

The river offers many places to the public for paddling and this is a great way to see the river close up; however, paddling the whole length requires careful planning and many portages. The big canoe and kayak event is the annual Lamprey River Canoe Race which takes place in late April and runs from Mary Blair Park to the Route 87 crossing in Epping.

### Historic Sites

Kiosks at many sites describe the history of use at each site and also of the towns in general. These will take you through time from the Native Americans, to the early settlers and the remains of their mill buildings, to the present day. Much of downtown Newmarket, with its large mill buildings, is listed in the *National Register of Historic Places*.



A visitor learns about history at Mary Blair Park in Epping. R.H. LORD

### Natural Features

The Lamprey River is very scenic. By visiting the highlighted areas, you will see the trees, flowers, and animals that flourish along the river. Picnic areas can be found at several locations where you can watch and listen to wildlife and moving water. You can learn about the floodplain forest and fish ladders. You can try your luck fishing for trout and other fish species or looking for more than 159 species of birds that inhabit the river corridor.

### Accessibility

Some accommodation(s) exist for people with a disability.

## River Protection

The entire main stem Lamprey River and five of its main tributaries are protected under the New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Program. In addition, a 23-mile segment from West Epping to Newmarket is also protected under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Lamprey River Advisory Committee partners with the state and the National Park Service to protect the river's outstanding natural features and historic sites and to provide educational and recreational opportunities.

You can help by following "leave no trace" principles on this special river and its corridor. Please stay on designated roads or trails, use designated canoe access points, leave wild animals alone, and contact land owners if you are accessing their land. Please help to preserve these special places and leave each site better than it was when you came.

# Sites Along the Lamprey River

## EBBING, NEW HAMPSHIRE

This town was named after the Epping Forest in England because of its heavily forested land. Epping was founded in 1741 and is the only town to have been home to three New Hampshire governors. It is famous for its bricks that were made here and were used in the construction of buildings and schools here and in nearby towns.

The Hedding Campground is a religious community started in the 1860s that is a town in itself. Lying on the outskirts of Epping, it has large land holdings on the Lamprey and many unique buildings. The campground is private, but opens up to the public during its Street Fair in the summer.

While recent development has changed parts of Epping, its character is revealed through many conserved woodlands and a few historic buildings. The annual canoe race is held on the last Saturday in April and is an exciting paddle from West Epping through the center of town.

### 1 Mary Blair Park

The National Wild and Scenic River portion of the Lamprey begins at the former Folsom Dam here. Mary Folsom Blair, a well-known resident and school teacher, donated this land to the town to fulfill her wishes for an area that children could enjoy. This 11-acre site once housed mill buildings and you can still see stone remnants of the old dam in the river. These remains are explained on the four signs of the history trail. This is also the area where the Pawtuckaway River meets the Lamprey and where the annual canoe race begins.

**RECREATION:** Canoe access, picnic area, baseball fields, and natural playground.

**DIRECTIONS:** Off Rte. 27 near Rte. 101, Exit 6, in West Epping.

### 2 Epping Town Hall

The center of Epping is, for the most part, residential. The Epping Town Hall, situated right on the river, is the most prominent building. You can visit the library and the nearby historical society or get a bite to eat at one of the local restaurants.

**RECREATION:** Behind the Town Hall is public land that has access to the river for canoeing (a short carry from the parking area to the river) and fishing.

**DIRECTIONS:** Rte. 125 to Rte. 27 to Main Street.

### 3 Mast Road Natural Area

This 531-acre conservation property is managed by the Southeast Land Trust and offers a rich variety of upland and wetland habitats.

**RECREATION:** This property is served by 2.7 miles of trails, including several trails that are universally accessible. Trail information is available on site at the parking lot kiosk and at [selnh.org/trail-maps-a-guides/](http://selnh.org/trail-maps-a-guides/).

**DIRECTIONS:** Rte. 125 to Rte. 27 south/Exeter Road. Turn left onto Mast Road. Entrance is on the left shortly after Star Speedway.

### 4 Route 87 Bridge Site/Tilton Conservation Area

This is an ideal spot for a short walk on the Floodplain Trail or a short paddle on the river. The kiosk includes a trail guide that you can photograph for easy reference as you walk. Early in the morning, you might spot some of the wildlife that depends on the Lamprey River.

**RECREATION:** The canoe launch provides access upstream to Mary Blair Park, but downstream passage to Wadleigh Falls in Lee is complicated by some large fallen trees. Expect to portage up and down steep slopes covered with poison ivy.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Rte. 125 to Rte. 87, 1½ miles to bridge. Parking is just after the bridge on the left.

**ACCESS:** This is an ecologically sensitive area that is likely to be very wet in the spring. Please do not venture into the floodplain or onto the trail when it is wet or muddy. No mountain bikes.

## LEE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Town of Lee was founded in 1766 and was named after General Charles Lee who fought beside George Washington in the Revolutionary War. It was the last of 129 towns chartered by Governor Benning Wentworth. Wadleigh Falls was the original town center, beginning in 1668 with Robert Wadleigh's sawmill. Other colonists arrived and established a cider mill, medicine mill, leatherboard factory, tanneries and a hotel near the falls.



Lamprey River Canoe Race R.H. LORD

### 5 Wadleigh Falls Vicinity

For thousands of years prior to the arrival of colonists and for a time thereafter, Native Americans came down from the Ossipee Mountains to summer on the river, growing gardens and fishing at the falls. The falls are formed by a natural rock formation, but dams provided power for the mills and factories there during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The dam, now breached, had a drainage area of 154 square miles.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Rte. 125 north to Rte. 152 east. The village is located at the convergence of Rte. 152, Tuttle Road, and Camp Lee/Campground Road.

**ACCESS:** The bridge is located on a sharp curve without a sidewalk. Pedestrians should be careful, as traffic can be intense at times. Public canoe access is 1/8 mile west of the bridge on Rte. 152 and includes a small parking area and history kiosk. Canoeists should plan to travel upstream only and return to the canoe access. A small dirt pull-off is also located on Tuttle Road and visitors can view some of the mill ruins just down the bank. The land around the dam is privately owned and the public is asked not to trespass.

**RECREATION:** Ball fields, playground, picnic area, walking.

**DIRECTIONS:** 34 North River Rd. (Rte. 155), about 4 miles from Rte. 4.

## DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Originally known as Oyster River Plantation, the Town of Durham was incorporated in 1732. Early commerce centered around shipbuilding in the Oyster River estuary. By the beginning of the 19th century, much of the industry had shifted to mills on the Lamprey River at Wiswall and Packers Falls. A major fire in 1883 destroyed the large mill complex at Wiswall Falls. In 1900, a generator was installed that supplied several houses in the area with power for Durham's first electric lights.

In 1891, Durham resident Benjamin Thompson gave his farm and fortune to the state of New Hampshire to relocate the New Hampshire College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts from Hanover to Durham, providing for its role as the present day home of the University of New Hampshire. The university conducts extensive research projects in the watersheds of Great Bay.

### 7 Thompson Forest

This 54-acre conservation property was once part of a 200-acre dairy farm and is now owned by the Town of Durham with wildlife management help from SELT. The 1.3-mile walking trail meanders through forests and former agricultural pastures.

**RECREATION:** Walking, birding, picnicking.

**DIRECTIONS:** 199-177 Wednesday Hill Road near the Durham/Lee town boundary.

### 8 John Hatch Memorial Park/Wiswall Dam

This 3-acre site, owned by the Town of Durham, consists of shoreline and woodlands and was a center of activity in the 1800s. Various mills and Durham's first electric power plant were built here. Although the mill buildings were destroyed by fire, visitors to the site can still see foundations. These remains were partially restored in 1999 by the LRAC and Durham, with funding from the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The site is listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*. The kiosk details the site's rich history.

**RECREATION:** Walking, picnicking, fishing.

**DIRECTIONS:** On Wiswall Road between Packers Falls Road and Lee Hook Road.

### 9 Packers Falls

Packers Falls, the "second falls" in Durham, is found just downstream from Wiswall. The site, owned by the Town of Durham, has a historic mill site with foundation remains and often offers views of some impressive rapids in spring.

**RECREATION:** Trail: 0.4 mile along Lamprey River and through woods. Tubing in the river is a popular pastime.

**DIRECTIONS:** At the intersection of Packers Falls Road and Bennett Road. Parking is available off Bennett Road.

### 10 Doe Farm

Approximately 87 acres in size, the Doe Farm was bequeathed to the Town of Durham in 1909 by Olinthus N. Doe. Artifacts of the family homestead remain along the trail, including the old cellar hole and family cemetery.

In the early 1920s the Durham Boy Scouts planted thousands of red pine, white pine and Norway spruce seedlings in the open field areas of the farm. These developed into the scenic plantation areas still visible today along the main woods and road trails in the western portion of the property. The hardwood and white pine canopy hosts a variety of wildlife, from birds and small mammals, to beaver and deer.

**RECREATION:** Walking, birding, swimming (no beach or facilities).

**DIRECTIONS:** Rte. 108 or Packers Falls Road to Bennett Road. Parking is available off Bennett Road near the railroad bridge.

## NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Newmarket is where the Lamprey River empties into the Great Bay Estuary. Boaters can enjoy both freshwater and saltwater adventures. The town has numerous recreation parks and conservation areas, especially along the Lamprey River.

Newmarket was incorporated in 1727 and was called Lampreyville for a time. Textile mills were a prominent feature of Newmarket in the 1800s and the Newmarket Manufacturing Company built and controlled dams as far away as Northwood to provide water power for the industries and town. Many of the historic mill buildings have been converted to modern uses such as apartments and small businesses.



Paddlers enjoy Newmarket's historic mills that were once powered by the Lamprey River. PETER SAWTELL

### 11 Piscassic Park and Boat Launch (Sliding Rock)

This town-owned, 2.5-acre wooded park at the confluence of the Piscassic and Lamprey rivers provides access to great paddling in the impoundment above Macallen Dam. Paddlers can travel upstream two miles to Doe Farm and beyond. The confluence of rivers here marks the end of the designated Wild and Scenic segment.

**RECREATION:** Boat launch, fishing, short walking trail and picnic tables. Kayaks on site can be rented from Newmarket Recreation Dept.. Call 603-659-8581 to make your reservation.

**DIRECTIONS:** Off Elm Street in downtown Newmarket. Turn onto Beech Street and then right onto Salmon. Bear left past bus stop to second right onto Piscassic Street. Park is at the end.

### 12 Schoppmeyer Memorial Park

This 3-acre park is owned by the Town of Newmarket and provides access to great paddling in the impoundment above Macallen Dam.

**RECREATION:** Kayak launch, fishing, and short walking trail. **DIRECTIONS:** Route 108 near the Newmarket/Durham town line. Small parking lot located beside the Newmarket Community Church Thrift Store.

**ACCESS:** Please stay on the lawn and do not trespass onto the adjacent gravel driveway. Kayak entry and exit assistance device available. Kayaks on site can be rented from Newmarket Recreation Dept.. Call 603-659-8581 to make your reservation. Private kayaks must be carried 530 feet from parking area to launch.

### 13 The Richard Schanda Conservation Park – Town Boat Landing

This town-owned, 0.4-acre park is located in downtown Newmarket below the Macallen Dam and offers public access for paddling on the salt-water portion of the river. Visitors can view a fish weir that was once used to catch migrating fish.

**RECREATION:** Picnic tables and boat launch for access to the tidal portion of the Lamprey River and Great Bay. Kayaks on site can be rented from Newmarket Recreation Dept.. Call 603-659-8581 to make your reservation.

**DIRECTIONS:** At the end of Water Street off Rte. 108 in downtown Newmarket.

**ACCESS:** This section of the river is subject to tides, so plan for changing currents. Be aware that at low tide, large areas of Great Bay might not have enough water to float a boat.

# Points of Interest

### A Folsom Conservation Area – Joshua Lane • Epping

Owned by the Town of Epping, this land was once slated for a housing development. It is connected to the Rockingham Recreation Trail – Portsmouth Branch that runs from Newfields to Manchester. The Epping Conservation Commission planted red pine seedlings to reclaim the woods along the sides of the main trail.

**RECREATION:** Any non-motorized trail users are allowed. Snowmobiles are allowed in the winter.

**DIRECTIONS:** Off Rte. 27, ½ mile west of Mary Blair Park.

### B Miriam Jackson Park • Epping

Small, historic riverside park near Epping Town Hall.

**DIRECTIONS:** Rte. 27 at Mill St. Bridge.

### C George Falls Woods • Epping

13 acres of pine forestland bordering the Lamprey River with some very large trees along the trail.

**RECREATION:** Walking, fishing, observation, snowshoeing, skiing, hunting.

**DIRECTIONS:** Jacobs Well Road, Epping. Located on the west side of the road and noted by a sign.

### E UNH Organic Dairy Research Farm at the Burleigh-DeMeritt Farm • Lee

The farm provides a glimpse of the evolving agricultural heritage along the Lamprey.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Lee center, proceed east on Lee Hook Road. The farm is on the right.

**ACCESS:** Please follow instructions at the visitor's kiosk. An old road west of the farmhouse leads to the river, but use is limited from May to October.

### F Lamprey River Preserve • Durham

This 240-acre natural area, owned by The Nature Conservancy, is managed for wildlife habitat and does not have formally maintained hiking trails.

**RECREATION:** An abandoned road enables foot travel, birding, wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing. Snowmobiles are allowed on designated corridor trail to Lamprey River only. Dogs, horses, mountain bikes, camping, and fires are prohibited.

**DIRECTIONS:** Located on Packers Falls Road in Durham.

### G Spruce Hole Conservation Area/Oyster River Forest • Durham

This 40-acre, town-owned property consists of forest and a 2.5-acre kettle hole bog which is recognized as a National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service.

**RECREATION:** Walking (including universally accessible trail), cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, mountain biking.

**DIRECTIONS:** From downtown Durham, take Mill Rd. approximately 2.3 miles to Packers Falls Rd. Take a right on Packers Falls Road. Parking is immediately on the right.

### H Wiggin Farm/Tuttle Swamp Conservation Area • Newmarket

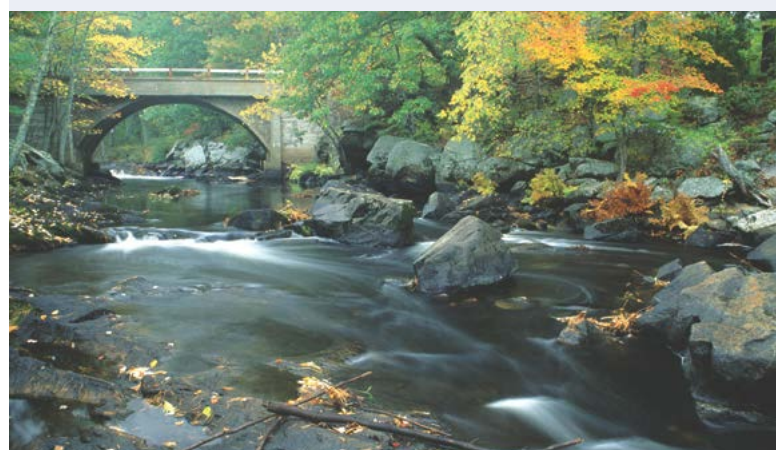
This area includes a field and hill setting bordering on a swamp wetlands complex that drains into the Lamprey.

**RECREATION:** Walking trail, sledding hill in winter; visitors can follow a trail describing the wildlife in the area.

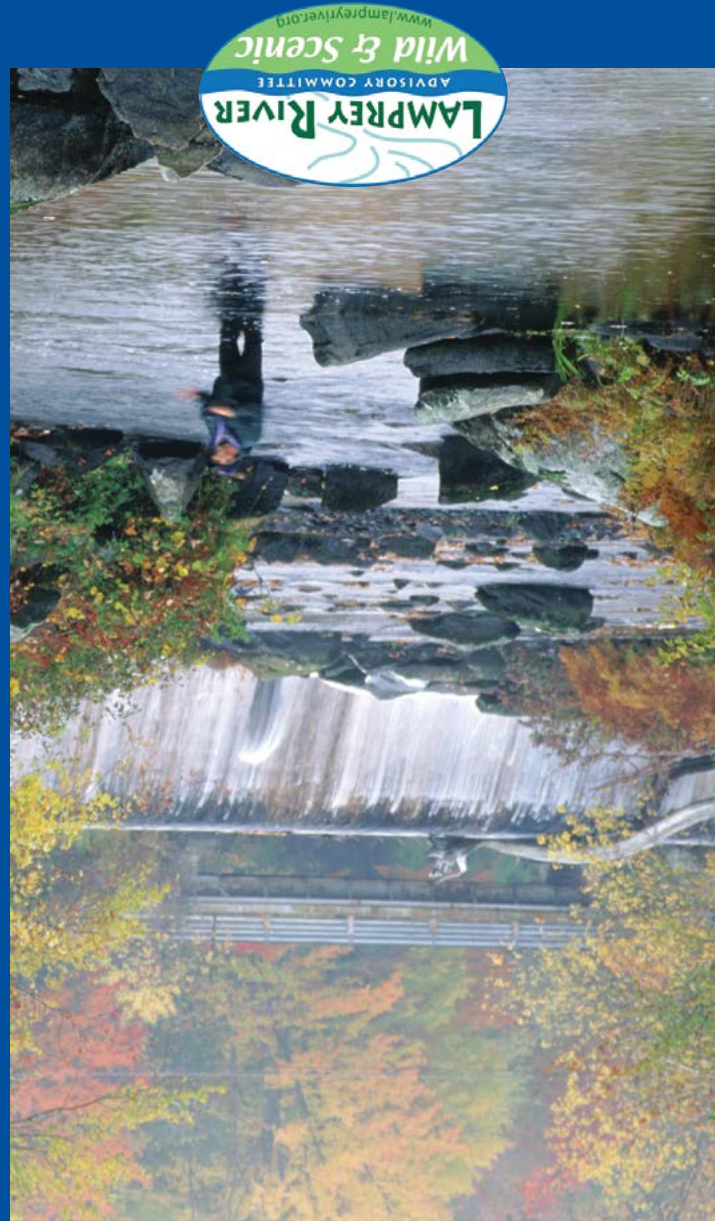
**DIRECTIONS:** Off Grant Road in Newmarket between Ash Swamp Road and Doe Farm Road.

### Other Sites to Visit:

- Town conservation areas: Visit websites for Epping, Lee, Durham, and Newmarket.
- Southeast Land Trust properties: Visit [www.selnh.org](http://www.selnh.org)



Right: Packers Falls, Durham. JERRY HONKHAN - ECOPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



Hikers can find some magnificent old trees at George Falls Woods. S. PETERSEN

# LAMPREY RIVER

## Explore the



Historic Wadleigh Falls circa 1900. LEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO

### For further information

Please visit [www.LampreyRiver.org](http://www.LampreyRiver.org)

### Thank you

Thank you to the boards within the towns of Epping, Lee, Durham and Newmarket, for helping to make this guide a reality.

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### Credits

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