

## Newsletter Summer 2019



### Champion of Land Protection

The health and integrity of a river is determined by more than what happens within its riverbanks. Rivers are defined and protected by the land along the river, but also by the land that surrounds small headwater streams, wetlands, and groundwater recharge areas. Protecting the best and/or most sensitive land helps to protect the water and the overall environment that relies on that water.

As of May 2019, the Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee has invested more than \$5.04 million to permanently protect 3719 acres along the river. This has involved dedicated hours of research and negotiations with landowners and other funding partners. Laurel Cox, former land protection administrator, embodies that dedication.



Laurel Cox (left) receives a framed photo of the Lamprey River from committee member Dick Lord, who took the photo and framed it.

The inscription on the brass plate reads:

**Laurel Cox  
In Thanks for many years  
working to preserve the Lamprey**

*photo by S. Petersen*

The following is an excerpt from the *Twenty Years of Progress Report (2017)* that Laurel wrote:

Over the ten years I have actively worked in land protection, the dominant theme of the process has been partnership. Some projects are relatively simple, such as the donation of a conservation easement or property by a single generous landowner to a single land trust organization. There can also be the complexity of a single project that encompasses multiple properties, landowners, land trusts, state agencies, and all the accompanying transaction personnel (banks, lawyers, surveyors, and appraisers).

The most important partnership in land protection work is with the landowner. It is a daunting task for a farmer or forester to commit to a permanent legal restriction over family land. For some people, a conservation easement can be a logical decision for a life spent in active environmental conservation. For other projects,

the decision is much more difficult: are the owners ready to trust the legal system, town, state, or federal government to understand how to wisely manage the farm to which they have devoted their lives? Positive, trustworthy relationships are important at every stage. The bottom line for the success of these projects is that all the entities involved are working cooperatively toward the common goal of protecting the forests, fields, and rivers of our neighborhood for the long term benefit of our future generations. I am proud to have played a role in helping LRAC with 21 projects that protected almost 1000 acres.

## Signs of Summer on Route 87

Good things are happening in Epping! The Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee is pleased to have partnered with the Epping Conservation Commission to add some much needed signage to the Tilton Conservation Area, where Route 87 crosses the Lamprey River.

# Lamprey River Floodplain


The Lamprey River overflows its banks almost every year and floods a large portion of the lowlands in this area. Some of the amphibians, reptiles, birds, and small mammals that live here depend on the flooding for food and reproduction. Certain trees and plants, which have adapted to the extremes of the water flow, thrive here. As the river recedes, a large amount of the floodwater is slowly absorbed into the ground, recharging the underground aquifers. These aquifers provide water for our use throughout the year.

During this flooding, the river can rearrange itself as it wears down the banks forming a new channel for the main river to flow through. The old river channel then becomes an oxbow, slough, or vernal pool that holds water certain times of the year and provides a haven for wildlife.

This portion of the Lamprey is vital as an important floodplain that many living creatures are tied to, including humans. Towns downstream use the river as a source of drinking water and the pulse of the floodplains help keep it clean.

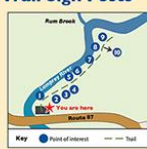



The Lamprey has been designated a National Wild and Scenic River. The designation helps to preserve important areas like this and provides support so the towns can work together on river related issues.

**Please tread lightly. Do your part to keep the river clean and protect the wildlife habitat in the area.**




### Guide to the Floodplain Trail Sign Posts

- Floodplain shrubs, such as silky dogwood, arrowwood viburnum, and sweet pepperbush have adaptations that allow them to withstand flooding. They help to provide shade, erosion control, and habitat.
- The depressions along the sides of the river are called vernal pools and are essential to fairy shrimp and certain frogs and salamanders that have adapted to temporary, fish-free waters.
- Flood plain trees include black cherry, silver maple, American hornbeam, red maple, American elm, hemlock, and shagbark hickory. The roots of these trees help to prevent erosion, the canopy offers shade to the land and river, and the seeds, nuts, and berries of these trees are valuable food for wildlife.
- Many different kinds of ferns thrive in the wet soil here including lady sensitive, interrupted, New York, and royal. Before the ferns unfurl and trees blossom in late spring, bouquets of spring wildflowers emerge and bloom. Along the trail you'll find trout lily, trillium, spring beauty, wood anemone, dwarf ginger, and bellwort.
- Standing dead trees provide homes to wood ducks, chickadees, woodpeckers, and other animals that nest in tree cavities. The fallen trees provide cover for salamanders, chipmunks, and the weasels that hunt for them. As the trees decay they return important nutrients to the soil and water.
- The log jams that spread across the river here might seem messy and bothersome to paddlers, but they are important to many river dwellers. Fish and turtles use the jams to hide from predators and feed on the insects that live there. River otters and muskrat catch fish near the logs, while other mammals such as bobcats and raccoons use them to cross the river.
- The silver maple trees that you see here are well adapted to the floodplains. Their wide spreading roots help to protect the tree when other trees might topple. Even when the silver maples fall, they can continue to grow in an almost horizontal position.
- Stranded branches, brush, and logs were left behind when flood waters receded. These piles are good hiding places for mice, which are important food for owls, hawks, foxes, and coyotes. The next spring, the piles are moved by high water to other spots downstream.
- The depression or wet area that you see here was once the old river channel. Many years ago the river changed its course and it now travels a different route. It is likely to have moved when the bridge was first built to cross the river. This old channel goes all the way back to the bridge. In other places along the river, beaver activity has caused the river to change course.
- This site is where the previous landowner brought in fill to build a house and driveway too close to the wetlands and without proper permits. Work was undertaken to remove the gravel and restore the wetland. Wetland plants, some of which were planted, including spirea, speckled alder, silky dogwood, nannyberry viburnum, and many sedges, are growing well as the site continues to recover.







### Ecological Diversity

One of the reasons for the Lamprey River's Wild and Scenic designation is its outstanding ecological diversity and quality. This map shows extensive wetlands along the river, a major contributor to ecological health and clean water.





### Site Map



**Please use caution.**  
From here downstream to Wadleigh Falls (NH Route 152) is one of the wider stretches of the Lamprey River. It contains lots of in-stream wood that chokes the channel and is critical for aquatic organisms, including fish. Paddlers can expect frequent downed trees and log jams. Some of these require maneuvering to avoid; others must be portaged. All can pose a risk to paddlers at various flow conditions.

For more information about vernal pools, dead trees, in-stream wood, and river animals, visit [www.LampreyRiver.org](http://www.LampreyRiver.org) and type your request into the search box.





The kiosk panel above is new, replacing an older version that was damaged by several floods and subsequent attempts to clean it. The new kiosk sign includes a map and site descriptors for the flood plain trail. Formerly, a separate brochure was needed to understand what the trail markers were showing. Keeping the

brochure box full of brochures (and free of trash or mice nests) was always challenging. Visitors now can take a photo of the site descriptors with their smart phones and have the information in hand as they explore the trail.



Volunteers installed the new canoe access sign on May 23, officially marking the site that many people might never have noticed.

Photo by Dick Lord

Less obvious signs have also been added. Missing site posts on the flood plain trail have been replaced and a few new ones have been added to help visitors locate some of the less obvious site posts.

Please thank the members of the Epping Conservation Commission for their vision to improve the park and their diligence in pursuing a grant from the Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee. We were pleased to be a supporter and partner of this worthwhile project.

Future work at the park includes crossings for the wetter sections of the flood plain trail and improvements on the canoe launch ramp. Stay tuned!

## Trails and Tribulations



One of the on-going principles of the Lamprey Rivers Advisory Committee is to enjoy the outdoors while protecting the resources that make the river and surrounding area enjoyable. When few people visit an area, fewer problems tend to arise. When more people visit, even with good intentions, more problems tend to arise. As you head outside this summer, please do your part to keep nature natural.

Most trails along the Lamprey River are geared for short trips on conservation land, so please be a respectful guest. The following “Leave no trace” principles will to make everyone’s trip to the great outdoors great (adapted from REI Expert Advice, for day hikes):

- Plan ahead and prepare:

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups when possible. Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces:
  - Concentrate use on existing trails. Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when it's wet or muddy.
- Dispose of waste properly:
  - Pack it in, pack it out.
  - Bag and remove dog waste. Do not leave bags on trails.
  - Deposit solid human waste in a hole dug 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp and trails. Cover and disguise the hole when finished.
- Leave what you find:
  - The adage “take only pictures, leave only footprints” still holds, although leaving fewer footprints is even better.
  - Preserve the past: Examine (but do not touch) cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
  - Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
  - Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species: Clean boot soles, kayak hulls, and bike tires off between trips.
- Minimize campfire impacts (be careful with fire).
- Respect wildlife:
  - Observe wild animals from a distance. Do not follow or approach.
  - Never feed animals.
  - Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Be considerate of other visitors:
  - Cyclists yield to hikers, hikers yield to horses, downhill hikers yield to uphill hikers.
  - Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.
  - Manage your pet.

## **Date Night**

It was a dark and cloudy night, about 70°. In the backyard, shiny, slender brown bodies were everywhere, most darting back into the soil as I walked. Some, however, were getting very neighborly and were sharing far more than idle gossip. I don't normally think of my backyard as a hot spot on a Friday night, but that night was all about stirring the night crawler gene pool.

If we conjugate the verb “to love”, we get I love, you love, he loves, she loves, we love, they love; and those night crawlers were doing it all. There is no telling who is he or she; it doesn’t matter. For worms, it’s both and neither at the same time. Maybe that is why worm reproduction is called “conjugation.”



This is a family-friendly newsletter and not everyone will enjoy the intimate details, but for those who are curious, the Cooperative Extension in Illinois has a great website in plain English that explains all sorts of interesting worm stuff. <https://extension.illinois.edu/worms/> If you get the chance, step outside to your own backyard at night with a flashlight and perhaps you, too, can witness the spectacle of worm date night.



## Summer Events along the Lamprey River



- July 13, 8-11. Rivers for Change river clean up, Schoppmeyer Park, Newmarket (kayaks available to rent through [sevenriverspaddling.com](http://sevenriverspaddling.com))
- July 13, 2-5, Rivers for Change public paddle, Schoppmeyer Park, Newmarket (kayaks available to rent through [sevenriverspaddling.com](http://sevenriverspaddling.com))
- July 18, 2-3, kids’ presentation at Nottingham Library
- July 27, 11-3, Splash and Dash, Schanda Park, Newmarket. (Visit <http://www.newmarketrec.org/lamprey-river-plash-dash/> for details.)
- August 13, 6:30-7:30, *Dam Straight! Balancing History and Ecology on the Lamprey River*, Durham Public Library
- August 17, 1-4, tidal ecopaddle, Schanda Park, Newmarket
- August 24, (tentative) 11-2, public picnic and paddle, Mary Blair Park, Epping

For more information, please contact [info@lampreyriver.org](mailto:info@lampreyriver.org)

For more information about the Lamprey River program from Rivers for Change, please visit <http://www.riversforchange.org/lampreyriver>.