


Newsletter Spring 2024



Herring Aid Is Back!

 <p>alewife <i>Alosa pseudoharengus</i></p>	<p>Herring Aid will return this spring when the river herring head back from the ocean to their birth places upstream to spawn the next generation. In 2023, almost 60,000 fish passed through the Macallen Dam fish ladder and back to the Lamprey River.</p> <p>How many will we see this year?</p>
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- Witness first-hand the great annual migration of the river herring.
- Ask the biologists all your fishy questions.
- See recently-completed engineered improvements at Macallen Dam, such as the new flood gate, reinforced sidewalls on the south bank, and a spruced-up yard at the NH Fish and Game staging area.
- If you are brave... handle the river herring.
- If you are *really* brave, hold a sea lamprey or let baby American eels swim around your fingers.

This event is free and will occur rain or shine.

Date: Saturday, May 18, 10-noon

Location: Macallen Dam, Newmarket, NH

Free parking is available along Route 108 and behind the Newmarket Public Library. Follow the fish signs to the top of the fish ladder.



Scary(?) sea lamprey
Photo by RH Lord

See you there!



Epping Fuel Farm Fire a Close Call for the Lamprey River

As many of you know, there was a massive fire in Epping on January 13 at a fuel storage facility close to the Lamprey River. Responders from many towns were called to help, including the fire crew from the Manchester Airport. Fire-control foam, a known toxic hazard, had to be used to contain and extinguish the fire. The aftermath was far less of a media sensation, thankfully, so many do not know how the story ended. When we reached out to NHDES for follow-up, they responded to our concerns with this great letter from Todd Selig, Town of Durham administrator, shared with Durham residents January 19, 2024. Used by permission.

During the oil tanker fire in Epping last weekend, our hard-working public works staff in Durham and at the UNH water treatment facility determined that the conflagration was around 2,000 feet from the Lamprey River.

In an abundance of caution, staff proactively moved to alternative water sources until Durham/UNH could determine whether a public health concern existed within the Lamprey River.

After conferring with the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), it was confirmed a couple of days later that the oil spill, as well as the flame suppressant materials utilized to suppress the oil tanker fire, were contained within a drainage ditch area and addressed by hazardous materials professionals. Further, with substantial river levels and flows within the Lamprey resulting from recent heavy rains, if any materials had entered the Lamprey, they were determined to have been de minimis and would have been washed downstream and out to sea.

The UNH/Durham water system was subsequently cleared by NHDES to resume withdrawal operations from the Lamprey River.

In summary, Durham/UNH staff acted swiftly and in an abundance of caution to protect our local public water supply, moved to alternate sources, and eventually resumed normal withdrawals from the Lamprey River. There was no public health impact to our water supply in Durham or at UNH whatsoever.

Lee Public Canoe Access Updates

The Lee Historical Society has been awarded a LRAC community grant to create and install waist-high informational panels that invite visitors to learn more about the mills at Wadleigh Falls and the long history of Indigenous presence in this section of the river. The panels will be placed at the upstream end of the Lee Public Canoe Access parking lot off Route 152. We are happy to be a partner in sharing this rich story in Lee's history.

While the LRAC is in a holding pattern waiting for low flows and good weather to begin repairs to the granite stairs and implement erosion controls, we are happy to report that the Lee Conservation Commission has been very busy improving the site through removal of invasive plants and promoting the regrowth of desirable shoreline plants. The site was heavily tangled in invasive glossy buckthorn last spring, but after several sessions of manual pulling and cutting last year and this year, much of the buckthorn stumps now sport black plastic coverings tied around them to prevent regrowth and side sprouting. (If you see them, please leave them alone.) The remaining good trees and shrubs are in a strong position to thrive this year. The conservation commission crew also noted that a beaver has started to chew on the desirable trees and shrubs in the area, so they placed wire mesh around those trunks to protect the trees.

Like much of the shoreline along the Lamprey River in this stretch, poison ivy is prevalent. The conservation commission folks braved the poison ivy to remove and bag the buckthorn, but nobody wants the general public to have to endure the consequences of skin contact with this itchy plant. The Conservation Commission hopes to engage a poison ivy removal specialist this year to remove and control the plants. When people say they are itching to go fishing or paddling this summer in the Lamprey River in Lee, that should be in the good sense, not in the literal sense.



glossy buckthorn, photo courtesy of <https://extension.unh.edu/>



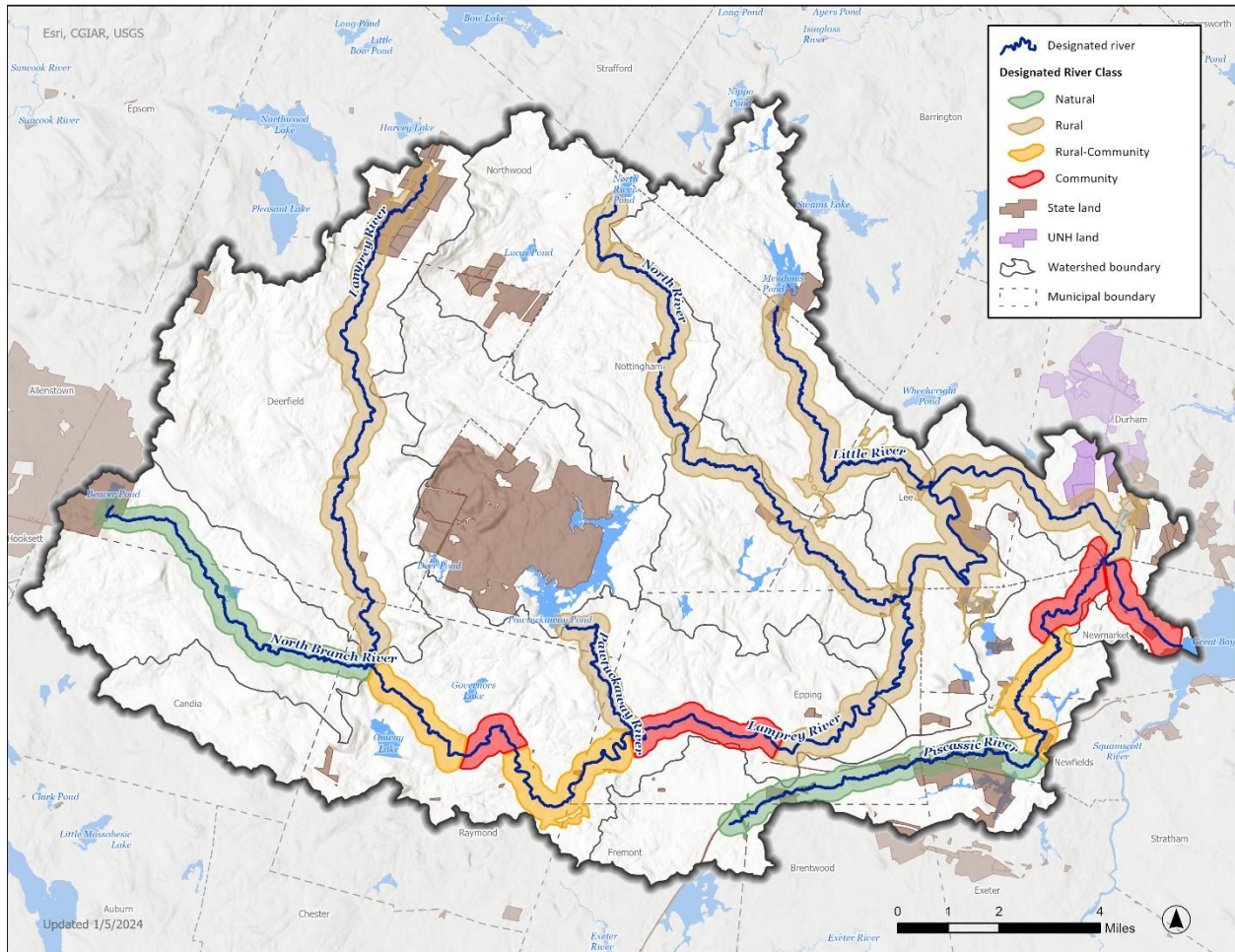
bagged buckthorn stumps at the Lee Public Canoe Access



poison ivy, photo courtesy of <https://extension.unh.edu/>

River Corridors: What Merits Extra Protection

The Lamprey River and five of its main tributaries are designated as protected under New Hampshire law and the New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Program, which is administered by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). The rivers themselves are subject to extra protections, but so too are their quarter-mile corridors. According to the law, [RSA 483](#), "The Designated River corridor is defined as the river and the land area located within a distance of 1,320 feet of the normal high water mark or to the landward extent of the 100 year floodplain of a designated river as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, whichever distance is larger." This rule applies to both sides of the river, so the total river corridor is actually one-half mile wide.



The designated, protected river corridors of the Lamprey River and its five main tributaries. Map courtesy of NHDES.

This corridor is always important to the health of the river, but it becomes extra important when people want to add new development or redevelop an existing area along a river. If any part of a proposed project is located within the designated river corridor, the project becomes subject to review by the local river advisory committee, such as the Lamprey River Advisory Committee. Local river advisory committees do not have the authority to issue or deny permits, but NHDES must consider their comments in the issuance of any permits, such as shoreland development, dredge and fill of wetlands, or major alteration of terrain projects.

NHDES has a tool that helps landowners, developers, and town conservation commissions and planning boards to determine whether a project is within a designated river or not, [NH Designated River Corridor Web Map \(arcgis.com\)](http://arcgis.com). Once you are on the site, you can zoom into a street address or tax map number and see where the river corridor boundaries are.

If you live or work in the river corridor, please be an extra good steward to your land and our river.