

Newsletter Summer 2024



Summer Recreation Water Quality Update

Summer is here and people are eager to get outside to enjoy the Lamprey River. We are happy to report some improvements over the past few years, but we also need to add a new word of caution based on last summer's experience.

1. Update: The Epping Wastewater Treatment Facility is no longer a key concern. There were no releases of partially-treated sewage last summer. In fact, there have been no such releases for over a year and no further releases are anticipated. Good news! Although no releases are anticipated, especially in summer, in the event of an emergency release, the Durham-UNH Water System and other key entities will be alerted. A moratorium is still in effect for new sewage system users in Epping. Planning for a permanent solution is under way.
2. Status quo: Moonlight Brook at Schanda Park in Newmarket continues to be a problem. Several years of testing often show high levels of human fecal bacteria present in the water. People (and dogs) should avoid direct contact with the water. If you plan to go paddling, you might want to avoid entering and exiting your boat there in case you tip and fall in the water. Paddling through that site should be OK if you stay dry; just make sure to wash your hands and rinse off well when you get back to land.
3. New: With all the rain last year, many contaminants got washed off the land and resulted in unsafe bacteria levels region-wide. This was true in the Lamprey River, as well as most other rivers and lakes. We cannot offer an exact recommendation, but the general rule for healthy people is to avoid direct contact with river or lake water for 48 hours following a rain event of more than an inch. If flooding happens, stay out of the water until the water returns to a normal level.

The State of New Hampshire does not test any site for swimming safety along the Lamprey River as it does with public beaches, mostly because the Lamprey River has no public beaches. Even with robust testing, you should assume that surface water might be contaminated in some way. If you have any open sores or a compromised immune system, be safe and stay out of the water. Even if you are healthy, remember that while most of the Lamprey River is safe for fishing and swimming, it is not drinking water. Do not drink untreated water. If you get untreated water in your mouth, do not swallow; spit it out and then rinse with fresh water. Click for more tips on [staying safe with water recreation](https://www.lampreyriver.org/download_file/508). (https://www.lampreyriver.org/download_file/508)

River Herring Tales

While we don't yet know how many river herring utilized the Macallen Dam fish ladder or the Wiswall fish ladder in 2024, we do know we are on track to match or break the old record of 92,000 fish from 2016. We were extremely happy to learn that the fish runs this year appear to be very strong. On the day of Herring Aid, May 18, there were approximately 2,000 alewives and 1,000 lampreys using the fish ladder, an event record! In addition, over 100,000 baby American eels had been counted the day prior to Herring Aid. Kids of all ages gleefully petted lampreys in the touch tank and some got a good soaking when the lampreys slapped the water.



Photos by R.H. Lord

Now that the event is over, the alewives and lampreys are swimming free in the freshwater portion of the river and spawning the next generation. Adult alewives will spawn and return to sea where they will feed on tiny food particles that they filter from the water. The alewife babies will stay in freshwater until fall and then they, too, will go to sea. Juvenile lampreys will spend about 5 years in the sediment of the river, filtering food from the water. After that, they will head to sea and spend several years feeding on the blood and tissue of living fish. Unlike alewives and lampreys, American eel babies actually hatch at sea and head to freshwater where they will stay until it is time to breed, and then they will go to sea. They feed on plankton, tiny fish, and small crustaceans.

All diadromous fish (meaning they live in both fresh and salt water) world-wide are facing many threats: dams, overfishing, pollution, loss of habitat, climate change, etc.. They could all use a helping hand. Herring Aid is one small piece of that and the fish seemed ready for that assistance this year. We hope you will join us next year for Herring Aid 2025.



Granting Wishes



For many years, the Lamprey River Advisory Committee has provided Community Grant funding for worthwhile projects that align with goals of the *2013 Lamprey Rivers Management Plan*. We are happy to announce that six grants were awarded this past spring and will be used to support valuable and interesting projects in several Lamprey River towns this summer.

- Durham: Doe Farm Conservation Area Forest Management Plan Update
- Lee: Wadleigh Falls Kiosk for Indigenous and Mill History
- Lee: Poison Ivy Removal at the Public Canoe Access on Route 152
- Newmarket: Willey House Central Park Mural and Community Engagement Series
- Newmarket: Old Lee Class A Trail Improvements and Signage
- Newmarket: Wiggin Farm Conservation Area Bridge and Boardwalk Improvements

Projects in all 14 towns that connect with the Lamprey River or its tributaries are eligible for consideration. Awards up to \$7500 can be used to support projects related to history, outreach, recreation, water resources, and wildlife & ecology. We also welcome opportunities to work with partners on research and land protection projects. For more information, please visit [LRAC Community Grants Program :: Lamprey River](#) or contact us at info@lampreyriver.org.

Stream Team: Installment #1

Have you ever been on the river and witnessed something that you thought wasn't quite right, or that definitely wasn't right? What would you do? To whom should you report it?

We have tried to make it easier to recognize when you see something that is not right, what you can and should do, and how to report it. Welcome to the Stream Team! For the next few quarterly newsletters, we will highlight one of the reportable issues in detail. If you cannot wait that long, we also have a [summary guide](#) that lists the issue, provides a link for more information, and how to report the issue.

Please note: Most of the land along the Lamprey River and its tributaries is privately owned. While you have the right to be on or in the water, you will be trespassing if you go onto private land without permission. Do not put yourself in danger by engaging in unlawful detective work for a better photo or to confront a landowner. The best way to

handle issues is to provide evidence and let authorized town or state officials take it from there.

In most cases, reporting is easy:

1. Take a photo with GPS enabled.
2. Record any pertinent notes to accompany the issue.
3. Contact the authority listed for the issue.

Issue #1: illegal dumping of yard waste into or next to the water

Taking care of a yard is a lot of work. The lawn needs to be mowed; leaves need to be raked, weeds and storm debris need to be picked up, and then all this stuff needs to go somewhere. Legally, that “somewhere” cannot include open water, such as a stream, pond, or river, or a wetland that might or might not have open water. Dumping yard waste in or next to water or a wetland is considered “filling” a wetland. Even dumping a bag of lawn clippings can cause substantial damage by smothering what lies below. If dumped next to a river, the natural bank vegetation can be smothered and killed, accelerating erosion of the river bank. Clippings or raked leaves dumped into the river can smother the river bottom, destroying habitat for aquatic creatures and creating a zone of low or no oxygen. Dumping yard waste this way is never OK. For the legal stuff pertaining to this issue, see [Section 482-A:3 Excavating and Dredging Permit; Certain Exemptions. \(state.nh.us\)](#).

If you see something similar to the images below, please take a photo with GPS enabled and contact that town’s code enforcement officer.



lawn clippings in the river



lawn clippings on a river bank

Summer ponderings...

“People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every day.”
— A.A. Milne, [Winnie-the-Pooh](#)

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, look to tomorrow, rest this afternoon.”
— Charles M. Schulz, [Charlie Brown's Little Book of Wisdom](#)