

Lamprey River Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes November 18, 2025 7:00 P.M.



Location: Lee Public Safety Complex, 20 George Bennett Road

APPROVED WITH AMENDMENTS DECEMBER 16, 2025

representatives attending in person:

John Wallace (Barrington); Dick Lord, David Steinberg (Durham); Jim Brady, Sara Morris (Lee); Grace Levergood (Northwood); Kathy McDonald, Therese Thompson (Raymond)

staff: Suzanne Petersen

guests: Ben Engel, Ted Howard, Debra Smith

Meeting began at 6:55.

summary of motions passed:

- **Dave Steinberg made a motion to approve SELT's request for \$200,000 for the Banks Conservation Project in Lee contingent on having sufficient funds in the LRAC land protection account, anticipated for spring of 2026. John Wallace made a motion to amend the original motion by adding a ~~second~~ two contingencies: 1. The landowner and SELT must execute the project agreement as discussed with LRAC and 2. *The Lamprey River Bend unit must be a priority.* Sara Morris seconded the amendment to the original motion. Amended motion passed unanimously.**
- **Dave Steinberg made a motion to approve SELT's request for an extension on the Mitchell Conservation Project through June 30, 2026. Grace Levergood seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Epping, contractor warehouse bays, 42 Exeter Road, shoreland: Jim Brady made a motion to approve the draft letter as revised. John Wallace seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Epping, Resource Waste Services solid waste transfer station: Dick Lord made a motion to submit the amended letter to NHDES for public testimony. Kathy McDonald seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Sara Morris made a motion to send a letter to UNH requesting that a no-cost extension be given to David Needle to continue toad pathogen work through Dec. 31, 2026. Dick Lord seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

Doe Farm Forest Management Plan Grant wrap-up, Ted Howard, Durham Trustees of the Trust Fund:

- The LRAC approved a community grant for \$4,260 to the Durham Trustees of the Trust Fund in June 2024. The funds were used help the town pay a professional forester to update the stewardship plan for this 85-acre forest. Funding from LRAC and other sources totaled \$11,000.
- The plan addresses the following goals:

- Maintain a healthy forest ecosystem through sustainable forest management, focusing on forest health, biodiversity, and wildlife.
- Conserve and protect lands which are either sensitive to disturbance, subject to legal requirements, or are not common in New Hampshire.
- Manage public use of the district's lands to protect the health of the forest ecosystem.
- Mitigate impacts of climate change on the forest and sequester and store carbon via natural climate solutions.
- Collaborate with local, regional, and state agencies and organizations and provide community education in accord with natural resources goals and objectives.
- The forest has been heavily infested by glossy buckthorn. Volunteer groups have pulled these shrubs and herbicide was applied a few years ago, with seemingly good results: many native trees are coming back.
- Red pines and ashes are now dead or dying. Best practices recommend cutting healthy ash trees that remain to encourage sprout growth. Smaller trees are less susceptible to emerald ash borer and the goal is to keep a stock of ash trees on site.
- The final report has been completed. The trustees are working to determine the best place on-line to house the report for maximum public access.
- Once the LRAC receives the final forest management plan and the LRAC grant report, this project will be complete and the final payment can be made to Durham.

approval of minutes from October 21, 2025:

Dick Lord made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Jim Brady seconded. Minutes were approved with 7 yes votes and 1 abstention.

financial report:

- Checking account statement, year-to-date budget, and land protection account were reviewed with no issues noted.
- Despite the federal shut-down, request for funding came through as usual.
- We are on track to spend down the FY2025 budget by the end of April 2026. The new FY2026 budget began October 1.
- We are unsure about the status of the FY2026 budget from the 2021-2026 cooperative agreement. It was not formally approved before Jim MacCartney retired. The fiscal agent, the accountant and the new NPS rep are looking into it.

Banks conservation Project presentation, Ben Engel, SELT:

- This 370-acre property in Lee has long been a priority for protection for most southeast NH groups. It meets all first-priority criteria for LRAC funding.
- The parcel is being divided into 5 conservation units to maximize eligibility from various funding sources. The "Lamprey River bend" unit is of the highest concern for LRAC.
- The estimated value of the property is \$7-8 million. The landowner is seeking \$3 million in compensation. SELT estimates that \$390,000 will be needed for due

diligence, legal fees, and property management that cannot be covered by governmental conservation funds.

- The landowner is committed to protecting the land but is also committed to providing some affordable housing. After much debate among the landowner, SELT, and a developer, the target area for 5-6 duplexes on 10 acres is on the western side of Tuttle Road.
- SELT is requesting \$200,000 from LRAC toward the project.
- The project details are still being worked out; SELT and the landowner need to execute a legal project agreement.
- LRAC questions and concerns:
 - The land protection fund currently does not have \$200,000 to commit to this project. It is expected that the land protection account will reach this threshold by spring of 2026.
 - One of the representatives from Lee was distressed to see surveying flags along Tuttle Road where the duplexes are being proposed.
 - With five units within the larger project being funded and managed separately, there was great concern that the most desirable land to develop is in the Lamprey River bend unit. Questions were raised whether LRAC could direct the majority of funding or at least half to this section. The response was that such a condition might make the whole project extremely challenging.
 - The Lee Conservation Commission heard about this project today and was supportive of efforts to pursue this project. Doing so with conservation commission funding will require a warrant article subject to public approval, best pursued in 2027.
 - **Dave Steinberg made a motion to approve SELT's request for \$200,000 for the Banks Conservation Project in Lee contingent on having sufficient funds in the LRAC land protection account, anticipated for spring of 2026. John Wallace made a motion to amend the original motion by adding a-second- two contingencies: 1. The landowner and SELT must execute the project agreement as discussed with LRAC and 2. The Lamprey River Bend unit must be a priority.** Sara Morris seconded the amendment to the original motion. Amended motion passed unanimously.

request from SELT to extend funding deadline for Mitchell Conservation Project, Newmarket and Epping

Due to circumstances beyond SELT's control, the Mitchell project will not close as planned by Dec. 31, 2025. SELT is requesting an extension to June 30, 2026. **Dave Steinberg made a motion to approve SELT's request for an extension on the Mitchell Conservation Project through June 30, 2026. Grace Levergood seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

Newmarket Elm Street mural project presentation, Debra Smith, Newmarket Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission:

- The Elm Street mural near the library has fallen on hard times. The 315-foot wall is the former foundation for the Newmarket Manufacturing Company weaving room. The 24 formerly vibrant paintings completed in 1997 have deteriorated largely due to seepage from the adjacent parking lot into the wall. The Arts, Culture, and Tourism Commission has assessed alternatives based on town resident input: do nothing, restore the wall as it was in 1997, or renovate. The best path forward is to renovate. The overall plan is as follows:
 - Perform minimal intervention to prepare the wall surface (sandblast & fill existing gaping holes).
 - Paint the wall either a neutral color or with cohesive background graphic (TBD by artist)
 - Install 12 removable steel frames (similar to Pocket Park mural panels).
 - Digitally print 2-sides of each PVC panel to showcase all original images in a rotating schedule. Each panel will measure 48"h x 72"w.
- The wall is owned by Chinburg Development and they have agreed to the plan. In addition, they will install transitional steps from the parking lot to the new library plaza.
- The Arts Commission plans to engage in extensive public communications and activities in support of the project. The importance of the Lamprey River to the town will be central to this effort. The renovated wall and art will be completed in 2027, in time for Newmarket's 300th anniversary.
- The total cost of the project will be \$33,500. The LRAC is being asked to consider \$3,500 for services of the mural artist/coordinator and \$3,500 for the printing of the two-sided panels.

No formal grant application has been submitted yet, but the committee agreed by consensus that this is a project that they would like to support.

approval of project review letters:

- **Epping, contractor warehouse bays, 42 Exeter Road, shoreland: Jim Brady made a motion to approve the draft letter as revised. John Wallace seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
- **Epping, Resource Waste Services solid waste transfer station: Dick Lord made a motion to submit the amended letter to NHDES for public testimony. Kathy McDonald seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

Wadleigh Falls kiosk update:

The canoe access sign and the new history panels have been moved into their more visible and accessible positions at the Lee Public Canoe Access. Letters were sent to the Cowasuck Band leaders, Lee's Indigenous storyteller, and the Lee Historical Association requesting their presence at a ribbon-cutting ceremony (date to be determined) before winter sets in. There was no response from the Cowasuck Band leadership. The Lee storyteller declined due to health issues.

The LRAC members present agreed that a ceremony is unwise at this time. Jim Brady of Lee reported that he has seen many vehicles stopped at the canoe launch and people are enjoying the new kiosk.

frog song display:

Dick Lord has been hard at work creating a sound board for a new display that will feature the calls of 8 local frogs and toads. David Steinberg is consulting.

discussion about proposed rule changes to wildlife mitigation in wetland permits:

Due to the late time and complexity of this issue, we will revisit this at the December 16 meeting.

unexpended funds from the toad pathogen research grant:

David Steinberg advised the group that the full amount awarded was not spent and enough remains for lab analysis next year. **Sara Morris made a motion to send a letter to UNH requesting that a no-cost extension be given to David Needle to continue toad pathogen work through Dec. 31, 2026. Dick Lord seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

adjournment:

Dick Lord made a motion to adjourn. Jim Brady seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 9:20.

notetaker: Suzanne Petersen