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Lamprey watershed education and outreach

Lamprey River Watershed Association

Dawn Genes

Lamprey River Watershed Association

Lamprey River Watershed Association. Lamprey River Nominating Committee

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LAMPREY WATERSHED EDUCATION and OUTREACH

A Final Report to
The Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership

Submitted by



LAMPREY RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
Dawn Genes, Executive Director

Northwood, Deerfield, Candia, Raymond, Epping, Barrington,
Nottingham, Lee, Fremont, Brentwood, Exeter, Newfields,
and Newmarket, New Hampshire

December 31, 2010

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	1
Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Project Goals and Objectives.....	3
Activities.....	3
Outcomes.....	6
Appendices.....	7
Lamprey River Nomination Brochure	
Question and Answer Sheet	
Press Release	

Abstract

The Lamprey River Nomination Committee sought the assistance of the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) to complete an extensive and detailed information package to nominate the Lamprey River and its major tributaries to the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program. The nomination package was due at DES on June 1, 2010, was reviewed and accepted by the State Rivers Management Committee in September and forwarded to the Commissioner of DES. The nomination is now working through the NH legislature with hearings anticipated during the spring 2011 session. If passed, the bill should be signed by Governor Lynch in July of 2011.

Assistance from PREP was essential for the completion of a major outreach effort to landowners along the rivers under consideration, communication with each town selectboard, planning board and conservation commission, and with many partners and organizations throughout the watershed.

Executive Summary

In March of 2009, the Town of Raymond voted to form a committee to study nominating the Lamprey River to the New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP). An important and unique feature of the RMPP is the opportunity for municipalities to participate, through local river management advisory committees, in multi-town river corridor planning and implementation efforts. While state designation provides in-stream protection, the local plan addresses the management and protection of the shoreline and adjacent lands that make up the river corridor. Because the plan is locally developed, adopted and implemented, it reflects the specific needs, interests and concerns of local citizens.

In June of 2009, a Lamprey River Watershed conference was held in Nottingham with the 14 watershed towns participating. Those in attendance felt strongly that there needs to be communication up and down river about issues that affect all towns. Many participants signed up to work on the preparation of a nomination of the Lamprey River and the major tributaries to the RMPP. Currently, on the Lamprey River in Lee and Durham is protected through this program.

The Lamprey River Nomination Committee was formed in July of 2009 with the goal of adding the remaining 35 miles of the Lamprey River and 52 miles of its major tributaries to the RMPP. This required the preparation of an extensive nomination package for submittal to the NH Department of Environmental Services by their June 1, 2010 deadline. The State Rivers Management Committee voted to accept the nomination and recommended that the NH DES Commissioner, Tom Burack, endorse the nomination and forward it to the NH Legislature for consideration. Currently, this nomination and the nominations of three other rivers in the state is working through the House and the Senate and if passed, will be signed by the Governor in approximately July of 2011.

Extending the RMPP to the whole Lamprey and its major tributaries will increase public awareness of the river and create a local management and planning effort centered specifically on the river and its resources. Designation can promote public interest and a sense of stewardship and respect for the river by its citizens and local officials. As a result, future development is more apt to take place in a manner which assures that the valued river resources are maintained. A state designated river may also be targeted by various assistance programs, thereby increasing the probability that the efforts of various local river interests will be successful.

Introduction

The Great Bay's largest tributary, the Lamprey River runs sixty miles from its headwaters in Northwood to estuaries in Newmarket. Since prehistoric times it has been a vital resource to the people who lived and worked along its shore. As populations in southern New Hampshire continue to grow, the Lamprey's bordering towns have become increasingly aware of their mutual stake in the river's health. However, only the twelve miles in the towns of Durham and Lee are designated under the NHDES Rivers Management and Protection Program. An additional portion from Epping to Newmarket was designated a Wild and Scenic River by the National Parks Service in 1996, one of only two rivers in New Hampshire so honored. The Park Service found that the Lamprey was:

... remarkable for its relatively unspoiled beauty and the abundance of wildlife that flourish in the midst of the fast growing greater Portsmouth region of Southeastern New Hampshire. In an era of highly managed river resources, the Lamprey stands out for its relatively natural flood and drought regimes, to which the River's fish and wildlife inhabitants have adapted. Broad, forested floodplains provide excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife and plant species. Agricultural fields, steep forested slopes, tributary streams, and wetlands enhance habitat diversity, creating a rich breeding ground for waterfowl, songbirds, shorebirds, turtles and other wildlife.

This natural beauty is even more apparent thirteen years later as the pace of Seacoast population growth has increased.

The upstream portion of the Lamprey is also remarkable for its wild character and unspoiled beauty, particularly its large, unfragmented wetlands. Such wetlands are essential habitat for many animal and plant species, and play important roles in flood control and in maintaining an adequate supply of clean water. As development spreads upstream from the Seacoast, however, the health, beauty and essential ecosystem services delivered by this relatively undeveloped portion of the river and its tributaries are increasingly at risk. The towns of Epping, Raymond, Candia, Deerfield and Northwood offer more-affordable housing to workers commuting to Concord, Portsmouth, Manchester and even Boston since the completion of Rt. 101 ten years ago. Commercial and residential construction has increased. The 34-mile upstream portion of the Lamprey is under greater pressure than ever, yet it has no special conservation status, even though excessive runoff and deteriorating water quality here affect downstream as well as local water quality and increase the risk of flooding.

In June of 2009, the *Lamprey River Symposium -Your Water, Your Wallet, Your Watershed Conference* was held in Nottingham. This Conference, sponsored by the Lamprey River Watershed Association, the Coastal Training Program of the Great Bay NERR, the Lamprey River Advisory Committee, and Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership solicited participation from all fourteen towns encompassing the watershed. Attendance was high and upstream towns were particularly well represented. Interest focused on water quality and the need for coordination in planning, regulation and management along the entire river. Particularly useful were the GIS maps of resources in the area made by UNH PhD candidate in Natural Resources, Erika Washburn. This gave stakeholders a vision of the Lamprey in a regional and local context that had not existed before. When the conference adjourned at the end of the day, participants took with them a greater understanding of obstacles to and benefits from wise river management, but a spirit of resolve to act was in the air. This project builds upon the information presented, the momentum generated and the spirit of commitment in evidence.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goal of this project is to prepare a nomination of the entire Lamprey River and major tributaries to become “designated” rivers under the New Hampshire DES Rivers Management and Protection Program. The nomination form is extensive and detailed. In order for the State Rivers Management Committee to consider acceptance of the nomination, strong local and public support must be demonstrated. This project will support conducting education and outreach programs to gain local support for the nomination. This project focused on the stakeholders in the towns of Northwood, Deerfield, Candia, Raymond, Epping, Barrington, Nottingham, Fremont, Brentwood, Exeter, Newfields and Newmarket.

Activities

The Lamprey River Nomination Committee (LRNC) held its first meeting in August of 2009 with membership from watershed towns. The LRNC prepared outreach materials and prepared a strategy for widespread notification of watershed towns and residents of the interest in seeking designated status for the remaining Lamprey River sections and key tributaries. The LRNC includes a dozen volunteers who have been meeting on a regular basis since July 2009. The announcement of the formation of the Lamprey River Nomination Committee in July of 2009 and the nomination process underway was printed in the LRWA fall 2009 newsletter to 861 watershed residents.

A brochure about the nomination and the Rivers Management Protection Program and a Question and Answer Fact Sheet was prepared to use with outreach. A map of the nominated river sections was also prepared.

Notification of Corridor Communities

Letters of notification, brochures explaining the nomination process and maps of the watershed were mailed to all 14 of the municipalities within the Lamprey River watershed. Letters were addressed to the Chairman of each of the Select Boards, Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions. The towns included Northwood, Nottingham, Deerfield, Candia, Raymond, Epping, Newmarket, Barrington, Fremont, Brentwood, Exeter and Newfields.

Table III.1 Towns and Organizations Contacted in by LRNC

Town/Organization	Local Government	Conservation Commission	Planning Board
Barrington Town Office	Mike Morrison	John Wallace	John Huckins
Brentwood Town Office	Jeffrey Bryan	Rob Wofchuck	Bruce Stevens
Candia Town Office	Frederick Kelley	Susan Wilderman	Mary Girard
Deerfield Town Office	Stephen R. Barry	Serita Frey	Frederick J. McGarry
Durham Town Office	Neil Niman	James Houle	Lorne Parnell
Epping Town Office	Tom Gauthier	Greg Tillman	Greg Tillman
Exeter Town Office	William Campbell	Peter Richardson	Langdon Plumer
Fremont Town Office	Donald Gates	Jack Karcz	Roger Barham
Lee Town Office	John LaCourse	William Humm	Robert Smith
Raymond Town Office	Frank Bourque	Cheryl Killam	Jonathan Wood
Newfields Town Office	Wes Moore	Alison Watts	John Hayden
Newmarket Town Office	Michael LaBranche	Bruce Fecteau	John Badger
Northwood Town Office	Alden Dill	Stephen Roy	Peter Jones
Nottingham Town Office	Mary L. Bonser	Samuel Demeritt	Scott Canney

Notification to State Senators and State Representatives

Notification letters, brochures explaining the nomination process, and maps of the watershed were sent to Senators and Representatives of the communities within the Lamprey River Watershed.

Outreach to Watershed Stakeholders

Letters were sent on or around March 24, 2010 to the individual landowners along the Lamprey River in Deerfield, Raymond, Epping and Newmarket, in addition to landowners along the North Branch River in Candia, the Pawtuckaway River in Raymond, the North River and Little River in Nottingham, and the Little River and North River in the town of Lee. In total, approximately 600 pieces of first class mail went to river abutters. Notification was also sent to all Lamprey River Watershed Association volunteers via electronic mail.

The letters and emails discussed what was proposed and why, notice of three public information sessions and addresses to send letters of support.

News articles about the nomination efforts appeared in the Carriage Towne News on January 7, 2010 and the Manchester Union Leader on April 14, 2010. The Forum, an online newspaper serving the towns of Deerfield, Northwood, Candia and Nottingham printed the article “Lamprey River Group to File for River Protection” submitted by Dawn Genes on April 10.

Notices about the public informational sessions were placed on the local community public access TV channels in Deerfield, Newmarket and Raymond.

Partnership Efforts

The Natural Resources Outreach Coalition (NROC) has provided valuable technical assistance to the LRNC through facilitation and strategic planning at LRNC meetings, assistance with public presentation preparations for the public meetings, and with development of informational materials such as “Frequently Asked Questions and Answers” which was included in the landowner mailings. NROC also facilitated at the public information sessions and captured notes.

The Lamprey River Advisory Committee provided the initial seed money to get nomination efforts underway. LRAC was formed in 1991 when Congress enacted legislation authorizing a study to determine whether the Lamprey River should be designated a National Wild and Scenic River. The river was indeed found eligible, and designation occurred in 1996. LRAC also serves as the local management advisory committee under the RMPP, under which segments of the Lamprey in Lee and Durham were designated in 1990.

Northwood Area Land Management Collaborative (NALMC) is a unique, voluntary public/private partnership working together across property boundaries to maintain and enhance the ecological, social, recreational, and economic resources. The NALMC neighborhood currently encompasses over 3,000 acres and includes land owned by NH Fish and Game Department, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, the Town of Northwood, Coe-Brown Northwood Academy, the University of NH, Harmony Hill farm and several other private landowners.

Bear-Paw Regional Greenways is a land trust with a mission to permanently conserve a network of lands that protects our region's water, wildlife habitat, forests and farmland. It works to conserve open space through outreach, education and land protection project assistance in towns within the Lamprey River watershed, including Candia, Deerfield, Northwood, Nottingham, and Raymond. Bear-Paw printed a notice of the April 13 public information session in Deerfield in their spring newsletter.

The National Park Service’s Rivers and Trails Program works with local citizens groups to preserve valuable open space, assistance in river conservation, and develop trail and greenway networks. It often acts as a catalyst to help assemble the necessary pieces to achieve on-the-ground conservation success,

helping identify resources, navigate the planning process, and convert ideas into action. Lelia Mellen, NPS, provided technical assistance in conceptual planning, organizational development, and historical and cultural resource documentation.

The Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire's mission is to conserve the significant land and natural resources of southeastern New Hampshire, including water, working farms and forests, wildlife habitat and natural areas, and community landscapes. As a regional land trust, the organization serves 39 communities of greater Rockingham County.

The Lamprey River Watershed Association (LRWA) was formed in 1983 to promote the restoration, conservation, and sustainable use of the natural resources of the Lamprey River Watershed. It supports the natural resource education and research on the Lamprey ecosystem. Moreover, it works in partnership to increase the understanding among citizens about the importance of conservation in the watershed. LRWA had identified the need for expanded designation in their strategic plan.

Public Meetings

Three public meetings: April 7 in Raymond, April 8 in Newmarket, and April 13 in Deerfield, were held to give riverfront landowners an opportunity to learn more about the nomination of the Lamprey River and what it might mean to them.

Individual first class letters were mailed to riverfront landowners in Newmarket, Newfields, Exeter, Brentwood, Fremont, Epping, Raymond, Candia, Deerfield, Northwood, Nottingham and Barrington notifying them of all three meetings so they could choose the most convenient one.

The public information meeting on April 7 in Raymond was held during a scheduled Conservation Commission meeting and was shown on RCTV Channel 22 for two weeks.

The public information meeting on April 8 in Newmarket was held during a scheduled Planning board meeting with the Conservation Commission attending.

Presentations to Groups

The LRNC attended a NALMC meeting on August 26, 2009 and again on February 9, 2010 to discuss what nomination of the upper Lamprey River might mean to this group and landowners in the NALMC region.

LRNC attended the Bear-Paw Regional Greenways Board meeting on December 12, 2009 to explain the nomination process.

On January 19, 2010 LRNC attended the Newmarket Planning board meeting to explain the nomination process and answer questions. A second presentation was made on April 8, 2010.

During a May 1 river clean up by the Great Bay Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the nomination was explained and participants were eager to sign the petition to show support.

Presentations were made to the Epping, Nottingham and Lee Selectboards on August 9, August 16 and August 23, respectively to present the benefits of becoming a designated river and to seek a letter of support. The Epping meeting was broadcast live on their public access channel.

Outcomes

On June 30, 2010 the LRNC formally presented the nomination to the state Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC). It was the first nomination in the 20 plus year history of the program that included a watershed approach. A watershed nomination is necessary in order to deliver high quality water to the Great Bay, to protect high quality fish and wildlife habitat and to protect the entire River and its major tributaries.

On August 31, 2010 the LRNC hosted a tour of some of the important features of the Lamprey and its major tributaries for the State RMAC. That evening, a public hearing was held. This hearing was attended by 50 people and all who testified spoke in support of the designation for all of the rivers.

On September 28th the RMAC met to deliberate on the nomination. DES had received over 100 endorsements in support of this nomination, including 32 from local officials in the towns that border these rivers. The RMAC was especially impressed by the letters of endorsement received from the elected officials of all 13 river corridor communities within the designated river reaches. The RMAC voted to recommend to DES Commissioner Tom Burack that these six rivers be designated into the RMPP.

On October 21st following a thorough review of our nomination, the state Rivers Coordinator (Steve Couture) also recommended to Commissioner Burack that these rivers be designated. Due to a strong desire expressed by the LRNC that a single Local Rivers Management Advisory Committee be formed if these rivers are designated as well as utilizing a watershed approach, Steve is also recommending that the LRMAC be expanded to include members from all of the designated river communities in the watershed. A strategy meeting between the LRNC, LRAC and LRWA is scheduled for January 27th in Raymond to brainstorm various scenarios put forth by Steve for discussion purposes.

Letters of Support Received

Based on the notification letters sent out, followed by an education and outreach initiative, a substantial number of support letters were received from a wide range of stakeholders, including municipalities, public and private groups, state senators and representatives, and many individuals that are riverfront land owners or residents that enjoy the use of the river in their community.

Results Summary As of September 14, 2010

600	pieces of first class mail to riverfront landowners
24	letters of support from town boards and commissions
69	letters of support from individuals and partner organizations
43	petition signatures of individuals in support of the nomination
98	attendees at public meetings

On December 2, 2010 the Commissioner recommended designation and Rep. Mike Kappler filed a bill which will be first heard before the House Resources, Recreation & Development Committee in late January, 2011. If it passes the House, the Senate Energy, Environment and Economic Development Committee will hold its public hearing. If it passes the Senate it will go to the Governor for his signature. If signed by the Governor it will become law within 30 or 60 days. It is anticipated that this will occur approximately July, 2011.

Appendices

THE LAMPREY RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES



The Lamprey River begins in Northwood and gathers water from 14 towns until it becomes tidal in Newmarket. The main branch of the Lamprey River is 47 miles long and another three miles is tidal out to the mouth of the river at Great Bay. The major tributaries are the North Branch River in Candia, the North River in Nottingham, the Little River in Barrington and Nottingham, the Pawtuckaway River of Nottingham and Raymond, and the Piscassic River which flows through Fremont, Epping, Newfields and Newmarket.

The Lamprey River Watershed is a region undergoing rapid growth with pressures from associated development that affects the existing environmental status of the river corridor. The Lamprey River is a unique and important resource whose protection should be expanded to ensure further safeguarding of the river's natural resources, water quality, wildlife and their habitats.

The river is a valuable community resource, providing scenic beauty, and recreational uses for all communities within the watershed region. This designation will bring the citizens and communities together to develop an integrated strategy to manage and protect the river and its tributaries. Today's citizens must continue to protect the Lamprey River to ensure that it is enjoyed by future generations.

Currently, only 12 miles of the river in Lee and Durham is protected by the state Rivers management and Protection Program. This section and an additional 11 miles enjoy federal National Park Service Wild and Scenic designation. Protected status is being sought for the remaining 34 miles of the Lamprey River from Northwood to Epping, portions in Newmarket and for 52 miles of tributaries. The careful management of all of the watershed is important for sending clean water downstream for all to enjoy for drinking, recreation, and ecological health.

If the Lamprey is designated into the Rivers Management and Protection Program it will join the 16 other rivers in over 100 New Hampshire cities and towns already receiving this special recognition and protection.

What is the Rivers Management and Protection Program?

In 1988, the State Legislature established the Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP) to protect significant river resources for the benefit of present and future generations. The program seeks protection of water quantity and quality in designated rivers through a locally prepared management plan. Recommendations for protecting the river corridor on the local level do not supersede municipal authority.

What does designation provide that is not available through other means?

An important feature of the Rivers Management and Protection Program is the opportunity for municipalities to participate in multi-town river corridor planning and implementation efforts. A Local Advisory Committee (LAC) is established, and is comprised of representatives from each river corridor community and come from a broad range of interests, including local government, business, and conservation, recreation, agriculture, and river corridor landowners. Designated rivers may also receive priority for funding from the state for planning, restoration, mitigation and education work. The LAC is eligible to apply for funds to implement management goals.

Will designation of the Lamprey River mean lots of new regulations or affect local land use control in the river corridor?

Local municipal land use authority is NOT preempted. A local decision before river designation remains a local decision following designation. For more information on the RMPP, the website and fact sheets can be found at:

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/rivers/index.html>

Why is the Lamprey River being considered for nomination?

The Lamprey River has numerous reasons that make it worthy of designation. As a significant source of drinking water, the river is an important component in a region with increasing population and development pressures. The river and its environs support significant plant and animal species, and play a contributory role to the health of the Great Bay Estuary and the New Hampshire seacoast..

What can you do to support the Nomination of the Lamprey River?

The nomination will need to include proof of local support for the river corridor protection program. You can attend public hearings and meetings to voice support, write a support letter, assist the Lamprey River Watershed Association with the inventory of river values, provide photos and historic documents, be a guide for river tours, and assist with other outreach activities.

Letters can be sent to: Lamprey River Watershed Association, 43 North River Road, Lee, NH 03861 or to volunteer@lrwa-nh.org

Information for Nominating the Lamprey River and Major Tributaries into the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program

Benefits of designation

- Protection of the river for present and future generations
- River designation establishes a Local Management Advisory Committee (LAC), composed of locally nominated and state appointed residents from each of the riverfront communities along the entire length of the designated river.
- The main responsibilities of the LAC are to develop and implement a local river corridor management plan and to advise local, state, and federal governing bodies and agencies of activities which may affect the water quality or flow of the designated river.
- State resources are directed to designated rivers before non-designated rivers. Resources include: the technical assistance of DES Rivers Management and Protection Program staff, potential funding sources for designated rivers (604(b), 319 technical assistance, etc), and assistance required by RSA 483:10, IV for state agency support in the development and implementation of management plans.

Why remaining portions of the Lamprey River and major tributaries are being nominated into to the State Rivers Management and Protection Program

- The Lamprey River Watershed is a region undergoing rapid growth with pressures from associated development that affects the existing environmental status of the river corridor.
- The Lamprey River is a unique and important resource whose protection should be expanded to ensure further safeguarding of the rivers natural resources, water quality, water quantity, wildlife and their habitats, scenic value and recreation.

The steps in the nomination process

- The Lamprey River Nominating Committee prepares a detailed natural resource assessment and holds at least one public meeting within the watershed prior to submission of the nomination package on May 31, 2010.
- The applications for nomination of the Lamprey River must be submitted to the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) by June 1, 2010. Public endorsement is important and demonstrated by letters of support from town boards, landowners, local businesses, chambers of commerce and other civic organizations included in the application.
- The NHDES Rivers Program Coordinator, in cooperation with the Rivers Management Advisory Committee, will hold at least one public hearing in the Lamprey River Watershed to receive public comment on the nomination.
- Once the nomination for designation in the Rivers Management and Protection Program is submitted, it takes at least one year to work through the legislative process it. We anticipate that designation of the Lamprey River will be signed into law the second half of 2011.

Frequently asked questions

Will more state regulation be placed on local landowners?

- The program does not have regulations of its own. However, the provisions of the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Program (CSPA) apply to all designated river sections and this could be a change if your property was previously not included in the CSPA.
- All local land use decisions, including buffer ordinances, remain local. (RSA 483:2)
- Designation reinforces existing state and federal laws.

Will the designation have a negative impact on land owners?

- No. River designation can increase respect for property rights and heighten recognition of the valuable contribution which landowners already make in river protection.
- No. The development of a river corridor management plan by the Local Advisory Committee can increase public understanding and interest in issues important to property owners and can bring technical assistance, leverage funding and other support to help address and solve such problems.

Will additional permits be required?

- No/Maybe. The same permits that are required before a river is designated would still be required after a river becomes designated. There are no permits required specifically by the RMPP. If your river section was not subject to the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA) prior to designation it will be subject to these provisions after. CSPA permits are needed for activities within 250' of the river.
- Once designated, the LAC is provided an opportunity to review and provide comment on any permit within 1,320' of the river. Their comments are advisory only. This does not extend the timeline for permits, nor require the filling of any additional permits.

What does designation mean for municipalities?

- Each designated river is protected and managed to maintain and enhance outstanding characteristics for which it was designated including drinking water supply.
- A Protected In-stream Flow Study has already been conducted for the Lamprey River to develop river-specific numerical criteria for stream flow protection on the currently designated segments. Water Management Plans are under development in conjunction with affected water users and dam owners to implement those criteria.
- If your town wants to site a solid waste or hazardous waste facilities it must be 250 feet from the river.

Does designated river status require additional or special in-stream flow standards?

- No. Water quality standards, including in-stream flow protection apply to all of the state's flowing waters. Standards speak to the river's suitability for fishing and swimming; ability to meet drinking water standards, and a policy to not let existing high quality waters degrade. In-stream flow requirements are developed for the entire river not just for an individual withdrawal.

What happens once the river is officially designated?

- After the nomination becomes official, representatives are nominated by each riverfront community and appointed by the DES Commissioner for three year terms on the Local Advisory Committee (LAC). Representatives are nominated by the Board of Selectmen with input from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. Interests represented on the LAC include, but are not limited to: business, conservation, recreation, agriculture, local government and riparian interests.
- The LAC is responsible for developing the local river corridor management plan and commenting on activities affecting the river that require state or federal permits.

See entire RSA 483: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/NHTOC/NHTOC-L-483.htm>

For more information contact:

*Jim Hadley, Lamprey River Nomination Committee Chair at 942-5630 or jhadley@metrocast.net
Or Dawn Genes, LRWA Ex. Dir. at 659-9363 or e-mail dawn.genes@lrwa-nh.org*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 21, 2010

Contact person: Dawn Genes, Project Coordinator, Lamprey River Nominating Committee
Phone: 659-9363 dawn.genes@lrwa-nh.org

Towns: Northwood, Deerfield, Candia, Raymond, Epping, Barrington, Nottingham, Lee, Newmarket, Newfields, Fremont, Brentwood, Exeter

LAMPREY RIVERS NOMINATED TO PROTECTION PROGRAM

Due to the tremendous effort of local citizens coming together to demonstrate to the state the value their communities place on their rivers, the Lamprey River with its major tributaries, the North Branch, North, Little, Pawtuckaway and Piscassic Rivers were nominated for protection through the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program managed by the Department of Environmental Services.

The Lamprey and tributary rivers nomination was the most complex ever and the first to promote a watershed approach. The elected officials from all 13 towns wrote letters of support as did numerous individuals. The Lamprey River in Lee and Durham was adopted into the program in 1992. Designating the entire river and the major tributaries will allow for all fourteen watershed towns to participate in protecting the area's water resources.

The State Rivers Management Committee voted to approved the nomination. The most significant benefit of river designation is a collective statement by local residents and the state that a particular river is a unique and important resource deserving of protection. A river designation gives a river an extra level of state protection for significant instream river resources, particularly water quality and instream flows.

Once a river is designated, a local river advisory management committee (LAC) is developed and is responsible for developing a local river corridor management plan and commenting on activities affecting the river that require state or federal permits. Each LAC is comprised of representatives from each riverfront municipality, which are nominated by the towns and appointed by the DES Commissioner. LAC members represent a wide range of interests from local government to conservation to businesses and are the only DES appointed advisors. Because the river management plan is locally developed, adopted and implemented, it reflects the specific needs, interests and concerns of local citizens.

Due to overwhelming public support for the nomination, DES Commissioner, Thomas Burack, approved the recommendation of the committee and forward the nomination to the General Court. Representative Mike Kappler of Raymond has already filed a bill for the house and there are many representatives that want to become co-signers. There will be a public hearing for the house bill and a public hearing for the Senate bill. If all goes well the bill will be passed and signed into legislation next summer!

Since the establishment of the RMPP in 1988 by the passage its enacting legislation (RSA 483), 16 rivers have been accepted by the state legislature for designation for their outstanding resources, values and characteristics.

Preparation of the nomination package was completed by the Lamprey River Nomination Committee with partial funding from the Lamprey River Advisory Committee and the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, as authorized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program. Project coordination provided by the Lamprey River Watershed Association.

