



Beaver do a great deal of good for the land, but...

It would be nice if they knew where and when to build and where and when to steer clear!

From an ecological viewpoint, the beaver engineer a fantastic watery landscape! They play an important role in establishing and maintaining wetlands. We know wetlands provide habitat for many sensitive plant and animal species.

But there are times where we find ourselves in conflict with beavers over who gets to use certain tracts of land. Even in places where beavers are tolerated, their activities can become problematic. Damage can include: property damage, flooding that threatens infrastructure like buildings, roads and railways, and tree loss.

There are however, several options for landowners to deal with beaver issues.

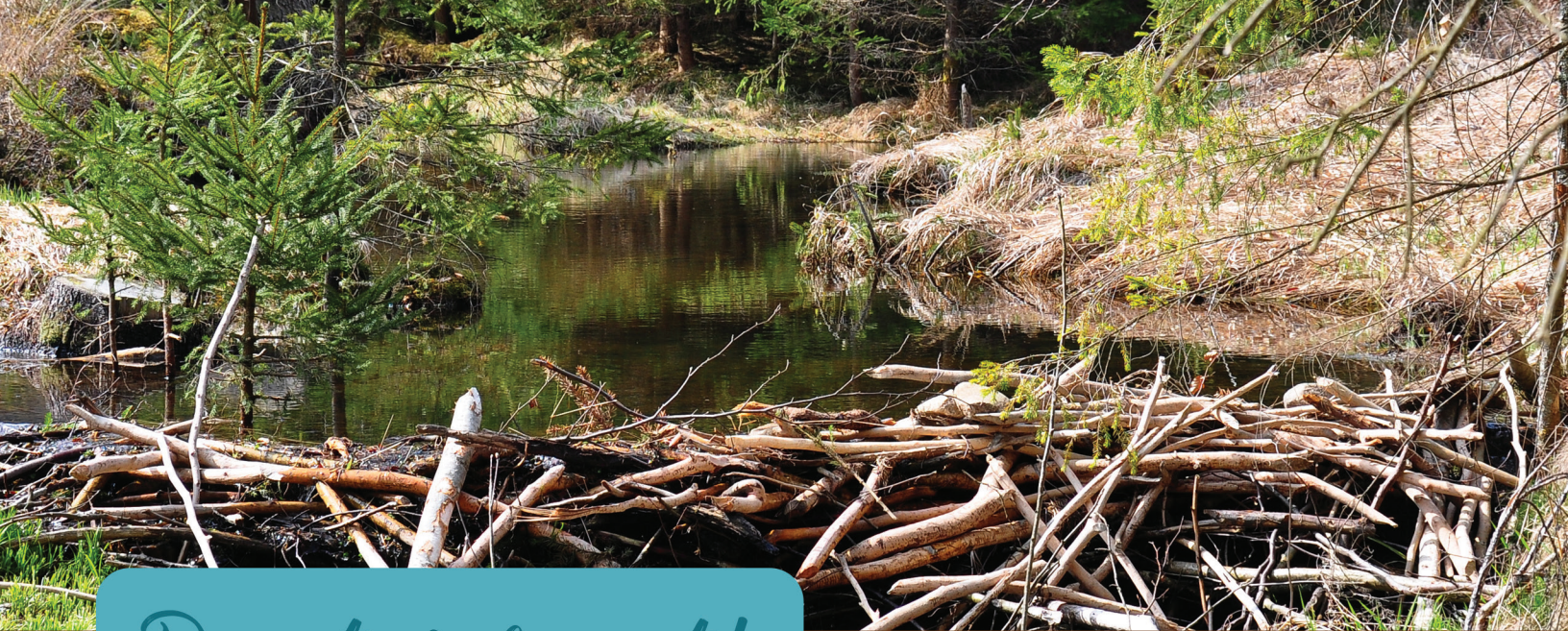
# Private land management and Beavers

*A love-hate relationship*

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## Dam it, or damn it!

Beaver dams sometimes contribute to areas of problem flooding, but they can also help store water during periods of drought and slow down the movement of excess water from land to river systems, thereby preventing more serious floods and significant financial damage downstream. Beaver, of course, have no way of knowing when and where their construction projects are going to benefit the landscape or become a problem. The give and take relationship between man and beaver is best to be assessed on a situation by situation basis.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

#### **Dam destruction?**

The use of machinery or explosives to remove dams tend to be short lived solutions. Beavers will quickly attempt to rebuild their structures, sometimes as quickly as overnight!

#### **Trapping or shooting?**

Trapping or shooting beavers is ineffective in the long term, because it simply creates a vacuum into which new beavers will move in.

#### **Dam management?**

Flow devices allow water to flow through a beaver dam and maintain a desired pond level, preventing flooding of adjacent roads, pastures, or structures. Every site requires a specific design, based on beaver activity and likely response, site environmental controls, and flood tolerance.

### PROTECTING TREES

#### **Protect individual trees**

There has been some documented success in protecting trees by painting their base with a mixture of coarse mason's sand and exterior latex paint.

Wrapping individual high value trees in metre-high, galvanized welded wire fencing or hardware cloth can deter the beavers from destruction.

#### **Protect stands of trees**

You can protect large areas by installing 1.5-metre high field fencing and keeping the bottom of the fence flush to the ground to prevent beavers from entering underneath.





## Who benefits from the beaver?

Beaver dams create diverse wetland habitats and high-quality ecosystems for fish and wildlife. Other benefits include sediment retention and mitigating the severity of spring runoff, both of which can improve stream stability and watershed health.



### Waterfowl

Research has verified that beaver ponds provide important waterfowl habitat. In a large study conducted by Ducks Unlimited, abundant breeding duck populations were found in beaver pond-rich forests.

### Amphibians

Beaver dams are associated with enhanced amphibian diversity. Ponds created by beaver dams are a warm, nutrient rich environment for tadpoles, and are especially crucial during dry spells.

### Moose

The populations of beaver and moose have experienced similar ups and downs over the past few centuries. Moose depend on nutritious wetland vegetation for forage and on wetlands to cool themselves during the heat of summer. The relationship between beaver and the moose is an ecological match made in heaven!



### The whole ecosystem

The beaver has become recognized as a keystone species in an ecosystem. Their dam systems create wetlands that are used by many other species. The riparian wetland vegetation provides additional forage and cover for a variety of wildlife such as big game and songbirds. Their ponds accelerate aquatic food chain production for fish, amphibians and waterfowl. Ponds also attract mink, river otter and muskrats. Tree snags around beaver ponds also provide homes for cavity-nesting birds.





## Forming a plan . . .

### Conservation management plans

A management plan can help you get the most out of your property. Your local SWCD can help you develop a property management plan... one that accounts for beaver activity within your boundaries.

For woodland properties, a Forest Stewardship Plan written by a certified plan writer, such as your local SWCD, the DNR or a private forest planner, qualifies landowners to apply for local or state tax-relief and incentive programs. To qualify for one of these programs, a landowner must generally have at least 20 qualifying acres of land.

The DNR's Forest Stewardship Program helps landowners finalize their own goals and prepare a voluntary management plan for their woodland. This Woodland Stewardship Plan, when written by a certified writer, is a non-binding, written document that lists your land's potential, what you want to accomplish, and specific actions you can take to accomplish those goals within a given time-frame.

**Contact us to start on a  
Conservation Management Plan**

**Phone: 218-732-0121**  
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