



Co-existing with Beavers

Introduction

A recent investigation by The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals revealed that beavers are being trapped and killed across many municipalities in Canada.

City officials often contract trappers to kill beavers because dams may be contributing to the flooding of roads, septic systems, homes, farms or other developments.

Lucky for us, and the beaver, there are many non-lethal approaches to beaver management. It is possible to co-exist with these creatures.

Trapping is not a solution

Beaver trapping is only a short-term solution because no matter how much trapping is done, attractive habitat and an ongoing food source means new beavers will soon discover the area and more dams will be rebuilt with new material (more trees).

Cruel Conibear trap

While sometimes referred to as a 'humane' trap, the Conibear was originally designed to break the animal's neck and spine, killing the animal instantly. But photographic and video evidence reveals the contrary; beavers are often maimed, left suffering or they are pinned underwater and left to drown outside their dens.

There is no such thing as a humane trap.

Benefits of beavers

North American beavers are a keystone species because they are essential to creating biodiversity. Many species rely either partly or entirely on beaver wetlands, and over 40% of these species are threatened or endangered.

Beavers also:

- Remove pollutants from surface and ground water
- Replenish water aquifers
- Produce food for other marine life
- Maintain the flow of rivers and streams
- Provide opportunities for viewing nature

Non-lethal beaver management

Instead of funding cruel and wasteful trapping, taxpayers should press their city council to implement non-lethal and cost-effective devices.

Simple measures such as tree wrapping and fencing have proven to be effective to prevent beaver problems. You can also prevent beaver gnawing by coating tree trunks with a sand and paint mixture.

In addition to protecting trees, water flow devices, such as the Beaver Deceiver™ and Clemson Leveller™, are non-lethal and inexpensive to build. When installed correctly, upkeep is minimal and less than the cost of removal strategies, and they can last for many, many years.

A note about destroying beaver dams

Destruction of beaver dens or dams is futile. Beavers will simply rebuild the dam using more trees.

Habitat modification is essential. It is the only long-term solution.

Beaver solutions

Protecting trees

The simplest way to protect trees from beavers is to set free-standing cylinders of heavy gage wire mesh around each tree.

These need to be 4 feet high, with about 5-6 inches between the tree trunk and the mesh. Unlike groundhogs, beavers won't burrow under mesh fencing, so staking is not needed.

You can also wrap or fence an area of trees, but leave some trees exposed as food supply (or leave some already-cut or fallen tree branches around). This will encourage the beaver to go for the trees/bushes one doesn't value much. If they run out of food supply, they will naturally relocate themselves.

For tree protection, homemade or commercially made tree guards can be used. Simple cylinders of galvanized welded wire (2"x2") placed out from the trunk and standing about 3-4 feet tall can be used to cage trees, which will protect them. You can also use hardware cloth or wire mesh (1/4-1 inch).

For bigger areas, consider placing some fencing just between the treed area and the water area, so that it would be more difficult for the beaver to get access from the trees to the water and back. Beavers are not good at hauling trees long distances on land, so this may be an additional discouragement.

Cylindrical Cages

Cylindrical cages are the best way to protect valuable trees. Make them of hardware cloth or sturdy 2 x 4 inch welded wire fencing, about four feet high (three feet is adequate in areas without snow). Encircle the trunk, leaving a space of about six inches between the tree and the fence. Cut every other horizontal wire and bend into hooks to connect with the other side. Cages can be anchored to the ground with stakes.

Chicken wire is less reliable, but it is sometimes used to protect many small trees as, for example, with mitigation plantings. If this type of wire is used, stake close to the trunk to prevent crushing by beavers.

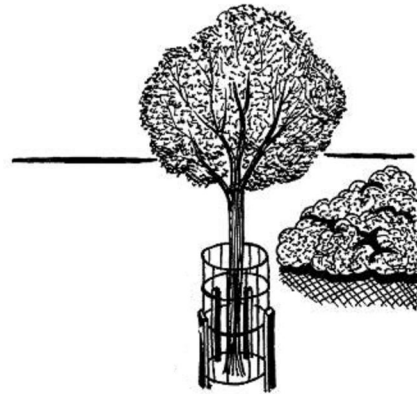


Photo: Cylindrical cage/tree wrapping

Paint and Sand Mixture for tree trucks

Another method to prevent beaver gnawing involves coating tree trunks with a sand and paint mixture. Use 8 ounces of fine sand (30 mil, 70 mil or mason sand) to one quart of oil or latex paint. Stir often and paint trunks about four feet high.

The paint can be clear or colour-coded to match the trees. Avoid painting young trees less than about six feet tall as this may be harmful to the tree itself.

Common Water Flow Devices

Beaver Deceivers™ are post-and-fence devices that are designed to protect culverts and overflow pipes from being dammed by industrious beavers.

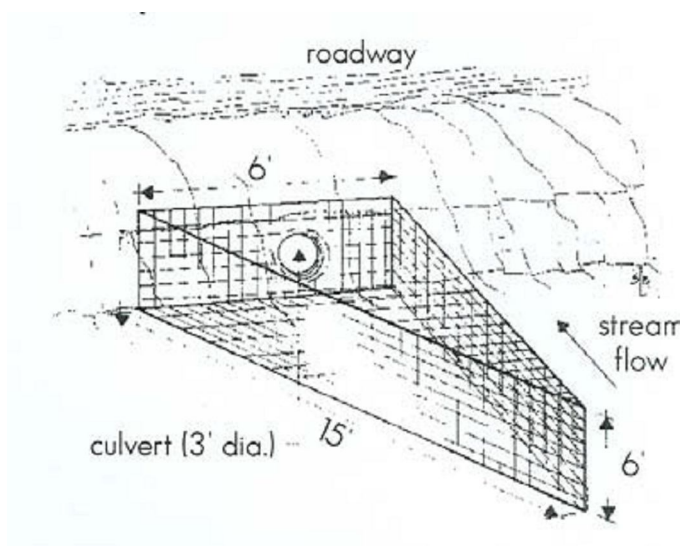
The fence panels are large enough for fish and other aquatic life to fit through, but too small for an adult beaver to enter.

By completely encasing the pipe, the beaver either are unable to dam them up, or are inclined to move on in search of a better place to build a dam, one that is more cooperative.

Beaver Deceivers™ prevent flooding to roads due to blocked pipes, and are easy to maintain. Pond Levelers are flow-through pipes that can be installed beneath an existing beaver dam to allow water to continue flowing downstream.

By ensuring the outflow end of the pipe is some distance downstream of the dam, the beavers' instinctive response to the sound of rushing water is thwarted as they cannot hear the water running through the pipe. The stream can then continue to flow as before.

Photo (below): Beaver Deceiver™



Other Devices

Clemson Beaver Pond Leveller™

This is a perforated PVC pipe is inserted through a beaver dam, allowing water to go through. It is designed to minimize the current flow so beavers can't detect it. Therefore, the animals do not try to block the intake.

This design works well in small streams or canals where a dam is blocking water flow.

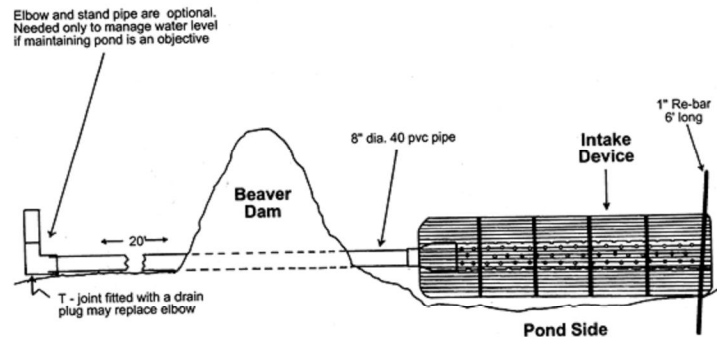
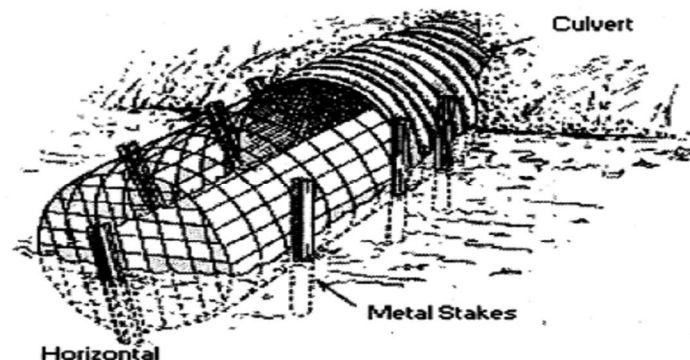


Photo: Pond leveller

Beaver Baffler™

The Beaver Baffler™ has proven to be very effective for various sized culverts and pipes, having more surface area that allows more time between cleanings verses just placing a screen across the outlet. It is the simplest design, easily constructed, low cost and using a minimal amount of materials.



Beaver Relocation

In some rare instances, beaver activity or damage cannot be controlled through management options, and in these cases it may be necessary to remove the beaver from the area and get them settled somewhere more agreeable to their engineering skills.

However, caution must be exercised to ensure that all members of the family are trapped and relocated together; beavers may have kits in their dam as well as last year's older siblings. Leaving behind immature offspring can be lethal to those kits.

Additionally, it should always be remembered that if beavers liked living there, other beavers will too.

As kits mature and disperse from their families in search of their own territories, it is very likely that new beavers will simply move in to replace the ones that were removed. So when a beaver or beaver family is relocated from a particular area, steps must be taken to make the now empty area unattractive to future beaver residents.

Caution must also be taken to avoid relocating beavers into territory belonging to another beaver family. As highly territorial animals, beavers will drive off new intruders to protect their homes.

In some areas, wildlife relocation is not permissible by law. Please be sure to check your Provincial or State laws before live trapping and relocating any wild animal.

For more information on relocation options, contact:

Sherri Tippie, Colorado
1-303-935-4995

Sherri has successfully relocated over 500 beavers.

Additional Resources

Beaver Stop® - Canada Culvert

1-800-565-1152

Branches all over Canada (including Langley & Prince George)

fsiculvert.com/beaverStop.php

Beavercone Products®

Fort Erie, ON

Tel: 905-991-1509

beavercone.com

Beaver Proof Add-On®

Western Canada: Keith & Karen Poirier

poirierk@xplornet.com

Tel: 780-963-8311

Western & Eastern Canada:

Atlantic Industries Limited

1-877-AIL-PIPE (1-877-245-7473)

Beaver Proof Add-On®, United States

Raymond & Diane Saucier

Tel: 207-324-8442

Clemson Beaver Pond Leveler®

MINNCOR Industries

St. Paul, MN

1-800-646-6267

Beavers: Wetlands & Wildlife

Sharon Brown, Dolgeville, NY

Tel: 518-568-2077

beaversww.org

Beaver Deceiver International

Skip Lisle, President

Grafton, VT

Tel: 802-843-1017

skiplisle@vermontel.net

Beaver Solutions

Mike Callahan, Owner

14 Mountain Road, Southamptn, MA 01073

Tel / Fax: 413-527-6472

info@beaversolutions.com

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