

# Beaver

## Damage Control

### Guidelines for people with beaver damage problems



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### Map of Beaver Management Zones

**Zone**

**A** High beaver population and excellent beaver habitat. Relatively few people-and-beaver conflicts occur. Stable beaver population is desired.

**B** High beaver population , excellent beaver habitat and excellent trout habitat. Trout stream protection takes precedent over protection of beaver on high quality trout streams. Reduced beaver population has occurred. Maintenance of a stable beaver population is desired.

**C** Moderate to low beaver population; habitat is considered average. Few people-and-beaver conflicts occur. Stable beaver population is desired.

**D** Low beaver population. Beaver population increase is desired to provide more waterfowl habitat.



## **DNR Beaver Management Plan**

Beaver, like many other species of wildlife, are considered good or bad depending upon who you talk to. Some people enjoy and appreciate beaver while others consider beaver destructive pests. Understanding and balancing both points of view is a goal of the DNR's beaver management policy.

### **The Beaver Management Plan**

In 1990, a revised beaver management plan became effective. The plan was created by a DNR team that included wildlife and fisheries managers, foresters, and wardens. Considerable input from members of the general public interested in beaver management also helped create the plan.

### **Beaver Management Zones**

Recognizing that beaver are considered both beneficial and detrimental, the beaver management plan divides the state into different zones for beaver population management. One goal of "zoning" is to reduce or maintain low beaver populations in zones where they are in greatest conflict with human interests. A second goal is to allow and encourage populations where there is greater tolerance and benefits associated with these animals. The state's different management zones are shown on the map on the previous page. Harvest pressure will be increased or decreased depending on the current population status and the population goal of a zone.

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## **Beaver Population Control**

Beaver have litters averaging four young each spring. Beavers have a natural population limiting mechanism, habitat. When there is not enough available habitat the older kits do not leave home and the subsequent litters will be smaller.

There are various ways to manage beaver so population goals for a specific beaver management zone can be met. The Natural Resources Board policy for furbearers is to maintain their populations primarily by use of general trapping seasons. During recent seasons the annual harvest have been approximately 40,000 beaver. Pelt prices over the last several decades have ranged from a high of about \$65.00 in 1967 to lows of \$10.00 or \$12.00 in the 1980's. In recent years, \$20.00 has been the average pelt price.

### **Trapping Season Length**

The season length varies depending on estimates of how high the beaver population is and how many beaver are to be harvested. In years when the population is high the season will be longer so that more beaver are taken. A typical season in the 1980's and 1990's ran from Mid-October through the end of April. In the 1960's, when beaver populations were quite low, the season started in February and went only until the end of March or mid-April. In the early decades of 1900, no beaver trapping was allowed because populations were critically low. The Beaver Plan suggests that season length be adjusted depending on the beaver management zone and the desired beaver population.

### **Liberalization of trapping regulations**

Trapping regulations were liberalized in 1989 allowing more beaver to be harvested during a longer trapping season. Liberalized rules now allow the use of snares placed 50% or more under water, and trapping within 15 feet of a beaver dam by landowners.

## Beaver harvest subsidies

Trapping pressure has not been sufficient to control beaver in some areas. Subsidies have been offered to encourage removal of more beaver. A subsidy is a bonus paid for beaver taken in special areas during specific time periods. The amount of the subsidy, the location of the subsidy area, and the length of time subsidies are offered has been looked at each year and adjusted to encourage more harvest in areas where not enough beaver are trapped to meet the management zone goals. Annual implementation of a subsidy payment program is dependent on need and availability of funds. At present, the beaver subsidy is suspended pending review of program effectiveness and improvement of the department's fiscal status.

## Aerial Surveys

Aerial helicopter surveys are flown by DNR research staff approximately every 3 years in Beaver Management Zones A and B (the northern third of Wisconsin) to estimate beaver populations.

## Beaver population estimates for Zones A and B

1992-2001\*

Zone	1992	1995	1998	2001
A	40,300	51,800	45,000	38,900
B	40,800	43,100	22,900	20,800

\*From Aerial surveys in Zones A and B and the Beaver Trapping Survey.

## Statewide Beaver Estimates

1992	1995	1998	2001
108,130	126,530	90,530	79,600

These results suggest a population reduction in Zone B and a maintained population in Zone A. Statewide trends show a gradual decline as well.

## Wildlife Services Beaver Control

The United States Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services (USDA-WS) office cooperates with the DNR and local governments in cost shared efforts to intensively remove (trap and shoot) beaver and beaver dams from DNR-designated high quality trout streams in northern Wisconsin.

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## Landowner Options

If beaver are causing problems on your property or property for which you are responsible there are options available. These options are spelled out in the next few pages. *Remember, the following information on controlling beaver activity applies only to beaver causing damage.*

## State Assistance

WDNR assistance is limited to providing information to people with nuisance and problem beaver. This assistance includes instructional materials, pamphlets, advice, clarification of applicable laws, and referral to experience trappers or private wildlife control companies. The WDNR staff will not come out to a problem site

and help remove beaver. There is no state damage control or compensation program which reimburses landowners for damages caused by beaver.

## **First Option: Learn to Live with Beaver**

In many circumstances people who have minor beaver damage problems, such as a beaver chewing trees or ornamental plantings on a lakefront cottage lawn, may elect to do nothing. Learning to live with wildlife and enjoying and understanding the creatures that share their habitat with you may be a good way of dealing with beaver damage. Turn a problem into an opportunity! Watching beaver is a great family activity and a good way to interest children in the outdoors. Private landowners should be aware that human developments impact wildlife habitat and can result in the destruction or loss of wildlife.

### **Understanding beaver behavior**

It's natural for beaver to chew tree trunks or to cut trees down.

Beaver rarely cut down large pines or massive old trees; they prefer willow, poplar, alder, and birch. Trees that are near buildings may be cause for some anxiety if there is a danger that they'll fall on the buildings. These trees should be protectively wrapped to discourage gnawing.

Beaver rarely bite and are not aggressive. There are very few known cases of beavers carrying rabies. Other human illnesses associated with beaver are explained on page 14 of this printout.

Beaver can provide many hours of "watchable wildlife" enjoyment. Their ponds create excellent wetland habitat and attract many interesting insects, birds, and mammals. Beavers build dams in order to have deep water for lodges and underwater food piles. If the water is already deep, as in a lake, they do not need to build a dam. Sometimes, instead of a lodge, they burrow into the shore and create a bank den. Beaver ponds are very important in preventing floods and drought. Beaver abandon the pond after they've used the majority of the edible foods along the shore. When their dams wash out the old pond area becomes a grass or sedge meadow that attracts many other wildlife. If tree growth occurs, the site may again be colonized.

For more information about beaver's life habits and biology read DNR factsheet #WM- 059 entitled *The Beaver*, available at most DNR offices.

## **Second Option: Protect Your Property**

If you're unable to live with the beaver damage, there are methods available to prevent damage. One set of methods involves protecting the property receiving the damage, the other set of options discourages beaver from setting up housekeeping in your neighborhood.

### **Protection trees; preventing gnawing**

**Chemical repellents:** There are commercially available repellents that discourage deer and rodents from chewing and browsing on plants. Although none are specifically registered for preventing beaver damage, they may be used for beaver unless the label specifically limits use to another species. If the label directions allow use on trees and shrubs it is generally O.K. to use for repelling beaver. However, read all labels carefully and do not use the repellents in a manner inconsistent with the labeling.

An example of a contact (taste) repellent, ROPEL\* ,is a bitter tasting substance that can be painted on tree trunks to discourage beaver from chewing. One gallon covers about 1 acre of 8 to 10 foot trees. Other examples of contact repellents include BIG GAME REPELLENT-DEER AWAY, MILLER'S HOT SAUCE, and Thiram products sold under the trade names BONIDE RABBIT-DEER REPELLENT, NOTT'S CHEW-NOITT,

GUSTAFSON 42-S, and WILBUR-ELLIS SCRAM 42-S\* among others. Two gallons of Thiram will cover 1 acre when mixed with 100 gallons of water.

Area repellents repel animals because of their strong odor. This type of repellent includes HINDER, Magic Circle, and a variety of “home remedy” repellents like soap, blood meal, moth balls, creosote, and rotten eggs.

Repellents wash away after a time and may need to be reapplied periodically. Some repellents are very smelly and may not be practical for use near a residence. Hunger and the availability of other more palatable foods dictate the effectiveness of repellents. Experience has shown that chemical repellents provide limited success.

Many nurseries, garden centers, farm co-ops, hardware stores and discount stores sell commercial repellents. For more information on each repellent, ingredients, cost and sources of supply read the University of Wisconsin Extension Publications # G3083-**Controlling Deer Damage in Wisconsin**. You can get this publication from county Extension offices or from:

UW Extension Publications  
PO Box 342831  
Milwaukee WI 53234  
#1-877-WIS-PUBS.

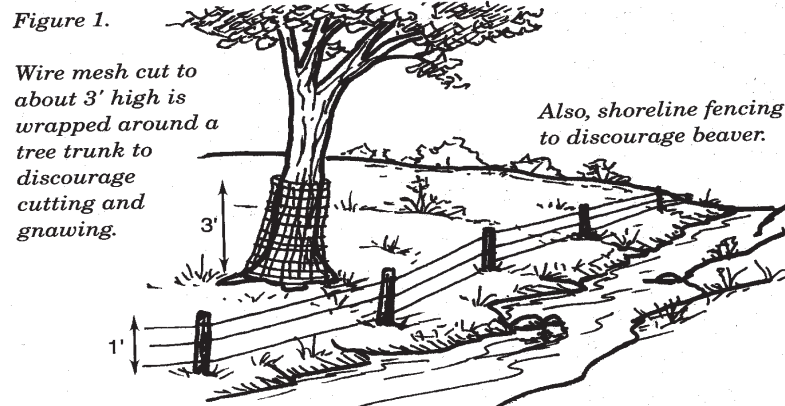
Or visit their website at  
<http://cecommerce.uwex.edu/>

**Physical barriers.** Heavy wire mesh, heavy gauge hardware cloth or tar paper will discourage beaver from cutting and gnawing trees along the shoreline. Figure 1. shows that in general the protective material you choose should be cut to a height of about 3 feet then wrapped around the tree. Mesh size should be less than 1 inch in order to be effective. The wire mesh or hardware cloth can be secured by wiring the ends together. Tar paper can be held in place by bailing twine or wire. This protection is quite effective and inexpensive if few trees are involved.

Another way to keep beaver from gnawing trees or cutting them down is to fence beaver out! Fencing can be elaborate or simple depending on the individual situation. If you are on the premises full time then a single strand electric fence suspended about a foot off the ground might provide the solution. If, however, you leave the property for extended periods then maintaining even a simple electric fence may not be practical.

Along the shoreline a low, attractive, permanent fence with gates may be enough to discourage beavers. An example of this type of fence is also shown in Figure 1. Also, individual, ornate fences around each tree you want to protect can be a creative way to keep beavers from gnawing.

Figure 1.



## Third Option: Discourage Beaver from Colonizing

There are two main methods of discouraging beaver from colonizing an area where damage cannot be tolerated. The first is to reduce the desirability of the area by eliminating the foods beaver like and the materials they need to build dams. The second method is to alter or undermine their dams so that the dams cannot hold water.

### Discouraging beaver by eliminating preferred foods.

If you get rid of food items that are attractive to beaver you may discourage them from settling. Beaver prefer trees like poplar, willow, birch and alders. If your objective is to prevent flooding of a roadway or burrowing on the shoreline, then cutting down these kinds of trees eliminates food sources. Remember, if you are planting trees in an area populated by beaver you may want to plant trees/foods that are not their favorites. Planting spruce and balsam trees are good alternatives to discourage beaver settling.

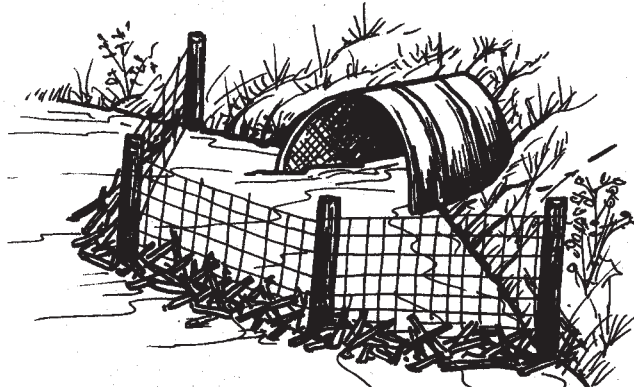
### Discouraging beaver by undermining their dams.

It is important to note the following options are not a “sure thing” and often have limited success. To increase your chance of success, regular maintenance is required.

**Fencing out culvert beaver dams.** Beaver often plug road culverts with dams. This problem can sometimes be slowed by building a horseshoe shaped fence around the up stream side of the culvert thus preventing the beaver from damming the culvert entrance. Beaver may build their dam around the fence but it is much easier to remove debris from the fence rather than from the inside of the culvert. Figure 2. shows a typical fence constructed around a culvert. The cost of this method of abating beaver damage depends on the size of the fence needed. A typical list of material might include 30 ft wire with 6” x 6” squares and 4 to 6 posts.

*Figure 2. A fencing scheme to keep beaver from building dams inside culverts.*

Figure 2.



**Beaver baffle for culverts.** A baffle can be constructed to keep beaver from building dams inside culverts. Figure 3. shows an example of a baffle. Beaver will build the dam against the posts but when the majority of the dam material is removed and the posts are pulled the dam should wash out. This type of abatement may require frequent tending. For small culverts one or two posts should do the job. A bend or hook on top of the pull posts will make it easier to lift out the posts using some type of pulley. To prevent theft of the pull posts you may want to consider devising an anti-theft bar for the baffle.

There are many variations of the beaver baffle depending on the needs, ingenuity, and materials available. The cost of the baffle varies depending on the number of posts, the material you chose for the posts, and the cost of any welding you might need.

Figure 3: Beaver Baffle for preventing dams in culverts and for easier removal of dams.

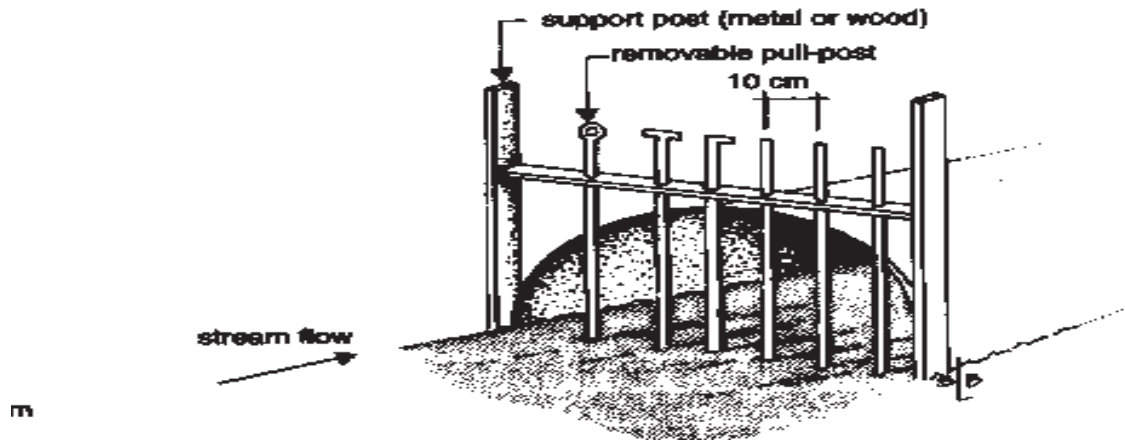


Figure 3.

### Beaver Stop™

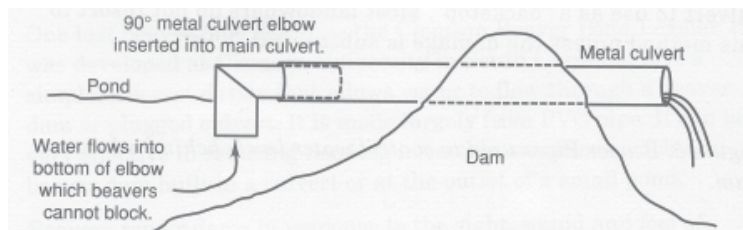
The Beaver Stop guards against the damming of culverts by nuisance beavers. It ranges in size from 4000 mm to over 2400 mm in diameter, and fits around standard pipes. The Beaver Stop is one of the few methods to manage beaver activity around culverts without impeding the passage of fish, or harming beavers.

For more information about the Beaver Stop™, contact FSI Culvert, 10470 176 Street, #105, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Phon. Or at [www.fsiculvert.com](http://www.fsiculvert.com).

\*Use of a trademark name or mentioning the name of a company does not constitute an endorsement.

**Controlling water levels with “beaver pipes.”** Water levels in beaver ponds can be regulated so that, although the ponds remains, the water level is not so high that it causes damage. Or, if the beaver cannot keep the water level high, they may get discouraged and move to a new sight. Figure 4. shows an elbow extension on a culvert through a dam. Figure 4 A. also shows a wire mesh culvert. These methods assume that beaver can’t figure out how to dam water flow in these devices.

Figure 4.



*Culvert constructed of #6 gauge reinforcing mesh panel (10' x 5' piece) covered with #4 gauge, 1"-2" welded wire mesh, attached with #1 hog rings. Bend assembled panels into a cylinder and fasten with #3 hog rings. Cover inlet end with 6" x 6" wire mesh. Three sections (30') are considered a minimum length.*

Figure 4A.

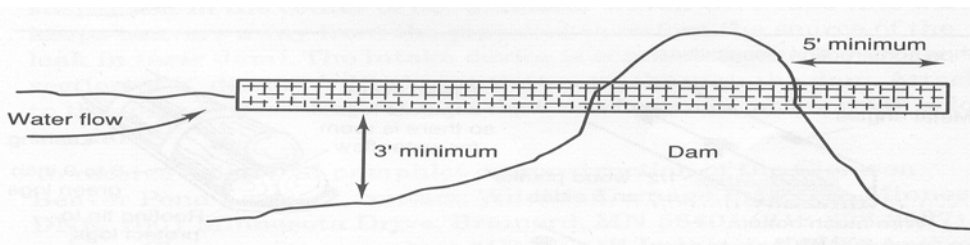
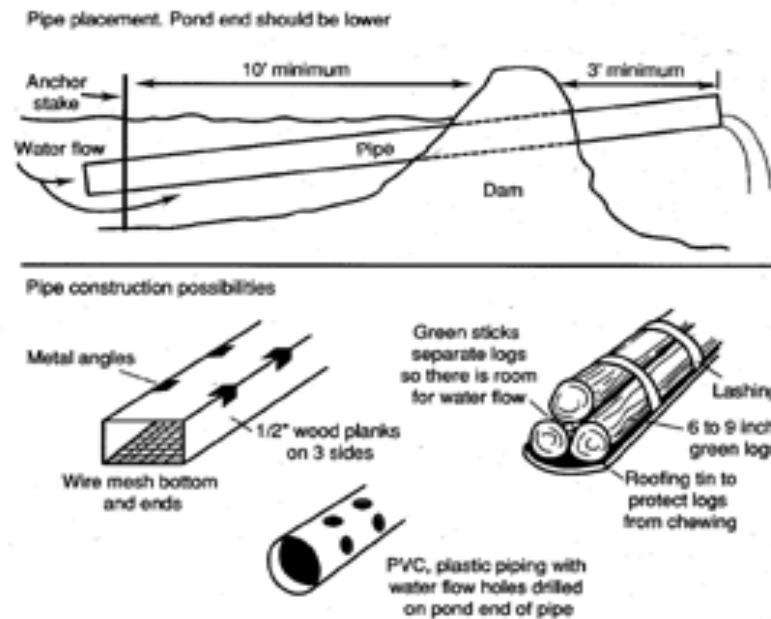


Figure 5. shows a method of installing pipes or troughs in beaver dams in order to control the water level in the pond. Several possible pipe construction methods are also shown. Details of “beaver pipe” construction are found in the article “A Device For Control Of Problem Beavers” (Journal of Wildlife Management, Vol. 27, No. 3, July 1963, by H.A. Laramie). The costs include lumber to make the pipes (or the cost of PVC piping) and labor to install them. This is a more difficult device to install than a fence or baffle, however, it may be the only option where there is no culvert to use as a “backstop”. Most landowners do not resort to this method unless the damage is substantial.

Figure 5. Beaver Pipes used to control water levels behind a beaver dam.



One last beaver pipe design is the Clemson Beaver Pond Leveler. It was developed at Clemson University in South Carolina. It is a simple, low cost device that allows water to flow through a beaver dam or plugged culvert. It is made largely from PVC pipe. It can be very effective in reducing flooding in certain situations, such as a beaver dam built in a culvert or at the outlet of a small pond.

Beavers repair dams in response to the sight, sound and feel of running water. The Clemson leveler transports water through a dam in such a way that beavers can't see, hear, or feel it and as a result, beavers don't attempt to plug the dam.

The intake device is the key component of the leveler. It is placed on the bottom of the pond, ditch or stream up stream from the dam. The intake device consists of a 10' long piece of 10" diameter PVC pipe with about 160 2" holes drilled along its length. The PVC pipe is suspended in the center of 30" diameter woven wire tube (the wire keeps beavers away from the pipe and therefore the source of the leak in their dam). The intake device is connected with a reducer to a section of 8" diameter PVC pipe that runs through the dam. Attached to this pipe is flexible PVC pipe that carries water at least 20' below the dam.

To receive a detailed pamphlet on construction of the Clemson Beaver Pond Leveler\*, contact: Wildlife Damage Management Program, Minnesota DNR, 1601 Minnesota Drive, Brainerd, MN 56401 (218) 828-2427.



## Last Option: Removal of the Dam, Lodge, and Beaver

Removal of the beaver dam, the lodge, and the beaver is generally the last option recommended for the individual landowner because of the difficulty and expense involved. Another reason removal is a last resort is because often, new beaver will recolonize an area from which beaver were removed. The problem of beaver damage may be solved temporarily, but it will probably reappear in a few years.

The laws and frequently asked question relating to dam removal, lodge removal, and removal of the beaver themselves are found in the next section.

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## Legal definitions in Beaver Control

[References: s. 29.885 (1) Stats., NR10.001(16) and NR12.001(1)]

**Damage** means harm to forest products; streams, roads, dams, buildings, orchards, apiaries, livestock and commercial agricultural crops. Including Christmas trees and nursery stock.

**Molest** means any activity which results in physical damage or destruction of an object.

**Private property holder** means an owner, lessee or occupant of private property.

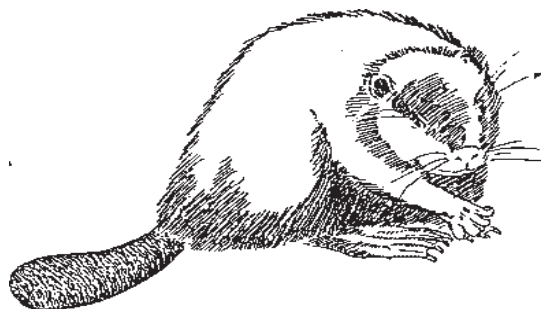
**Removal activity** means removing or authorizing the removal of a wild animal that is causing damage or that is causing a nuisance or the removal of a structure of a wild animal that is causing damage or that is causing a nuisance.

**Remove** means capture, shoot, set a trap for, relocate, or otherwise destroy or dispose of.

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## Laws for Landowners

In the next few sections concerning dams, lodges, and removal of beaver, the pertinent state statutes (cited in references as “stats.”) or Natural Resources administrative code (cited in references as “NR”) are given as references so that you may find and read the exact text if you’re interested. Be sure to use the most current versions of the statutes and rules if you are checking further into a specific question. Copies of the Wisconsin Natural Resources Administrative Code and the Wisconsin State Statutes are available at most libraries or on the Internet at :[www.legis.state.wi.us](http://www.legis.state.wi.us). References are given in the following format: Chapter.section (paragraph) (subparagraph). For example, NR12.10 (b) (3) can be found in Wis. Natural Resources Administrative Code Chapter 12, section.10, paragraph (b), subparagraph (3).



# **Beaver Dam Removal Laws**

## **Am I allowed to remove a beaver dam on my land?**

Landowner, lessees, or occupants may remove beaver dams causing damage or a nuisance without any sort of permit, permission, or authorization from the DNR. [Reference: NR12.10(1) (b)(3)].

## **How can I remove a dam?**

One way to remove a dam is by blasting. All blasters in Wisconsin must be licensed. You may hire licensed blasters to remove a dam on your property. To obtain a list of licensed blasters contact the Department of Commerce, Safety and Buildings Division in Madison at (608) 261-8500. Hiring a blaster with beaver dam experience is recommended. Blasters are not required to carry insurance. Prudent landowners should check their insurance policy for coverage of any damage caused to downstream property from the released pond water as well as any accidental injuries.

**Note:** explosives cannot be used to kill or remove beaver; however, explosives may be used to remove their structures, including dams and *vacated* lodges. You should be aware that unless the beaver have been removed from this area they are likely to return and rebuild.

An alternative to blasting dams is to tear them out using hand tools (a shovel and pick) or a backhoe. However, this is quite difficult and time consuming and is usually not as complete a removal as blasting.

## **Do I need a permit to remove a dam from a neighbor's land?**

No, you don't need any DNR permits to remove a dam on neighboring land. State statutes s. 88.90(3) indicates that an occupant of lands damaged by flooding caused by "natural causes" on a "natural water course" on the property owned by another may enter upon those lands and remove the obstruction at the damage party's own expense. This statute states that this is not trespass. The DNR maintains that it is always good practice to seek consent and permission from your neighbor to remove a beaver dam on their property. If you are considering entering the property of another according to provisions of s. 88.90(3) we suggest you first consult your attorney. Furthermore, you should be aware that this statute does not authorize removal of beaver, only the obstruction, mainly the dam. Please keep in mind that removal of the dam will not solve the problem. We hope neighbors will cooperate in solving legitimate problems.

## **Just what do the terms "landowner" and "lessee" mean?**

"Landowner" means any person over 18 years of age and any partnership, firm or corporation that holds title to land whether or not this land is subject to easement, mortgage, lien, lease or restrictive covenant, except that this term does not include any person who is under guardianship, a person who is incompetent or a person who is mentally ill. A person, partnership, firm or corporation holds title to the land if they have any of the following titles: sole owner, joint owner, owner of an undivided interest, sole or joint trustee or sole or joint consignee. Land contract holders are considered landowners.

"Lessee" means any person possessing a written lease for the use of land for the production of commercial seedlings, crops, orchard trees, Christmas trees, nursery stock, honey, and livestock. It doesn't include a person who rents a home or lands for reasons other than commercial production of crops.

## **Who can authorize dam removal from corporate or publicly owned land where beaver are causing damage?**

The board or governing body of the corporation should designate one person responsible for authorization of beaver removal activities. Their signature must appear on any permission given to agents of the corporation who

are on the corporation's property for removal activities. Typically, a town chairperson or county supervisor is assigned this responsibility.

### **Can I enlist other people to help me remove beaver dams, do they need any sort of permit?**

Yes, you can hire someone or have unpaid help to remove dams on your property. People who assist in removal activities don't need any permits from the DNR but they must possess written authorization from you, the landowner, when conducting dam removal activities on your property. [Reference: NR 12.10(3)(c)].

### **Am I liable for damages a beaver dam on my property causes to the property of another?**

Yes. The law states "A person who owns, leases or occupies property on which a beaver structure is causing damage and who fails or refuses to give consent to the DNR to remove the beaver or the structure to public property or the property of others." [Reference: s.29.885(6)]. DNR staff would not actually remove the dam. That is the responsibility of the neighbor who wants it removed.

### **Can I set traps on a dam?**

Only the landowner or his or her family members may set a trap on a beaver dam. This privilege cannot be transferred from the landowner to an agent or employee; the landowner cannot authorize another person to trap on a beaver dam. The exception to this is where the landowner is a corporation or municipality. In these situations an employee or elected or appointed official is legally considered a part of the "landowner" entity and may set a trap on a beaver dam [Reference NR10.13 (1)(b)(5)].

### **Am I liable for injuries sustained by people helping me to remove beaver dams?**

The law dealing with this question gives some protection to the landowner. The statutes outline responsibilities of a property owner for the well-being of anyone entering the property solely to engage in a removal activity. "Private property holder" is defined as including officers, employees, and agents.

The landowner owes none of the following duties to a person removing beaver or their structures: to keep the property safe for removal activities, or to inspect the property; or give warning of any unsafe condition, use or activity on the property. In addition, the private property holder is not liable for an injury to a person engaging in a removal activity, or an injury caused by a person engaging in a removal activity.

The landowner is liable for injuries caused by malicious acts and malicious failure to warn against an unsafe condition on the property of which the owner has knowledge. They are also liable for injuries sustained by an employee of the property holder acting within the scope of his or her duties. [References: s. 29.885 (7)].



# Beaver Lodge & Beaver Removal Laws

## Can I remove a lodge?

Yes. However, nobody can use explosives to remove an *active* beaver lodge. Written authorization from the DNR is required before a **vacated** beaver lodge may be removed. After receiving written authorization from the DNR, a licensed Wisconsin blaster may, at the landowner's directive, use explosives to remove vacated beaver lodges. [Reference s. 29.088 (3) and 29.885 (2)(b) Stats.]. Note: explosives cannot be used to kill or remove beaver; however, explosives may be used to remove their structures.

In addition, written authorization from the DNR is required to mechanically remove a beaver lodge or modify a lodge to facilitate removal of the beaver.

## How will it be determined that a lodge is vacated?

DNR personnel may ask for proof that at least several beaver have been shot or trapped from this lodge. They may check to see that there is no recent activity near the lodge.

## Can I trap on a beaver lodge?

Anyone may trap on, in or around a beaver lodge. There is no longer a 15 foot setback.

## Can I remove beaver from my land without a permit?

Yes, landowners, lessees, and occupants are not required to have a DNR permit to remove beaver causing damage on lands under their control. Removal activities can take place year-round. For a land-owner, lessee, or occupant to receive assistance from an agent they must give such a person written authorization [Reference: NR 12.10 (3)(c)].

## What beaver removal methods are allowed?

Landowners may shoot or trap beaver causing damage or a nuisance on their own property. Live-trapping is also allowed. [Reference: s. 29.337 Stats.] There are no restrictions on the caliber of firearms that are allowed. A 12-gauge shotgun utilizing #2 or #3 steel shot is an effective choice for shooting beaver. Use extreme caution when shooting near water; bullets and shotgun pellets ricochet easily! Unless exempted you must comply with shooting hours-one half hour before sunrise to 20 minutes past sunset. No use of artificial lights are allowed. You must abide by all other hunting and trapping rules listed in the regulations pamphlets unless you receive written or verbal exemptions from the DNR. The current trapping regulations include information regarding size of traps, placement, frequency of checking traps, and type of sets.

You can't shoot beaver if your property is within a municipality where the discharge of firearms is illegal unless you obtain a permit from the local municipality.

You may not set a trap within 100 yards of any building devoted to human occupancy without the owner's consent.

You may NOT remove beaver by using explosives, poison, or poison gas. [Reference s.29.088 Stats.]. When the trapping season is closed you may not use any bait or scent. [Reference NR10.13(1)(b)(2)].

## **Do I need a hunting or trapping license to remove beaver?**

No, the owner or occupant of any land, and any member of his or her family over 12 years of age may hunt or trap beaver on land they control without a license at any time. However, no hunting is allowed in the 24 hours prior to the opening date for deer hunting. [Reference s.29.337 Stats.].

## **Can I get other people to assist me in removing beaver causing damage?**

The landowner may invite others to assist (participate) in the removal of beaver causing damage or nuisance as long as the following rules are observed:

1. All people assisting in beaver removal must have a valid small game, sports or patron license if they plan to shoot beaver.
2. All people assisting in beaver removal must have a valid trapping license if they plan to remove beaver by trapping.
3. All assistants or participants shall possess written approval from the landowner or lessee when carrying on removal activities.

The landowner, lessee, or occupant may not charge any form of a fee to a person providing removal assistance.

The landowner cannot exempt a participant from having a license.

Landowners cannot give permission to a participant to trap on a dam. (NOTE: The term “landowner authority” in the reference cited here means the authority granted by the state to the landowner in section 29.337. It does **not** mean authority or permission a landowner may grant to another person.) However, a participant can use methods other than those listed in the hunting and trapping regulations with the written or verbal permission of the DNR.

All participants shall meet the requirements of the statutes pertaining to hunter safety and age. All participants must abide by the current hunting and trapping regulations. Copies of the regulations are available at the local DNR office or online at [www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife).

## **Can I remove beaver if I am not a Wisconsin resident?**

Yes, as long as you do not trap beaver on property other than your own. Non-residents may not purchase a Wisconsin trapping license and therefore are not eligible to assist other property owners.

If you plan to shoot beaver on property you do not own you must have a valid non-resident small game license.

## **Where can I release a live-trapped beaver?**

You may not release or relocate beaver to DNR owned lands unless you have a permit from the local wildlife manager. [Reference NR 12.10 (1)(a)(3)]. You do not need a permit to release a beaver on non- DNR controlled lands; however, you should obtain permission from the landowner where the beaver is to be released. Call the local DNR manager to locate possible release sites.

In most cases live-trapping and relocating beaver is not a good idea. Relocation may be less humane than killing beaver if they do not have time to store food or build a dam before winter or if the new location’s habitat cannot support them.

You may not keep a live beaver as a pet.

## **How much does it cost to have a beaver trapped?**

Trapper charges vary from nothing (just permission to trap during the open season), to a fee per caught beaver. Sometimes trappers will trap problem beaver just for the permission to trap during the open season. A colony typically has 5 to 6 beaver. If all the beaver are not removed then the remaining individuals will continue to fell trees and build dams. There is no guarantee that even if you remove all beaver from a site it will not be re-colonized the following year.

## **Where can I get a list of beaver trappers?**

Contact your local Wisconsin Trappers Association (WTA) district director or local DNR office and ask for the booklet entitled, *WTA Nuisance Wild Animal Removal Referral Book*, which is updated annually. You can also find this book online at <http://www.wistrap.org/ADClis.html>.

## **How can I learn how to trap?**

All beginning trappers who have not purchased a trapping license in the past are required to complete a course of the Wisconsin Cooperative Trapper Education Program (WCTEP) prior to trapping. Persons exempt from this requirement must have purchased a trapping license in the past. This course teaches trapping ethics and responsibilities, proper trapping techniques, proper pelt preparation, marketing, basic furbearer ecology and management, and trapping history. The Wisconsin Trapper's Association administers the program in cooperation with the WDNR. The class is taught by certified instructors at locations in many communities throughout the state. Those who are interested in taking a Trapper Education Course should consult the most recent Wisconsin Trapping Regulations pamphlet for further information or check the trapper education website at: [www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/trap/trapeduc](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/trap/trapeduc).

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## **Health Notes**

You should be aware of several illnesses associated with people working around beaver dams. Two diseases which are relatively rare, but nonetheless are present around dams and ponds are tularemia and blastomycosis. A third illness, giardiasis (gee-are-die-a-sis), is more common but not as debilitating as the first two.

*Tularemia* ("rabbit fever") is contracted by direct contact of human skin with the blood or tissues of infected animals (the bacteria can penetrate intact skin). The bacteria causing the disease, *Francisella tularensis*, can also be contracted by drinking contaminated pond water. The symptoms include headaches, chills, vomiting, fever, aches and pains, skin lesions, and swollen glands. Wearing gloves while working around beaver or their structures can reduce the chances of contracting tularemia.

*Blastomycosis* is a fungal disease of the lungs contracted by breathing in spores that are present in forest soils. Isolated cases of blastomycosis have been linked to beaver dams. If you are tearing apart and disturbing a beaver dam on a dry day when a lot of dust is present you may be exposed to the blastomycosis spores. One symptom of blastomycosis is a pneumonia-like persistent cough.

*Giardiasis* is an intestinal illness that causes chronic diarrhea. It is contracted by ingestion of food or water contaminated by feces of large mammals like humans, dogs, cats, deer and beaver. It occurs in the water of beaver ponds because of the concentration of animals there. It also occurs where human feces are not disposed of in a sanitary manner. It is prevented by not drinking the water from beaver ponds.

For more information on any of these illnesses contact your local public health official.

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