



Strategic Action Plan

for Project Beaver

February 2024



Introduction

Project Beaver is focused on accountability through outputs, and this plan is intended to ensure that we prioritize the work that we can be the best in the world at, leaving everything else to others.

This plan should be considered and revised at least once a year.

Guiding Statements

Mission

| *We empower humans to partner with beavers and value their works.*

Purpose

| *We exist to help humans defer to the stewardship of beavers in managing our waterways.*

Vision

| *We work to nourish a world where humans partner with beavers for the resilience of our planet.*

Values

Humility We are but students of complex systems and old wisdom, committed to doing our best.

Excellence We are dedicated to craft and skill in all that we do.

Action We are here together, now, acting out of love for the earth and future generations.

Respect We treat all people with dignity and respect, even and especially when we may disagree.

Truth We are committed to sincerity and honesty as we stand together for a common purpose.



Programs

Empowering Humans: Resources for Living with Beavers

Maintain an online resource hub via a user-friendly website, optimized to provide knowledge resources that empower visitors to partner with beavers and advocate for the good work that they do.

- Develop and promote one-page info-sheets that empower people to share key concepts about beaver coexistence, beaver-based restoration, and the positive ecological impacts of beavers with others.
- Keep our Best Management Practices (BMPs) documents up-to-date with the latest advances in beaver coexistence techniques.

Pond levelers: A beaver coexistence tool

The many benefits of beaver ecosystems are harder to appreciate while their dams are flooding meads, crops, homes, or other infrastructures. With coexistence tools, beaver property can be protected while allowing beavers to remain on the landscape. Pond levelers are an immediate and cost-effective solution that prevent flooding by controlling the maximum water height of the beaver pond. During high flows, excess water moves downstream but during low flows or drought, water is stored in the pond.

The goal of a pond leveler is to set a maximum water height for the pond while minimizing disruption to the beaver family and their habitat. Pond leveling devices use a plastic culvert pipe to create a permanent, leak to the dam. The pipe is linked to a capul intake located upstream within the beaver pond. A cage around the intake of this pipe keeps beavers at arm's length, so they do not sense the leak in their pond.

Why use a pond leveler?

- Cost:** The installation and maintenance of a pond leveler can be less expensive than repeatedly removing dams and trapping beavers.
- Ecological benefits:** Beavers and their dams improve watershed health and are important for numerous other species including many fish and birds.
- Longevity:** Pond levelers can last 5-10 years or longer if properly maintained.

Will a pond leveler work for you?

Every site with beaver activity is unique. Pond leveler designs can be adapted for different situations, including shallow or narrow sites. However, in all situations, pond levelers are most effective when every effort is made to keep the beaver pond as big as possible. Capping the water level too low will force the beavers to move out and create a new beaver dam. For more information, access the *Best Management Practices for Pond Levelers and Culvert Protection Systems: A guide for using flow devices to coexist with beavers on the Project Beaver website.*

For more information and references visit projectbeaver.org

Tree Protection: A beaver coexistence tool

Beavers provide many ecological benefits, but it can be frustrating when they cut trees that are special to us. Tree wrapping with wire mesh cages is an immediate and cost-effective solution that can protect mature trees along waterways while allowing beavers to remain in their habitat.

The specifications for wire mesh cages can vary, but all involve wrapping a heavy gauge wire around mature trees to prevent beavers from accessing the trunk. The goal of tree wrapping is to block access to certain trees and should not be used to stop beavers from taking any trees at all. Wrapping too many trees can deprive beavers of enough food to survive the winter, resulting in death, abandonment of the site, or more persistent attempts to get past the cage.

Innovative new approaches

Tree wrapping is not the only tree protection method available. Alternative approaches have been used to keep beavers from gnawing their heads through but still enough to prevent them from chewing it. A beaver can chew through chicken wire!

Will tree wrapping work for you?

Tree wrapping works best in places near water sources where a few large, key trees are prioritized for protection. Certain tree species, like willows and aspens, have coexisted with beavers. They are well-adapted to being cut and quickly regenerate, often sending up many new shoots in response. For the best chance at success, wrapping a selection of large trees with a dense or unmanageable species that do not regenerate easily. For situations where every tree requires protection (like in orchards), refer to the crop protection subtopic.

For more information and references visit projectbeaver.org

Best Management Practices for Pond Levelers and Culvert Protection Systems

A guide for using flow devices to coexist with beavers

Version 1.2
April 2023

Beavered land: Partnering with Beavers for Ecological Wealth

Create a program that empowers people who love beavers to protect the ecological wealth they build and maintain through both short-term “beavered easements” and a long-term “beavered land trust.”

- a. Develop a mechanism for donor funds to directly support protecting square meters of land “under beaver management” via both leased easements and land acquisition.
- b. Innovate a technological monitoring program that is responsive to real-time environmental conditions to create a standards body and verification program for beaver-managed wetlands (i.e. solve for how do we determine the area “under beaver management”).
- c. Pilot this program with a select group of adventuresome land holders and philanthropists, capturing footage along the way for telling the story of this approach.





Beaver Boardwalk: A Place to Learn from the Beavers

Plan and build the first destination in the Pacific Northwest where the public can experience beaver-created habitat in an accessible way.

- a. Design, permit and construct visitor facilities, including boardwalk, parking area, public bathrooms and caretaker's quarters.
- b. Secure long-term conservation protection for this beaver wetland and adjacent habitat.

Recovering the Slink: Helping Beavers in Southwest Oregon

Lead a strategic approach to planning and implementing basin-scale beaver-based restoration and coexistence in Southwestern Oregon. Conduct high-profile projects across a diversity of ecologies, land-use practices and human partners.

- a. Consider the landscape; develop an **interactive online map** highlighting the beaver habitat modeling and regional planning, where public and regional restoration practitioners can track the real-time results of this program to help beavers in the Rogue Basin and Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.
- b. Consider the beavers; facilitate a **community science monitoring** “scavenger hunt” project with regional partners for beaver presence and activity that will directly inform beaver-based restoration planning and **collect genetics data on the beaver population** through opportunistic hair sampling, in collaboration with local academia.
- c. Consider the people; **work with those who kill beavers** (often regional nuisance wildlife removal companies and irrigation districts) to understand their needs to support beaver coexistence and non-lethal solutions,

give invited “beaver talks” to community groups, organizations, schools and clubs, and provide technical and strategic support to those who are creating better beaver policies.

- d. Help beavers stay; strengthen and maintain a “help desk” and “first responder” program to connect landowners with beavers questions and coexistence struggles with trained people that can help.
- e. Help beavers fix it; conduct and support process-based restoration projects with the goal of restoring beavers to degraded streams.
- f. Help beavers find it; strengthen and maintain a refugee program to relocate beavers that would otherwise be killed.



