



LIVING WITH BEAVERS

Often the appearance of beavers at ponds cause villages, HOA's or homeowners to become concerned due to actual or potential damage to trees. Village or neighborhood flooding is also occasionally a cause of concern.

The presence of beavers generally indicates a healthy ecosystem and humane approaches to living with beavers are both possible and practical. Further, the development of a comprehensive, non-lethal plan that effectively addresses potential damage is not only environmentally responsible and humane, but it is also more readily accepted by stakeholders.

A comprehensive beaver plan may include:

- Survey trees to determine extent of existing damage and determine which trees can be saved
- Protect trees from damage both in common areas and at private residences in close proximity to the pond
- Remove trees that have already sustained too much damage to be salvaged (assessment to be made by a landscape company)
- Replant trees to replace those that require removal and take steps necessary to protect them from damage
- Remove portions of the existing beaver dam to allow the free passage of water and in order to support installation of a flow/leveling device
- Install a physical leveling device that will mitigate the risk of localized flooding caused by beaver dams by allowing the passage of water even after the beavers rebuild their dam
- Develop a communication plan for stakeholders regarding the comprehensive approach

Tree Protection

Two different methods of protecting trees are possible. Wire wrapping trees is extremely effective in terms of mitigating beaver damage and this approach may be more desirable in areas for trees that are not particularly visible.



Trees that are more visible may, for aesthetic reasons, have their trunks painted with a mixture of paint and sand. The paint may be tinted to match the tree bark so that it blends in with the tree trunk. This method is also very effective in preventing tree damage but requires periodic maintenance to reapply the paint/sand mixture.



Flood Protection

When flooding occurs and threatens homes, part of the existing dam may need to be removed. This will allow the flow of water across the dam. Partial dam removal will also facilitate the installation of a dam leveling device. There are various leveling devices that are currently available and we will gladly provide a list of alternatives. Fundamentally, these dam leveling devices allow the passage of water across the dam to effectively level the water even after the beaver rebuilds the dam.



Why Not Trap Beavers?

There are a number of reasons why we strongly recommend against trapping. First, scientific studies show that trapping renders, at best, a temporary solution to wildlife conflicts. If habitat appropriate to support a species exists, it is inevitable that new animals will take the place of the animals that were trapped. Only through modifying the environment to address wildlife conflicts – by modifying or eliminating their potential habitat, for instance – can sustainable results be achieved. Since we either cannot or do not want to eliminate ponds (eliminate the habitat), the next best way to achieve a sustainable solution is to modify the environment to remediate and minimize conflicts.

Not only is trapping nothing more than a temporary solution, but trapping is almost always a lethal solution. Beaver trappers in Illinois almost exclusively use kills traps that hold beavers under water until they drown. This approach is fundamentally inhumane and is not well received by most homeowners as an acceptable solution.

Beavers have also shown to have beneficial long-term benefits to the ecosystem. We have included a few links to information that shows how ecosystems flourish, in part, as a result of the presence of beavers.

These links may be found in the Resources and Helpful Links section that follows.

Beavers are also protected by state law, which means that no private individual can harm or trap beavers (or other protected wildlife) without being a permitted nuisance removal operator. Nuisance removal operators can legally remove beavers, but those efforts are quite costly and, as stated earlier, almost always end up in the death of the animal. Additionally, as mentioned previously, trapping is shown not to lead to a permanent solution.

The Benefits of Beavers

[The Benefits of Beavers Handout](#)

[Video: *Beavers Improve Biodiversity and Prevent Flooding – Wildwood Trust*](#)

[Video: *Glynnis Hood – The Beavers as an Eco-Friend*](#)

Learn More About Beavers

[Video: *About Beavers for Children: Animal Videos for Kids*](#)

Resources and Helpful Links

For instructions on how to wire wrap trees:
<http://www.beaversolutions.com/beaver-facts-protecting-trees/>

For instructions of how to protect trees using a mixture of paint and sand including the actual ratio of sand to paint and the specifications for the type of sand and paint: <http://www.beaverinstitute.org/management/tree-protection/>

Flint Creek Wildlife Rehabilitation
847/842-8000
www.flintcreekwildlife.org

