

# Living with Beavers

Beavers have the ability to both positively and negatively impact their environment. Ponds can flood timber, crops, lawns and roads. Dams can obstruct bridges, culverts, and other drainage areas, and can weaken road beds. Beavers girdle and fell trees and shrubs, and can damage crops. Conversely, ponds slow run-off and retard erosion, filter silt, agricultural chemicals and pollutants from streams, and generally provide habitat and improve water quality for fish and wildlife. During a drought, dams can provide a consistent water source.



Beavers build dams to increase the size of their habitat, and gain access to more food. When beaver activity becomes significant enough to be called beaver damage, several options are available for managing the problem. Integrated pest management (IPM) uses multiple ways to reduce or eliminate damage, and offers the most effective, long-term control. For any IPM system to be successful, it is important to inspect beaver habitats regularly and take prompt action to prevent renewed problems. Removing a colony is difficult, expensive, and often unsuccessful, since new beaver families may colonize a cleared area.

Beavers are a natural part of our landscape. As trapping continues to decline and populations increase, learning to live with beavers may be necessary. Finding ways to allow for needed land use in the presence of beaver population is possible, and simply requires a new way of thinking.

Any questions or concerns, or for more information on beavers and beaver control, please contact Stephen Majek, Director of Agricultural Services at 780-361-6226.