

BEST PRACTICES



Beavers in the Urban Landscape Part 3

Now that we've talked about the biology and behaviors of beavers in [Part 1](#) and [2](#), it's time to look at how we manage beavers within the urban landscape.

Who manages beavers in the urban landscape? Staff from local government agencies are working to understand how beavers interact with wetlands, streams and human infrastructure. Everyone's jobs differ depending on their role within their respected workplace. But one thing is certain, when working with beavers, adaptive management techniques apply to all. This means management efforts change depending on the specific situation between the land and the beavers.

When we think of beavers, it's easy to assume we know them. But due to overhunting and near extermination during the early 19th and 20th centuries, very little is known about them. Today, we are just now learning about the benefits they provide within the urban landscape. For example, beavers have been reintroduced into the wild to help restore rural areas prone to drought, fire and flooding. Land management experts have had great success reducing fire risk and increasing flood storage. We are now witnessing and documenting increased biodiversity in these areas, all because of our beaver friends.

Until recently, general practices involved trapping and relocation. When done properly, beaver relocation can be a successful way to address conflicts between beavers and human land use. Yet, it is important to note that relocation is not always the best solution. Keeping beavers in place is now becoming the best management practice. Successful techniques used to manage beavers living close to human infrastructure include:

- **Flow devices:** Pond levelers or beaver deceivers, help control the flow of water through beaver dams and prevent flooding or erosion along roads, ponds, ditches and on private property.
- **Protective fencing:** Protective barriers around trees and other vegetation can prevent beavers from damaging them. This can also encourage beavers to build their dams in other areas of the watershed.
- **Tree wrapping:** Wire mesh wraps or other protective material around tree trunks help prevent beavers from damaging them. This is a particularly effective strategy for more vulnerable young trees.



- **Beaver dam analogs:** These are human-made structures that mimic the function of natural beaver dams. They can help slow down and retain water in a stream, which can improve water quality and increase habitat for fish and other aquatic species.

The key to managing beavers in the urban landscape is to maintain balance. An approach that accommodates the needs for both humans and beavers is best.

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