



JUN 25 2018



To: Agency Staff and Other Interested Parties

From: Paul Henson, Oregon State Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Curt Melcher, Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Subject: Beaver Management in Oregon

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The purpose of this joint memo is to convey management direction for North American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) (beaver) that is supported and encouraged by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). Given their ecological importance to a wide variety of other species and habitat (including Federal ESA-listed species such as coho salmon [*Oncorhynchus kisutch*] and steelhead [*O. mykiss*]), as well as their iconic status within Oregon, *both agencies support the conservation and ecological recovery of beaver within their native range in Oregon, as well as the reduction of conflicts with humans and land managers.* As a native furbearer, beaver conservation and management is the purview of ODFW. However, in order to ensure conservation, ecological recovery, and reduced conflicts of beaver, agency staff should work with each other and our Federal, state, and local government partners, tribes, non-profits, private landowners, licensed furtakers, wildlife control officers, and others to conduct the following actions. These actions should be considered and integrated into current work responsibilities of staff to the extent practicable, as well as directly into any beaver management initiatives that are attained with new resources or partnerships.

Science and Guidance

- support the collection of monitoring information across Oregon that indicates beaver presence/absence at fine scales
- support identification of significant, truly unoccupied, suitable, and “landowner-friendly” habitat for beaver to be considered for reintroduction efforts
- develop techniques for improving beaver habitat conditions in areas of vital fish habitat with beaver presence, but lacking habitat structures (i.e. dams)
- research, develop, and test fish- and wildlife-friendly and effective beaver dam control devices that will reduce property damage and help landowners tolerate beavers on their property
- develop fish passage guidelines or criteria for beaver dam control devices and beaver dam analogues (BDAs)

Habitat

- work with landowners to re-establish habitat and vegetative cover conducive to beaver
- educate agency staff on beaver habitats, including, but not limited to, dietary needs and land use practices and history

Outreach, Education, and Technical Assistance

- provide education and outreach to landowners on the role of beavers in restoring waterways and diverse ecosystems, the potential benefit of beavers for land and water management, and options for beaver management (e.g., <http://oregonforests.org/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/Wildlife-Book-American-Beaver-Proof.pdf>)
- for landowners concerned about beaver damage, continue to provide tools and assistance to work through the following progressive, general beaver management options:

- acceptance, with or without incentives (e.g., [Riparian Lands Tax Incentive Program](#), [The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#), [USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Coastal Program](#) [which provides technical, financial, and regulatory compliance])
 - property protection (e.g., “pond levelers,” “beaver deceivers,” fencing, other exclusion methods)
 - dam breaching
 - relocation, per current ODFW requirements
 - lethal removal, per Oregon Revised Statutes and Oregon Administrative Rules
- for landowners interested in promoting beaver presence or activity on their property, provide tools and assistance to identify current beaver presence, potential property impacts (to the landowner or neighbors), habitat suitability for beaver, current scientific methodologies to jumpstart dam building, and reintroduction needs if warranted
 - educate agency staff on beaver identification (e.g. sign), ecology, and habitat to ensure suitable professional guidance
 - identify, develop, or promote Federal or state incentives for living with beaver
 - identify, develop, or promote projects and outreach material that demonstrate positive ecological and landowner outcomes of beaver
 - support the formation by partners of a coordinated network of beaver problem-solvers to respond to “nuisance calls,” who could assess beaver problems and recommend nonlethal solutions

Reintroduction

- utilize ODFW’s [Requirements for Relocation of Beaver in Oregon](#), and contact ODFW wildlife veterinarians if there are health issues for beaver intended for relocation
- reintroductions, and relocations of nuisance beaver, should occur only where there are suitable, unoccupied habitats and willing landowners
- as a means to maximize the survival and success of reintroduced beavers, utilize the best available science to identify suitable sites for the reintroduction of beaver, including tools such as eDNA techniques, the Beaver Restoration Assessment Tool (BRAT), and score cards
- beavers held in facilities and given the opportunity to form pair bonds or reunite family groups seem to have a greater chance of successful establishment upon release, so explore the feasibility of establishing a temporary holding facility for beavers following ODFW wildlife holding requirements
- utilize [The Beaver Restoration Guidebook](#) to guide beaver restoration efforts

Coordination

- build collaborative relationships between both agencies to support and promote mutual partnering in the conservation and management of beaver in Oregon
- build on and expand communication, coordination, and collaboration with other partners to expand the capacity to implement meaningful conservation actions (e.g., Oregon’s Beaver Work Group, National Marine Fisheries Service, Federal land managers, tribes, The Wetland Conservancy, universities, non-profits, landowners, and other interested individuals or parties)

Thank you for all of the work you do to conserve and manage Oregon’s natural resources. These actions will help ensure the long-term sustainability of this iconic and widely important species for Oregon. If you have questions, please call Tom Stahl (ODFW, 503-947-6219), Derek Broman (ODFW, 503-947-6095), or Chris Allen (USFWS, 503-231-6179).