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# MIDWEST BEAVER NEWS

**November 2026**

**A roundup of recent regional, national, and international beaver news curated for you!**

## Midwest Highlights

**Minneapolis Welcomed BeaverCON 2026**
At the end of September, nearly 500 researchers, restoration practitioners, land managers, policymakers, educators, and advocates from across North America came together for BeaverCON 2026. In a recent blog post, Cameron Aker, Driftless Area Outreach Coordinator with Trout Unlimited, wrote, "I was fortunate enough to attend this year's event in Minneapolis in late September and wasn't sure exactly what to expect. I came away much more knowledgeable about beavers, their impacts on whole ecosystems, and why we should all care about them."

**BeaverCON Highlight: Mickki Garrity's Keynote on Wild Rice, Beavers, and Relationships**
Mickki Garrity, a Citizen Potawatomi Nation–enrolled scholar, writer, and advocate for environmental healing, cultural sovereignty, and Indigenous science, and a Ph.D. student from the Fairfax Beaver Lab, delivered a powerful presentation on wild rice, beavers, and relationships that earned a standing ovation. Watch her presentation to hear why and what that message can offer us.

**Pond Leveler Installed in Rochester, MI**
Oakland University researchers recently launched a first-of-its-kind stream study into how Michigan manages flooding associated with beaver activity. Collaborating with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), OU researchers installed a pond leveler in Galloway Creek in Rochester Michigan, in August 2026. Researchers will monitor the beaver pond and areas both upstream and downstream of the dam to examine the effects of the pond leveler on Galloway Creek and the surrounding ecosystem. They will collect data on habitat, stream morphology, water flow, water temperatures and wildlife biodiversity, while also monitoring

the behavioral responses of beavers and other wildlife. The team is pictured below.



*Sandra Troxell-Smith, Mena Booton, Andrea Knutson, Josh Liike, Luke Bechtell, Mario Prisciandaro, Jessica Kemp, Ryan Dinehart, Justin Jendza, and Thomas Raffel*

## Ecosystem Services

**Beavers Help UK Farmers Tackle Drought**
As the climate crisis brings more extreme weather to Britain, farmers are experimenting with new tactics to tackle drought – and flooding. One of those tactics is to put beavers on the landscape to store water on the landscape and build flood resilience as well.

**Beavers Build Flood Resilience in Urban Settings**
A new U.S. Geological Survey study looked closely at two small urban creeks near Portland, Oregon, and found that beaver dams slowed down a significantly higher amount of water flow during storms than the same creeks but without dams. This did not stop the floods, but it bought enough time to cope with the problem.

**Beavers Boost Bird Populations**
Because avian species are highly sensitive to environmental changes, their presence or absence are clear indicators of habitat health. At the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve in southwest Montana, each part of its beaver pond complexes serves a different constituency of birds. Find out more about which bird species require open water, dead standing trees, cattails and bulrushes, mud flats, muddy shallows, shallow water fringed with tall grass and sedges, wetlands, wet meadows, and more.



A northern yellow warbler at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve.
Courtesy Doug McSpadden

## Beaver Restoration

**Researchers Studying How BDAs Shape Streams**
Research is being conducted to determine how design choices made in the construction of beaver dam analogs impact where gravel erodes and deposits in streams where the BDAs are implemented.

**Restoration in the Adirondacks**
The Boquet River Association is looking to welcome beavers back to the region's headwater streams through low-tech, process-based river restoration as a way to support Atlantic salmon populations.

**California Status Report and Revised Beaver Relocation Assessment Tool**
The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has released a 2025 status report on beaver restoration projects in California as well as a California beaver restoration assessment tool (BRAT) viewer. The status report provides updates on the beaver restoration project proposals received, project implementation, translocated beavers and progress toward overall ecosystem benefits and restoration objectives. The BRAT model helps determine where within a watershed or specific property beavers may yield the most restoration benefits

**Colorado Status Report**
Several months after finalizing a plan to increase and sustain the state's beaver populations, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Department of Agriculture, and the State Land Board are moving forward with its Beaver Conservation and Management Strategy.

**BDA Impacts on a Mixed-Land-Use Watershed**

A recent study provides evidence that beaver dam analogs (BDAs) can initiate significant hydrologic and geomorphic changes in a stormwater-driven, ephemeral stream system. By documenting these responses in a flashy, human-impacted system, this study extends BDA research beyond perennial and rangeland settings.

**Shifting Perceptions of Beavers in Oregon**

For most of the twentieth century, beavers were considered a pest in Oregon. Beavers only became legally recognized as wildlife in Oregon in 2024. Prior to that, they were classified as a nuisance species. By the start of the 2020s, Oregon had more ecologically impaired waterways than almost any other state, and environmentalists were ready for a serious solution--beavers. Today, Tribal leaders, local governments and even private land owners are putting their heads together to restore beaver populations — and the other species that rely on them. In early 2026, Tribal members set up a series of beaver dam analogs on the Warm Springs Reservation in Central Oregon to draw the animals back to the area. Around the same time, beavers were spotted settling into a newly restored wetland in the Metro Portland area, a move the city has embraced.

**Colorado Project Combines BDAs with Translocation**

At West Rifle Creek State Wildlife Area, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) local wildlife officers are combining the use of beaver dam analogs with the strategic relocation of seven beavers. These projects are successfully slowing down the flow, reviving critical riparian habitats, and proving that a few wooden stakes and a dedicated group of people can help Colorado's wildlife. CPW partnered with Colorado Open Lands, Ducks Unlimited, the Mule Deer Foundation and the National Wild Turkey Federation on the project.



Beaver makes its way down to the newly formed pool between two new man-made structures at Garfield Creek State Wildlife Area.
CPW photo

## Beaver Coexistence

**Beavers Northwest Partners with State and Local Agencies**
Beavers Northwest co-founder Ben Dittbrenner, speaking of his experience working in surface-water management for Snohomish County in Washington State, reports, "We were doing a lot of work helping to relieve the amount of conflict beavers were causing for the county. For a long time, the standard approach was people would just trap out the beavers…. We were doing non-lethal beaver management and it turned out to be much more cost-effective. The cost of hiring guys to trap beavers and clean up the mess in the culverts cost a bunch of money." Agencies that have worked with Beavers Northwest include the Washington State DOT and City of Bellevue Utilities.

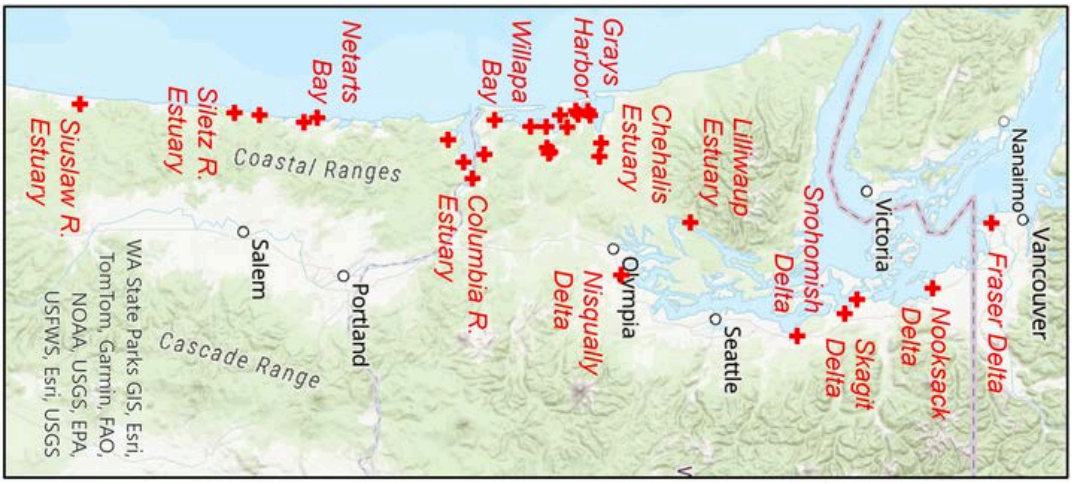
**Utah DOT Piloting Pond Levelers**
Utah DOT recently partnered with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Sageland Collaborative and Utah State University's Beaver Ecology and Relocation Collaborative to install three pond levelers in Beaver Creek in Logan Canyon. "What I see in this work is an opportunity to expand Logan Canyon's capacity to support wildlife habitat, hold water, create wetlands, improve water quality and make the area more resistant to fire," said Shane Hill, riverscape restoration project manager at Sageland Collaborative. Watch a video below from Utah DOT.




# Beaver Mythology and Ecology

**Indigenous Beaver Tale Explains Area Topography**
Beavers feature prominently in Cree mythology and environmental history in the region around Rupert Bay located on the southern end of Hudson Bay in Canada. One Cree myth about this area, recorded by the anthropologist Alanson Skinner, tells of a giant pursuing an enormous mythical beaver down the Nottaway River until the beaver escaped into Rupert Bay. According to the myth, the giant then picked up a huge rock and hurled it at the fleeing animal, missing the beaver but creating Stag Rock, the distinctive island found in the river's mouth today.

**Surprise! Beavers Can Tolerate Brackish Waters**
Despite their reputation as freshwater critters, beavers can live in—and engineer—areas where rivers meet the sea. As adaptable engineers who are capable of creating the habitats they need to survive, their damming habits can create calm pools of freshwater within estuaries. Research is being conducted by Greg Hood in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia to learn more about these tidal beavers. In the image below, red crosses denote intertidal beaver dams.



# The International Scene

**From Around the United Kingdom**

- A colony of beavers that has set up home on a former dairy farm in Somerset is being hailed as a success story for a rewilding project.
- Beaver kits have been born in the wild at Pensthorpe Natural Park in Norfolk for the first time in 500 years.
- An animal sanctuary in Cornwall has announced the arrival of two beavers, who are named after famous conservationists Steve and Terri Irwin.
- An update on efforts to reintroduce beavers to Wales.
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust develops a plan to bring back beavers.
- Beavers are even better for the environment than first thought, according to new research conducted in Cheshire.
- A family of six beavers has been released into the waters around Loch Ness, in the Scottish Highlands.
- The Beaver Trust joins Rewilding Europe's European Rewilding Network.

**Beavers Fighting Drought in the Czech Republic**

Drought has affected areas of the Czech Republic this year that even longtime residents cannot remember ever seeing dry. In the Soutok Protected Landscape Area, located at Czechia's border with Austria and Slovakia, while the surrounding landscape is parched, beaver dams retain water in wetlands, pools and parts of meadows. This allows rare plants and animals to survive there.

**Toronto Art Installation Features Beaver Sculptures**

Cree artist Kent Monkman's latest work is a 15-foot-tall bronze and steel beaver lodge that rises on the shores of a waterfront parkland on Ookwemin Minising: Biidaasige Park in Toronto.

**Photo of Urban Beaver Family in Poland Wins Award**

Polish photographer Jan Wieczorek has been awarded this year's Rewilding Europe Award for his photo Urban Beavers, which captured a family of beavers in the Polish city of Olsztyn.



A 15-foot-tall bronze and steel sculpture, "The Colony," by Cree artist Kent Monkman, sits on the waterfront of the Ookwemin Minising: Biidaasige Park in Toronto, Canada. It features an oversized beaver colony and celebrates the importance of water to Indigenous worldviews. Credit: Photo by Michael Seleski, courtesy of Kent Monkman



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