



Why do beavers chew trees? Tree Protection:

Beavers chew trees for two reasons: food and building materials. They can't digest the hard inner wood, so beavers strip off and eat the leaves and softer outer bark. This leaves them with good, cleaned wood sticks and logs that are perfect for building dams and lodges. This way the beavers can create ponds of deep water that not only keep them safe but are lush wetland habitats that encourage more trees to grow.

Non-lethal solutions

Chewing trees is the most common human-beaver conflict. Oftentimes, beavers will be lethally trapped to prevent them from felling trees on private property. However, there are low maintenance, cost-effective solutions that will protect your trees. There are two main ways to protect your trees from beavers: wire-wrapping and sand-painting.

Wire-wrapping is the process of enclosing the tree with wire fencing from ground level to breast height. Leaving enough room for the tree to grow ensures the tree stays healthy and the beavers can't get in. This process should be redone every 2-3 years to accommodate tree growth. If you want to encourage the beavers to stay in the area, it is best to select only a few trees to protect, so that the beavers have enough food to remain. If you want to passively remove the beavers from your property, wrapping enough trees usually forces the beavers to move on to a new area.



Sand-painting entails painting the tree with a mixture of paint and sand from ground level to breast height. Paint can be mixed to match the color of the bark making it practically impossible to notice. The sand content in the paint hurts the beaver's teeth, so they won't chew on it, but is perfectly safe for the tree. This process should be redone every 2 years.

For more detailed information, the Beaver Institute has a self-help guide, which can be found here: <https://www.beaverinstitute.org/problems-solutions/tree-damage/>

Or visit the SLO Beaver Brigade website under "Get Expert Help", which can be found here: <http://www.slobeaverbrigade.com/beaver-problems/>



Flood Protection:



Photo courtesy of Michael Callahan @The Beaver Institute

Beavers build dams in rivers and streams that spread out the water, widen the channel and create a deep pond for them to live in. This can mean unwanted flooding for a stream on your property. Luckily, we have the technology to **control the water level** of beaver ponds, so that **flooding is prevented, and the lush beaver wetland and all of its benefits can remain.** Pond Leveler devices A.K.A Flow Control devices (see above) are a trusted and reliable tool that have solved beaver flooding conflicts for over 20 years. Over a thousand devices have been successfully installed all over the U.S and Canada and continue to work to this day.

How do the flow devices work?

A pipe is run through the beaver dam at a certain height, and essentially acts as a leak through the dam. The water then flows through the pipe so the height of the pond can never rise above the pipe level. An exclusion fence is attached at the pipe inlet to prevent beavers from getting close. This boundary creates enough space that the beavers cannot feel the flow of water leaving their pond. And, as long as the water depth is at least 3 feet, the beavers will likely stay. A successful flow device installation would result in a stable, flood-proof beaver pond that continuously brings benefits to you and the land and water around you.

For more detailed information, the Beaver Institute has a self-help guide, which can be found here: <https://www.beaverinstitute.org/problems-solutions/stream-damage/>

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For help with installations, you can contact the SLO Beaver Brigade

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Blocked culverts or drainages:

Human made infrastructure like culverts and other drainage structures create natural choke points in rivers and streams that are ideal for a beaver to build a dam and create a pond. **Thankfully, nearly all man-made structures can be prevented from beaver damming.** There are several strategies that can be taken to either prevent damming or control flow through a dam depending on the situation. With a little thoughtful engineering any area can be made co-habitable for beaver and human use. These strategies consist of placing protective fencing or a diversion dam around an existing culvert or drainage structure. All of these techniques are effective, and the different strategies are employed depending on the site conditions.

Culvert Protective Fencing Fence and Pipe Device Diversion Dam



Photos courtesy of Michael Callahan @The Beaver Institute

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