

EVENT RECAP



Photo credit: Naturally Curious with Mary Holland

DETAILS

**BEAVER WORKSHOP
DEC 6TH, 2019
WSU PUYALLUP RESEARCH
AND EXTENSION CENTER**



Photo credit: Jordan Jobe

PURPOSE OF THIS WORKSHOP:

Agriculture and habitat organizations are working towards developing a beaver management program to serve Pierce County landowners. A main goal is to offer resources for landowners who are experiencing impacts of beaver activity on their property, including on-site solutions or beaver relocation. This workshop advanced knowledge on beaver and ecosystem management, HPA permitting and process, advanced efforts towards developing solutions for landowners, and offered a hands-on opportunity to build a pond leveler for future deployment at a beaver dam.

BEAVERS 201: Elyssa Kerr, Beavers Northwest [Presentation](#)

Elyssa Kerr, Executive Director of [Beavers Northwest](#) presented on beavers' benefits to the environment, common beaver management strategies, and how to develop a mitigation plan for beavers that may be causing problems.

Beaver dams can wreak havoc on surrounding neighbors and roads by causing flooding, but they can also provide benefits such as water storage, groundwater recharge, and create habitat for fish and wildlife. They also know good potential beaver habitat when they see it, and persistently return to desirable sites: Elyssa says this is why live trapping and killing beavers should be used as a last resort.

When considering beaver management strategies like notching dams, beaver relocation, repellants, and "beaver deceivers" (a trapezoidal cage built around culverts), Elyssa cautioned participants to consider the maintenance and work intensity involved when deciding how to manage beavers or dams that are causing problems.



Photo credit: Beavers Northwest

Examples of pond levelers installed over beaver dams.

When beaver dams cause flooding or water flow problems, Elyssa explained how installing a flow device called a "pond leveler" is a longer-lasting solution than notching. The device is simply a pipe that allows water to flow over the dam with a cage at the inlet of the pipe to prevent beavers from impairing it. Maintenance with a flow device can save people time and money.



Photo credit: Erin Mackey

Elyssa taught participants how to build a bond leveler. Materials included 16ft cattle fencing panels (6"x8" mesh), two 20ft single-wall HDPE pipe, wire, a drill, hog rings, pliers, and bolt cutters. T-posts are used to hold the pipe in place once in the water. Obtaining an HPA permit from WDFW is required before installing the device.

Beavers Northwest can assist with pond leveler installation including site assessment, materials acquisition, installation, and monitoring and maintenance. If you have further questions about this process, please contact Beavers Northwest: 619-708-5434

HPAs & BEAVER DAM MANAGEMENT:

Liz Bockstiegel, Habitat Biologist, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
[Presentation](#)

Liz Bockstiegel, Habitat Biologist from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) presented on the HPA permitting process and how it can help address potential negative impacts to the surrounding habitat and fish species.

HPA = HYDRAULIC PROJECT APPROVAL

Any modification or removal of a dam requires an [HPA from WDFW](#).

This includes notching/removing dams, installing deceivers or levelers, or constructing beaver dam analogs.

Types of HPAs:

1. **Standard** – the permit is valid for up to 5 years, and requires documents that can take time to produce. Project is in compliance with State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) or given exemption from local government.
2. **Expedited** – Valid for only 60 days from date of issuance. Requires a written application, must be issued within 15 days of receiving a complete application. No SEPA required.
3. **Emergency** – Call a habitat biologist or the Emergency Hotline at 360-902-2537. Verbal approval that must be put in writing within 30 days. No SEPA required. Habitat biologist will conduct a site visit within 10 days of the Emergency permit issuance.

Apply for an HPA online through the [Aquatic Protection Permitting System \(APPS\)](#) or mail a hard copy of the [Joint Aquatic Resources Application \(JARPA\)](#) form to WDFW.



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons

[Read more](#) about WDFW's tips for beaver dam management.

DISCUSSION:

Following the presentations, the group discussed various next steps and further questions:

- Drainage Districts can receive an HPA for Beaver Dam Management and an HPA for Vegetation that is valid for an entire drainage network for up to 5 years. Contact your local Habitat Biologist for assistance.
- Some Drainage Districts struggle to understand what is classified as a ditch, modified ditch, or a creek. A map of these drainage networks and their historical classification has not been produced by the county. Other counties (Skagit and Whatcom, for example) have management plans and permit plans for drainage districts that include maps, management actions, and where you do or do not need an HPA. This process could benefit agricultural landowners or Drainage Districts.
- Various organizations in the area, including Pierce County's Agricultural Program, WDFW, Beavers Northwest, South Sound Beaver Recovery, and others are collaborating to develop resources/solutions for addressing beaver dams. This may include follow-up workshops for landowners in order to better understand how to deal with problematic beavers, and better educational materials from DFW and the County.

SOUTH SOUND BEAVER RECOVERY: Co-founders Mark and Jacob Heckert

A local father-son duo has recently formed a nonprofit organization, [South Sound Beaver Recovery](#), that's focused on beaver relocation. Mark Heckert (a biologist) and his son, Jacob (a natural resource management student) are working on establishing the potential for beaver relocation in the Puyallup Watershed, which up until 2017 was illegal in western Washington. They're working with DFW, local tribes and landowners to relocate problematic beavers by releasing them in habitats away from humans. They're also looking to study the beavers after relocation to determine best management practices and how beavers successfully adjust to their new homes. **They're asking landowners to call them (at 253-732-8822) before calling Wildlife Control.** They're organization is also in need of volunteers for habitat assessment, short term holding facilities, and securing funding sources.

Special Thanks to Our
Presenters and Hosts:

Beavers Northwest

South Sound Beaver Recovery

