

Beaversprite

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Photo by Sharon T. Brown

A young beaver enjoys a meal of poplar leaves in shallow water.

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Working for Wildlife, People
and Healthy Ecosystems



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Since 1985

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President's Message

Thank you all who have renewed your memberships and made extra donations. We continue to work 7 days a week and 12-hour days for beaver and wetland education, plus solving individual and community problems. Without your continued support we could not continue. Yes, we still do not receive salaries, our board members are paying members of BWV and all contributions go toward education and long term problem solving. **WE LOVE WHAT WE DO!!!!**

Did you ever wonder how a beaver can pull a 20-40 pound floating log through the water? A log that may weigh more than half the beaver's weight? PHYSICS!

Oh my, why did I bring up a subject most people avoided or hated in school?. Well, here is the answer. Weight is the pull of gravity on the Mass of the log and can be represented by the equation $W = M \times g$ where g is the acceleration due to gravity and is

9.8 (I will leave off the units to the chagrin of all of you who like physics). What this

means is Weight is nearly ten (9.8) times the Mass, so what the beaver has to pull through the water is only one tenth of the Weight. Now the beaver only has to apply a force of two pounds (lbs.) for a 20 lb. log and four lbs. for a 40 lb. log. Who would ever think that physics could be so illuminating!!!

As the photos show, we do help physically solve beaver flooding problems. Wow, it's nice to get out of the office!!!

The extreme weather, which forced us to use a boat for a deep water installation near Hurley, NY, also caused problems elsewhere. We advised a Texas rehabber who found a kit a mile from a stream after a flood!

In September we gave a talk for the

Scoharie Land Trust in Jefferson, NY, and then hiked to several beaver ponds on the Trust's beautiful 320-acre property. How great



to know it'll be protected for future generations!

Besides aiding beaver supporters in Oshawa (see p. 6) we've also been providing help to people in Maine (about protecting a flow device outlet) and other states.

Overseas Efforts

The beaver documentary that we helped a Korean Broadcasting Company crew film in 2009 has been shown twice on KBS World. And the videographer brought his wife, 12-year-old son and 10-year-old daughter to visit us and the beavers this fall.

Our great member Alex Hiller in Germany actually met with environmentalists in Riga, Latvia about the beaver problem in that city's park.. Alex saw that our letter about adequately protecting trees was translated and given to the proper authorities.

New Website!

As this issue goes to press, nearly a year of work on our new website is almost done. It's been a real marathon, but was well worthwhile because the new site has a great design and will offer much more useful information.

For the Beavers and All,



Our grandniece Ellie is in the car, ready to help with a flow device.

News & Alerts

Clean Energy Act

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) joined with Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) to introduce bipartisan legislation to establish a Renewable Electricity Production Act (S 3813). This would require the U. S. to produce 15% of its electricity from renewable sources, while allowing for a smaller percentage to come from energy efficiency improvements. Because congress hasn't passed other global warming bills, it is even more important to advance clean energy measures such as this act that will reduce our dependence on dirty fuels, curb global warming pollution, and create thousands of clean energy jobs. Ask your senator to vote for S 3813.

Ban Deadly Poisons

Representatives DeFazio (OR) and Campbell (CA) recently introduced H.R. 5643 - The Compound 1080 and Sodium Cyanide Elimination Act. This federal bill would ban two of the most deadly poisons used to kill coyotes and other wildlife on America's ranch lands. In 2008, nearly 13,000 animals suffered a merciless death from these poisons, and sensitive habitats were laced with lethal toxins.

Compound 1080, is one of the most deadly poisons on earth, and is commonly used in livestock collars. These rubber collars are placed around the necks of sheep and goats to poison predators. The pouches, however, are frequently punctured by vegetation and barbed wire, leaking the poison - which has no antidote.

Sodium cyanide is used in M-44 "coyote getters", ground-based poison ejector devices that are baited to attract and kill predators. These non-selective devices have killed non-target wild animals and pets, and have seriously injured people. Ranchers could use better animal husbandry practices such

as having guard animals, sound and light devices and appropriate fencing. It makes more sense to use such long-term deterrents rather than killing coyotes and non-targets year after year. Encourage your representative to vote for HR 5643.

Protect Wild Horses

To protect a herd of wild horses from being rounded up by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the ASPCA has filed a federal lawsuit against Ken Salazar, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The ASPCA and other groups are challenging the federal government's ongoing illegal treatment of wild horses. "The BLM is systematically driving America's wild horses to extinction," says Matt Bershadker, ASPCA representative. "Despite intense public outcry, it has continued to increase its efforts to remove these horses from public lands legally designated for their use."

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) was authorized to determine appropriate herd management, but the BLM refuses to wait for the study's results and continues to have cruel roundups of wild herds—often using low-flying helicopters to chase terrified horses—in clear violation of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, which was passed to protect wild horses and burros from capture and preserve the land used by them. The ASPCA seeks a moratorium on all future roundups until the NAS publishes its findings.

To protest the barbaric and illegal treatment of these American icons: [visit the ASPCA Advocacy Center to take action now.](#)

MN Sulfide Mining Threat

A land exchange would transfer 6,650 acres of Superior National Forest (including much of 100-Mile

Swamp) in northeast Minnesota to Polymet Mining for "open pit" mining to extract copper and other metals from sulfide ores. But when sulfide ores are exposed, they oxidize to sulfuric acid that harms both animals and plants. This acid mine drainage allows toxic heavy metals, such as mercury, to dissolve in the water, which can then be contaminated for centuries.

Send comments on the land exchange plan to James Sanders, Forest Supervisor, 8901 Grand Avenue Place, Duluth, MN 55808. More information is at http://www.waterlegacy.org/sulfide_mining, plus *Precious Waters*, a video about sulfide mining by Friends of Boundary Waters may be seen.

Environmentalist Fired

N.Y. Governor David Paterson fired Pete Grannis, Commissioner of the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), on Oct. 21 for "insubordination." Two days earlier, a leaked DEC memo was the subject of a front-page story in the Oct 19th *Times Union*. It starkly described likely consequences of the Governor's planned layoffs of 209 agency employees and warned that fewer polluted sites would be cleaned up.

DEC's workforce had already been reduced by about 16% since 2008. "Many of our programs are hanging by a thread," the memo stated. "The public would be shocked to learn how thin we are in many areas.... Due to major staff and funding losses, combined with more legislative mandates, "DEC is in the weakest position that it has been in since it was created 40 years ago."

"Grannis was fired for telling the truth," according to Environmental Advocates of New York. "He wanted New Yorkers to know the DEC was compromised by reckless staff and budget cuts." Ironically, Grannis was fired via a phone call while receiving an award for environmental stewardship.

City Faces \$4 Million Fines for Busting Dam

Draining Alabama Pond Causes Massive Kill of Rare Fish

Regina Nummy, Manager of Hawkins Park in Birmingham, didn't think twice about ordering park workers to destroy a beaver dam. They used heavy equipment to take out the Roebuck Springs dam on September 19, 2008. In two hours they drained most of the pond, leaving behind millions of state protected mollusks and 12,000 federally protected fish dying in the mud.

Roebuck Springs had the world's largest population of watercress darters, a species on the brink of extinction.

This blatant violation of the Endangered Species Act led the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on June 24, 2010 to announce claims against the city of over \$4 million.

At the time of the dewatering disaster, Roebuck Springs hosted the world's largest population of watercress darters, a species on the brink of extinction. This colorful, two-inch fish survives at only three other sites in the Birmingham area. It is unusual for so many of an endangered species to be killed at once, and the \$2,975,000 fine from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reflects that massive loss.

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) has an additional claim of \$1,063,000 against Birmingham for killing the both the darters and 2.4 million sharp-crest *Elimia* snails, a species that is in trouble in Alabama. An ADCNR investigator commented, "It's certainly a surprise that this would be allowed to happen considering the importance of the site."

Nummy defended destroying the beaver dam at Roebuck Springs as



Photo by Glynn Wilson

Roebuck Springs pond with the beaver dam and darters still intact.



Photo by Glynn Wilson

A view of Roebuck Springs after park workers took out the dam.

necessary to stop flooding of a nearby tennis court. This is controversial as frequent park users say the tennis court was never flooded. In addition, the Birmingham area has suffered from drought conditions for several years.

Plugged culvert

Beavers had plugged a culvert at the outlet of Roebuck Springs pond, according to William Nichols, ADCNR biologist. But the simple solution would've been to clean out

the culvert and install a water control device — as was done after the massive fishkill Nichols said that installation (a concrete box with an open side containing riser boards to manage the water level) has worked well for the last two years.

Alabama has the greatest number of species of freshwater fish and mollusks, but has lost over 67 species to extinction during the past 80 years.

But in 2008 both the beaver dam and an earthen dam beneath it, dated from 1900, were demolished. As the water rushed out, most of the 20,000 watercress darters retreated into aquatic plants near the shore, instead of going with the flow. They belong to the Percidae family and like to “perch” among the watercress and other plants in the normally slow-moving waters of limestone springs. The males have brilliant blue and red markings, while the females are more dull colored. But camouflage didn’t save the Roebuck Springs darters as 80% of their pool drained.

A good steward

Faith Apostolic Church of Birmingham owns another of the four sites where the rare fish survives. Here, church leaders have encouraged members to become water quality monitors, and in 2008 created Seven Springs Ecoscape, a park to celebrate the watercress darter. Their efforts were praised by famous biologist, and Alabama native, E. O. Wilson. He said, “We have to set up more reserves everywhere, small reserves like the church property here in Birmingham. And we need them large. We need them global in extent and in planning.”

Alabama has the greatest number of species of freshwater fish and mollusks in the U.S., but has lost over 67 species to extinction during the past 80 years. Luckily, Alabama had gotten

funding from the federal State Wildlife Grants program, six years before the Birmingham disaster, to create the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center, the largest state non-game recovery program in the U.S. Because the Center’s mission is to conserve and restore freshwater species, experts were on hand to help with estimates of the loss and restoration plans for Roebuck Springs. Surviving darters were concentrated in a small remnant of the original pond, where an invasive crayfish was killing them, so that predator was mostly removed.

FWS sent a demand letter to the



A male watercress darter. His species faces extinction.

city Birmingham with 18 requests after the 2008 incident. The city initially cooperated by installing a sandbag dam, an aerator (to maintain oxygen levels depleted by much dead vegetation from the drainage), a water quality monitor, informational signs and a permanent water control device.

E. O. Wilson said, “We have to set up more reserves everywhere, small reserves like the church property here in Birmingham.”

But, the city balked at the other other actions needed at the urban park, such as identifying and protecting the recharge area for Roebuck Springs, the source of Village Creek. The stream

and historic mill pond are surrounded by a golf course, tennis courts, Hawkins Recreation Center and a parking lot.

City officials have also ignored requests to divert or filter both the parking lot runoff and storm sewage discharges into the pond, and to have a public education program about the rare fish. A year after the disaster, scientists found only about half of the normal darter population surviving at the site.

Alabama DCNR had filed a legal complaint against Birmingham in October of 2009 citing five counts, including diverting a stream and

negligence. The state agency eventually came up with a claim against the city of Birmingham of \$1,063,000 for killing about 12,000 watercress darters plus 2.4 million sharp-crest *Elimia* snails (a replacement value of 15 cents was figured for each of the 2.4 million snails lost). As legal negotiations continue, the city’s

attorney has filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the environmental agency.

Asking \$200 per darter

U.S. FWS filed a notice of violations this June that including a claim for \$2,975,000 for the deaths of 11,760 watercress darters (asking only about \$200 for each — often fines for killing individuals of an endangered species are \$1,000 or more for each) and for injuring an additional 8,900 darters.

Legal negotiations continue as the city’s attorney has filed a Freedom of Information Act request. Cynthia K. Dohner, Southeast Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said, “We want to do what’s best for the fish, and our work is far from over.”

Sharon T. Brown

Citizens Defend Oshawa Beavers

When BWW spoke with Marissa Kata this summer, she was in the midst of battling to save a beaver family in the heart of Oshawa. We sent her background information about flow devices, and posted a video about them on the campaign's Facebook site. We also analyzed a city report that recommended removing the beavers and pointed out misleading statements in it, prior to the special Oshawa City Council meeting.

"I really believe that without the support of you and some others, we couldn't have swung the vote our way," Kata said later. But it was the amazing Oshawa citizens themselves who stepped up and got the job done.

Jack Snedden thought he was performing a public service by removing two large Conibear traps on July 16th from a Goodman Creek dam in the heart of Oshawa, Ontario—after all the exposed traps could've killed a pet dog or injured a child. Snedden said, "I think I did the community a favor," but the 62-year-old now faces a \$420 fine.

This case is reminiscent of one from 1957 when teacher George Clements found beaver traps set near his school in British Columbia and sprang them to prevent injuries to students. Though Clements did this only after he had accidentally stepped into a trap (a veteran, he said "I first thought it was a land mine," Clements later became an expert on trapping and founded Fur-Bearer Defenders). was Nonetheless he was charged for interfering with traps — a charge that Snedden is now resisting. And public opinion appears to be on his side.

A week before Snedden found the lethal traps, city officials had announced plans to have a trapper remove beavers from a storm water management pond to reduce the risk



Photo by Robert T. Bell

Jack Snedden carries off two Conibear traps he found on a park dam.

of flooding. But neighbors of the flat-tailed animals, such as Joyce Schnegg, strongly disagreed. Last fall she had raised an alarm after spotting a trapper in the pond. A city representative then told the public that six of the Goodman Creek beavers had been relocated. Later, city officials confirmed that the six were killed.

Beavers on Facebook Again

Not long after Snedden took away the new traps, Oshawa activist Marissa Kata created a "Save the Goodman Creek Beavers Protest!" site on Facebook. She used it to announce a July 17th demonstration at Goodman Park. She explained, "In a recent development, despite previous

bad press regarding the unnecessary drowning of the Goodman Creek Beavers, council and city staff in an amazing development have decided to take more lives. Please note that there are humane, cost effective and efficient ways to deal with this problem, i.e. Beaver Bafflers."

About 50 people came to the roadside rally. Many carried signs, such as one saying, "Give a dam. Save our beavers." Snedden displayed the two Conibear traps to passersby. He was videotaped as he used a spade to show how forcefully this trap snaps shut, and the video soon appeared on the "Save the Goodman Creek Beavers Protest!" Facebook site. (cont. p.7)

Kate, a young mother and college student, became a spokesperson for the campaign. Despite being in the midst of midterm exams and a family emergency, she made an excellent case for coexistence during a CBC interview. Though Kate had never before been involved with an animal issue before, she'd had some political experience as the head of the Downtown Oshawa Action Committee. Her practical, common sense answers were hard to dispute.

Later she spoke at the special Oshawa City Council meeting about the Goodman Park beavers. She said, "When I arrived at the council, it was so overwhelming. There were news cameras and satellite trucks everywhere."

Kate once again performed admirably. She said residents would like to see a negative story turned into a positive one, and that nonprofit organizations were willing to assist the Council to develop a proactive plan. Jack Snedden spoke too, and about 50 beaver supporters were present. Their arguments countered an earlier report from City staff, where a consulting ecologist had said flow devices often don't work (he must have been unfamiliar with the many studies about the modern devices).

Facing public outrage about a policy that meant Oshawa would have an endless cycle of killing, despite effective alternatives, the council voted 5 to 4 to reverse their earlier decision. Beaver pond neighbor Joyce Schnegg said, "It's wonderful.... I knew we could find a middle ground that lets the beavers live."

At the Oshawa City Council's September meeting they allocated \$60,000 (!) for a water control device and debris filter at the Goodman Park dam. Meanwhile, Jack Snedden plans to fight a fine from the Ministry of Natural Resources for unlawfully possessing a body gripping trap and interfering with legal trapping. He may have a strong case in court.

Waterlife, a Documentary

Waterlife tells the startling story of the last great supply of fresh water on earth. This almost two-hour documentary about the Great Lakes is beautifully made, and raises some important issues.

It begins with a question: why are the Beluga whales at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River the most contaminated marine mammals on the planet? A quarter of these adult whales have cancer and the only explanation appears to be pollution from upstream—from the Great Lakes that feed the St. Lawrence River.

About 30% of Lake Huron's vital coastal wetlands are being stranded due to falling water levels.

We learn how "Water unites people across time and space" as *Waterlife* takes us back 350 years to when Europeans first began harvesting the flow. Native American women now take turns walking the 10,000 miles of Great Lakes' shoreline in an attempt to raise awareness of the necessity of keeping the lakes clean.

Scenes of people enjoying these lovely lakes, "the crown jewels of the U.S." contrast with another use – as sewers. Paper mills along the shoreline spew water loaded with phenol, phosphorous, chloroform, dioxins and other organic chemicals. Most of these industrial chemicals bind up into particles and settle on the bottom as a layer of contaminants.

Toxic harbors

Twenty years ago, the federal government identified 43 "particularly toxic" harbors on the Great Lakes. Since then, only three of these harbors have been cleaned up.

Rapids once protected Lake Superior from invasive species, such as zebra mussels and sea lampreys, but locks have allowed these creatures

easy access. By the mid 1960s the sea lampreys had wiped out most of the big fish.

Lake Huron has thousands of islands in Georgian Bay with wetlands, described as "little pockets of warmer water with sub-emergent plants that actually keep the rest of the Great Lakes fishery in a healthy state." Young fish need to eat zooplankton, but the latter are crashing due to the voracious zebra mussels. And about 30% of the vital coastal wetlands are being stranded due to falling water levels.

The pollution game

Many cities have combined sewage and storm water systems with both using the same pipes. When it rains, plants reach capacity and overflows go back into the lake. Keeping up with industrial polluters has become a game, where corporations do not readily disclose the toxins they produce. One regulator said, "Every chemical we've looked for is out there." Government agencies may also squash toxicity reports because they don't want to know the bad news either.

Estrogenic contaminants are known to feminize fish and in the Chippawa community of Sarnia, two girls are now born for every boy baby.

Drinking water plants are designed to remove solids and certain metals. Ozone is used to kill bacteria and viruses. But ultra-trace amounts of organic chemicals remain, and no one knows how they affect humans. One researcher said, "We'll become so dumb, we won't know how dumb we've become!"

Cleaning up water and sewage plants is not popular among politicians. Perhaps the people need to first educate themselves about these issues, and then re-establish "The Great Law" of Native Americans: "Consider the needs of one generation to the next seven generations into the future."

Ducky's Adventures as a Two-year-old

By Patti Smith

Saturday October 2, 2010

I will never forget the evening of Ducky's formal debut, an event that took place during my first summer of beaver watching. I had waited for weeks to see the kits, but they never appeared when I was there. That evening, Willow, the matriarch, arrived

Her wonder could not have equaled mine.

to sample the picnic I brought for her, as had become her habit. Instead of finishing her refreshment, however, she ate just a little and then swam away.

She soon returned with a miniature beaver bobbing beside her. Willow strolled back up to her picnic while Ducky sat up in the shallow water, little paws tucked up to her chest and watched. Her wonder could not have equaled mine. I like to think that Willow had decided it was time to show off her baby. At the very least, allowing the kit to follow her to the picnic site demonstrated the degree of trust she felt in me.

A childhood of leisure

As that summer became winter, little Ducky taught me the ways of young beavers. Though she sometimes pretended to be helpful, she enjoyed a childhood of leisure. She would raid the larder while the rest of the family worked to gather it. As November drew to a close, Ducky bestowed upon me a high honor -- a little squeak-whine greeting as I stood alone on the shore one night. I had become an honorary beaver.

The next summer, still just a small beaver herself, Ducky spent long hours in the lodge supervising her new siblings. By mid-July, Ducky was shepherding two new kits around the pond. She had become a full-fledged working member of the family.

Another winter blew in and then trickled away. According to the literature, Ducky, now two, was ready to leave her natal clan and forge her own way. This is the phase of life when adult beavers are

most vulnerable. I could imagine too well the dangers a lone beaver might encounter on a quest for a territory and mate. True to form, once the new kits were born, Ducky headed off into the wide world.

I guessed that she would follow the brook and its tributaries rather than head off cross country, although I had once seen a beaver dead in a road far from any stream, so I couldn't be sure. Would she select a site and create a new pond, or would she be more motivated to find a



Photo by Ellie Nunn

mate? A mate would be more difficult to come by. I knew of no other colonies in this watershed that would have dispersing 2-year-olds.

I searched for Ducky upstream and down. I found a single beaver settled in a magnificent alder swamp at the bottom of the brook, but it wasn't Ducky. Only one tributary remained to check. If Ducky was not there, it meant she had leap-frogged the alder swamp pond and entered the big river. With a road following the river for most of its length, and a branching network of tributaries, Ducky would be much more difficult to find, and much more exposed to the hazards that arise from proximity to humans.

Fresh mud on the dam

On July 11, I set out up the remaining tributary. I knew that beavers had once occupied a site about three-quarters of a mile up, and a pretty little pond had persisted long enough to appear as a landmark on a couple of generations of maps. Once there I found fresh mud along the top of the dam and sprigs of blueberry in the water nearby. I clambered noisily up

a bank at the end of the dam. As I did, I heard a beaver surge through the water and slap its tail. I sat down near a derelict lodge the beaver had just vacated. On the far side of the pond a beaver floated nervously out from behind a bleached snag. Ducky? The beaver began to paddle slowly toward me. I tossed an apple into the water. The beaver paddled faster. Ducky!

The habitat she had chosen was good, but not excellent. Like most beaver ponds at this elevation, largely inedible red maple, spruce and fir ringed the water. There were some pond lilies, however, and their roots would provide winter sustenance.

Ducky lived in the pond alone and I wondered how that would affect a social animal. I imagined her life there to be a bit gloomy. I was not entirely surprised when she disappeared again a month later. I renewed my search. I visited the pond at the bottom of the stream. The same beaver remained the solitary occupant. Nor was Ducky in residence elsewhere on her tributary. My next step was to follow the length of the brook from my house up to her childhood territory.

A beaver's wake!

As I approached an old dam, I saw that water had collected behind it again. Sure enough, a beaver's wake sliced across the dark pool as I approached. Ducky swam right up for her apples. This site did have an abundance of winter forage, and though just a 15-minute stroll from my house, it was still remote from other humans.

Beaver trails, canals and a harvest of alder branches suggested Ducky was not just passing through. As I gazed upstream, admiring the pretty valley, I saw the second beaver. He swam right over. Ducky, busy with an apple, greeted him with a few little squeak-whines. The new beaver emitted a low growl-like hum, then a warning huff and for good measure, slapped with his tail. When he surfaced, I explained that I'd known Ducky since she was in pigtails, so he'd better get used to my visits. He huffed again and swam off.

Despite this cool reception, I was delighted to meet Ducky's mate. In the fairy tales this is where the story would end, and

Continued on p. 9

My Planned Beaver Relocation in 2011

By Gudrun Scott

I'd signed up for a work party on 10-10-10, as organized by Bill McKibben, to try to get the atmospheric carbon dioxide in the down to 350 parts per million by 2050 (see the website www.350.org). My "work" consisted of walking two miles to church that Sunday instead of driving as I usually do. My church, the Chenunda Creek Fellowship, is a historic Seventh Day Baptist Church. Each Sunday the church has a list of prayers, and I was so encouraged when I saw a prayer for "DEC (NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation) to relocate beavers" that referred to our effort to restock our valley.

We shall be using the courts to decide if the DEC will, grant us a permit to relocate a beaver.

I have walked my neighborhood to get everyone's consent for the beavers to create a small wetland. Several neighbors were delighted and nobody objected. Our creek, the Buttermilk Creek joins with the Chenunda Creek and then flows into the Genesee River. The Chenunda Creek has also lost its beaver dam. Beavers are much less active in our area and maybe that is why they have not rediscovered our good location for eight years..

This summer a seismic survey of our area was done by a large corporation and paid for by National Fuel. I asked the boss of the 60-man crew to please let me know if they run across any beaver pond with fresh mud indicating active animals. He

Ducky, Continued from p. 8

perhaps in the relatively uncomplicated world of a beaver, I could conclude with "and they all lived happily ever after." I prefer to think of this as the beginning of a story. You bet, I'll keep you posted.

Patti Smith writes a nature column for The Brattleboro Reformer. Her earlier column about Ducky was in the Fall 2008 Beaversprite.



Photo by Ross Scott

promised to get back to me, but so far no beavers have been found.

On May 18 of this year I was given a ticket for "trapping (a beaver) out of season" and told that would cost me \$200. A DEC employee called me the next day and explained that a permit to move a beaver in a trap would only be given for a dead beaver, or for an injured beaver to a rehab facility—not a live beaver.

Beaver released right by the road!

We do have a rehab facility for beavers in our county, but when the DEC decided to release the beaver that I had caught in a Have-A-Heart Box trap, they let him go right next to the road.

These beavers were building a dam on both sides of county highway #21 between Alfred and Alfred Station in Allegany County, NY. For two years I had been talking with the local DEC office about relocating a beaver to my valley as well as requesting a permit for this year.

We shall be using the courts to decide if the DEC will, grant us a permit to relocate a beaver. The agency is not accustomed to people challenging this type of ticket for supposedly trapping out of season—I maintain that my action did not fit the definition of trapping to skin a pelt.

On Nov. 8, 2010 we are meeting before the town justice in Alfred, NY to address the ticket, and then we will continue the court proceedings to see if

we are entitled to a permit to relocate a beaver. The DEC website states that under extraordinary circumstances, a permit for relocation will be given with the approval for the relocated site to be approved by the that DEC region's wildlife manager.

Excellent beaver habitat available

We are confident that our particular site will meet all extraordinary circumstance. It is an excellent site: the property is remote, our neighbors all approve, plus there is water year-round water and plentiful beaver food. A beaver dam was located here in the past, and there are no roaming dogs. The local school children could study the ecology of a returning wetland and its many benefits.

We've paid taxes on the 250 acres for 40 years. Other states such as New Mexico and Oregon are now relocating beaver as a way of preserving water, soil and fish and keeping the water table up. The beaver is the state animal of New York.

The beaver that was released by the DEC by the dangerous highway may have been one of the several beavers that were found dead on the road in the following few weeks. We know these hard working animals sequester carbon, and thus have a low carbon footprint.

Visit the website www.350.org to learn more about Bill McKibben's campaign lower the atmospheric carbon dioxide to 350 parts per million by 2050.

Better Ways to Manage Utah's Beavers

By Brett Prettyman

Beaver Creek, Uinta Mountains
»Trapped by the hundreds of thousands for more than a century, beavers nearly disappeared from the North American landscape. Trappers pursuing beaver fur for the European market were among the first explorers, other than American Indians, to visit the area of the American West now known as Utah.

“Dams change everything,” said Mary O’Brien....

Now, beavers are in demand again, not for their fur but for their engineering expertise, and the water conservation and forest restoration that result from their dam-building skills.

“Dams change everything,” said Mary O’Brien, the Utah Forests program manager for Grand Canyon Trust. “Where water was once just passing through the landscape it is suddenly pausing there, recharging aquifers, creating a riparian area and making a place for all kinds of wildlife to live.”

It is that ability to replenish the land that spurred O’Brien to ask state wildlife biologists about relocating the



A beaver forepaw track in the mud.

mammals into areas where they once roamed.

“We don’t know the exact historical extent of beaver in the Southwest. They were mostly trapped out before settlers got here,” O’Brien said. “But now, as we enter into what is almost universally accepted as increasing drought, with earlier snow melt and more intense precipitation events, we need to look at the engineering miracle of beavers. We have friends at hand who are ready to jump back into historical habitat and help us with our water issues.”

The beavers may be ready to jump back into areas where their ancestors once felled aspen and willow, but catching live wild animals and hauling them around the state requires planning. That plan is being completed now by a committee formed by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) and will be presented to the public in a series of Regional Advisory Council Meetings in December. If approved by the Utah Wildlife Board, it will become the state’s first management plan for beavers.



Mary O’Brien on a dam in Utah’s Arches National Park.

“The fact that we have some groups with an interest in using beaver as a watershed restoration tool is the driving force for the plan, but we recognize as an agency that we have not given a lot of effort to beaver management since the early 1980s,” said Justin Dolling, game mammals coordinator for the DWR. “This [committee] has laid out a possible course of action on how to deal with nuisance beavers, managing the population through sport harvest, setting rules for relocating them and encouraging a public education

component of the value of beavers.”

The beavers may be ready to jump back into areas where their ancestors once felled aspen

Not everyone is excited about the idea of restoring beavers. That old saying “busy as a beaver” has a different meaning to landowners with expensive new trees decorating their property as fallen logs, farmers who open their irrigation gates to get just a trickle, and Forest Service employees trying to keep a road from flooding every other night.

“I get called out all the time to deal with a nuisance beaver,” said trapper Stan Bassett, a member of the DWR’s Beaver Management Plan committee. “People can get really mad. I tell them the beaver is just doing what it is supposed to do.”

Because he isn’t allowed to move a live beaver, Bassett has to kill the animals he captures. With the value of a beaver pelt so low -- averaging \$13.13 between 1982 and 2008 -- Bassett tans the hides and uses them in talks he gives to Boy Scout and church groups.

“The fact that we have some groups with an interest in using beaver as a watershed restoration tool is the driving force for the beaver management plan.”

“I would rather relocate than kill those beaver. I’d relocate everything I caught if I could,” he said. “Some people think all I want to do is kill them. That could not be farther from the truth. When a beaver pond is established, everything comes there - deer, moose, muskrat, ducks. Beaver ponds are neat places to visit.”

Bassett, who has been trapping for 40 years, is among a small number of people in Utah who still pursue species like beaver, badger, fox, mink and bobcat during winter months. He has trapped some of the same areas for decades, taking between 20 and 100 beaver each season. Bassett has not noticed a change in population numbers, but has watched his fellow trapper numbers drop from a recorded high of just over 400 in the 1987-88 season to 133 last winter. Records show that 745 beavers were trapped in the winter of 2007-08.

There were probably that many trappers in Utah’s borders 200 years ago, and they likely trapped 10 times as many animals.

“Dams slow the flow of water coming off the mountains. They act like speed bumps and spread the water out on the land.”

So many beavers were trapped in the West during the early and mid-1800s that by 1899, the species was considered rare and the Utah Legislature closed all trapping. All beavers killed between 1912 and 1957 were either illegally taken or taken by state-commissioned trappers.

A general statewide season with unlimited take opened again in 1957, but animals had to be checked with the state and tagged for commercial sale until 1974.

Utah’s only true effort to determine beaver populations in the state came in a 10-year study that ended in 1981. The study placed the number of beavers in Utah at that time around 30,000. Dolling said it is the best estimate out there and he feels comfortable stating that the number of beavers has not decreased in that time.

O’Brien likes to wonder what the forests of the Southwest looked like before the days when beavers

were trapped to such low numbers. She suspects most of the mountain valleys had meandering creeks with lush wetlands frequented by a vast range of wildlife. It is an image she would like to see for herself in places where streams have turned into raging straight-cut channels that erode the banks and carry the water to faraway places.

“Dams slow the flow of water coming off the mountains. They act like speed bumps and spread the water out on the land,” she said. “They create a dramatic change in the hydrology of the landscape, and that is a change that may serve us all.”

Reprinted from the October 16, 2009 issue of The Salt Lake Tribune. Learn more about how O’Brien helped improve beaver management in Utah in the next Beaversprite.

A Great Day for Beavers

Saturday, August 8th was a great day for Beavers— and for people too. The 3rd Annual Beaver Festival was celebrated in downtown Martinez, next to Alhambra Creek. A walk over the nearby pedestrian bridge that crosses the creek provided a superb view of the beaver dam. At one point, a green heron came to rest on the dam.

Beavers are nocturnal so there wasn’t an expectation of a sighting. What was stunning was the creek, the dam crossing it, the plant life on the creek’s banks, and the amazing quiet and feeling of peace when just several feet away a lively celebration was in full swing. It was like stepping from one world into another and then stepping back. The support for beaver conservation was community wide and very alive.

From Susan Kirk’s Open Spaces, Natural Places Blog.

Good News from Unexpected



UNEXPECTED WILDLIFE REFUGE, INC.
Home of the Beaver Defenders
P.O. Box 763, Newfield, New Jersey 08344

By Sarah Summerville

It was a relatively quiet and laid back summer. The trails have been cleared since August and are ready to receive the first of the autumn worshipers - those of us who walk about in awe of Mother Nature's most flamboyant talent with a palette of colors on her chlorophyll canvas. Those trails are clear thanks to the help of volunteers Al, Karen, Katrina

The Autumn dawn is a soft whisper in the sun's long-reaching rosy rays -

and Jan. Over the hot lazy months of July and August, Karen and I split wood until the splitter gave out. It hung in there until almost all of the wood was split and stacked in the barn in anticipation of the coming winter before wheezing its last breath.

A season of anticipations

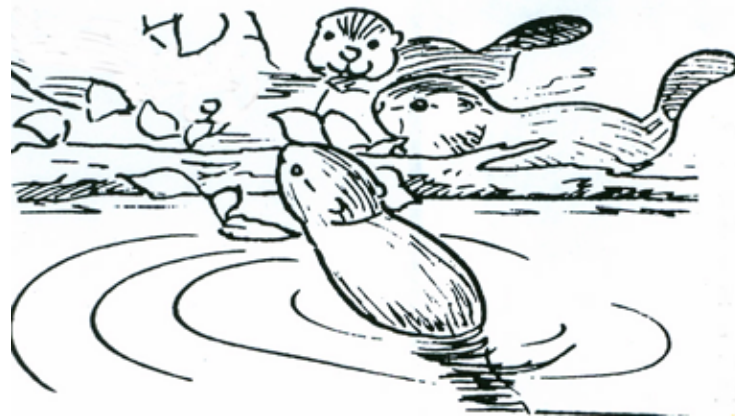
Anticipate - v. to look forward to. The French say the best part of an affair is going up the stairs.

For me, fall is a season of anticipations. Each morning is filled with a delicious anticipation of the soft hesitant sunrise. October sunrises are so much more apologetic than the blazing summer mornings when the sun just hoists itself over the horizon to shout good morning - let's get started! The Autumn dawn is a soft whisper in the sun's long-reaching rosy rays - they linger behind the treeline to let you know they will be dropping in shortly. Peeking over the treetops, they slowly fill the dooryard like honey.

The evenings slip away just as

softly. My lovely, quiet autumn evenings have pretty much been given over to an absolutely adorable beaver family. The anticipation of 'Beaver Time', as Hope used to call it, is the best time of the day.

It has been confirmed as of July — Unexpected Wildlife Refuge is officially home to three baby beavers. Three perfect, furry, whining, comical little kittens. Since April, Mom has



been very friendly with me and my cache of apple slices that I take out almost nightly. It is extraordinary how I schedule everything so that this time is free to sit next to a buggy, boggy body of water and interact with this entertaining little family. Dad detests my presence and, until just last week, was refusing to take a single apple slice, even when it was floating right under his unapproving nose. He will now inspect and *occasionally* accept a slice when it has been tossed as far from the shore as is tolerable. He eats while floating, warding off his insistent offspring who attempt to divest him of his rare indulgence. I once tossed an apple slice out as far as I could for his convenience, and from

behind and above came the loud rattle of a kingfisher who dove at the splash mistaking it for a fish. What a surprise for all of us!

Unexpected Wildlife Refuge is officially home to ... three perfect, furry, whining, comical little kittens.

At first, I wasn't sure how many babies there were - they came out one at a time and floated upstream in agitation, flipping themselves over with their instinctive slaps of whimsical

warning. Finally, one little fellow took Mom's cue and while she was perched on her tail enjoying an apple next to my leg, he swaggered right up to me and asked for some too. Okay! Plenty to go around!

He sat with Mom and me and whined incessantly through mouthfuls of apple mush. This little talk box chatters away at all times, even when no one is anywhere near enough to mess with his meal. When he was done eating his apple slice, he went after hers. She was firm but not too rough - she turned abruptly to her right with a grunt. I provided another slice to the hungry beggar - he took it directly from my fingers, hesitantly,

Good News, *continued from p.12*

but with entitlement. As he turned his back on me to eat, I reached out and gently petted his back. His fur was soft and damp and warm. He did not move and tolerated the attention with his snack.

With time, patience, bug bites and bird watching, the other two kittens showed up with their seasoned sibling. My friendly beaver babe came directly to me and hoisted himself halfway out of the pond, placing his tiny wet hand on my knee. I provided his slice, and cast out four or five slices into the pond for the other two kittens. They both slapped their tails at the plopping fruit and dove in the most unrefined way. Their reaction caused my little

They all congregate around the vegetation and fold up leaves to make little beaver-sized sandwiches.

friend to slap and dive as well, getting me wet for his effort. Everyone finally surfaced and found a snack - all floating and eating with eyes half-closed. Of course, I hang out after the apples have all been distributed, but when the handouts are gone, so pretty much are the kittens.

When Mom is with us and the apples run out, she tools over to the bank and snips off some sweet pepper bush branches and pulls them out into the middle of the family circle. They all congregate around the vegetation and fold up leaves to make little beaver-sized sandwiches. Their little black hands are very delicate and handle the leaves as easily as we handle our food. As I watched Mom, I noticed that her nails were almost as long as the actual digits on her paw. Beavers are prolific diggers, and dredge mud up from the bottom of the pond to pack against the walls of their lodges and dams. The beavers here also like to harvest the prehistoric looking spatterdock roots

Another Beaver Makes Bronx River Home — Doubles New York City Beaver Population

By Barry Paddock

Hot dam! The first beaver found in the city in 200 years finally has company after three years of solitude on the Bronx River.

A beaver named Jose is now sharing his life with another buck-toothed mammal - but the relationship is unclear.

“A companion, a friend, a mate, an associate - we don’t know what it is,” said Rep. Jose Serrano for whom the first beaver was named after its discovery in 2007.

The semi-aquatic duo were spotted over the summer and photographed by a Bronx Zoo employee on a stretch of the river that runs through the zoo.

“We’ve doubled the population of beavers in New York City” said John Cavelli of the Wildlife Conservation Society which runs the zoo.

Beavers were once central to the city’s economy. Two of them even appear on the city’s official seal and flag. But the giant rodents

were hunted to local extinction for their pelts in the early 1800s, and deforestation kept them from returning.

For years, the Bronx River was so polluted, it couldn’t support such wildlife.

“The second beaver now just reassures us this was not a fluke,” Serrano said. “This river is coming back to life.”

Calvelli hopes it’s just the beginning. Although the gender of Jose and his new friend is unclear, environmentalists hope the beavers get busy and produce offspring.

“We look for love in so many places, why not the Bronx River?” Calvelli asked.

In the meantime, the public can vote on their favorite of five names for Jose’s friend at bronxzoo.com. Among the choices is “Justin Beaver” in homage to singer Justin Bieber

From the Sept. 19, 2010 Daily News.

out of the black pond muck as well. As bizarre as these fleshy, lumpy tubers look, the beavers love to eat them as much as they enjoy their little yellow flowers that bloom all summer. Even though she used her nails as a digging tool, they were extremely clean and smooth.

She is a very young mother, and her fur is also very clean, and she is well groomed and healthy looking. When she dives under the surface of the pond and comes back up, the water beads on her back and rolls off, like water on a waxed car.

Pears don’t float

I took pears out with me one night. Although it would seem that beavers like pears as much or more than apples, pears don’t float. So I learned the hard way that you have to either hand the pear pieces to the beavers or lay them on the bank. Tossing them in the water, they were pretty much lost to the beavers. However I am certain that they were found and enjoyed by turtles, fish and other aquatic critters who probably couldn’t believe their luck!

Frick and Frack

By Bobbie Binns

Frick was my first beaver baby... he was found as a newborn in Georgia while I was in RI attending the 2003 NWRA conference. Since we live on a rather large lake I volunteered to rehab him. I knew nothing about beaver



Our first photo of Frick.

rehab but there was a lovely woman in TX who was an internet friend and happened to also be an excellent beaver rehabber. We spoke at length on

Frick had waddled up the boardwalk from the lake and climbed two flights of stairs to the deck.

on the phone, via email and she gave me a crash course in beaver rehab.

Within a week of my return home I received a second beaver baby of similar age! In no time we fell into a comfortable routine with Frick and Frack. The kids thrived and we honestly didn't run into any problems. They ate well, grew, swam, and played. I had them on a schedule similar to an infant's schedule....wake up in the morning...into the tub for a potty...breakfast....into the tub for another

potty and a swim....play time, a nap, into the tub for a potty, feeding time... tub time...etc.

Seems like all I did was sit on the "throne" next to the tub and watch the little darlings swim. As they got older I started taking them down to the lake to swim and eventually we wound up doing a soft release from our home.

For a while I could walk down to the lake in the evening and rap my hand on the seawall where they had dug their first den. In short order a little head would pop out ready for the sweet potato or apple I usually brought as a gift.

"He's baaaack!"

One day I went down and there was no response to my knock. I was truly sad to think my little guys had moved on, and of course, I worried that they were able to fend for themselves. Several weeks later I got a 5 AM call from my hubby at the hospital where I was working a night shift. His

exact words were "He's baaaack!"

I could not believe it! Frick had waddled up the boardwalk from the lake and climbed two flights of stairs to the deck. When hubby opened the door Frick came in and headed straight to his bathtub. A nice swim was followed by a chunk of apple and after a good scratch he headed back out the door. I was thrilled and amazed.

He repeated this maybe half a dozen times during that first winter. There would be no sign of them, and then out of the blue, he would show up one night, scratch on the door and head for his tub. Once he'd had a nice soak he would climb in my lap and I'd rock that silly 20-pound beaver while he ate his apple.

It's been quite sometime now since I've seen him but my next-door neighbor has reported seeing an adult and a couple of babies near his boat

Dear BWW,

"My friend and I went to the Eco-Odyssey Park near Ottawa. We quite enjoyed the experience though it was aimed more at providing families who live in the city with some contact with nature.

You basically rent a pedal boat and you have a choice between just paddling about with a map which is called the Wanderer, or a choice of 3 levels of "Identification Adventures", sort of detective games. These are called the Observer, which we chose, the Explorer and the Adventurer.

After we chose the basic game, we were given a map with a specific route that to follow by finding the markers and a sheet with questions and clues we were to look for. We got the "Duck" route. Our question was "What animal nests in groups at the top of trees."

We were also given a reference book with a lot of information. When we got back from our pedal boat ride there was a "quiz" to work through using our clues, plus information from the book and also from listening to some "talking frogs" along a path to figure out the answer to our question.

This would be more fun if one was with some children... We didn't see any signs of beavers but apparently they are there... It's a really nice location.

J.N Canada

B.E.A.V.E.R.

Phil Wheeler, our Planning Director at Olmsted County Environmental Services, has a knack for acronyms. He recently suggested that we refer to stream restoration work with the acronym B.E.A.V.E.R— "Broad-based Environmental Amelioration of Valley Ecosystems and Rivers." While his is a somewhat tongue-in-cheek suggestion, I think it has some merit.

T. L. MN

house. We believe they live in a bank den around the bend from us, and do occasionally see one swimming across the lake at dusk, but have not had any close contact in a number of years.

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Dam Shame Retirement Cake



When Jake Jacobson retired from his position as Watershed Steward at Snohomish County Public Works, co-workers surprised him with this unique cake. Jacobson ran the successful beaver program for eight years.

Mike Rustay has now assumed responsibility for carrying on the program that has kept the Washington county's roads safe from beaver flooding, while preserving valuable wetlands.

Beavers: Wetlands & Wildlife is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization created to carry on the educational work of the "Beaver Woman" Dorothy Richards who was both an environmentalist and a wildlife advocate. Officers are Owen J. Brown PhD, President; Brian Graff, Vice-President; Sharon T. Brown, MA, Treasurer; and Caryl Hopson; Secretary. Other members of the Board of Directors are: Trina Bassoff PhD, Kenneth Koman, Andrew Mason, Matthew Perry and Debbora Quayle.

Our Advisory Board consists of Gen. John Burney, Anthony DeLuca, Lowell Halverson, Esq., Darrel Norris, PhD, Hope Ryden and Elissa Wolfson. *Beaversprite* staff includes Sharon Brown, Editor and Contributing Editors: Sarah Summerville (NJ), Owen Brown and William Ingram (OH). Opinions expressed in *Beaversprite* may not be identical with Beavers: Wetlands & Wildlife policy.

Kids Beaver Joke

What is a beaver's favorite month to cut down trees?

Answer: Sept- timber!

From HSUS KIND News

