

ecokare international

Kari Gunson is currently the owner of Eco-Kare International based in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. For the past twenty-two years she has been conducting research and applying road ecology solutions in Canada, the U.S. and recently Mexico where much of her work has focused on turtles, roads and wetlands.

More recently, Kari has become interested in beavers, and joins the Beaver Corps training program with the grateful support from Fur-bearers based in British Columbia, Canada. Kari became interested in the Beaver Corps program after finding that many of the road culverts at wetlands, were blocked by beaver dams and/or screened with a beaver exclusion device preventing safe road crossings through culverts for wildlife. At one site in particular, Kari installed a beaver pond-leveler pipe (with assistance from the Beaver Institute) which has proved successful in deterring beavers from damming the road culvert (see pictures below and <https://ecokare.com/news/> for a full report).



The site now includes the first of its kind holistic approach that integrates two components of road ecology: wildlife and hydrology. The site includes an upsized culvert (1.2 m) for turtle and other wildlife passage, 1.0 km of wildlife exclusion fence, and a pond-leveler pipe to maintain water flow and prevent flooding of the road-bed and an adjacent land owner's property.



Road culvert blocked by beaver cone and dam Building wildlife exclusion fence to culvert

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Installing a pond leveler pipe to allow water flow and prevent upstream damming at the culvert

Painted Turtle swimming through culvert above

In Ontario, there are eight freshwater turtle species that are all designated as 'at risk' and the number two threats for these animals are habitat loss and road-kill. Therefore, by preventing unnecessary lethal trapping of beavers, wetland habitat is preserved. Furthermore, effective techniques to prevent beavers from 'plugging' road culverts allows for potential wildlife passage and natural hydraulic flow preventing flooding. A win-win for wetland ecosystems, beavers, and adjacent human land-use objectives.

You can find out more about Kari and her work at <https://eco-kare.com/> and please feel free to contact us at the details below to help you install effective road ecology and beaver mitigation solutions at your site(s). We look forward to working with private land owners, contractors in road maintenance, consultants, non-government organizations and road agencies.

Note, Kari received training from the Beaver Institute as a Beaver Wetland Professional, and is a member in good standing in the Beaver Institute's International BeaverCorps Association.