



The Beaver Institute: Advancing Beaver Science & Management

The Beaver Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of the importance “Nature’s Engineer” the beaver. The Institute champions the beaver's critical role as a keystone species creating healthy, climate-resilient wetland ecosystems, and we are the leader in promoting resolution of beaver-human conflicts with positive collaboration, education, and science-based techniques.

Founded in 2017, the Institute offers unique programs that train beaver management professionals such as the BeaverCorps, and furthers beaver research and professional collaboration with a coalition of member organizations, with its biennial conference, BeaverCON and other efforts. Working with public and private landowners, land managers, highway professionals and conservation professionals, the Beaver Institute helps incentivize and implement cost-effective methods to promote coexistence with beavers.



Beaver Institute Programs



The Beaver Institute develops and implements programs to help restore beavers and their valuable wetlands across North America:

BeaverCorps

The Beaver Institute offers the first and only professional, non-lethal beaver management training program. Our BeaverCorps students become experts in beaver wetland management and become certified as Beaver Wetland Professionals. To date, we have trained more than 40 BeaverCorps members across North America. [More information here.](#)

BeaverCON

BeaverCON is a biennial, international conference on the east coast of the United States for professionals, researchers and practitioners to learn what works in beaver conflict management and watershed restoration. The next BeaverCON (Building Climate Resilience: A Nature-Based Approach) is taking place on June 14-16, 2022 in Hunt Valley, Maryland. [More information here.](#)

Climate Change Beaver Coalition

This advocacy group includes dozens of North American partner organizations and professionals working to raise awareness with state and federal policymakers and others about how beaver wetland restoration can make significant contributions fighting climate change. [More information here.](#)

Connecticut Beaver Initiative

Since 2020, the Connecticut Beaver Initiative has assisted towns and Connecticut landowners to resolve beaver-human conflicts, offering grant assistance to nonlethally resolve problems, and training licensed Connecticut Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators to implement effective, nonlethal beaver management practices. In 2022, this landowner grant assistance program is being expanded nationally. [More information here.](#)

Beaver Benefits

A keystone species, the North American beaver, *Castor canadensis*, are vital ecosystem engineers. Their dams create wetlands that are among the most biologically-productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to coral reefs and rainforests. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, over 50% of America's freshwater wetlands have been lost to draining and/or filling, and much of the remaining wetlands have been degraded. In the American West, wetlands cover only 2% of the land but support 80% of the biodiversity.

Aside from humans, no other animal exerts such a far-reaching impact on the landscape. Through their activities, beavers can:

- Restore watershed health
- Provide wildfire refuges and fire breaks
- Create diverse habitats and ecosystems
- Increase biodiversity
- Regulate stream flows
- Improve water quality, filtering out contaminants and heavy metals
- Replenish drinking water aquifers
- Store significant amounts of water that ranchers, farmers, and other users can draw upon during times of drought
- Stabilize the water table
- Repair eroded stream channels
- Promote salmonid (salmon and trout) recovery

The financial impact is tremendous, saving governments, working landowners and other key stakeholders millions of dollars with their free work.

Beavers: A Vital Partner in Combating Climate Change

Incorporating beaver and nature-based approaches in stream restoration can help tackle the most pressing environmental challenges of our time: climate change. Many of the extreme effects of climate change, such as drought, wildfires, species loss, and flooding, can be moderated by beaver activity.

Beavers build dams and wetlands that increase the environment's climate resilience naturally and cost-effectively. Beaver-created habitat reduces wildfire damage, speeds reforestation after fires, reduces storm flood events, recharges our groundwater aquifers, increases biodiversity, and more. All these things build climate resilience, and beavers do them for free.

Beaver Conflict Mitigation

Despite their valuable ecological services, beavers can cause significant damage through tree destruction and flooding. However, cost-effective, long-term, environmentally friendly, and humane options exist to resolve most beaver conflicts and retain their benefits. Beaver trapping is legal, but to retain all the beaver benefits it should be a last resort.

Beaver Institute Team

Adam Burnett, Director

Adam Burnett serves as the Director of the Beaver Institute after a career of building and running non-profits in the field of performing arts and environmental conservation. He received his BA from the University of Kansas in Theatre & Creative Writing and spent a decade as the artistic director of Buran Theatre. His plays, poems, and essays have been produced and published, many of which concern pathways of cooperation with animals and the environment. As a fundraising & development professional, Adam has worked alongside a bevy of institutions including Exit Art, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Dixon Place, Queer | Art, and Health In Harmony, among others. Adam's passion for beavers developed in 2020 as he navigated co-managing a prairie pond with beavers and local farmers.



Michael Callahan, Founder and President

Michael is the founder of the Beaver Institute Inc. He began working with beavers in 1998 after founding the Pioneer Valley Wetland Volunteers with his wife Ruth. In 2000, he started [Beaver Solutions LLC](#), a world leader in effective beaver management, and has personally resolved over 1,800 beaver-human conflicts. He has gained an international reputation as a leader in progressive beaver management and teaches beaver workshops, started an online Beaver Management Forum and created an instructional DVD to teach others to do this work. In 2017 he founded the Beaver Institute, Inc. to spread progressive beaver management strategies to improve watershed restoration and climate resilience. Michael lives in Southamptn, Mass.

Board of Directors

Reese Mercer

Reese is program director and founder of Beaver Works Oregon and founding board member of Think Wild – Wildlife Hospital and Conservation Center in Bend, Oregon. Reese brings 15 years of nonprofit and board experience to Beaver Institute, in addition to 20 years of professional experience as a business and technology consultant.

Scott McGill

Scott McGill is the founder and CEO of Ecotone, Inc., a design-build ecological restoration company located in Forest Hill, MD. Scott has over 30 years of applied experience in both design and construction of ecological restoration projects throughout the United States. He is a thought leader in the field of ecological restoration and has brought many new ideas and methods into the mainstream, including the use of native materials and the North American beaver to drive ecological and water quality outcomes.

Lawrence Johnson

Lawrence Johnson retired as the Director of Non-Discrimination Compliance at Westfield State University in Mass. A law school graduate with a graduate degree in Higher Education Administration from Michigan State, Larry worked in higher education for 35 years. His integrity, commitment, and legal training are great assets to the Board of Directors.

Danielle Dunn, Treasurer

Danielle Dunn graduated from Bryant University in 2019 with a Bachelor in Science in Business Administration and from Western Governors University in 2020 with a Master's in Accountancy. Danielle worked in the KPMG Providence office in the audit field. She now works for WilliamsMarston as a Senior Consultant. Danielle currently lives in South Carolina with her fiancé and two dogs.



