Montana Beaver Working Group

Connecting and providing resources to people interested in the role of beavers in watershed and riparian health

In this challenging time and in the face of many uncertainties, we extend our warmest wishes for good health, security, and support. Thank you for being part of our network, and please know we appreciate your engagement.

Stories and News

Just Released: Action Plan for Beaver Restoration in Montana

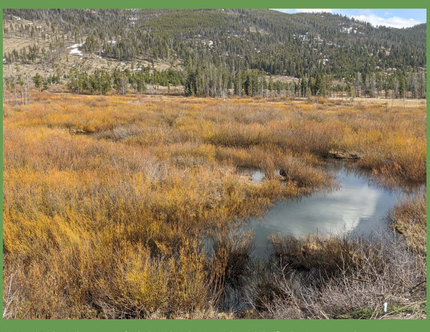
Joe Griffin led a field trip the day before the strategy meeting with participants from Blackfeet Community College to view habitat complexity resulting from beaver activity in Silver Bow Creek, part of the Butte Superfund complex (photo by Sarah Bates).

In February, we gathered a diverse group of 50 professionals in Butte to identify priority strategies for restoring beaver and beaver habitat in Montana and to commit to specific actions to advance beaver restoration for the benefit of Montana's watersheds. The meeting was made possible by the generous support of the Turner Foundation and hosted by National Wildlife Federation and the Clark Fork Coalition. Jennifer Boyer facilitated the work session, and conducted a pre-meeting survey to identify priority focus areas.

Key priority goals, strategies, and action steps developed at this meeting are now available in an action plan, available here.

Thanks to all who participated, and all who are working on many fronts and in many places to restore healthy riparian habitats and watersheds!

Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest Plan Calls Out Beaver for Watershed Health



On May 21, the Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest released the final environmental impact statement, land management plan, and draft record of decision, available here laying out the framework to guide management decisions for the next 15+ years. Notably, the plan includes specific provisions connecting beavers with watershed health and climate resilience:

- Desired Condition (FW-WTR-DC 09): Beavers play an important ecological role in wetlands and riparian areas where they benefit and enhance groundwater, surface water, floodplain and riparian habitat complexity, and add resilience to changing climate conditions.
- Goal (FW-WTR-GO 04): Work cooperatively with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to use beavers to manage aquatic habitat quality.
- Guideline (FW-WTR-GDL 01): When conducting management activities, in order to support aquatic habitat quality and resiliency, beaver complexes should be enhanced or maintained.
- Possible management strategies and approaches: Restoring riparian habitats to aid in the reestablishment of beavers into stream segments where they historically occurred.

RESOURCES

BEAVER LIFE HISTORY AND ECOLOGY BEST SCIENCE PAPER

The latest of an outstanding series of technical papers by the King County Beaver Working Group, available here.

This literature review represents the best science currently available on beaver life history and ecology, with a particular focus on Western Washington. The resources cited in this document span over 200 years. Most of the papers cited in this document represent studies conducted using standard scientific methods, but some resources are books that represent years and sometimes decades of beaver observations. For more materials from the King County Beaver Working Group (including graphics about beavers and the hydrologic cycle), visit kingcounty.gov/beavers.

UNDERSTANDING BEAVERS AS A NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTION

Webinar recorded on April 20th, now available for viewing, thanks to the Putting Beavers to Work Collaborative in Alberta, Canada. WATCH IT NOW.

Beavers impact our watersheds in a noticeable and beneficial way. Why not harness their natural infrastructure power, which they so willingly provide, and allow them to do some of the heavy lifting: water storage, flood/drought risk reduction, enhance human quality of life, and more. The target audience is municipal planners, engineers and other related practitioners and professionals.

RIPARIAN AND GROUNDWATER-DEPENDENT ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENTS

Webinar recorded on April 29th, now available for viewing here, thanks to the U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station.

Riparian and groundwater-dependent ecosystems of the arid west are both valuable and vulnerable, with a long history of use and alteration. We are completing a series of assessments for National Forests in the intermountain Region to support forest plan revision and project planning.

In this short webinar, RMRS researchers Katey Driscoll and Max Smith:

- Talked about methods for rapid assessments of ecological integrit for riparian and groundwater-dependent ecosystems
- Provided selected results from the Ashely, Manti-La Sal, Salmon-Challis, Bridger-Teton, and Fishlake National Forests
- Took questions and feedback—and discusses the role of beavers in these ecosystems.

LOW-TECH PROCESS-BASED RESTORATION

The Riverscapes Consortium offers access to updated project implementation and monitoring protocol information, including an online map of low-tech process-based restoration projects. The protocol was developed based on the combined input of restoration ecologists, geomorphologists, and data scientists from Anabranch Solutions, Eco Logical Research, and Utah State University.

Montana Beaver Conflict Mitigation Project team members install double-culvert exclusion device at Council Grove State Park, with hands-on support from MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks (photo by Sarah Bates).

Please send stories, upcoming events, and other resources to:
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MT Beaver Working Group newsletters are posted online at:
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