

## **To Beaver or Not to Beaver, Strategies for Beaver Management on Private Lands**

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The activity of beavers on streams in the western United States can lead to landscape-scale benefits for natural water storage and fish and wildlife habitat. There is increasing interest in using beavers and beaver mimicry as stream and riparian habitat restoration tools, and to mitigate the impacts of drought and rapidly changing annual water regimes on rangelands. Private landowners may benefit from beaver activity through increased water availability and greater production of green vegetation in floodplains during dry portions of the year. However, beavers can also cause rapid and significant damage to human infrastructure and desired streamside vegetation when they settle down in an inappropriate area. The purpose of this presentation is to outline strategies for evaluating situations where landowners want beavers to colonize their property, as well as situations where landowners want to thwart or preclude beaver-related property damage. Strategies for encouraging colonization include GIS and field-based habitat evaluations, habitat modification to encourage settlement, evaluating the local beaver population for dispersal potential, and communicating realistic expectations of colonization potential and expected benefits based on stream conditions. Strategies for discouraging beavers include tree fencing and painting, culvert fencing, pond levelers, dam destruction, translocation, and lethal trapping. Beaver management on private lands will be a key issue in the coming decades as private landowners are faced with challenges related to long-term environmental changes, and biologists, land managers, and other entities are uniquely situated to help private landowners navigate the complexities of beaver colonization and associated impacts.