

## Baffling beavers reduces flooding

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FREDERICTON - Two Fredericton residents concerned with the city's wildlife policy in wetland areas are praising the city for its decision to stop killing the beavers who's been damming the culvert and flooding the Gibson trail.

A Beaver baffle has been installed along the Gibson Trail near Marysville to deter beavers from building intrusive dams to the trail system. Photo: Cole Burston/Canadaeast News Service

Gabriela Tymowski, a year-round trail user, said the city's installation of a beaver baffle - a device designed to confused beavers and stop them from building dams in wetland areas - is a positive step toward sustainable beaver management.

"The beaver baffle works by tricking the beaver into thinking that they are successfully damming a culvert, when in fact, they can't because water can still successfully get through the baffle," Tymowski said.

"This means that the area will no longer flood, and because the beavers need a certain amount of water in order to survive - their entrance and exits to their lodge must be underwater - they will be forced to relocate."

Tymowski, who's been using the Gibson trail year-round for the last 12 years, said she contacted the city after coming across a dead beaver that drown after getting stuck in a trap.

After it was confirmed the city hired someone to kill the beavers, Tymowski said she requested a meeting with staff to come up with an alternative.

"They were receptive," she said.

"At the meeting, we asked them about their policy regarding wildlife in the city. They told us that they did not have any policies regarding beavers, but were interested in our concern.

"We gave them information about approaches other cities in Canada have used, such as the beaver baffle, and also gave them information about a biologist at UNB who had experience with beaver management."

Don Murray, city forester and acting parks and trees manager, said the city took the advice of Tymowski and others concerned with how beavers are managed in making the decision to purchase the beaver baffler.

He said before the city installed the device in June, they were going out to break up dams every day.

"We've been battling this beaver for a long time and we finally put a structure in so he can't dam the water up," he said.

"We were flooding our trail out. It was constant. We'd go out and dig the dam out and he'd fill it in the next day."

Since installing the baffle, Murray said the city hasn't had any problems with beavers.

"We put that in and they packed their bags and left," he said.

"It's been so successful we've got another area where we're trying to control the water level, they'll put it was too deep and we want it at a lower depth, so we're probably going to purchase and install another one of these."

Like Tymowsky, Caroline Lubbe-D'Arcy, a member of Friends of the UNB Woodlot, said she was pleased to hear the baffler had been installed.

Lubbe-D'Arcy said she's been actively pushing to see the devices installed in the woodlot because the alternative - killing the beavers - is both bad for the environment and ineffective.

She said not only are wetlands important, but when you kill a beaver, you'll always end up with more as other families move in on the newly available habitat.

"You can't really control (beavers) by getting rid of them," she said.

"So these beaver bafflers are a really good thing. When they jumped on board with this, I was so happy. You can't put a sign up that says no beavers. It's not going to happen."