

Beaver Management Informational Meeting Hayward, WI 9/29/2011

Poster session from 6:30 to 6:57 PM. Twenty-four (24) folks in attendance in addition to 6 presenters/facilitators.

Debbie – asked everyone about the survey and if they need any additional time. Introduced the webinar to the group and focused them to the webinar link and how they can access the page. Will be an online version of the survey made available online. Webinar is a collection of 10 minute slide presentations will only see the slides and hear voices. Time for Q and A at the end to keep everything flowing.

Meeting started at 6:57PM – Debbie introduced herself to the group. Described the task force and the charge. Public meetings, webinar are the first phase of public input. Will have additional time for commenting.

Intros –

John O – Last plan developed when beaver populations were at their peak – damage high, among other issues. In Northern part of state, goal was to reduce the population. Goal in south was to create a beaver bank...no work on this, but beaver were able to fill into these areas. John mentioned the helicopter survey – accurate, but very expensive. WM is bureau ultimately responsible for beaver management plan. Many stakeholders involved. Goal from wildlife reasonable balance.

Dave M – Thanked everyone for coming. Based in Rhinelander. Involved in furbearer research and monitoring. Concentrate on beaver population and harvest estimates.

Steve A – started career in mid-80s in Forest Co. On original team that wrote the first plan. Fisheries guys didn't want beaver anywhere, wildlife guys know the benefits. Tried subsidies, contract trapping, making maps of beaver lodges and dams. Really wanted to document issue with trout. Research staff conducted research from 1982-2000 in northeast part of the state. Removed dams and beaver for 18 years. Documented other coldwater species bounce back. Mutually exclusive thing with beaver. Accumulated affects were over a long period of time. Stream specific beaver removal. Primary removal is contract trapping with USDA Wildlife Services. Annual meeting of what streams will be in the program, maxed out with funding and efforts. Successful in northeast part of the state. 10,000 miles of trout streams in the state, 2,000 miles of streams that are worked on. Forest Co – 50% of trout waters under beaver control. Plan will be different – where will occur and how much of it we will do.

Jason Suckow – Thanked attendees for attending. Jason also began his career in Forest Co. USDA Wildlife Services closely partners with fisheries, wildlife and law enforcement. Interested in protecting resources. Work closely with tribes and wild rice protection. Counties – timber protection. Snowmobile clubs, homeowner associations. Work with national forest systems. Big thing, to design the plan with balance. Two

million dollars in damage if beaver return to coldwater systems in the northeast. A lot of warm water in Wisconsin, promote duck habitat and heron rookeries. How does task force pick and choose? Complex and difficult to maintain balance.

Mark – started trapping 5 years ago, and has always been an avid brook trout fisherman. Would always look for beaver dams to find good trout fishing. Initial trapping of beaver occurred on the class I trout stream, and then they moved to class II trout streams. Understands biologists and their background. Believes beaver dams help trout fishing. Always fished beaver dams, siltation did occur, but it would eventually wash out in July storms. Caught over 400 trout behind one beaver dam – today there is not the same number of trout as there historically was. Found beaver dam, had good fishing, eventually, over time, have had a decrease in opportunity. Mention of exotic salmon and steelhead.

Steve – you are right, early on, beaver deeper water is a plus to a trout stream. Overall, can't manage on the washout. Value is if you can maintain it, periodically removal may work in Wisconsin.

Mark – before we were here, these systems did exist.

Steve – Can still find cedar stumps in sedge meadows. Believe this part of the country was an area that didn't promote beaver everywhere. Beaver on landscape, and so were brook trout.

Francis – is an avid fisherman, and has found decent fishing behind newly established beaver dams. After the second season the situation changes. Today is here as a town chairperson. Could have cost of repairs in the northern part of the state 2 million, plus 2 million in man hours fixing elevated water levels. Lost timber, acres lost could come close to 2 million dollar value. On class I streams – not streams he has know before. Years ago we had beaver, but selection was much different...logging days. Right now, have been battling beaver all summer long – removed 3 dams on 3 different occasions, then they come back. Since spring have had 19 beaver removed – has not influence the rate at which they rebuild. Would blow dams if funding was available. Share trout aspect, but has to look at balance.

Les – agrees with Mark – trapping for 45 years. Fished brook trout a lot growing up. If you want fishing to come back – need to increase otter tags. Feels losing a lot of brook trout to otter. Will catch trout near spillways. Beaver aren't hurting trout, 2 years excellent fishing, after that siltation.

Jim – Drought for 7 years – is population decline cyclic based on changes in water levels? Beaver population higher with more water. Forestry practices also a concern – on any class 1 stream, cut down to stream, hard pressed to find buffers in sawyer co. Beaver love popple, and more favorable for beaver. Enforcement of timber buffers needs to increase. Instead of contracting APHIS, periodic beaver dams are beneficially. Maybe contract APHIS every 3 years, instead of an annual basis.

John – a lot of good points. John G commented last night – under management guideline on county and state lands have BMPs for water quality, can harvest within area but must maintain 60 square feet of basal area. Found chain saws were easier to cut along streams. For water quality, need certain basal area to protect. Maybe increase basal area in coldwater, and decrease in warm water.

Hard to put handle on beaver – beaver only other species besides man that can alter the environment. Pond in good spot – priceless, the opposite is also true. Beaver do better with more water. Harvest and management is something we look at all the time.

Stan – beaver has kept him alive since 1966. Not too hard to keep beaver in a spot for 1 or 2 years on a class 1 trout stream. Thinks this is a good idea that some one takes in to consideration.

Les- are you thinking about bringing back mandatory registration?

John – it's an option, but our field staff overwhelmed with workload and is not going to support this. Mandatory registration was required up until 1982 – but overwhelming and taking up a large amount of time. Don't register beaver or muskrats. Replaced mandatory registration with questionnaire. Something that might be on the table, but could be too expensive.

Francis – would appreciate any input on what options are available to alleviate damage that has occurred and will continue to occur?

Jason – back in 80s had law that you needed a permit before you could do anything with beaver. Would issue a blanket permit to everyone – but now made it available for landowner to control their own problems. This was done through legislative law. Best techniques – shows landowners how they can live with beavers...depending on the time of the year. Some sites will be continue to be chronic.

Jason – every situation different, will always have beaver problems. Over the last 30-40 years, culverts are being set higher when they are put in. Some times when roads are fixed, lifting the culvert will bring beavers into the area even faster. Making recommendations to get culvert reset into the stream bed. Screening, baffles – may work, but every situation is different. Use combination of methods to work it out. Integrated approach to get beavers up and get them down. Beaver are the gift that keeps on giving – no other animal that is so opposing, but can be on the other extreme and be so destructive.

Comment – maybe a system, that can identify trappers in area that maybe able to help in the area.

Jason – trappers call every fall. APHIS is not interested in competing with trappers. Not interesting in killing beaver, interested in protecting the resource. Will tell trappers where they can find beaver to trap. National Forest makes a map of dams they want.

Comment – make it easier to identify trappers in the area. Encourage trappers to contact their town chairman.

End of trapping season until now - \$20 a piece in not enough enticement to trap.

John – we can help town out by having better information on our website

Suggest having trappers be the management tool of choice. Permission from town chairman.

Larry – are they thinking about shortening the season in zone A?

John – yes, we’ve actually recommended it the last two years. Administration says we need to look at whole picture.

Larry – would suggest shorter in the fall, and leave it longer in the spring.

Meeting Adjourned – 8:10PM