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Beaver Management Planning: **A review of existing plans and programs with recommended best management practices**

OUTLINE

- **Beaver Management Report**
 - Where to find it
 - Purpose + Goal
 - How to Use It
- **Beaver management plans**
 - Stakeholders
 - What are they
 - What do they look like
 - Goal setting
- **Why focus on beavers?**
- **Human Dimensions**
- **Conflict Resolution**



BEAVER MANAGEMENT REPORT





WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

The report will be posted to National Wildlife Federation's reports website:

<https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Reports>

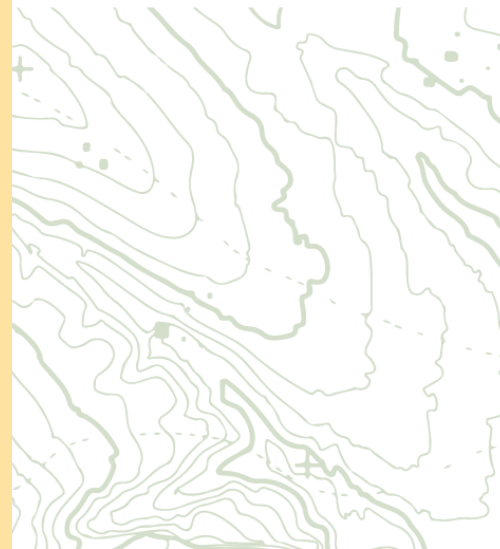


Photo credit Tanner Saul, National Wildlife Federation

PURPOSE + GOAL

- Purpose: to analyze and summarize existing approaches and review features, such as decision matrices
- Goal: provide approachable and realistic examples that elevate watershed restoration work via beaver conflict resolution and education
- NOT an exercise in ranking or grading
- Identified 8 BMPs that create a framework
- All plans/programs embody at least one BMP, but not all BMPs are embodied in every plan





HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

- At any point in the planning process, but the earlier, the better
- As a reference guide
- As an inspiration, and a reality check
 - Acknowledges the work that has been done in this space and the lessons learned
 - “Where the rubber meets the road”
 - To know what isn’t possible, and what IS possible
- Audience is wide-reaching, some sections may not be as relevant
- Only a snapshot in time, there are many links and resources



BEAVER MANAGEMENT PLANS & PROGRAMS



STAKEHOLDERS

A topographic map with orange contour lines on a white background, showing various peaks and valleys. Some peaks are marked with a small orange square and a cross.

Referenced a lot in the report, this is only a starting list:

- State agencies: wildlife, agriculture, water resources, transportation
- Local government and groups: city or county parks, water utilities, streets
- Tribal agencies and communities: wildlife, climate, agriculture
- Federal agencies: USFS, USFWS, BOR, BLM, NPS, NOAA, APHIS
- Agriculture and private landowners
- Recreation community: hunters, trappers, anglers
- Universities and researchers
- Non-profits and non-governmental organizations

WHAT IS A BEAVER MANAGEMENT PLAN?

- No solitary definition or pathway
- Traditionally focus on furbearer management
 - Parameters around hunting and trapping
- Newer emphasis on restoration potential
- Manages human-beaver conflicts
- Balanced and complementary management of beavers as a keystone species, restoration agent, nuisance, and furbearer



WHAT DO ROBUST PLANS INCLUDE?

- Education and communication plans
 - Often assumed, but unfunded
- Conflict resolution programs + decision matrices
- Goals with timelines and funding sources
- Mechanisms for measuring success
- Research for data gaps
- Identification of legal pathways
- Pilot programs

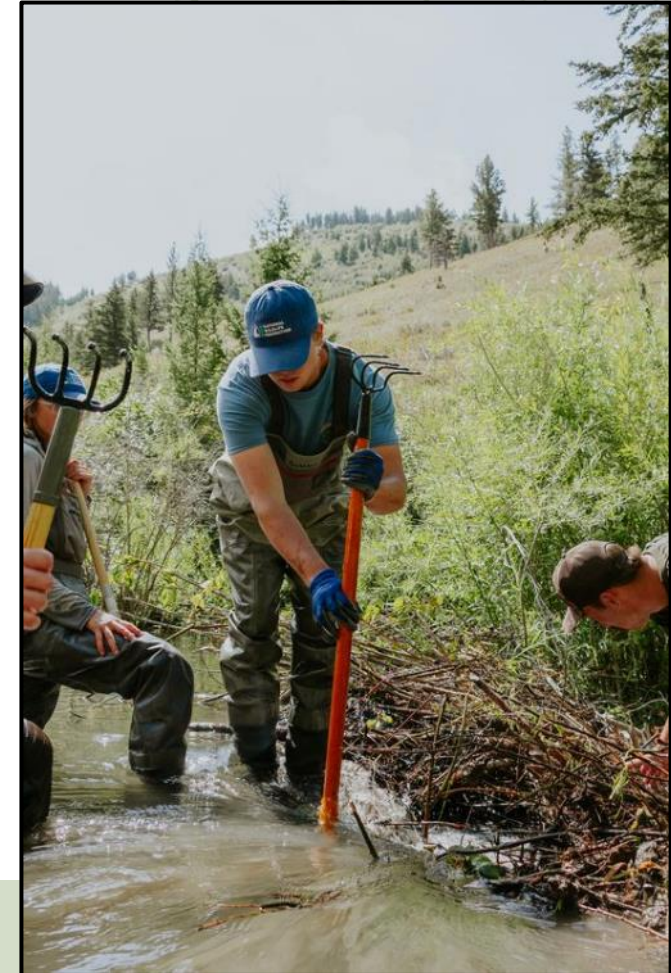


Photo credit Tanner Saul, National Wildlife Federation

GOAL SETTING

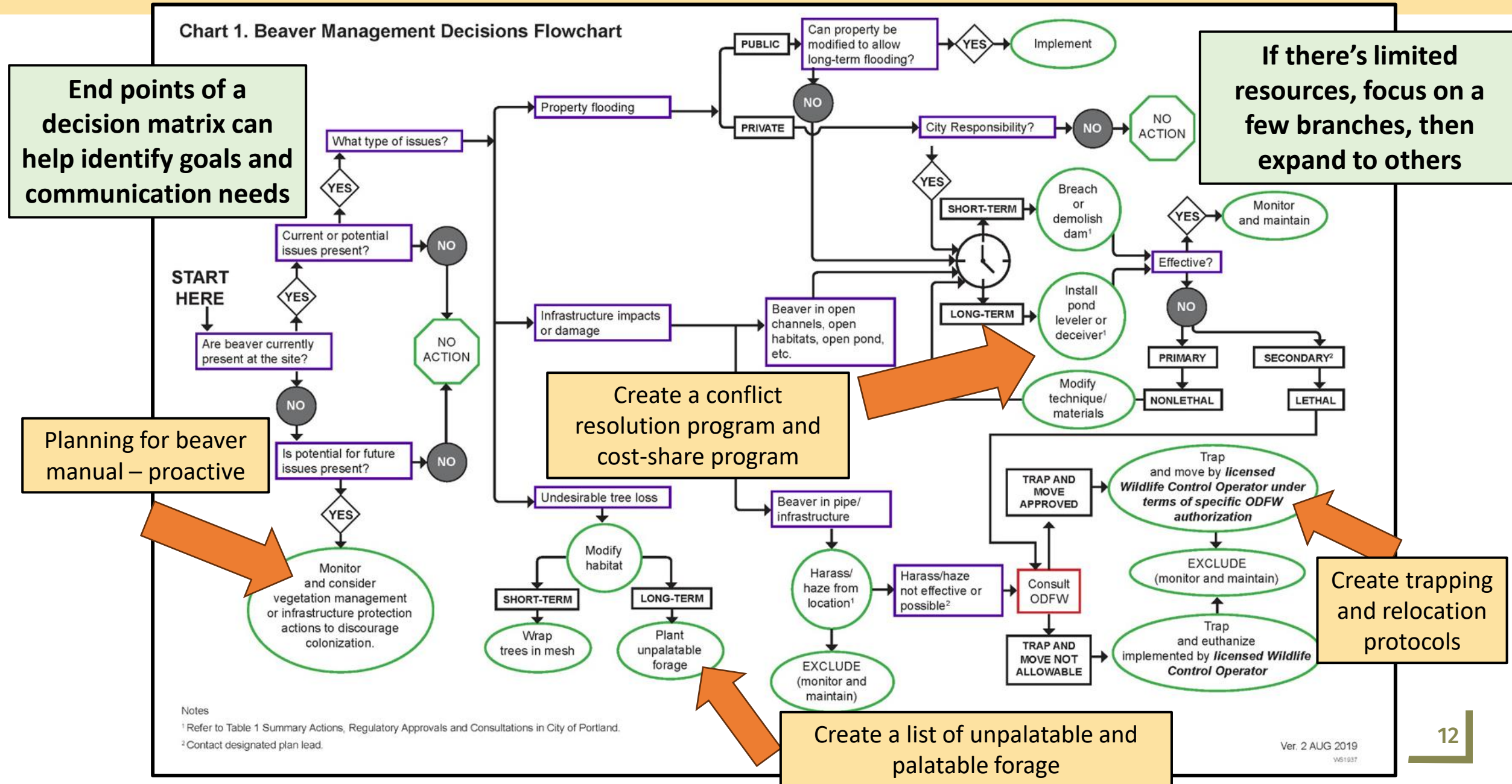


Photo credit Tanner Saul, National Wildlife Federation

- Framing and foundation work can take several years and be the focus of an action plan
- Focus on information gathering
- Goal setting should consider:
 - Time: 2, 3, 5, 10 years?
 - Scale: statewide vs. watershed
 - Funding: how much, and over what timeframe
 - Staffing: full-time, part-time, volunteers, partners
 - Achievability: based on what you have, what can you do? What may be outside of our control?

CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON, BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Chart 1. Beaver Management Decisions Flowchart

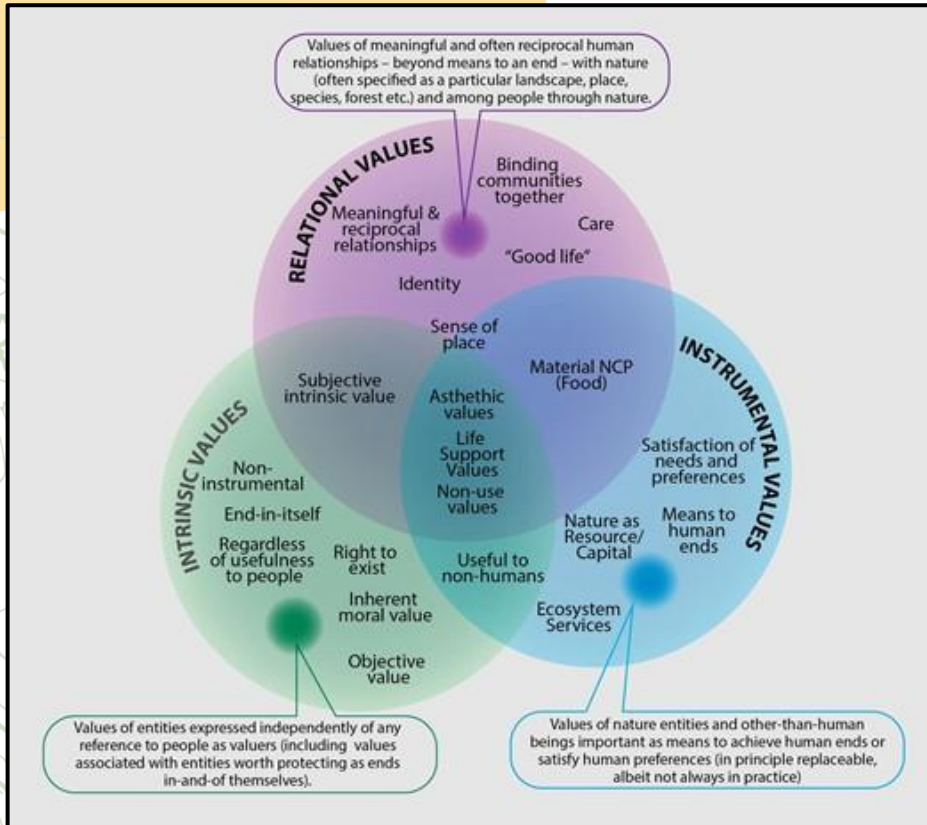


HUMAN DIMENSIONS



VALUES-BASED FRAMEWORK

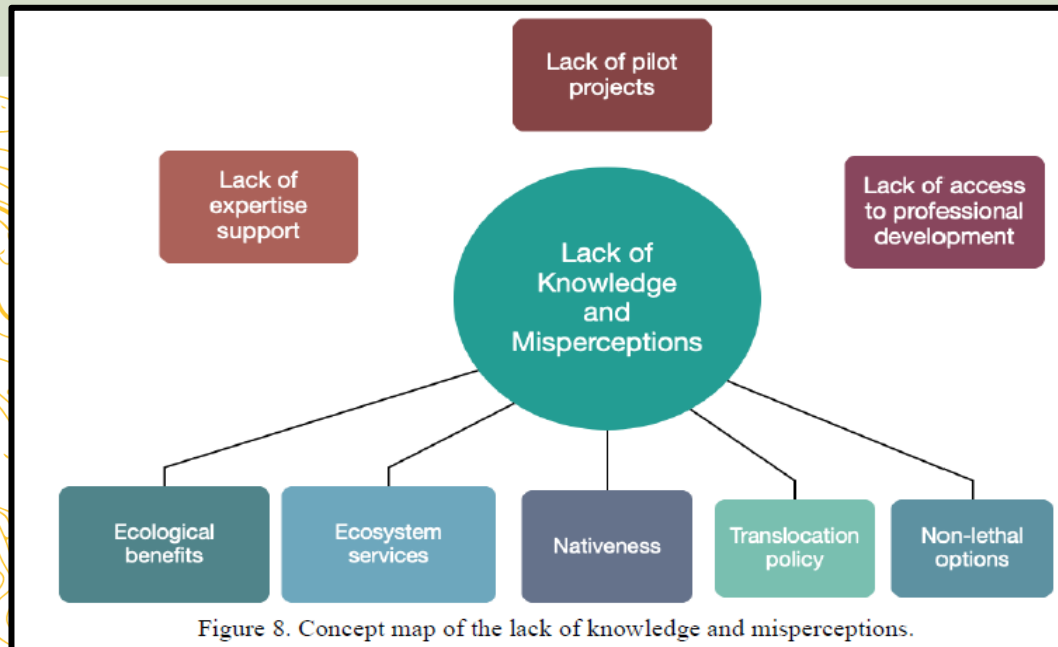
- People think differently!
- Important to involve all your stakeholders
- We want to facilitate dialogue, improve restoration outcomes, and resolve conflict
- Three general value types: relational, intrinsic, and instrumental
- Types can converge, overlap, or have “fuzzy boundaries”
- Overlapping value types are a good starting point to build support for a plan
- Responsibility, accountability, trust



[Why nature matters: A systematic review of intrinsic, instrumental, and relational values](#)

IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING BARRIERS

1. Human dimensional barriers
2. Impacts on nonparticipating landowners
3. Liability
4. Institutional issues
5. Political barriers
6. Financial barriers
7. Lack of knowledge or misperceptions
8. Ecological barriers
9. Lack of organized influence



Lack of knowledge and uncertainty was a theme.

[Beaver translocation for ecosystem health and restoration: uncovering barriers to policy change in California](#)



WHY FOCUS ON BEAVERS? WHAT ABOUT CONFLICT?



WHY ARE BEAVERS BENEFICIAL?

- You know! But does everyone else?
- The question for many stakeholders isn't "if," but at what location, cost (conflict), and timeline
- Science and data may not always be the most salient talking point
 - Understanding and effectively communicating the limitations and parameters of study results
- Solving conflict is a powerful motivator, and this can keep beavers on the landscape...



Photo credit Tanner Saul, National Wildlife Federation



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CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Conflict resolution programs are a vital component of robust beaver management plans
- Gathering data on conflicts is a good goal, it can help focus limited resources
- Think of the target audience when designing materials
 - Text-heavy manuals vs. pictures
 - Language availability
 - Location: online, print, phone calls, site visits
- It isn't always about developing something new – sometimes it is about marketing



Excerpted from "Return of Beaver" by Stephen Collins Comics for the Guardian, 4/8/25
The rest of the panels can be viewed on his Instagram

CHALLENGES

- As much as we know, we don't know everything
- "Successful beaver-related restoration projects require...partners who are willing to take risks, innovate, and stay committed. A regulatory environment that enables experimentation, flexibility, and adaptive management is also important."
[Ranchers, Beavers, and Stream Restoration on Western Rangelands](#)
- Beavers are living creatures with their own minds
 - Beavers build dams to improve their lives, and beavers might not build dams
 - Focus on restoring beaver habitat