



Beaver Management Guidelines October 2007

1.0 Purpose

To establish beaver management guidelines in line with the City's Environmental Policy, that reflects a balanced approach to coexist with beavers while addressing flooding control, infrastructure integrity, native tree and shrub assets and public safety within the City of St. Albert on public lands.

2.0 Guidelines

2.1 Timeline

Representatives from Public Works, Office of Environment and Environmental Advisory Committee will review these guidelines on an annual basis.

2.2 Beaver Management

(A) Trained Public Works staff will record any beaver activity during the unfrozen period of the year as part of their regular inspection procedures (minimally in June and late August/early September).

The following information will be collected:

- i) Population estimate based on number of lodges and/or visual sightings
- ii) Dam locations and sizes
- iii) Immediate areas of feeding,
- iv) Types and numbers of trees being removed

(B) Trained Public Works staff will assess any potential impact to public properties using the collection of data outlined in section A. Unacceptable beaver activity will be reported to Office of Environment and determination of action will be decided upon by Office of Environment and Public Works staff.

(C) Unacceptable beaver activity may include:

- i) Cutting City managed trees 6 cm or greater in diameter at breast height (DBH) that have special value or may cause a safety concern
- ii) Tunnelling under walking trails
- iii) Destabilizing slope or any activity that under mines the river bank
- iv) Tunnelling under areas mower operators drive in groomed park areas
- v) Interference with culverts or infrastructure
- vi) Prospective flooding issues in the event of a large runoff
- vii) Activity in high use public areas that may put the beaver or public health at risk.

(D) If active management is deemed necessary, the management of beavers will initially be carried out through a non-invasive approach, following all provincial and federal guidelines, where applicable, such as:

- i) Special trees with ecological or aesthetic value in predetermined areas of feeding will be protected through wire skirts, exclosures or river edge beaver fence. Additionally, other trees and shrubs, where there are large quantities and have advanced regenerative capability should be left unprotected for the use of beaver

- ii) Dismantling of beaver structures through methods least destructive to the environment
- iii) Removing debris, and/or
- iv) Other non-invasive deterrents that do not harm the beaver.

(E) If non-invasive management techniques are not applicable or are ineffective, the City will consider retaining a licensed professional to live trap and relocate the beaver following all provincial and federal guidelines. Some considerations when relocating beaver are:

- i) Signage will be posted at strategic locations to notify the public that trapping activities are occurring in the area
- ii) Relocation should occur during the time of year when beaver will have adequate time to re-colonize, this is typically between May and August
- iii) Attempt to move beaver within the watershed and/or a maximum distance of 10-15 kilometres
- iv) The relocation destination should be predetermined and proper permission will be obtained
- v) Move only to areas where there is a high probability of beaver survival once relocated
- vi) Once beaver has been relocated prevention and exclusion techniques should be implemented at the site to prevent the area from being re-colonized by another beaver.

(F) Destroying beaver will be considered after all other management tools have been exhausted or when an emergency situation has arisen. Once the beaver is destroyed, prevention and exclusion techniques will be implemented at the site to help prevent the area from being re-colonized by another beaver. Beaver remains will be disposed of appropriately.

(G) Unacceptable beaver activity will lead directly to live trapping and/or destroying in the following man made water bodies: Lacombe Park Lake, Grandin Pond, upper and lower Heritage Lakes and any other stormwater retention ponds.

3.0 Other Management Considerations

- Beavers will not be prohibited from moving up and down the Sturgeon River
- Relocation sites and permits for control should be kept up to date for quick response

4.0 Addendum – Carrot Creek

- The Beaver Management Guidelines were initially developed specifically for the reach of the Sturgeon River that runs through the City of St. Albert. This reach is predominantly surrounded by the Red Willow Park trail system and urban and industrial developments. The issues with beaver are typically centred around effects on City infrastructure and safety around the trails and parks.
- The area of Carrot Creek acquired by the City of St. Albert is very different than this. Agricultural development, some rural residents and some oil and gas activities predominantly surround Carrot Creek. Access along Carrot Creek is also very restricted except where there are road crossings and the issues with beavers are more related to flooding of buildings, roads and agricultural lands.

4.1 Background Information

- The City of St. Albert acquired Carrot Creek with the newly annexed lands in February 2007.
- The City now owns to the far top bank of the creek on the west side in the annexed area

- The exception to this is along the constructed ditch from Highway 2 at the north portion of the annexed area where the City owns to the south side of the ditch.
- The Office of Environment and representatives from Public Works reviewed existing beaver management strategies with Sturgeon County, which has been to respond to landowner complaints only, and having a professional on retainer to deal with these complaints. This typically included kill trapping the beavers and removing the dams with dynamite.
- Landowner complaints were typically related to flooding of lands or removing trees.
- Local oil and gas companies were contacted if dam removal was close to their facilities.
- Four potential beaver locations along Carrot Creek were identified with the staff of Sturgeon County. Most were related to flooding of private lands rather than culverts or bridges.
- There are about 20 landowners along Carrot Creek that could be affected by beaver activity.

4.2 Beaver Management – Carrot Creek

- The City will follow the beaver management practices set up by the Sturgeon County in the short term so that the residents will receive the same level of service.
- The City will re-evaluate these practices in one year to determine what changes to these practices may be necessary.

(A) The City will respond to residents complaints related to beavers rather than by regular inspection. The City will still document any beaver activity related to culverts or bridges that is observed during regular working tours.

(B) Trained Public Works staff will investigate each public complaint to assess the type of unacceptable beaver activity that is of concern to the resident. Unacceptable beaver activity will be reported to Office of Environment and Public Works staff and the Office of Environment will decide upon a determination of action.

(C) Unacceptable beaver activity may include:

- i) Cutting City managed trees 6 cm or greater in diameter at breast height (DBH) that have special value or may cause a safety concern.
- ii) Destabilizing slope or any activity that under mines the riverbank and causes a safety concern.
- iii) Interference with culverts or infrastructure that could cause flooding of private buildings or agricultural lands.
- iv) Prospective flooding issues in the event of a large runoff
- v) Activity in high use public areas that may put the beaver or public health at risk.

(D) If it has been determined that there is unacceptable beaver activity, the City will consider retaining a licensed professional to remove the dam and/or kill trap the beaver following all provincial and federal guidelines. Beaver remains will be disposed of appropriately.

(F) Once the beaver is destroyed, prevention and exclusion techniques will be recommended to the resident, if applicable, to help prevent the area from being re-colonized by another beaver such as a wire skirts, exclosures or creek edge beaver fence to protect trees with special value.