

4-24-2020

## Idaho Beaver Outreach Plan

Lillianne French  
*Boise State University*

Rosio Ojeda  
*Boise State University*

Melissa Symmes  
*Boise State University*

Emily Wakild  
*Boise State University*

---

## Idaho Beaver Outreach Plan

### Abstract

Beavers have always played a key role in the balances of environmental conservation and wildlife management. Beavers help grow vegetation in river valleys that are prone to fires, provide natural habitats for other organisms, and most importantly regulate changes and seasonal fluctuations in rivers and streams (Utz). Beavers are keystone species that have the ability to manage and conserve wilderness areas (Goldfarb). The problem with beavers is that their image is controversial, especially in Idaho. The state of Idaho was built on hunting and trapping beavers, as well as agriculture. Throughout history to the present, beavers have been represented as a nuisance and a loss of income to farming communities, as well as, an opportunity for fur markets in the past (Goldfarb). However, the goal of this research is to implement an outreach strategy that seeks to educate and promote beaver awareness throughout Idaho and in some of the most controversial areas. Neighboring states, such as Oregon and Washington have found a way to idolize the beaver and use it as a source of climate resistance and fire regulation. How can Idaho learn from these strategies to change perspectives on the beaver? Outreach, education, and other motives of awareness will be crucial in identifying problems and promoting solutions to the public regarding beaver conservation and ideology. Some of the methods that will be used to conduct this effort include advertisements, public outreach to local communities and businesses, and interviews of nonprofits and state agencies. This will be set as a foundation, or a guidebook that will outline how to handle and promote beavers in Idaho. Beavers symbolize the development of the west and should continue to play a role as an environmental tool in Idaho.

### Keywords

beavers, conservation, climate change resilience, implementation, wilderness, wildfire, keystone species

# IDAHO BEAVER OUTREACH PLAN



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

By: Lillianne French, Rosio Ojeda & Melissa Symmes

## RESEARCH QUESTION: How can Idaho mimic successful outreach and public perceptions of beavers in other states to promote beaver conservation and climate resistant strategies?

### INTRODUCTION

The beaver is considered to be a keystone species because of their ability to manage and conserve wilderness areas, such as riparian habitats. They are also considered to be a nuisance to humans all around the world including the United States. While there are states who have managed their human-beaver conflicts by understanding their beneficial influences, there are also states who have not, Idaho being one of them. Idaho's best management towards this species is killing it or destroying their lodges. Idaho should mimic successful outreach and public perceptions of beavers from other states to promote beaver conservation and climate-resistant strategies.



Cornell University. (2018, May 11). Wildlife baby boom: What to do if you find a baby animal. Retrieved April 11, 2020, from <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/news/20180503/wildlife-baby-boom-what-to-do-if-you-find-baby-animal>

### METHODS AND DATA

To get the best outreach to Idaho on the management of human-beaver conflicts we observed different peer-reviewed articles that captured the public's perception on beavers, beaver damages, and beaver control. We also examined sources containing the benefits of beaver in human environments. Observing the harvest of beaver throughout the United States will help indicate different perspectives on beaver management in different states.

### SURVEY LITERATURE

#### OREGON:

- Landowners wanted more education
- Capturing, relocating, wrapping trees, installing control devices, and installing fences or screens were acceptable management practices (Morzillo et. al., 2015).

#### MASSACHUSETTS:

- More information is needed to determine the appropriate management that coincides with public perceptions (Jonkers et. al., 2009)
- As beaver damage severity increases, respondents find installing drainage pipes and lethal control more acceptable (Jonkers et. al. 2009)



Beaver Dam. (2020, April 13). Retrieved April 13, 2020, from <https://www.youtube.com/user/annelieseRN>

#### ARKANSAS:

- Respondents wanted more information and education on beaver-control and removal more so than financial compensation,
- Did not know about government control services, and wanted government agencies to provide a service for beaver-related problems (Wigley and Garner 1987)
- Landowners should be educated about the benefits of beavers with an assistance program (Wigley & Garner 1987)

#### WYOMING:

- Public land managers are more beaver tolerant than private landowners because they are less likely to have conflicts with rural development (McKinstry & Anderson, 1999)
- Increased information beaver control and their benefits would be useful to landowners (McKinstry & Anderson, 1999)



Goldfarb, B. (2019, March 22). An indigenous tribe in Washington is strategically placing beavers around to help salmon. Retrieved April 11, 2020, from <https://www.businessinsider.com/strategically-placing-beavers-around-to-help-salmon-2019-3>

### ANALYSIS

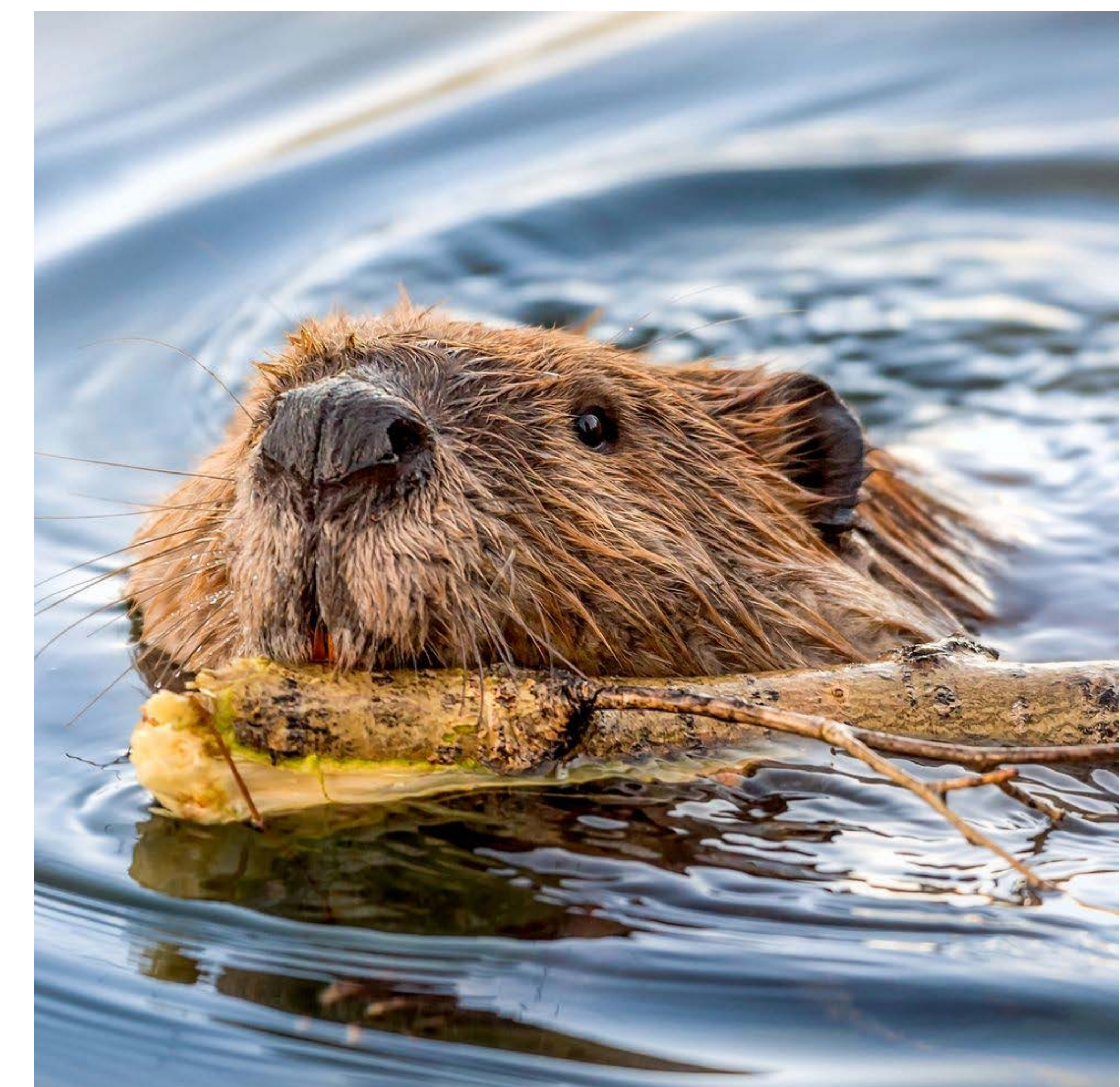
Based on the examination of the previous research of other states and human-beaver conflict, the best course of action to get the perspective of beavers in Idaho would be to ask the public where they stand with the situation. This gives a better understanding of the acceptance or nonacceptance based on damages, encounters, and location in the state of Idaho. More beavers were harvested in states with these less than positive attitudes about beavers (U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Group).



Perkins, S. (2013, July 12) What Role Do Beavers Play in Climate Change? Retrieved April 13, 2020 from <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2013/07/what-role-do-beavers-play-climate-change#>

### CONCLUSION

As research shows, beavers do have a positive influence on riparian habitats and human environments, yet it is not fully accepted in states built on agriculture and rural populations like Idaho. For Idaho to have an effective educational outreach plan, it must focus on the majority of rural demographics because these are the populations experiencing the negative economic impacts of beaver damages. This educational information should inform landowners of the benefits beavers have on the environment and how this can benefit their lands. By educating the public and most importantly, landowners, we hope that this information will curve their perspective on beavers to be more understanding and open-minded about the actions taken to manage this key stone species



Walden, L. (2019, November 26). Confirmed: Beavers will be reintroduced in two south England locations next spring. Retrieved April 11, 2020, from <https://www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife/countryside/a29853337/beavers-reintroduced-uk-national-trust/>

# References

- U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Group. 2017. U.S. Furbearer Harvest Statistics Database 1970 to 2017. *Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*. Retrieved April 13, 2020, [https://www.fishwildlife.org/download\\_file/view/1776/1213](https://www.fishwildlife.org/download_file/view/1776/1213)
- Beaver Dam. (2020, April 13). Retrieved April 13, 2020, from <https://www.youtube.com/user/annelieseRN>
- Cornell University. (2018, May 11). Wildlife baby boom: What to do if you find a baby animal. Retrieved April 11, 2020, from <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/news/20180503/wildlife-baby-boom-what-do-if-you-find-baby-animal>
- Jonker, S., Organ, J., Muth, R., Zwick, R., & Siemer, W. (2009). Stakeholder norms toward beaver management in massachusetts. *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 73(7), 1158-1165.
- McKinstry, M. C., & Anderson, S. H. (1999). Attitudes of private-and public-land managers in Wyoming, USA, toward beaver. *Environmental Management*, 23(1), 95-101. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s002679900170>
- Morzillo, Anita T., Needham, Mark D. (2015). Landowner Incentives and Normative Tolerances for Managing Beaver Impacts, *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 20:6, 514-530, DOI: [10.1080/10871209.2015.1083062](https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2015.1083062) [https://www-tandfonline-com.libproxy.boisestate.edu/doi/full/10.1080/10871209.2015.1083062](https://www.tandfonline-com.libproxy.boisestate.edu/doi/full/10.1080/10871209.2015.1083062)
- Perkins, S. (2013, July 12) What Role Do Beavers Play in Climate Change? Retrieved April 13, 2020 from <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2013/07/what-role-do-beavers-play-climate-change#>
- Walden, L. (2019, November 26). Confirmed: Beavers will be reintroduced in two south England locations next spring. Retrieved April 11, 2020, from <https://www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife/countryside/a29853337/beavers-reintroduced-uk-national-trust/>
- Wigley, T. B., & Garner, M. E. (1987). Landowner perceptions of beaver damage and control in Arkansas. *Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conferences*. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1061&context=ewdcc3>