



**ALAN BRUBAKER, P.E., P.S.**

**SUMMIT COUNTY ENGINEER**

**BEAVER CONTROL POLICY  
SUMMIT COUNTY SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
January 2023**

Beavers and the ponds they create provide many environmental benefits by providing habitat for numerous other species, storing, and slowing stormwater flows and filtering and cleaning surface water runoff. However, beavers can become a nuisance when the dams they create cause flooding of yards, crops, buildings and/or roadways.

Beavers, like many wild animal species, are protected in Ohio. Ohio permits their trapping from December 26 through February 28. Hunting of beaver is prohibited. In Ohio, "Nuisance wild animal" means a wild animal that interferes with the use or enjoyment of property, is causing a threat to public safety, or may cause damage or harm to a structure, property, or person. Nuisance beaver may be trapped anytime by any person, but subject to the rules and restrictions set forth in Ohio Administrative Code Section 1501:31-15-03 and other provisions of law.

Nuisance trapping of beaver by a licensed commercial nuisance wild animal control operator is somewhat costly ranging between \$500-\$1,500 to trap and remove a colony. Trapping and removal is also rarely an effective permanent solution to a problem as other beaver will often re-inhabit the territory within a year or two. Installation of control devices to prevent blocking of culverts and to control beaver pond water levels, while being considerably more costly than trapping, may provide better, more effective, longer lasting solutions to beaver problems.

Maintenance of drainage ways to prevent flooding of upland properties is the responsibility of the property owners of the land through which water flows. Where flow blockages occur, it is that property owner's responsibility to correct the problem, even if that blockage is caused by beavers. Entering the property of another to remove beavers and/or blockages requires the written permission of the owner of the property.

The Summit County Surface Water Management District (SWMD) is very aware of the frustration caused by the potential for property damage due to beaver activity and SWMD personnel will do what we can to alleviate problems. Please report any problem beaver activity to the SWMD. Our staff will recommend action that a property owner may pursue to help alleviate the problem. Where we determine there may be a high risk to public safety or of structural flood damage, we will map the active beaver activity location, investigate the problem, monitor (where warranted) the water elevation of beaver activity and assess the risk to public safety and structures.

Where risk to public safety or of structure/property damage is determined to be imminent, we will notify the property owner(s) to correct the problem by installing water level control devices or by removing the nuisance beaver dam and colony. Should a property owner fail to act within a

reasonable time we will initiate enforcement action; that action may involve the SWMD removing the nuisance and billing the property owner(s) for the actual costs.

Where such nuisance activity is found to be within a county drainage easement where the county has maintenance responsibility, the SWMD will take appropriate action and bear the costs accordingly.

As noted above, beavers are protected wild animals and their activities are generally considered beneficial to the environment. Unless their activity is found to be a nuisance, no action to trap, remove or otherwise control their activity will be undertaken by the SWMD.

This policy is intended to assist in the control of beaver activity where it interferes with the use or enjoyment of property, is causing a threat to public safety, or may cause damage or harm to a structure, property, or person. Resolution of such conditions will remain the responsibility of the land's owner(s) where the nuisance is occurring on private property. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed reason for preventing any property owner from taking action to protect their property from damage due to beaver activity.

(Dollar amounts stated herein are estimated using 2022 costs.)

