

# POLICY # AG 001

## BEAVER CONTROL POLICY

- DEPARTMENT: AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

<b>APPROVAL DATE:</b>	AG 04-07-92 (August 1992)
<b>REVISION DATE (s):</b>	22-08-07 (August 13, 2007) ; April 25, 2017 (2017-04-48); October 9, 2018 (2018-10-10)
<b>REVIEW DATE (s):</b>	

### POLICY STATEMENT

The County is committed to protecting municipal infrastructure from water movement problems related to beaver activity and to provide the option of blasting beaver dams on private lands at a fee for service.

#### Background

The beaver is not a declared pest or nuisance under the *Agricultural Pest Act – Pest and Nuisance Control Regulation* in the Province of Alberta. The County of Vermilion River has no legislated duty to provide beaver control on private or provincial land. However, beavers are frequently a concern in the County. Heavy spring run-off or excessive summer rain storms can create problems when beaver have built dams in watersheds, creeks and coulees. Any culvert or watershed where there are trees nearby can become a beaver problem area.

### PURPOSE

Beaver pose many problems in an expanding human environment. This policy addresses the management of flooding due to beaver dams. It anticipates that such problems will occur to



varying degrees from time to time and provides the guidelines required to remain flexible but prevent undue municipal expenses.

## DEFINITIONS

**Designated Watercourse:** A waterbody with a defined bed and banks, designated under the Alberta Water Act Code of Practice for Watercourse Crossings as Class, A, B, C, or D. Within the County of Vermilion River this includes the Vermilion River, Battle River, North Saskatchewan River and all tributaries within 2 km of designated watercourses.

## POLICY

### A) Protection of Municipal Infrastructure – Private or Public Lands

- 1) The County of Vermilion River will remove beaver and/or beaver dams from private property or public lands if the removal serves to protect municipal infrastructure (roads, bridges, culverts, etc.).
  
- 2) County staff will assist internal departments with the removal of beaver dams and cleaning of culverts for the protection of municipal infrastructure and public safety. Public works will maintain a system of screening off culverts where repeated beaver problems exist.
  - a) For concerns with municipal infrastructure or public safety, the County is granted authorization to remove beaver dams and control beaver on County controlled lands and public and private lands to which it has access under the authority of the *Wildlife Act*. All beaver management work must comply with the *Fisheries Act*, *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* and Alberta's *Water Act*.
  - b) Beaver lodges will only be removed upon approval of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division on a case-by-case basis.
  - c) Decisions on impact to public infrastructure will be based on the discretion of Agriculture staff and Public Works staff.
  - d) Hired trappers/shooters must be authorized under the County Damage Control Licence.
  - e) To enter on private land, county personnel must obtain written permission from the owner or lessee (form WA144).
  - f) The county will facilitate appropriate explosive handling and use (i.e. licenced magazine, certified blaster, fee for service).

### B) Does not Affect Protection of Municipal Infrastructure – Private or Public Lands



- 1) The County of Vermilion River will maintain a list of contacts for persons requiring removal of beaver or beaver dams from private property or public lands.
- 2) County landowners with beaver-related problems on private or public land (i.e. for private or industry buildings, yards, roads, agricultural crop and pasture lands) are encouraged to deal with the problems on their own as far as possible.
- 3) Where help is required to alleviate water problems on private or public land, arrangements may be made to deal with the situation through county resources at the discretion of the Agricultural Fieldman. Applications will be accepted on a complaint basis, but may be refused when manpower or resources are limited. Fees will be charged as per the County Fee Bylaw.
- 4) Trapping and/or removal of beavers is the responsibility of the landowner.
- 5) The landowner must sign a "Permission to Enter upon Lands for Problem Wildlife Control" form.

#### C) Lands Located within Department of Fisheries and Oceans "designated watercourses"

- 1) County landowners with beaver concerns on lands located within Department of Fisheries and Oceans designated watercourses are encouraged to deal with beaver-related problems on their own as far as possible.
- 2) All beaver management work on designated watercourses must comply with the *Fisheries Act*, *SARA*, *Alberta's Water Act* and *Public Lands Act*.
- 6) Where help is required to alleviate water problems on private or public land (i.e. for private buildings, yards, roads, agricultural crop and pasture lands), arrangements may be made to deal with the situation through county resources at the discretion of the Agricultural Fieldman. Applications will be accepted on a complaint basis, but may be refused when manpower or resources are limited. Fees will be charged as per the County Fee Bylaw.
- 3) Trapping and/or removal of beavers is the responsibility of the landowner. The County will maintain a list of licenced trappers.
- 4) The landowner must sign a "Permission to Enter Upon Lands for Problem Wildlife Control" form.
- 5) All decisions to remove beaver dams must be approved in advance by the County of Vermilion River Drainage Committee.



- 6) Dam removal will be limited to September 1 until freeze up in order to meet restricted activity restrictions imposed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and Alberta Environmental Protection to protect spawning and fish habitat, birds and amphibians. No dams may be removed after the pond freezes without a case review by DFO.