

**Title: Beaver Flood Control**  
**Policy No: 6304**  
**Approval: County Council**  
**Effective Date: May 4, 1994**  
**Revised Date: May 20, 2008**  
**Supersedes Policy No: NIL**



**Policy Statement:** Woodlands County will provide a means of alleviating the detrimental effects of beaver dams on the natural drainage pattern on private land through the use of local trappers and beaver dam breaching, as approved by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division and Fisheries & Oceans Canada.

**Definitions:**

1. Private land means cultivated, pasture, hay land, or woodlots.
2. Woodlots mean a treed area with commercial value.
3. Trapper means the holder of a Registered Fur Management Area or an individual eligible to hold a trapping license in accordance with Alberta Sustainable Resources Development regulations.
4. Breaching means rupturing the dam to create an opening.

**Fees:**

1. All requests from landowners for beaver dam breaching will constitute a charge outlined in the County's fee schedule, as may be amended from time to time. Payment must accompany applications.

**Consent:**

1. Beaver flood control will be carried out on a written complaint basis only. Landowners will be required to fill out a beaver flood control consent form prior to any control work being initiated.
2. Upon receipt of a signed beaver flood control consent form and payment, the Director of Agriculture Services will notify personnel responsible for beaver dam breaching in that area.
3. In the event of a dispute between landowners with regard to beaver flood control, the process will be referred to Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division to be resolved.
4. The County will advise Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division of all beaver complaints affecting public lands prior to responding to such complaints.

**Trapping:**

1. Local landowners are encouraged to resolve any beaver flooding problems during the normal trapping season by their own means with guidance provided by the Municipality's Director of Agriculture Services when required.
2. The registered trapper will be the initial contact for beaver trapping in their area when requests are received by the County between October 1<sup>st</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup> of the year.
3. A current list of registered trappers in Woodlands County will be maintained by the Director of Agriculture Services with the assistance of Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division.

**Dam Breaching:**

1. Beaver dams will be breached in accordance with Fisheries & Oceans Canada guidelines as outlined in the Woodlands County Beaver Dam Breach Plan (Appendix 'A').
2. When dam breaches are to occur in an area between October 1<sup>st</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup>, the registered trappers that may be affected downstream will be notified.
3. Where possible, dam breaches will be completed prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.
4. If breaching of dams could cause a problem downstream, those downstream dams will be removed at no charge at the discretion of the Director of Agriculture Services in consultation with the affected landowner. Landowners downstream who will be affected by the water release from dam breaching will also be notified.
5. Beaver houses may be removed upon approval of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division on a case-by-case basis.
6. In the event of potential road failure or property damage, necessary steps will be taken to alleviate flooding so as to prevent further damage from occurring.

**Firearms:**

1. Firearms may be used to remove beaver on road allowances upon approval of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division on a case-by-case basis.

## SCHEDULE 'A'

### Woodlands County Beaver Dam Breach Plan

The beaver dam breach plan outlines how beaver dam breaches will be accomplished from April to November on watercourses within Woodlands County boundaries and outlines the use of explosives or mechanical devices for the breaching of beaver dams causing flooding or damage on private or municipal properties. The plan covers most dam breaches; however there may still be situations when the DFO will be contacted for a site-specific assessment on Class C watercourses.

Legal land descriptions of Woodlands County:

TWP 56 Ranges 10, 11, 12 W5  
TWP 57 Ranges 10, 11, 12, 13 W5  
TWP 58 Ranges 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 W5  
TWP 59 Ranges 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 W5  
TWP 60 Ranges 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 W5  
TWP 61 Ranges 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 W5  
TWP 62 Ranges 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 W5  
TWP 63 Ranges 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 W5  
TWP 64 Ranges 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 W5  
TWP 65 Ranges 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 W5  
TWP 66 Ranges 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 W5  
TWP 67 Ranges 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 W5

Named Class A watercourses in Woodlands County as stated on the Code of Practice Map from Alberta Environmental Protection:

Athabasca River

McLeod River

Named Class C watercourses in Woodlands County as stated on the Code of Practice Map from Alberta Environmental Protection:

Mud Creek  
Doris Creek  
Clearwater Creek  
Mink Creek  
Beaver Creek  
Goat Creek  
Carson Creek  
Goose Creek  
Freeman River  
Paddle River

Timeu Creek  
Horse Creek  
Christmas Creek  
Bull Creek  
Hedin Creek  
Chickadee Creek  
Weasone Creek  
Corbett Creek  
Little Paddle River

Inaccessible Creeks and Rivers:

Wolf Creek  
Windfall Creek  
Hope Creek  
Sakwatamau River  
Coutts River  
Oldman Creek

Ethel Creek  
Stony Creek  
Bessie Creek  
Akuinu River  
Saulteaux River

Any tributary within 2 km of a designated Class C watercourse.

Beaver dams will be breached when the dam is causing flooding on private property or when road infrastructure is in danger of being damaged. The breaching of the dam will be done slowly as to not disturb or have a downstream effect. The County will only breach dams on private property by the use of explosives; the landowner will be responsible for dam removals either by mechanical or manual means.

Beaver dams will be breached using three means:

1. Explosives will be used in situations where equipment is not able to get close enough to breach the dam. Whenever possible charges will not be used within 30 meters of a spawning bed.
  - a. Explosives will be used if it is the only feasible means of breaching the dam causing damage.
  - b. Up to 1 kg charges of Logger's Choice or gel based explosives will be used.
  - c. The charges will be placed 30 cm above the bed when practical, the charges will be placed in the center of the dam on the upstream side to cause a breach in the dam material and not disturb the profile of the streambed.
  - d. If more than one dam is to be removed on a watercourse, the downstream dam(s) shall be removed first.
  - e. Small portions of the dam will be removed at a time to prevent the disturbance of the downstream sediment.
  - f. Dams on Class C watercourses will not be breached during the spawning period of April 16 to June 30 unless site-specific approval has been received.
  - g. Upstream disturbance will be assessed prior to detonation of the explosive.
  - h. Downstream inspections will take place to investigate any fish-bearing habitats prior to detonation.
  - i. Downstream effects will be monitored during the breaching of the dam.
  - j. Any fish trapped downstream or stranded by the breaching will be relocated into the main stream of the watercourse.
  - k. Residents will be encouraged to leave dams which are not causing flooding.

- l. Prior to the blasting of any dam on a Class C watercourse during the restricted activity period the DFO Regional Office shall be notified of the location and time the blasting will take place.
  - m. Class D, unmapped, or non-coded watercourses will be administered by following the mitigation measures provided in the DFO's Letter of Advice.
2. Equipment, such as backhoes, rubber wheeled grade-all, or a track hoe, will be used whenever possible to breach the dam.
3. Manual methods will be used in situations were there is a danger of damaging power lines, gas lines, or where other means are not feasible.