

I am an Agriculture service provider, trapper and a small rancher. The matter under discussion is very troubling to me. As an Ag service provider, I get to see first hand the crop and ground damage done by "problem beaver" throughout the state, and have witnessed the beaver population growing throughout my 35 years in the irrigation industry. I live on the same property that I grew up on. As a small rancher, who has family living on a Century Farm less than 1/4 mile from where I live today, I remember walking to the creek with my dad and the excitement of seeing a beaver there. In the mid 70's there were few beaver in our stretch of Palmer Creek, today I harvest 3-4 beaver a year from here and deal with some of the neighbor's beaver problems with no impact on the beaver population. Almost any time I walk the creek, I see at least 1 beaver. As a trapper, I deal with an increasing number of calls about problem beaver. Farmers losing crops and landowners with plugged culverts under their driveway are the majority of problems I hear about.

Often times, landowners want to try nonlethal methods to discourage the problem rodent, eventually, they ask me to permanently remove them. It has been my experience that hazing (dam removal and electric fencing) and attempts to excluding (grating across culverts) do not work well with beaver. Beaver stay in the area and continue their business as usual.

It seems to me that this bill is creating a problem where none exists. The farmers don't want to kill all the beaver, only those causing damage. Trappers genuinely care about the resource and want to see it continue well into the future, often working to manage areas to maintain a healthy population year after year. It has also been my experience that if there is a problem in a certain area ODFW has worked with all parties involved to study and implement appropriate actions. Beavers are an important part of our environment, but over population will result in, not only increased damage, but increased disease within the beaver population. Diseases, such as giardia, can and will spread to other mammals, including humans.

Thank you for your consideration -- Dave M