



ASB-20 – Beaver Management Policy

Department: Agricultural Service Board

POLICY OBJECTIVE:

The County of St. Paul will manage beaver activity in a consistent and practical manner to protect municipal infrastructure, minimize flooding and road damage, support responsible environmental stewardship, and provide a fair approach to addressing landowner concerns within the scope of County responsibilities.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

1.0 Definitions

1.1 The following words shall be defined as follows:

- (a) “Municipal Infrastructure” means roads, bridges, culverts, drainage systems, and other transportation-related infrastructure identified through the County’s road and asset classification systems and regularly maintained for public use, as well as municipal utilities, County facilities, parks, trails, recreational facilities, and other developed municipal assets under the maintenance responsibility of, or maintained under agreement by, the County.

2.0 General Approach

- 2.1 The County will undertake beaver control where activity is causing or may cause damage to municipal roads, culverts, bridges, drainage systems, or other municipal infrastructure.
- 2.2 The County may proactively identify and address beaver activity based on operational needs, regardless of whether a complaint has been received.
- 2.3 All work will be completed in accordance with applicable federal and provincial legislation, including any site-specific requirements or approvals related to fish habitat or watercourses when necessary.
- 2.4 The County will consider potential impacts to agricultural operations when planning dam removal activities. Where feasible, dam removal with a high potential to flood cultivated land will be scheduled prior to seeding or after harvest; however, timing may be adjusted where required to address higher priority risks.
- 2.5 Where appropriate, the County may consider alternative beaver management methods, including non-lethal, flow control, or infrastructure protection measures, where feasible and practical.
- 2.6 Long-term mitigation should be considered through infrastructure design and planning where feasible, particularly in areas with known or recurring beaver-related impacts.

COUNTY OF ST. PAUL NO. 19

Our Mission - To create desirable rural experiences



3.0 Prioritization of Work

3.1 Beaver activity that is identified by Agricultural Services and Public Works as posing a risk to or causing damage to municipal infrastructure will be prioritized for management to ensure the continued function and safety of the County's road and bridge network.

3.2 Work will be prioritized based on risk and impact:

High Priority: Risk to public safety or municipal infrastructure failure

Moderate Priority: Restricted drainage with potential for damage

Low Priority: Minimal or no immediate impact

3.3 Repeat problem locations may be prioritized for longer-term mitigation measures.

3.4 Beaver activity occurring on County-owned land that does not pose a risk to municipal infrastructure may not be prioritized for management. Impacts such as vegetation loss or localized flooding on adjacent private land will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and response will be subject to operational priorities and available resources.

4.0 Municipal Land and Infrastructure

4.1 The County will manage beaver-related impacts to municipal infrastructure on County-owned land and within road rights-of-way.

4.2 Methods to manage beaver-related impacts may include:

4.2.1 Dam breaching or removal;

4.2.2 Water control measures; and

4.2.3 Trapping or removal of beavers on County land.

4.3 Where appropriate and feasible, the County may consider alternative methods to manage beaver-related impacts on County-owned land and infrastructure, including flow control devices, exclusion fencing, culvert protection systems, and other infrastructure protection measures.

5.0 Private Land

5.1 Landowners are responsible for managing beaver activity on their property in accordance with applicable legislation.

5.2 Where a beaver dam located on private land poses a risk to municipal infrastructure, the County may undertake dam removal or other control measures, and costs will be borne by the County.

COUNTY OF ST. PAUL NO. 19

Our Mission - To create desirable rural experiences



- 5.3 The County will not generally remove or trap beavers on private land. Where municipal infrastructure is at risk and the landowner is not able or willing to address the issue, the County may undertake such work with landowner permission.
- 5.4 The County will not intervene in disputes between private landowners where municipal infrastructure is not impacted. Responsibility for addressing these matters rests with the landowners, and provincial authorities may provide guidance or enforcement in accordance with applicable legislation
- 5.5 Landowners, or their authorized agent or trapper, may be eligible to participate in the County's Beaver Reduction Incentive Program in accordance with Section 8.0 of this policy.
- 5.6 Where beaver-related impacts on private land affecting municipal infrastructure are not being addressed by the landowner, or where access for County assistance is not permitted, the County may, where appropriate, consider other available mechanisms in accordance with applicable legislation, including engagement with appropriate provincial or federal authorities.
- 5.7 Beaver dam removal on private land may be provided on a complaint basis. Fees will be applied in accordance with Section 8.0 of this policy.

6.0 Beaver Control

- 6.1 Beaver control activities will be carried out by qualified County staff in accordance with applicable legislation and County procedures.
- 6.2 Where practical, beavers should be removed prior to dam breaching to reduce the likelihood of repeated dam construction. In situations where immediate action is required to protect municipal infrastructure or property, dam breaching may proceed prior to removal.
- 6.3 In unique circumstances where internal resources are not available or suitable, approved, properly licensed contractors may be engaged, subject to Council approval.

7.0 Authorization and Requirements

- 7.1 A Permission to Enter Form must be signed prior to any work on private land.
- 7.2 Required easements must be obtained prior to commencement of work:
 - 7.2.1 By the County for County-owned land projects; and
 - 7.2.2 By the County for private land requests.

COUNTY OF ST. PAUL NO. 19

Our Mission - To create desirable rural experiences



7.3 The County is responsible for notifying affected upstream and downstream landowners.

7.4 Applicants are responsible for obtaining any required regulatory approvals.

8.0 Fees and Cost Responsibility

8.1 Where work is requested by a landowner and does not primarily benefit municipal infrastructure, fees will be applied in accordance with the County's Fee Schedule Bylaw.

8.2 Where dam removal results in additional upstream or downstream work, those costs may be charged to the applicant where the work is for private benefit.

8.3 Where the primary benefit of the work is protection of municipal infrastructure, costs will be borne by the County.

9.0 Beaver Reduction Incentive Program

9.1 The County may operate a Beaver Reduction Incentive Program to support the removal of beavers throughout the County, with the goal of reducing the risk, impacts, and associated costs of current and future beaver activity on municipal infrastructure.

9.2 Budget allocation for the Beaver Reduction Incentive Program will be approved annually by Council upon recommendation from the Agricultural Service Board. The program will operate only in years where funding has been approved.

9.3 Where the program is in effect, program details will be established by the Agricultural Service Board based on the approved budget and administered by Agricultural Services staff.

9.4 The County may modify or cancel the program at any time.

10.0 Right to Refuse

10.1 The County may refuse service where:

10.1.1 Work cannot be completed safely;

10.1.2 Required approvals or access are not in place;

10.1.3 The request does not meet policy criteria; or

10.1.4 Available resources are allocated to higher priority work.

10.2 Where service is refused, responsibility remains with the landowner.

COUNTY OF ST. PAUL NO. 19

Our Mission - To create desirable rural experiences



11.0 Limitations

11.1 The County does not guarantee permanent removal of beaver activity, as beaver populations are naturally recurring and ongoing management may be required.

Related Policies:

ASB-12 Firearms Authorization Policy

Council Approval: August 11, 2026