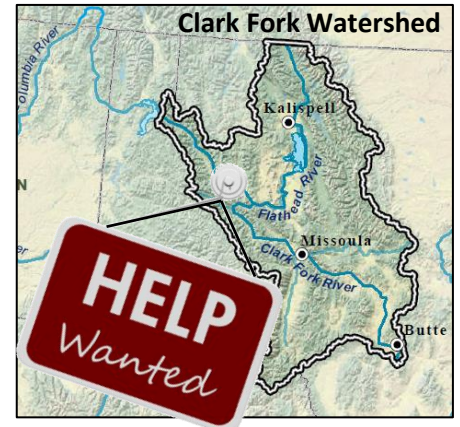




Dear Friend of the River:

## The Clark Fork watershed has a labor shortage.

Not of the human variety. It's a lack of the four-legged watershed worker better known as the **beaver**, which just a few hundred years ago boasted impressive numbers throughout this 14-million-acre basin. With that abundance came big-time ecological benefits, including rich and diverse riparian habitats, water storage that kept aquifers recharged and erosion in check, and stream systems that stayed wet, cool, and connected.



Today, after 200 years of development and industrial use – and facing numerous stressors, such as climate change, chronic low flows, and exploding demand – Montana's rivers and streams could use those benefits more than ever.

But beaver – some of the most effective stream restoration architects around – have dwindled to a fraction of their historic populations. Two hundred years of trapping and habitat loss are the big culprits. But their signature handiwork, including culvert-plugging, flooding, and tree-cutting, can be destructive and costly, winning them few friends among land managers and owners. Removal has been the traditional go-to option. But in places where beaver could be a good fit, that strategy preempts the benefits they could bring. **What's the fix?**



Enter the **Beaver Conflict Resolution Program**, a pilot project developed in 2019 by the [Clark Fork Coalition](https://clarkfork.org), in collaboration with [National Wildlife Federation](https://www.nwf.org) and [Defenders of Wildlife](https://www.defendersofwildlife.org), to address some of the biggest obstacles to increasing beaver presence in the Clark Fork basin: beaver-human conflict, and a lack of effective, readily accessible, non-lethal alternatives.

To tackle those issues, we are: 1) offering cost-share and technical assistance to landowners experiencing beaver conflicts; 2) training partners to assess beaver problems and address them with nonlethal methods; and 3) working with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (who manages beaver on both public and private lands) toward a broader conflict resolution program linked to large-scale beaver restoration goals in the state.

Two years on and we can say unequivocally: **it's working**. As you can see in the [2019-20 Impact Report](#), with some basic materials and a bit of field-tested ingenuity, the project has already delivered highly-effective solutions at 13 sites across the Clark Fork watershed. As a result, conditions are improving for beaver, humans, and stream systems at public parks, river access sites, and on private lands, through which many high-priority streams flow.

The strategies are straightforward, typically involving pond-leveling, culvert-fencing, and tree-wrapping. All low-cost, high-impact techniques that allow beaver to do what they do best while reducing or mitigating the impacts on infrastructure and property. **That allows those much-needed ecological benefits to start stacking up**, such as cooler, cleaner water, better storage, less erosion, greater resilience in the event of catastrophic wildfire, and more complex, diverse, and healthy aquatic and riparian habitats for fish, birds, and other wildlife.

Project by project we're **starting to fill that watershed labor shortage** by helping beaver coexist with humans in places where they are already present, and where they can boost the health of river systems, wetlands, and entire watersheds in ways human river restoration experts can only dream about. And at a fraction of the cost.

**Here's where you come in:** This summer's work includes a pond-leveler project near Garrison, culvert fences near Condon, and five other fencing and tree-wrapping projects in the Missoula and Deer Lodge Valleys. But as the map in the [Impact Report](#) shows, reports of beaver conflicts span the Clark Fork basin. **We need your help** to sustain current projects, implement new ones, and support beaver conflict resolution trainings so we can expand the benefits of this highly effective program.

If you can, **please give to the Beaver Conflict Resolution Program today**, and when you do, your gift will be **matched in full** – dollar for dollar – **doubling** your impact! That ensures help is on the way for landowners, resource managers, and others, who see the many advantages of beaver, but could use a hand maximizing ecosystem benefits while minimizing impacts. It's a *triple win* for beaver, people, and watersheds. **Be a part of it** with your gift to the Beaver Conflict Resolution Program today!

Thanks for considering,



Karen Knudsen  
Executive Director

#### BEAVER CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

