

## Report to Council

**Report Title:** Beaver Wildlife Management Follow-up

**Prepared By:** Brad Thomson, Facilities and Parks Supervisor and Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services

**Department:** Recreation

**Date:** January 13, 2026

**Report Number:** REC2026-01                      **File Number:** C11REC

### Attachments:

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### Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number REC2026-01 - Beaver Wildlife Management Follow-up, prepared by Brad Thomson, Facilities and Parks Supervisor and Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services for information purposes.

### Report:

#### Background:

This report is provided as a result of Council's request following a delegation in December. In May 2023, staff observed extensive beaver-related damage to both newly planted and established trees within Bend Park and Lobies Park. In response, staff consulted with representatives from the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority (SVCA) to seek guidance on appropriate mitigation measures. SVCA recommended that trees within the affected areas be protected with chicken wire and that a licensed trapper be retained to address the beaver activity.

Staff proceeded to wrap a significant number of trees with chicken wire; however, due to the scale of the damage and number of trees impacted, it was not feasible to protect all trees in this manner. Brockton staff subsequently sought further advice from a licensed trapper regarding the most effective approach to address the nuisance beavers. Based on this consultation, it was determined that certified body-gripping (quick-kill) traps approved for humane beaver management ("trap(s)") should be strategically placed along the banks of the Saugeen River to remove the beavers causing the damage.

In November 2025, staff received complaints from users of the Saugeen River Trail regarding renewed signs of beaver activity along the banks of Bend Park. The complaints primarily raised public safety concerns related to small, sharp tree stumps left near the edge of the trail. Upon investigation, staff confirmed that beavers were once again causing significant damage to small- and medium-sized trees, resulting in several hazardous stumps along the trail corridor. Staff evaluated options and once again proceeded given the potential risk to public

safety. Through consultations with a licensed trapper, and it was again determined that traps along the riverbanks were the most appropriate course of action to address the nuisance beavers.

For both trapping occurrences, trap locations were selected based on recommendations from the licensed trapper, as traps are most effective when placed at active beaver access points. Installing traps outside of these areas would have been ineffective and an inefficient use of resources. During trapping operations, the Saugeen River Trail was temporarily closed to the public using barricades and signage to ensure public awareness and to prevent access to the affected areas. These measures were implemented to protect public safety and to ensure that trail users and their pets remained clear of the trapping zones.

### **Analysis:**

The removal of beavers from municipal parklands is necessary to protect both public safety and the long-term health of the park environment. Beaver activity results in the loss of mature trees and damage to the tree canopy, which is essential for shade, erosion control, and the overall appearance of our parks. A partially felled tree left by a beaver creates a fall hazard that may go unreported and could injure a park user. In addition, beavers leave behind sharp, uneven stumps that pose a serious safety hazard to park users, particularly children, seniors, and anyone who may trip or fall.

Beavers have very few natural predators. Those that do exist, such as coyotes, foxes, lynx, and bobcats are all known to inhabit Bruce County and the Municipality of Brockton. Allowing beavers to remain in parklands increases the likelihood of attracting these predators into areas heavily used by the public. The presence of large or aggressive wildlife in community parks would create significant safety concerns and management challenges.

For these reasons, proactive removal of beavers from areas that highly used public parks and trails is necessary to maintain a safe, accessible, and family-friendly environment for all residents and visitors.

Upon consultation with SVCA and research staff considered two control methods for this location and situation:

### **Relocation option:**

In Ontario, it is strongly advised from the Ministry of Natural Resources to not to relocate a beaver more than one kilometre from the original trapping site. Even within this limited distance, relocation requires written permission from a landowner willing to accept the animal onto their property, which is often difficult to obtain. Relocation within such a short range is ineffective, as beavers are capable of travelling 8–16 kilometres in a single day and will typically return to their established territory within hours. As a result, relocation would lead to an ongoing cycle of capture and release without resolving the underlying issue.

Additionally, relocation poses significant risks to the animal's welfare. Beavers are highly territorial, and introducing a relocated beaver into an area already occupied by others often results in aggressive conflict, injury, or death. Displaced beavers also experience high stress, loss of shelter, and limited access to food caches, especially outside of peak feeding seasons. Due to these constraints, behavioural traits, and low survival rates, relocation is not a humane, practical, or effective solution.

## **Certified body-gripping (quick-kill) trap approved for humane beaver management Option:**

The trap option is the most effective and permanent solution for resolving the beaver issue in a timely manner.

Unlike relocation or repeated live-trapping, this method provides an immediate resolution and prevents ongoing property damage, repeated stress to the beaver, and the need for continual intervention. It also avoids the high mortality risks associated with relocation, such as territorial conflict, starvation, and exposure. Legal and professionally deployed traps are widely recognized as the most efficient, humane, and responsible wildlife management option in situations where non-lethal alternatives are ineffective or impractical.

Staff are committed to finding new and innovative methods to wildlife management. Preventative planning will include planting tree species and shrubs that do not appeal to beavers where possible, recycling fallen trees by safely leaving remnants of these trees or logs for the beaver. The enactment of these measures is used sparingly and only in extenuating circumstances. We provide this report for Council's information as requested.

## **Strategic Action Plan Checklist:**

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision                       | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community              | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life                               | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development                          | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance                          | N/A |

## **Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:**

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective?  
N/A

## **Reviewed By:**



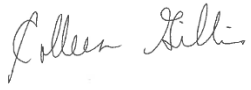
Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

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## **Respectfully Submitted by:**



Brad Thomson, Facilities and Parks Supervisor



Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services

**Reviewed By:**



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer