

Bob, I'd like to submit this addendum to my second set of comments. It might add clarity to what I said in those. Thank you, Martha Hall

Water Levels in Beaver Ponds

In my second set of comments I tried to summarize the important ecosystem-level functions provided by beaver dams and the issues related to water level in beaver ponds.

I think these topics should receive a lot of attention in this revision of the ACFL Plan. This is because the beaver ponds are probably one of the most interesting and important features in the ACFL for the many reasons I tried to explain.

If beaver ponds dry up so there is not enough water during droughts and in late summer during normal years, this creates real challenges for beavers and the other species who use these ponds. I lived near Whistle Lake on Whistle Lake Terrace for a number of years so I hiked around Little Toot Swamp a lot. This beaver pond sometimes dried up during late summer when I lived there.

I believe it is important to have "management goals" in the new ACFL Plan and "strategies" to implement these goals. One goal would be protecting the integrity and longevity of the beaver ponds. This may require some changes in the current trail system and its bridges. The beavers are always working hard to raise the level of their dams so water levels will be high enough in late summer and during droughts. Natural sedimentation also means water levels must rise. Just the volume of biomass that goes back into the beaver ponds when the pond lilies die back each fall must be huge.

Because of threats posed by climate change, including longer and more serious droughts and more wildfires, a strategy is needed that prioritizes flexibility and rises in water levels in beaver ponds over protection of the current trail system and its bridges which could be changed fairly easily.

Thank you for including these comments in those for the revision of the ACFL Plan.
Martha Hall