

**PURPOSE:** Properly managed beaver ponds provide beneficial habitat for waterfowl. The key is the ability to control water levels at critical times of the year to maximize forage.

**WATER CONTROL:** There are two popular devices for controlling water level in beaver ponds. Information on constructing the devices is available from the Alabama Forestry Commission.



- Install a temporary device such as a three-log drain. Break the dam in the stream channel forming a narrow v-shape. Place the three-log drain with the upstream end staked down. This allows continual drainage and makes it difficult for beavers to patch or clog the drain to reflood the pond. Remove the device in November and allow beavers to reconstruct the dam and flood the pond. This method relies on the beaver's instinct to reconstruct the dam. A potential problem is that beavers may no longer be present.
- Installing a permanent device like the Clemson Beaver Pond Leveler reduces damage from flooding and allows for improved habitat for waterfowl. Once the dam is broken, place the intake device on the pond side of the dam and stake it down where it will remain submerged. Attach a culvert to the intake device and extend it through the break in the dam. Place a standpipe on the end of the culvert to allow for the management of water levels.

**FORAGING OPPORTUNITIES:** Mast-producing trees, preferably water, willow, nuttall, cherrybark and Shumard oaks, in and around beaver ponds provide excellent fall and winter forage for ducks, especially mallards, wood ducks and black ducks. Beaver ponds with living mast trees can be managed as a green tree reservoir by installing a water control device.

Remove water from impoundments before the growing season to prevent tree mortality. Flood from early October to February, or during the dormant season for hardwoods. Flood to 15 inches or less to prevent damage or death to trees. Draining the pond every growing season and flooding two out of three years, or every other year, will maintain trees indefinitely.

Planting Japanese millet on mud flats enhance waterfowl habitat. Sow in May or June and allow it to mature (45-60 days) before reflooding.

Photo Credit: Claude Jenkins



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