



THE TRACKS YOU LEAVE BEHIND

FINANCIAL PLANNING NEWS
AND INSPIRATION FOR
FRIENDS OF DEFENDERS

Beavers: Nature's Ecosystem Engineers

Beavers are a keystone species, crucial to creating and maintaining habitat for many other species. These ecosystem engineers dramatically alter their environment by felling trees and constructing dams that increase biodiversity by establishing new wetlands and improving existing habitat.

The dynamic mix of habitat formed by beaver dams and ponds benefits wildlife, including native fish, amphibians and migratory birds. Beaver dams also decrease water velocity, which helps prevent soil erosion, recharge groundwater storage, capture sediment and filter pollutants to improve water quality.

Beavers used to live in nearly every stream in North America, but as demand for their fur skyrocketed in the early 20th century they were trapped to the brink of extinction. Despite reintroductions and natural expansion, beavers have yet to return to many areas of their historical range and their population remains a fraction of what it once was.



© DR. CARRIE BURHEINI

Unfortunately, not everyone considers beavers a restorative presence on the landscape. In some areas where beaver and human populations overlap, felled trees and unwanted flooding caused by beaver activity can be problematic. Enter Defenders' Beaver Incentive Program, an effort introduced in Colorado and soon expanding to other states. The program helps property owners employ tools like fencing or paint mixed with sand to protect trees, and flow devices (pipe and fence systems installed in waterways) to prevent flooding.

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YOUNG GRIZZLY © TIMOTHY R. GRAMS



RED WOLF (CAPTIVE) USFWS/B. BARTEL



GLACIER NATIONAL PARK © ZACKARIAH COLE

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Visit our website:

www.defenders.org/tracks

Dear Defender,

We're excited to share *Tracks* with you in a paper-saving "self-mailer" format. We'd love your feedback!

—The Planned Giving Team

FreeWill + Defenders of Wildlife

*A new tax-free way to support
wildlife conservation*

If you were born before June 30, 1949, and have an IRA, there's a smarter way to support Defenders of Wildlife than with cash gifts. Making a gift known as a "rollover" or "qualified charitable distribution" (QCD) from your IRA is a tax-free way to give today to the causes you care about, even if you don't itemize deductions on your tax return. FreeWill now has a free and intuitive online tool to help you donate directly from your IRA. See it for yourself at **Defenders.org/freewillQCD!**



Estate Planning Awareness Week October 21-27, 2019

Estate Planning Awareness Week is a great time to think about the legacy you want to leave behind. Let your will and other estate plans show how devoted you are to wildlife. By remembering Defenders of Wildlife in your estate plans, you can ensure that our nation's most vulnerable species have a voice for years to come.

The number of American adults with a valid will has trended down in the past decade. Break the pattern and make sure your estate plans are up-to-date! 🐾

To include Defenders of Wildlife in your will, add language like the sample below:

"I give, devise and bequeath _____% of my estate/the remainder [or \$_____] of my estate to Defenders of Wildlife, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) [Tax ID #53-0183181] located in Washington, DC."

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A Lifelong Defender: Lelia Vaughan

Dr. Lelia Vaughan fondly recalls her experiences with wildlife as a small girl in Jonesville, Texas. Whether observing frogs from her canoe or catching bugs to admire, many of Lelia's happiest days were spent at the local pond, her dogs in tow.

One of Lelia's most memorable experiences occurred one day in the 1960s when her father—a Defenders member who shared his Defenders magazines with his children—took her out on the family's land to glimpse a red wolf. Seeing what turned out to be the last known representative of the species in her county deeply affected Lelia. So did her father's warning to keep the dogs leashed to protect them from poisons as

wildlife authorities pursued plans to eliminate native wolves and coyotes in East Texas. Today the red wolf is the world's most endangered canid, eradicated from 99.7 percent of its range and found only in a small, reintroduced population in eastern North Carolina.

Lelia went on to earn a doctorate in parks and recreation, chair a college department and teach water safety. She continues to pursue new wildlife viewing experiences, traveling as far as Antarctica to view leopard seals and the Arctic to watch polar bears. Lelia also carries on her family's legacy of support for Defenders, including our efforts to restore the red wolf to its native habitat. "No one speaks up for wildlife like Defenders," says Lelia. "The name says it all." 🐾



RED WOLF (CAPTIVE USFWS/B. BARTEL)



Dr. Lelia Vaughan at T.C. Lindsey and Co. General Store in Jonesville, Texas. Lelia co-owns the store, which was founded in 1847 and is the oldest general store in Texas.

Beavers

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In cases where these tools are not enough, Defenders works with a nonprofit group that specializes in live-trapping and relocating "nuisance" beavers and their families to areas where they will be safe and can create important habitat for native species.

"Beavers are amazing, and we should be encouraging their efforts to create and maintain aquatic habitats," says Defenders' aquatic biologist Aaron Hall "The incentive program, and relocations, allow us to do exactly that, which benefits a huge variety of at-risk wildlife." 🐾



BEAVER POND © DB YOUNG

Learn more about beavers and other wildlife and our work to protect them at defenders.org/wildlife.