

Title: Dam It: Partnering with Beavers to Achieve Restoration Goals

Abstract: Although rarely mentioned as a primary cause of ecological degradation, the post-colonial fur trade inflicted profound damage upon North American landscapes through the extirpation of the beaver, a keystone species that dramatically modifies terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. In the absence of beavers, millions of ponded acres dried up, hundreds of thousands of stream miles downcut and incised, and species across virtually all taxa lost critical habitat. Today, a growing coalition of beaver advocates centered in the American West, including members of both the scientific and livestock communities, are working to restore beavers to improve the condition of riparian areas. As ecosystem engineers and keystone species, beavers provide a broad range of benefits, including habitat restoration for salmonids, sage grouse, and amphibians; flood and drought control; the improvement of water quality and quantity; carbon sequestration; and wildfire mitigation. In this talk, Ben Goldfarb, author of the award-winning *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter*, will discuss the history and environmental implications of the fur trade; detail the ecological and hydrological benefits that beavers provide; and discuss a range of techniques for restoring and coexisting with this vital but occasionally challenging species.



Speaker Bio: Ben Goldfarb is the author of *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter*, winner of the 2019 PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. His journalism has appeared in publications including *Science*, *National Geographic*, and *High-Country News*, and anthologized in the *Best American Science & Nature Writing*. His next book, on road ecology, will be published in 2022.