



PROGRAM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

BEAVERS: AGRICULTURE'S FOE TURNED FRIEND

Session A, Breakout Room #: 17

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Growing socioeconomic and climate change pressures will lead to a 20 percent net increase in global water requirements. Water availability and stability will decrease in the coming years, making innovative solutions essential to aiding agricultural irrigation needs. Traditional beaver management focuses on the removal and relocation of beavers, but these avenues are expensive and temporary, as beavers often return to the same areas. Beavers are environmental engineers, so improved management solutions are necessary to minimize human-beaver conflict to allow beavers to be part of the solution for increasing water quantity and quality. The aim of this study was to identify the best ways to reduce human-beaver conflicts in agriculture water systems to allow for coexistence in Snohomish County. To accomplish this, my research focused on reviewing literature and interviewing employees at Snohomish Conservation District to compile information and data about key environmental and human issues facing the county. Technologies like pond-levelers, culvert protection and tree caging control water levels and vegetation access without removing beavers altogether. My research found these methods are the best way to provide cost effective and long-term coexistence solutions. Pressures from human development and decreases in available land make it more important to find ways to coexist with wildlife. Beavers could provide a solution to irrigation increases in coming years, providing increased climate resilience and protections for other critically threatened habitats.