CHOMP: Tree Wrapping Initiative

Location Prioritization

Locations along the river system should be prioritized based on the following factors:

- **Risk to public safety:** Identify areas where fallen trees could pose immediate dangers to infrastructure or public spaces.
- **Density of existing trees:** In areas with dense tree cover, select trees may be wrapped for protection, while some trees can be left to allow natural processes to take over.
- **Level of beaver activity and beaver tolerance:** Prioritize areas based on the level of beaver activity and the tolerance for beaver presence in the area.
- **Proximity to private land that has suitable beaver forage:** This is an important consideration for potential future conflicts and to highlight opportunities for engagement and education around resources for landowners.

A mosaic of patches with varying levels of tree wrapping effort is recommended to maintain a balance between protection and allowing natural processes to occur in some reaches.

This prioritization framework should be established through a mapping exercise before groundwork is carried out.

Tree Prioritization

Note: Beavers are known to "eat themselves out of house and home." During the fall and winter months, they primarily consume woody species such as willows, aspens, and cottonwoods. However, in the spring and summer months, their diet shifts to include grasses and forbs, providing them with a broader range of food sources.

TIER 1: Public Safety

- This tier focuses on trees that pose an immediate risk to public safety and infrastructure. These are trees that, if they fall, could damage property, block roads, or cause injury.

Considerations for Selection:

- **Proximity to Infrastructure:** Trees near roads, power lines, buildings, or public areas.
- **Structural Damage or Disease:** Trees that are weakened due to disease, rot, pests, or damage (including beaver chewing), making them more likely to fall.
- **Height and Size:** Large, tall trees that could cause significant damage if they fall.
- **Risk to Human Activity:** Trees in areas where people commonly pass, such as parks, trails, or other recreational spaces.

TIER 2: Protecting older trees to promote a multi-aged riparian stand

- This tier focuses on trees that are valuable for their size, biodiversity, and role in promoting a balanced, multi-aged forest stand.

Considerations for Selection:

- **Ecological Value:** Protect trees that are important for soil stability, streambank stability, and providing streamside shade.
- **Proximity to Water:** Trees closer to water are more likely to be felled by beaver.
- **Size and Age**: Large, older trees cannot be readily replaced and provide a source of recruitment.

TIER 3: Protecting younger growth to promote a multi-aged riparian stand

- This is the lowest priority tier, but still an important factor to consider. If all the large trees are protected, beavers will turn their attention to smaller trees or relocate to other areas upstream/downstream. By selectively protecting small patches of younger stands, we can support long-term sustainability and promote a healthy, multi-aged riparian ecosystem.
- Note: smaller diameter trees / shrubs do not need to be individually wrapped – the wire fencing can encircle a small area including numerous trees.

Considerations for Selection:

- **Species:** Many riparian species, including cottonwood, aspen and willow (also species that are preferred by beaver), reproduce vegetatively and can re-establish through their existing root systems after they have been chewed. Small patches of these species can be protected if desired, but beavers play a role in the natural disturbance regime and cycles of regeneration.
- **Growth Potential:** Young trees that have the potential to become large and valuable over time. These include fast-growing species or those important to the future structure of the forest.
- **Proximity to Beaver Activity**: The closer it is to beaver activity, the more likely it is that they will be felled.