



## Upper Raritan Watershed Association

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## CREATURE FEATURE

### North American Beaver

*Castor Canadensis*



The pond at Fairview Farm has become home to a pair of beavers! They arrived in early April and have built a lodge along the bank, where we presume they are getting ready for the arrival of babies. We have roped off the trail that goes past their lodge so they are not disturbed, but we see them frequently from lots of vantage points as they swim across the water. We are keeping tabs on them, and will let you know once we see babies!

### “Sacred Center” or Nuisance?

Native Americans called the beaver the “sacred center” of the land because of the rich, productive wetland habitat that the beaver creates for other mammals, turtles, frogs, birds and ducks. The wetland habitat created by beavers can also cause flooding of low-lying areas creating conflict with human uses

of the land. The dams, however, can also help to reduce erosion and flooding problems by slowing stream flow.

### Did you know?

- Beavers mate for life! Mating season runs from January through March.
- Females have one litter of kits a year between April and June.
- Babies can swim within 24 hours of birth, and will leave the lodge with their parents within a few days.
- Young beavers live with their parents for two years. Beavers can live to be up to 20 years old.
- Adult beavers can grow up to 4' feet in length and weigh over 60 pounds.
- They slap their tail against water to signal danger or warn away predators.
- Beavers have large incisor teeth that they use to cut into trees and woody vegetation.
- Most of their diet is made of up tree bark and cambium, the sort tissue that grows under the bark of the tree.
- The beaver waterproofs its fur by coating it with castoreum, an oily secretion from its scent glands.
- Beavers build lodges of sticks and mud on islands, on pond banks or on lake shores.
- Beavers are highly territorial and will protect their lodge from other beavers. Their territory is marked by piles of mud and their scent. Beaver dams have been found up to 2,800 ft in length and fourteen feet in height.

For more information about the North American Beaver, go to one of the following links:

[EnchantedLearning.com Beaver information](#)

[New York Times: After 200 Years, a Beaver Is Back in New York City](#)

[Aquatic Environments](#)