



**For Immediate Release
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The Beaver Solution, a New Video from The Lands Council

SPOKANE, WA – A cute, fuzzy beaver is the lead character in a new cartoon short produced by Hamilton Studio and Klündt | Hosmer for The Beaver Solution: The Lands Council’s campaign to promote the benefits of restoring beavers in Eastern Washington as an alternative to large new water storage dams in the Columbia River Basin.

View the video at: www.landscouncil.org/beaversolution

Eastern Washington needs more options to manage its water due to increasing demands from downstream users and a changing climate. The inability of our streams and rivers to store spring runoff has resulted in reduced flow in the Columbia River when peak water demand occurs in the late summer and fall from farmers, cities, and salmon.

The Washington State Legislature created the Columbia River Initiative to find new water storage options to meet downstream water demands. In 2003, the Department of Ecology began investigating locations for new dams on tributaries to the Columbia River. The proposed dams would pump water into the reservoir in the spring and release it in the summer, but could cost up to ten billion dollars and flood thousands of acres of farmland and wildlife habitat.

“The Lands Council wants to be part of a natural solution to our water storage needs,” said Brian Walker, Watershed Program Director. “We believe we can find suitable locations for beavers to create natural dams that store spring runoff, which would eliminate the need for an additional large storage dam in the Columbia River Basin. The water behind beaver dams, including the surrounding ground water, is slowly released naturally to increase flows in the late summer, providing water to downstream users and fish” says Walker.

Historically beaver numbered in the millions in Washington, but trapping almost wiped out beaver by the late 1800’s. Today, it is estimated that there are roughly 50,000 beavers in Washington; a far lower number than the historical levels.

A grant from the Department of Ecology is partially funding The Lands Council's research, which will identify physical locations for beaver dams based on the best suitable habitat for beavers, provide estimates of water storage potential, and address the social and economic benefits, including opportunities for water banking and conservation easements.

"We hope The Beaver Solution video will increase public interest in beavers and the important benefits of beaver dams in storing water, trapping sediment to improve water quality, and creating habitat for fish and wildlife," says Mike Petersen, Executive Director of The Lands Council. "Plus, it's fun to watch."

For more information on The Beaver Solution go to: www.landscouncil/beaversolution.org

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